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LETTERS

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THE AMERICAS

Susan Sterner is a Fellow of the Institute writing and photographing the lives and status of Brazilian women.

"Forro Fever"

RECIFE, Pernambuco, Brazil **August 14, 1999**

Mr. Peter B. Martin
Executive Director
Institute of Current World Affairs
4 West Wheelock Street
Hanover , NH 03755

Dear Peter,

A thin black man with a whisky-worn face and an accordion strapped to his chest propped himself against the corner of a bar nestled among decrepit lean-tos deep in the public market of Caruaru (car-roo-ah-ROO). Arms pumping like bellows, fingers dancing along keys, his scratchy baritone bared his soul. A second man caressed an accompaniment out of a *zabumba* drum while a third, who looked halfway into a bottle of *pinga*, kept the rhythm going by scratching bottle caps against the cement, *"tchss-tch-tch-tchsss-tch-tch-tchss-tch-tch-tchss."*

A small crowd pulled in tight around the musicians. Everyone seemed pleased that we had stumbled upon them, parting a little so our friend Paul, my husband Tyrone and I could get a better view. A bright-eyed, benevolent drunk improvised a little soft-shoe on the edge of the cluster, moving nimbly between birdcages and baskets set out for sale.

We had found it. Real *forro pé de serra* (fo-HO pay dee SEH-ha). For a few serendipitous moments everything was as I had imagined. Then the singer ordered a beer. The others turned back to their bottles. A wisp of magic evaporated under the beating sun. We wandered off through aisles crammed with homemade sweets and bins of pet food.

It was Easter weekend and we were exploring Caruaru, a small city in the hilly area of Pernambuco just west of Recife. We had learned that in Brazil the best party is always the one to come. While still recovering from the revelry of *Carnaval*, the *festas juninas* (June festivals) were described to us as a solid month of Northeastern Brazilian culture at its best. The greatest enthusiasm was always reserved for *forró*, the musical style that dominates and sets the tone for the festivities.

Authentic *forró* is an acoustic version known as *forró pé de serra* (forró of the foothills), usually performed by a trio comprising the accordion, triangle and *zabumba*. The triangle (or bottle caps if need be) keeps the quick percussive tempo, the *zabumba* adds the soul and the accordion gives the music life with polka-like sighs and flourishes. That's what we had stumbled upon. And it left us wanting more

The first time I heard *forró* it caught me off-guard. It sounded like a cross between the polkas I heard in my grandparents' northeastern Pennsylvania

home as a kid and the zydeco I fell in love with when I moved to New Orleans in the early 90s. It was definitely something to which I could two-step, an infectious, danceable rhythm. I was enchanted by the style and the stories sung sometimes like ballads, sometimes like playful poems.

English-speaking tourists passing through Brazil love a bit of folklore that claims the term *"forró"* originated in the Queen's own English. As myth has it, the British while here to build railroads and other projects financed by their banks, brought their culture with them. On Saturday nights and work holidays big dances and parties would be held to which everyone was invited. They were "free for all." Continuing along this line of thought, "free for all," distorted by time and mispronunciation, became *"forró."*

Another explanation, and probably closer to the truth, is that the word *"forró"* descended from the word *"forrobodó"* (fohoboe-DOE) which is a huge, playful party with food and drink in abundance. The idea is definitely linked to simple country folk; we might be inclined to use the words "shindig," or "hoe-down." These parties have been an alleged feature of the Brazilian Northeast since the 18th century and might even be linked to medieval Portuguese culture. *Forró pé de serra* is most readily heard during the *festas juninas* which center around the feast days of Saint Anthony (June 13th), Saint John (June 24th) and Saint Peter (June 29th). The feast of Saint John, the most celebrated of the three, is associated with the harvesting of corn planted on the feast day of Saint Joseph in March. These dates fall close to the summer (winter, here) solstice, adding yet another layer of festival history to the reasons to party in June.

In any case, I fell in love with *forró pé de serra* and recordings of the smooth styles of the great Pernambucano Luiz Gonzaga (1912-1989) and his protegés who propelled the genre to national fame in the 1950s. The themes range from lovesickness and epic tales of the hard life of the Northeasterner, to poetically veiled political commentary and light recounting of everyday life. A modern version, *forró elétrico* reminds me not a little of some *Tejano* music from the U.S. Southwest both in its bouncy, grinding melodies and the boot-stomping crowds it attracts. Amplified and electrified with keyboards and drum machines, it's another animal altogether.

Just before Easter a friend of ours, Paul VanderVeen, came to visit for a few days. Eager to show him something beyond the city limits, I suggested a day trip to Caruaru. The city is famous for its giant market of North-

eastern crafts and foods. It's also the self-proclaimed "Capital of Forró," boasting the largest body of resident *forró* musicians in the country.

With visions of musicians on every corner and strains of the accordion wafting from shady bars, we boarded a bus. Two hours later we roared off the highway into the bustling streets of Caruaru. The place was hopping. Shoppers zigzagged through traffic and crowded stores for last-minute buys before the start of the holiday weekend. A man helped us figure out where to jump off the bus and put us in the care of a young boy. Said the man, "He's Evangelical, he'll help you." And help us he did as he led us through the busy streets to the edge of the market, the infamous *feira de Caruaru* as immortalized in Luiz Gonzaga's recording of "Feira de Caruaru" (Caruaru Market).

Stalls were bursting with handmade leather goods, beautiful wooden carvings, local poetry, pottery, weavings, leather goods and block prints. There were also stalls filled with the same "crap-you-don't-need" found in any roadside Stuckey's or tourist shop: back-scratchers, boob-cups, innumerable tacky tee-shirts. The only thing missing was a stand selling snow globes with cityscapes of Caruaru trapped inside.

A group of musicians, five in all, came around the corner playing *forró*. Those who knew songs requested favorites and paid the band a few *reais*. Some danced. "So this is it, real *forró*," I thought to myself. I was disappointed. The market seemed too aware of itself as "authentic." The idea of pleasing the tourist was everywhere. I looked at the musicians. They were wearing matching outfits and seemed bored.

That's when we wandered away from the commercial heart of the market and came upon the little slice of musical serendipity. When the spontaneous performance had ended we were left craving more. *Pé de serra* became our Holy Grail. Following well-meant suggestions (a Brazilian hates to be the one to let you down) we explored a part of town called the *Alto do Moura*, known as an enclave of artisans who produce colorful folkloric clay figurines sold throughout the country. At night, we were advised, musicians often would stroll the streets. We poked around and settled into a little bar to await twilight serenades and foot tapping. But the sun set without a musician in sight and the cold wind drove us back into town.

"Bad news, guys. The buses to Recife are sold out. There's standing-room-only left on the last bus — but only for two people," I told Paul and Tyrone. And with that it was decided we would stay in Caruaru for the night. We ferreted out a little hotel with an Alpine motif (complete with fondue parties, a common theme in the area, but that's another newsletter).

We hopped a ride back into town to a city concert being held at the train station. (A young tee-shirt artist had told us we would hear great music there.) As I stepped out of the cab the turbo-charged mega-bass took over my heartbeat and rattled my teeth. Like a lab mouse, I wiggled and burrowed my way to the back of the crowd trying to gain distance between myself and the "speakers of pain." From a safe distance I watched teens dancing in front of the two-story speaker system. They seemed to be chatting as they danced. Lesson learned: One person's "great-music" bliss is another's pain.

On a street corner well behind the stage (I could still feel my fillings vibrating slightly) a group of men stood shooting the breeze. After debating among themselves, they sent us up a hill, "just a little further" along the main drag. Several kilometers later, we arrived at the designated bar to find a one-man synthesizer-band singing easy-listening versions of U.S. pop music.

Bar after bar, it was the same. Deflated but not defeated, we asked everyone we passed where, in the great *"Capital do Forró"* we would find said music? One cabbie responded in a wry, paternalistic tone, "Oh there are places in town, but you'll never make it out alive." He wouldn't even take us there. It was too risky for *gringos*.

We walked back to town, laughing at our out-of-season quest. Our brush with *pé de serra* had been a chance encounter. Grabbing a cab back to the hotel, I couldn't resist asking one more time. With a nod to the affirmative, the driver hooked a u-turn in the middle of the street and whisked us away to the "best place in town." How many times had we heard that claim in one night?

We pulled in front of the *Forrozão* (fo-ho-ZOW, The Big *Forró*) a huge metal-barn-of-a-bar. From the outside we could hear the pulse of the drum machine and overpowered speakers. Not exactly what we were looking for, but the scene was interesting enough to merit drinking a beer on the sidewalk with fellow loiterers.

Women (girls, really) fluttered in and out of the building. Their entrance was free — like honey for the bees. Men hovered around drinking beers, affecting tough-guy nonchalance and crushing beer cans under boot heels. Hot grills laden with chunks of cheese and sausages thickened the air. Plainclothes cops in tight jeans and automatic weapons strapped to their thighs hassled a few guys — just another Saturday night at the *Forrozão*. A breeze scattered sparks into the crisp night air. I crushed my beer can under my tennis shoe. And we left.

* * *

LADIES ONLY

Like the U.S. Christmas Holidays, or the beginning of the Mardi Gras season in New Orleans, *São João* seasonal music played everywhere weeks before the holi-

days began. Snippets of lyrics blurted through windows of buses hurling past bars. As cars zoomed by I would hear the "ting,ting,ting" of the rhythm triangle. *Forró* was everywhere. The city was getting in the mood.

Pamela hovers near her grandmother for a break from the wild dancing.

Not being Catholic, I wasn't really sure if this was a holiday for a saint recognized by the Vatican or a local religious hero the Brazilians *thought* merited sainthood. I started asking locals, "Who was *São João*?" I got a range of answers: a very brave soldier who fought for Brazilian independence; an outlaw in the *sertão*; a hero to the poor; a local priest. Finally Givaldo, the *côco* vendor across the street from our apartment, set me straight.

São João was none other than John the Baptist. He's referred to as one of the "water saints," along with Saints Anthony and Peter. Their feast days are celebrated, according to Givaldo and other locals, by people who live in desperate need of water, such as the poor farmers of the Northeast, as well as by those who make their living on the water, such as fishermen and sailors.

Even the *Coletivo Mulher Vida* (Women's Life Collective), an organization for which my friend Neta works, was getting ready for *São João*. She invited me to spend the night with her on the eve of the big *São Joao* shindig. That night neighborhood women worked late to prepare traditional holiday dishes: *Munguzá*, a corn porridge sweetened with coconut milk and cinnamon; *canjica*, a

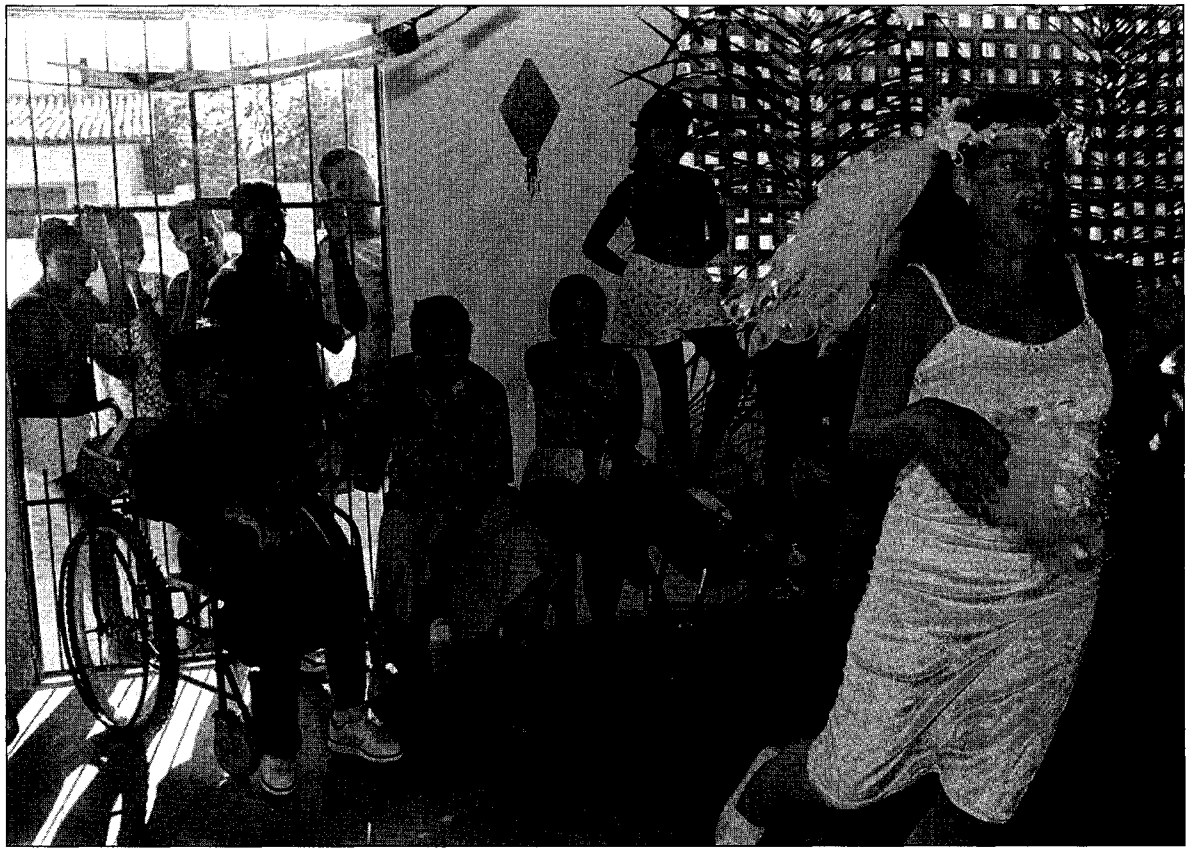
Dressed as a matuto *(hillbilly, backwoodsman, country person) Zulede, right, leads Judete through a* São João *square dance during a party for members of the* Coletivo Mulher Vida *(Women's Life Collective) in Tururu, Pernambuco.*

(left to right) Severina, Maria, Amara and Denise arrive at the Tururu party dressed as men to play their roles in the square dance and mini-drama that it centers around.

heavy corn custard sweetened with coconut milk and cinnamon, and *bolo de milho*, a cornmeal cake flavored with, yes, coconut milk and cinnamon. Remarkably, each has a distinctive taste. (During the festival period the costs of coconut and corn triples even in neighborhood markets.)

The next day excitement reigned as everyone scrambled to throw together costumes for the *quadrilha* (a square dance). As I understood it, the general theme was to dress up like a *matuta*, or simple country person, and square dance. Since I had planned on photo-

Tururu members of the CMV *display their gypsy costumes at the* São João *celebration. Others arrive dressed as a judge, bride, groom, "other woman," town drunk, mother-in-law, etc.*



The "bride" gets some laughs as she whirls and around the floor and the square dance gets underway at the meeting house in Tururu. By the end of the dancing a crowd of 100-150 had gathered outside the gates and lingered until the women passed extra food through the grills.

graphing the event I wore a regular sundress.

I was in the first van from Rio Doce to Tururu, where the party was being held. I stepped into the meeting hall and met with definite disapproval. Before I knew it four women had hustled me into a back room, pulled my dress over my head and replaced it with a brightly colored, frilly affair that flared out dramatically when I twirled — maximum spin factor, Ladies.

Two women whipped my hair into red-bowed pigtails, rosied my cheeks with lipstick and added a big, polka-dot freckle. In short time I had become a convincing parody of a hillbilly, paraded before the waiting crowd of women and assigned a position in the *quadrilha*.

The crazy costumes played a role in the traditional *quadrilha*. Present were a bride and groom, a judge, mothers-in-law, a drunk, a gypsy, the "other woman," country folk, etc. The music was stopped and a minidrama enacted in which the "bride" and "groom" were brought together before the community. Everything was high drama as the groom's mother accused the bride of getting pregnant to snare the catch-of-the-town. Then the groom's lover crashed the scene, demanding money for *her* baby. A drunk philosophized on the morality of the day and railed against the mayor and judge. Everyone mocked indignation with loud gasps and titters of shock. The lampooning of public figures and institutions continued until we were incoherent with laughter.

All of this screaming and outbursting caused no small ruckus. By the end of the "wedding," a significant crowd had joined in the hooting and hollering. But the women had anticipated this and had locked the gates surrounding the party to protect their stashes of food and drink. Neighborhood children pushed their arms through the gates, hoping to have their hands filled with cake and meat pies.

A LONG TRAIN RIDE

Tyrone and I first heard of *São João* while we were taking an intensive Portuguese class last year in which there were several graduate students studying ethnomusicology. One of them gave a short slide show and presentation on the *"Trem do Forró."* He presented it as an incredible anthropological phenomenon. He showed slides of an old train (*trem*) that traveled from Recife into the interior of the state of Pernambuco. Along the way, *forró pé de serra* bands played music as everyone danced and sang traditional songs. The train would stop *en route*, and the revelers would pour out to mix with

locals in spontaneous celebrations of life and music.

"Wow! We know where we'll be in June!" we thought. We envisioned a month of riding a decrepit train, getting down-and-dirty and documenting the trail of *forró*. It would be an adventure.

Our first clue to the type of adventure on which we were embarking should have been that the tickets for the *"Trem"* were sold only at Shopping Recife, the area's largest mall. Looking beyond that, the price should have been a clue. We paid the equivalent of roughly $28.00 per person — a price that easily put this "authentic" experience beyond the reach of more than two-thirds of the population (and I'm being conservative). The big tip-off was the official *"Trem do Forró"* tee-shirt, with a giant train cartoon on the front and the date of validity printed on bright yellow sleeves — definitely not a aesthetic plus in the eyes of two photographers. But I wasn't quite ready to get cynical. In Brazil, you never know.

On the appointed day we rose before dawn, put on our mandatory tee-shirts and took a cab to the downtown train station. I knew we were fish out of water as soon as the train station came into view. Hundreds of adults (dressed just like us!) were milling around in the early morning sunlight. It looked like a friendly confusion and we would have blended in perfectly if only we had remembered one thing: a giant cooler of party supplies.

It was a strange scene when the station gates opened and everyone rushed to find a space in one of the nineteen train cars. We opted for car number three — not too far from the potty car, but not too close. Each car came equipped with its own *forró pé de serra* trio (the real thing!) and a guy selling chilled 90-cent beers. As latecomers hopped on from the platform, the train rolled out of the city.

It was a beautiful ride through a light mist left behind by an early-morning rain shower. The trios started playing their wonderful music. Cans cracked open. Tyrone and I sat on the windowsill and watched the city pass.

The rails cut straight through older industrial and poorer neighborhoods of Recife. As we passed, residents ran to the edge of the tracks and waved or gave the thumbs-up sign (the all-purpose Brazilian symbol that says everything from "Life is good!" to " Catch you later!" to "Whoa, Buddy. Don't run over me!"). Adults lifted children onto their shoulders and danced. Everyone on the train waved back, enjoying the illusion that Recife

A group of Gravatá senior citizens entertain the Trem do Forró *crowd for 20 minutes of scheduled "spontaneity" before finishing our journey.*

was one happy celebration and we were spreading the joy. But when rocks began to sting against the side of the train arms were abruptly pulled in and children moved away from the windows. The divide between the "haves" and "have-nots" reasserted itself and from then on the people we passed were viewed with wariness. We rumbled on.

By 9 a.m. we had cleared the city limits. Beer was flowing freely and couples were working up a sweat dancing in the aisles. Each car became its own world as the passengers got to know one another and swapped swigs of whisky, snacks and dance steps. A priest in full cassock wound his way through the cars, accepting fresh beers and stopping to dance now and then, scoring big points for clerical popularity.

When one couple noticed Tyrone actually buying our breakfast beer (if you can't beat 'em join 'em) they insisted their cooler was ours and plied us with fresh drinks and snacks throughout the morning. We danced and traded stories. Being from the U.S. made us a novelty but at least half of the 50 people in our car were from other parts of Brazil. The Northeasterners were positively radiant that their culture had such allure and were eager to play host and show visitors a good time.

And so it was that we danced with engineers, national and state transportation coordinators (including the woman who first conceived the idea of the *"Trem do Forró"*), travel agents, bureaucrats, a nurse and teachers. It wasn't the salt-of-the-earth crowd we had initially expected to belly-up to, but it was an interesting, warm collection of Brazilians in party mode.

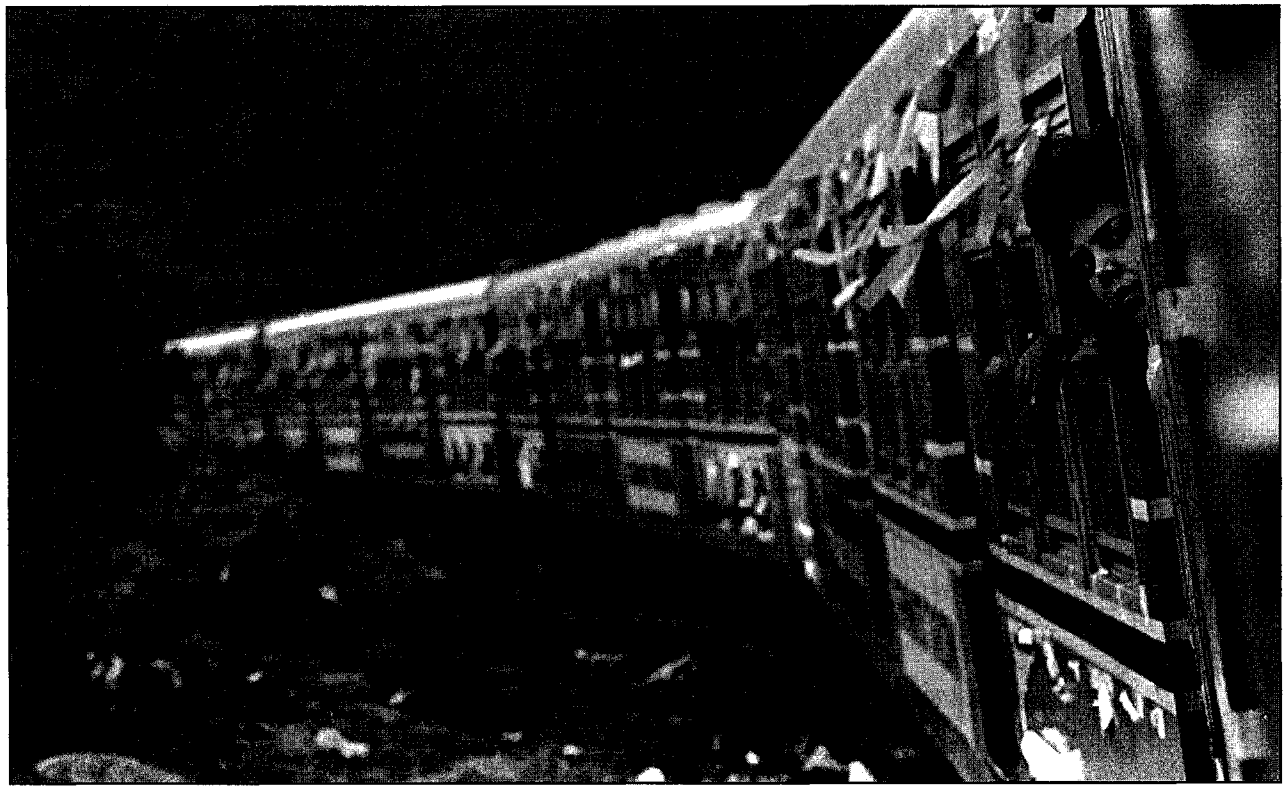
We ascended into the hilly region east of Recife called the *agreste*, passing enormous ranches, elaborate weekend homes and small farming communities. About 30 kilometers outside Caruaru the train stopped in the town of Gravatá (grah-vah-TAH). As we slowed, elderly men dressed as bandits from a bygone era fired blanks from rusty rifles at us. The smoke cleared to reveal a huge crowd of townsfolk awaiting us near the platform.

It was hard to tell if we were in the midst of an actual down-home festival, or arriving late to a party for which we had paid. I suspected the latter. In any case, it was time to be spontaneous and we de-boarded through a sea of spectators (and thieves, according to our fellow travelers clinging to their coolers) into the midst of a *quadrilha* performed by Gravatá senior citizens teetering a little under the sudden crush of visitors.

I was drawn to a group of irresistible grandmas dressed as *matutas* (country women — which meant they were parodying themselves). They clutched each other as they hop-swayed to the music blasting through loudspeakers. As I looked at them through my camera lens I realized they were the same women from the slide show I had seen a year earlier! Just as the party was warming up we got our cue to halt all spontaneity and re-board the train to resume our creep through the countryside.

After five hours of drinking and nonstop dancing we had hit a collective wall. The whole train needed some

Revelers lead a dancing line through the center aisle of the Trem do Forró *past weary musicians who played continuously for over five hours. Note the snazzy tee-shirts!*



The Trem do Forró *rounds a curve just before heading into Caruaru. After six hours of non-stop dancing and riding through the countryside.*

aspirin and a nap. I wandered through the other cars, including the potty-car where a man was amusing himself by videotaping the agony of women standing in the 45-minute line for the bathroom. Other than that bit of grassroots journalism, the train was fairly sedate.

But the bands played on to the appreciative feet of a few dancing diehards. By automobile, the trip from Recife to Caruaru is just under two hours. Travel by bus adds another 30 minutes. Our liquored-up train made the 110-kilometer trip in just under six hours.

As the train approached Caruaru, a crowd thickened along the tracks. No one threw rocks or flipped-the-bird this time — perhaps because they realized we were part of the masses that would descend upon Caruaru and spend over $2.25 million in the month of June. In any case, our arrival had the air of a turn-of-the-century campaign train pulling into a sympathetic city. Fireworks showered from above and streamers unfurled against the sides of the train. The radio-equipped security ushers didn't even try to shoo away kids jumping on to ride the last hundred yards. It was a romantic, feel-good moment for both the city and the tourists.

As the train hissed and bucked to a stop our travel buddies wished us weary goodbyes and disappeared into the throngs. That was the end of the line for the *"Trem do Forró"* — hardly the anthropological intrigue our former classmate had presented last July, but a solidly Brazilian experience nonetheless.

TARZAN'S HUT

Bone-tired and hungry, Tyrone and I meandered through town. The official party area seemed to include every major street and acres of open area. We found respite in a little restaurant and refueled on boiled manioc root and grilled goat.

Our neighbors in Recife, Mizonildo and Neide, are from Caruaru. When we told them we were going to give the *Trem do Forró* a try Mizonildo shook his head in dismay: How could we have been snookered into buying tickets? Silly gringos! Still he generously invited us to stay in his old bedroom at his parents' home in Caruaru. He reasoned that if we were to spend the night in Caruaru and absorb the real flavor of *São João*, we might be redeemed of the *Trem* gaff.

Mizonildo's mom and dad were waiting for us when we found their home. We stepped into Mizone and Carminha Martins' living room and introduced ourselves. They burst into simultaneous torrents of friendly chatter that flowed straight through Tyrone and me. We were only two hours away from Recife but the accent had changed just enough so it had become work for us to understand Portuguese.

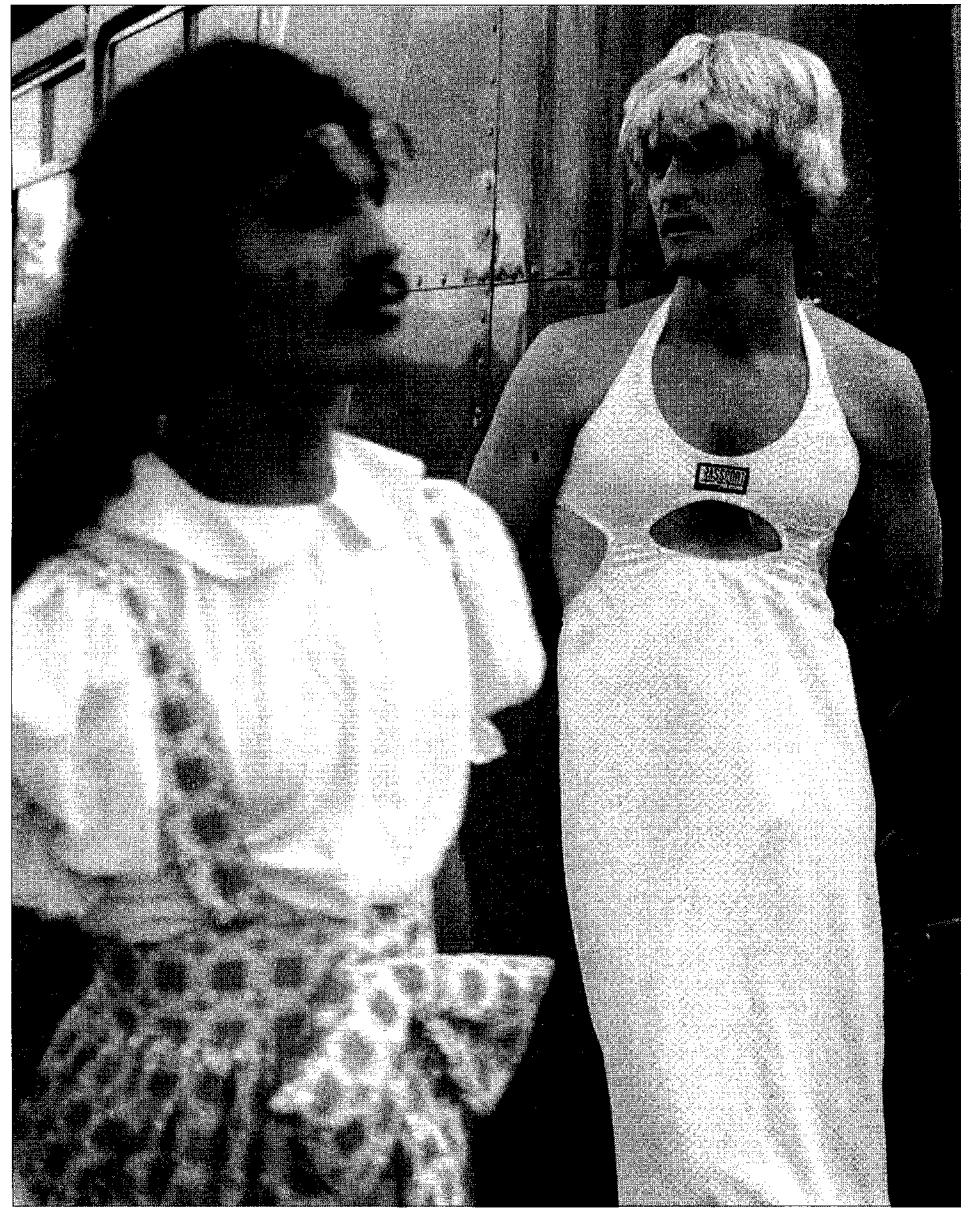
Sensing how tired we were, Carminha led us through

a backyard filled with peacocks, Guinea hens, mop-headed chickens, doves and parakeets. We crossed a small garden and went up the steps of the little bungalow Mizonildo and Neide had renovated in a Tarzan theme. Everything that could have been bamboo, was bamboo. I ventured through a trap door down a ladder into the bathroom to wash in buckets of cold water Mizone had hauled in for us. It had been such an odd day it seemed logical to me that we should sleep in a faux-jungle hut.

Eager to not miss anything on the streets, we changed into warm clothing and hustled back to the kitchen. Carminha had whipped up a traditional *São João* dinner of *canjica*, corn on the cob, rice and beans, sautéed beef tips, fresh bread and home-churned butter.

At this point it's worth mentioning that Mizone Martins has just recently been elected a city councilman for Caruaru. He ran and won as a member of the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB). According to his son, Mizone's biggest claim to fame thus far has been his reluctance to agree with other council members. As I listened to his description of his 40-year career monitoring water levels and dams for the state of Pernambuco, I looked at his framed portraits of Che Guevara and homemade homages to other personal heroes (local writers, etc.). His words painted a picture of a land of incredible disparity in access to capital and natural resources, principally water — the touch of Midas in this semi-arid region. I understood how he became politicized.

Tyrone and I tried to "interview" him informally on the politics in a land in which water exists only for the wealthy landowners and powerful politicians. But it was *São João*, and the Martins, both natives of Caruaru, were more interested in talking about the changes they had



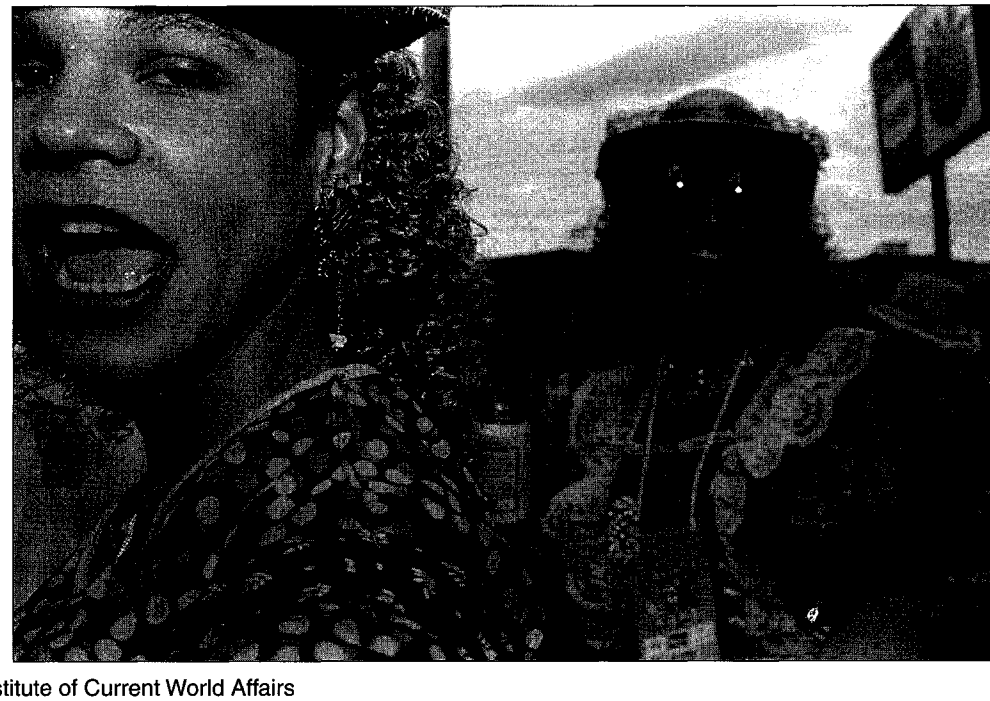
Fashions were mixed as men prepared to parade in the "Gaydrilha" *during Caruaru's* São João *festival. The main road was shut down and over 5, 000 men participated.*

A man ajusts his hair before the parade

seen in the celebration of *São João*. "Back in their day..." *São João* was a quiet community event. Everyone dressed like country farmers and promenaded around town, stopping at various family parties or public dances. Women turned out in appropriate dresses or skirts, emphasized Mr. Martins. In his day no woman would have ventured out in jeans and a long-sleeved black sweater. Properly chastised, I gave my sweater an adjustment and we headed out the door.

Out on the street we found controlled mayhem. It was the night of *"Gaydrilha"* (gay + *quadrilha*), in which the men and boys of town were invited to sport their feminine side and wow the crowds. They turned out in all sorts of outfits. There was enough lycra and fake boobs bouncing around the street to embarrass Hollywood.

It's said that during *Carnaval* Brazilian society releases tension by living inverted for a few days. The poor who claim closer roots to the traditions of *samba* and other music forms take the lead on the streets with the rest of Brazil following behind. And while it is the female form, particularly the eroticized *mulatta*, that is most celebrated and on constant display, the male body is often just as naked and just as brilliant (just not as photographed or exploited by a chiefly macho society.) Another inversion is men



Pretty "women" flirt and catcall to others in costume and plainclothed men during the "Gaydrilha" *in Caruaru.*

Photo by Tyrone Turner

parading as women. They love it. And crowds love it.

That night costumes and motives ran the gamut of effects. It was a mostly raucous crowd out to prove masculinity had nothing to do with clothing and everything to do with exercising the right to don a dress and wander the streets in brotherly (read: drunken), emasculated camaraderie. It was an aggressive climate. The costumed guys grabbed at each other's parts and lunged after plain-clothed men, making lewd remarks and blowing kisses. To be sure, there were the occasional shrinking violets, young men finally free for a day to wear their fantasy outfits in this rough, industrial, cattle-raising town. They sacheted with a luminous timidity, accepting praise and ignoring derision, believing they were the truly beautiful.

We roamed around this motley collection of "women" and women and then headed to the main stage area. I was beginning to regret having skipped the evening nap our comrades on the train had insisted was key to loving a Brazilian holiday. Perhaps they were right. We found a quiet piece of curb just outside the police complaint station and huddled there watching the crowd grow.

By midnight we had re-wandered the entire Sao João party zone, munched on all the possible treats, and stood at our rendezvous point awaiting the Martins. They arrived freshly napped, caffeinated and ready to make the political rounds. We hustled to keep up with them as we cut through the sea of revelers.

We were ushered onto a 20-foot-high platform sponsored by the City Council. Mizone moved about, adeptly introducing us to the local pols and big wigs. When the show started we watched from above as couples showed-off their fancy footwork and security guards dealt with the ebb-and-flow of drunken fights. By 3 a.m. the only thing keeping us awake were the waiters swirling around us with drinks and appetizer-sized versions of the holiday corn foods, cheeses and sausages we had been eating all evening.

Nearly 24 hours after we had started our day Tyrone and I collapsed in Tarzan's hut. I was happy I didn't have to swing on a vine to get to the bed. As I fell asleep the peacocks and roosters were beginning their morning chatter.

Until next month,