These new compositions are inspired by Brazilian multi-instrumentalists and composers Hermeto Pascoal and Egberto Gismonti. I named my group Trio Bruxo after reading an article on Pascoal, whose autodidact development and mystical presence truly imbue him with the magical aura of a sorcerer (“bruxo”). Both Pascoal and Gismonti are profoundly influenced by folk and indigenous musics from the northeastern regions of Brazil, as well as 20th-century classical harmony and jazz improvisation. I have specifically looked at the musical languages of maracatú de baque virado and forró, and filtered them through the lens of my jazz training and explorations of classical compositional techniques.

**Ancestral** – On a powerful visit to Cidade Velha in Cabo Verde (the oldest port of the transatlantic slave trade), historian Charles Akibodé said the following to a group of musicians (including myself):

“[Artists] say ‘yes, I am a creator,’ but they never know that they go inside of them[elves] in order to take a part of their memory. … You cry and you don’t know why you are crying; but you never make the link with yourself and the part of your memory, of your archive inside of you.”

Akibodé framed the Portuguese colonization of Cabo Verde as “fighting to break the memory of Africa.” The Afro-Brazilian religion of candomblé is devotional to the gods (orixás), one’s ancestors (eguns) and ancestral knowledge. The iconography of candomblé is prevalent throughout Afro-Brazilian music, notably maracatú de baque virado from Recife. The cell of this piece, stated by solo piano, is a fragment that laid dormant in a notebook for many years, an attempt to channel the melodic language of toadas, the traditional chants in maracatú processions.

**A bandeira do bruxo (The Sorcerer’s Flag)** – The piece is conceived to showcase the improvisational capacity of all four soloists. The form is extrapolated from elements heard in the introduction of “Nossa bandeira é nacional,” as recorded by Maracatu Nação Cambinda Estrela. Harmonically, the piano introduction is a tip of the hat to Hermeto Pascoal’s poly-triadic concept, as documented in Luiz Costa-Lima Neto’s book *The Experimental Music of Hermeto Pascoal & Grupo, 1981-1993*.

**Moa Vive** – a two-part suite dedicated to Romualdo Rosário da Costa, better known as Mestre Moa do Katendê. Considered one of the greatest masters of capoeira de Angola in Salvador, he was also an award-winning songwriter and percussionist who pioneered the genre of afoxé. Mestre Moa was tragically killed the night of the first round of the 2018 Brazilian election, stabbed in the back twelve times by a younger supporter of President Jair Bolsonaro. The piece interpolates a fragment from Moa’s song “Escola viva” (as heard on the album *Angoleiro, sim sinhô*). I was moved by a quote at one of many memorials for Moa, filmed and posted on Facebook: “For every Moa that is killed, ten more Moas will be born.” Thus, numerological elements of 5, 10 and 12 are present throughout the structure of the piece.
Cheguei, meu povo Variations – inspired by pianist/composer Frederic Rzewski’s North American Ballads, in particular his treatment of the spiritual “Down By The Riverside.” I embarked upon a set of variations on the toada “Cheguei, meu povo” (“I’ve arrived, my people”) by Mestre Walter Ferreira of Maracatú Nação Estrela Brilhante de Recife. The rhythmic transition into the piano solo is a common chamada (call) from Maracatu Nação Cambinda Estrela.

Pilgrimage Suite – a three-part suite, developed with the guidance of trombonist/composer Jean-Nicolas Trottier. It began as my attempt to write a traditional choro, which shares the same form and harmonic movement as ragtime. Trottier identified certain sections in the choro (now the final movement) that could benefit from further development. I have named them for three landmarks of my personal and artistic journeys through Brazil: Vila Madalena, the artistic, cosmopolitan hub of Sào Paulo that anchored this band’s first trip to Brazil; Gávea, a well-to-do, isolated neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro where some of my colleagues and friends live, full of dense flora and fauna thriving, minutes from the city; Ó do Borogodó, a club specializing in traditional samba and choro in the Vila Madalena neighbourhood of Sào Paulo.

Pesquisando o forró (Researching Forró) – I wanted to end the concert with the characteristic forró party music of Northeastern Brazil. I composed the harmonic sequence first, and subsequently added a melody in the vein of the active, arpeggiated figurations of the sanfona (accordion) or pifano (traditional flute) common to forró. The frenetic tempo change is an homage to the performance style of Hermeto Pascoal.

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Dedicated to my mother, Cheryl Tessler Ryshpan (1950-2017), who showed me how to be independent, always pushed me to be better, and who was more excited for my Master’s degree than I was.

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