

# WHO GETS TO MAKE A LIVING IN A CULTURAL CAPITAL? MUSIC WORKERS, MUSICAL URBANITY, AND SÃO PAULO'S CITY OF MUSIC LEGISLATION

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*This article addresses the interconnectedness of economic livelihoods for music workers and state funding for the arts in São Paulo, Brazil—a center of musical production, cultural life, and state-directed arts spending. I use the lens of “musical urbanity,” or the distinctive symbolic, material, spatial, and administrative qualities of urban musical sociability, to unpack how music workers understand urbanity as a cultural resource that requires state regulation. As an illustrative case study, this article examines the content of and debate surrounding the City of Music Law, a proposed municipal arts development law (lei de fomento). Stakeholders drafted the legislation specifically in response to the concerns of music workers who find careers difficult to assemble in the city. Advocates of this legislation seek a more equal distribution of state support for music production in São Paulo while leaving aside the financial and bureaucratic concentrations that make such redistributions possible.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Cultural policy; musical labor; urban soundscapes*

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This article highlights one of the paradoxes of musical life in São Paulo, Brazil: the city is a center of musical production and cultural life, but it is also a place in which music workers find steady careers difficult to assemble. Moreover, state and state-related financing comprises a significant part of the local music economy, meaning that music workers' claims to steady work are closely tied to the state's role in funding the arts. The question of regular financial support for music workers, however, is a relatively minor one in broader conversations about state funding for the arts. It figures among a series of local, national, and global debates about the definition of culture within state funding regimes, whether there is a right to culture, how culture is an economic resource, and, of particular importance to the question in São Paulo, the spatial enactment of cultural rights—particularly the concentration and distribution of such resources. Academics, cultural institutions, certain grassroots movements, and the press tend to focus on these latter issues, meaning that efforts to address job stability enjoy limited visibility.

Such debates about spatial distribution, access, and state arts support point to a larger question about labor conditions and cultural production in a city like São Paulo—namely, is urbanity a resource for cultural production? And, if so, should the state be charged with regulating and distributing the trappings of musical urbanity (e.g., musical institutions, income, diverse audiences) in relation to São Paulo's music workers? By musical urbanity, I refer to the ways that authors have identified music as a constituent part of urban lives. In addition to the symbolic aspects of music that form cultural identities,<sup>1</sup> these distinctively urban qualities of musical sociability include music's relationship to the materiality of urban spaces,<sup>2</sup> music as an everyday activity,<sup>3</sup> the concentration of musical institutions and state administrative practices surrounding music making in cities,<sup>4</sup> and music as an urban economic activity<sup>5</sup> characterized by both specialized labor and the lessened importance of stylistic categories.<sup>6</sup>

In order to consider how music workers, grassroots organizers, bureaucrats, and politicians understand music as part of urban life, this essay examines a municipal legislative proposal in São Paulo—PL 376/2016, commonly known as *São Paulo Cidade da Música*, or São Paulo City of Music. For the cohort of music workers and cultural administrators advocating the legislation, the City of Music Law is an aspirational blueprint for state interventions in cultural production. At the heart of this advocacy is the concentration of

music workers and musical economies in the city. São Paulo is an attractive place for music workers, given the concentration of imagined career opportunities and associated media infrastructure located in the city, and performers, engineers, and producers move to São Paulo from throughout Brazil as a way of furthering their careers. Nonetheless, the concentrated state funding mechanisms for culture that make the city an attractive place to pursue a career in music have not addressed the ways in which individuals find and engage in steady work. The City of Music proposal engages many of the aspects of the resources that São Paulo's urban concentrations offer to music workers: the importance of musical institutions, the sustainability of individual music careers, the development of musical infrastructures, and the role of music in everyday life.

The City of Music proposal is an arts development law (*lei de fomento*), a municipal cultural policy instrument that typically includes provisions for infrastructure building and funding for otherwise noncommercially viable productions within a specific arts cohort. Arts development laws emerged in Brazil as a grassroots cultural policy mechanism in the twenty-first century. Cultural workers and artist collectives crafted such laws as a response and corrective to cultural tax incentive laws, most emblematically the 1991 Rouanet Law—a federal tax credit program aimed at boosting private support for the arts in the wake of the country's then-recent re-democratization. In São Paulo, arts development laws support theater (2002), dance (2005), circus (2016), and cultural practices on the city's peripheries (2016). São Paulo's theater law was Brazil's first such municipal law, which emerged from a social movement of actors and theater companies in the city responding to Rouanet Law funding for commercial theatrical productions (a recurring issue for arts tax incentives, addressed later in this article). Insofar as São Paulo's arts development law for theater has supported production companies that create less commercial and more aesthetically challenging work, culture workers in theater and other arts regard it as a successful model of state funding of the arts invested in the sustainability of artistic groups over time.<sup>7</sup> For this reason, culture workers in São Paulo (and cities throughout Brazil) have subsequently worked to pass such laws.

A coalition of musicians, culture producers, and politicians developed and advocated for the City of Music Law during most of the administration of Workers' Party Mayor Fernando Haddad (2013–2016), and have continued their advocacy through the 2020 local elections. By focusing on a consistent

funding stream for the creation and dissemination of music in São Paulo, the City of Music proposal addresses a gap that exists in music policy not only in São Paulo but also throughout the country. In post-dictatorship Brazil, the “alibis for funding”<sup>8</sup> for cultural practices have simultaneously focused on expanding access to cultural production to broad segments of society, incentivizing private support for the arts, and (less frequently) fostering economic development. Moreover, state and state-related spending (disproportionately concentrated in São Paulo) has become an essential dimension in the livelihoods of the city’s music workers. In practice, this means that music workers both depend on state-directed financial practices and negotiate barriers to access that include bureaucratic practices, competing program goals, economic vicissitudes, and a process that favors one-off projects in order to access such funding.

In the context of São Paulo’s music economy, the City of Music Law would have represented a somewhat modest sum of money—a planned R\$15 million in 2017—compared to the R\$152 million that the Commercial Social Service of São Paulo (SESC-SP) budgeted for music and the R\$101 million of federal cultural tax incentives (Rouanet Law) allocated to music projects in the State of São Paulo in the same year.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the City of Music Law would be novel in it centers music workers, making musicians, producers, and independent music venues the target beneficiaries of this spending, rather than a general audience (in the case of the SESC-SP) or private enterprises (in the case of Rouanet Law).

Although the City of Music Law was proposed in the same 2016 legislative session during which the City Council passed arts development laws for circus and cultural practices on the city’s peripheries, it was not brought up for a vote. Advocates had hoped to secure passage at the end of 2016, during the lame duck session of a comparatively sympathetic municipal administration. Subsequently, Mayors João Doria (2017–2018) and Bruno Covas (2018–present) have overseen large cuts in municipal cultural funding, including the programs established by arts development laws. Nonetheless, the City of Music proposal continues to figure prominently in grassroots advocacy and left-leaning political platforms. A new City Council, elected in late 2020 and seated in early 2021, includes more representation from left and far-left parties that may be more sympathetic to the concerns of the music and arts workers. Regardless, the state’s role in regulating and distributing the benefits of musical

urbanity (institutional support, income, access to diverse audiences) remains a salient issue for those who make their livelihoods in this space.

### SURVIVING ON ART IN SÃO PAULO

The 2008 *frevó*<sup>10</sup> “O retrato do artista quando pede” (The Portrait of a Begging Artist) illustrates some of the principal issues confronting music workers attempting to assemble careers in São Paulo. Kiko Dinucci and Douglas Germano authored and recorded the song, which is included on the duo’s self-titled album *Duo Moviola*. The song levels several critiques at cultural finance from the perspective of an individual artist attempting to make a career off of cultural spending. For the significant portion of musicians making careers outside of the recording industry, the most lucrative possibilities lie in financial support from a constellation of state-directed and state-related cultural finance mechanisms. Barriers to this professional goal include the divergent purposes of each funding mechanism, the complicated bureaucracy surrounding them, and the seeming irrelevance of an individual effort in a broader system that seems at once impersonal and personalistic.

While making light of the various cultural policy programs and institutional structures that simultaneously provide support for artistic endeavors in São Paulo and create numerous mundane and structural impediments to earning such support, Germano and Dinucci also do a skillful job of mapping the network of incentives available to music workers in São Paulo. The lyrics mention the SESC (the Commercial Social Service), as well as municipal (formerly the Mendonça), State of São Paulo (formerly the PAC), and federal (Rouanet) cultural incentive laws that finance projects in the city. Perhaps the richest moment of the composition is the spoken bridge, in which the instrumental forces quote the “Marche funèbre. Lento” movement of Frédéric Chopin’s Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 35, as the narrator makes a pun with the homonym of CEU (a network of municipally controlled unified educational centers primarily in the city’s periphery that occasionally contract musicians for cultural programming) and *céu* (heaven) to suggest ironically that one might finally succeed in locating some kind of government-directed cultural patronage in the afterlife.

The song also outlines several of the challenges to finding steady work, explaining that, to survive on art in São Paulo, an artist must either become (or

<p>Pra sobreviver de arte em São Paulo Tenta o SESC, tenta o SESC, Mas se o programador não for com a tua cara, Esquece, esquece</p>	<p>To survive on art in São Paulo, Try the SESC, Try the SESC But if the curator is not into you, Forget it, forget it</p>
<p>Pra sobreviver de arte em São Paulo Tenta o PAC, tenta o PAC Mas em caso seu projeto falta o CEP, Se etrepe, se etrepe</p>	<p>To survive on art in São Paulo, Try the PAC, try the PAC But if your project is missing a zip code You're finished, you're finished</p>
<p>Você gasta o que não tem no xerocão, E a tiazinha sempre diz que está faltando, Um carimbinho de uma data esquecida E assinatura com a firma reconhecida</p>	<p>You spend what you don't have on copies And the lady always says something is missing A little stamp of a forgotten date And a notarized signature</p>
<p>Pra sobreviver de arte em São Paulo Lei Mendonça, Lei Mendonça Mas se não tiver contrapartida social, Bau-bau, a água bebe a onça</p>	<p>To survive on art in São Paulo Mendonça Law, Mendonça Law, But if there's no social benefit Bye-bye, you've missed your chance</p>
<p>Pra sobreviver de arte em São Paulo, Vai e tenta a Rouanet Mas se o empresário fala em custo-benefício Manda ele se pentear</p>	<p>To survive on art in São Paulo, Go and try the Rouanet, But if the business-owner talks about cost- benefit, Send him away</p>
<p><i>falado</i> “Mas, meu amigo, se todas as suas tentativas derem em nada, não se importe. Pois, mesmo após a morte, você poderá tentar um projotinho no céu...”</p>	<p><i>spoken</i> “But, my friend, if all of your efforts yield nothing, don't worry. Because, even after death, you will be able to try a small project in heaven [CEU/céu]...”</p>
<p>Tenta o SESC Tenta o PAC Lei Mendonça Vai e tenta a Rouanet</p>	<p>Try the SESC Try the PAC Lei Mendonça Go and try the Rouanet</p>

**Figure 1:** “O retrato do artista quando pede” (Portrait of the begging artist) by Duo Moviola (Douglas Germano and Kiko Dinucci), 2008.

hire) an expert in both the constellation of state funding mechanisms and the administrative techniques involved within them. One such difficulty lies in understanding the divergent missions of cultural finance mechanisms, captured in the ideas of social benefit (*contrapartida social*) and cost-benefit analysis. Many direct governmental funding programs require that an applicant articulate how a particular project contains a social benefit (usually in the form of expanding audience access to a cultural product). In the case of tax incentive laws, however, an applicant typically appeals to the strategy of a

potential corporate sponsor's marketing department, which will usually only invest time in a cultural project if it is understood as advancing the entity's commercial objectives. A second challenge is the paperwork itself. Here, Dinucci and Germano lament the cost of paperwork (such as authenticated copies) and the process of filling out applications, with minutiae like missing zip codes and signatures serving as the basis for rejections. Indeed, the paperwork surrounding these mechanisms is considerable, with the written bidding process of the *edital*<sup>11</sup> serving as the basis for accessing this funding.

The production history of "The Portrait of a Begging Artist" also includes several ironies. Duo Moviola's self-titled 2008 album received a grant from the State of São Paulo Secretariat of Culture's 2007 Stimulus Prize in Music (*Prêmio Estimulo de Música*) for the production and recording of a CD, a predecessor to the ProAC series of competitive bidding processes. Dinucci, in particular, has subsequently crafted a fairly successful performance career as a solo artist and member of groups such as *Metá* and *Passo Torto* that have attracted considerable support in São Paulo's cultural finance scene, independent live music venues such as the *Casa de Francisca*, and in the national and international music press.

### SUBSIDIZED PUBLIC CULTURE IN SÃO PAULO

Two of the most prominent sources of funding for music in São Paulo—the Rouanet Law (R\$101 million in 2017) and the SESC-SP (R\$152 million in 2017)—have helped to make São Paulo a center of state-financed music production. Despite demonstrating divergent "alibis" for arts funding, both Rouanet Law and SESC-SP projects are imbricated in the economic concentrations that occur in São Paulo. In fact, these two mechanisms in particular have made financial resources disproportionately available in São Paulo vis-à-vis the rest of the country. While this, in theory, has expanded the possibilities for music workers to gain access to such funds, neither cultural funding program addresses musical labor as such. What follows is an explanation of the logistics and procedures of Rouanet Law and SESC-SP funding in order to illuminate how neither addresses the role of individual careers in music production.

Cultural incentive laws, like the 1991 Rouanet Law, permit certain businesses and individuals to direct a portion of their tax responsibilities toward preapproved cultural projects. Since their introduction in the second half of

the 1980s, such laws have become one of the primary methods through which the state directs money to music production. They shift the decision-making functions of cultural policymaking to the private sector while leaving the state largely responsible for their administration and financial backing. Although these laws were initially introduced to encourage private entities to fund a portion of cultural projects in partnership with the government, subsequent revisions and regulations have largely returned complete financial responsibility to the state.<sup>12</sup> In practice, cultural tax incentives like the Rouanet Law generally provide a 100 percent tax credit to sponsoring corporations in addition to a percentage of the product (e.g., admissions to a concert or show) and free promotional advertising. Criticisms of these laws have abounded, from scholars and cultural producers who have criticized its essential subsidy for corporate marketing<sup>13</sup>, cultural agency heads who have called it undemocratic, and in the mass media on a recurring basis when a well-known artist applies for support from the law. A reform of the Rouanet Law (known as Procultura) has languished in the Congress, while executive orders during the PT governments of Lula and Dilma were largely related to promoting audience access by requiring, for instance, that a larger percentage of subsidized products (e.g., admissions) be offered at lower prices to groups such as students, the elderly, etc.

Rouanet Law spending demonstrates a spatial concentration that has favored São Paulo. In 2017, 39.9 percent of tax incentives allocated to music were directed to the State of São Paulo, which comprises around 21.7 percent of the national population. A distinction in Brazilian tax law between *lucro real* (“real profit”) and the other based on *lucro presumido* (“presumed profit”) has contributed to this in part. Briefly, a higher tax rate applies to real profits, which are also entitled to a broader range of tax deductions and credits, including those of the Rouanet Law. While some corporations may choose to pay taxes based on real profits, many of those that do are required to by law, such as corporations with profits over R\$78 million, multinational corporations, and commercial outfits in banking, real estate, investment management, underwriting, and private pension funds.<sup>14</sup> This fact shapes how culture workers design and pitch projects to appeal to the marketing and branding departments of these industries. Moreover, the highly variable annual profits in some of these sectors generate considerable uncertainty in the prospects for cultural tax incentives from year to year, particularly in a period of economic contraction,



with many proponents developing projects in multiple areas to buffet against such volatility.

The State of São Paulo Commercial Social Service (SESC-SP) demonstrates a different approach to cultural funding, but it is also a significant factor in São Paulo's musical economy. In recent years, the institution has produced over 5,000 annual musical events across nearly forty cultural centers in the state, becoming its largest employer of musicians. A 1946 federal law created the SESC within a broader portfolio of privately controlled social service institutions (collectively known as the S System) to provide for the welfare of commercial workers and their families, usually through educational and health facilities. With the expansion of the Brazilian welfare state and the rapid urbanization of the country, the institution's mission shifted toward providing opportunities to access leisure and cultural practices at multipurpose cultural centers. A typical SESC center in São Paulo today includes one or more theaters and/or auditoriums, a gymnasium, swimming pools, recreational rooms, classrooms, a periodicals reading room, a cafeteria, and one or more large indoor/outdoor spaces where cultural and recreational activities occur for free or at reduced prices.

The state-level (i.e., sub-national) funding distribution envisaged by the 1946 S System legislation places constraints on the extent to which Brazilians have access to S System services. Under this framework, more economically prosperous states have better funded SESC and SESI affiliates, resulting in a concentration of programming in states with larger economies such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, the state-level management structure means that spending priorities vary from state to state. The considerable amount of S System spending on culture is driven primarily by the State of São Paulo branch of the Commercial Social Service (SESC-SP), which budgeted R\$770 million for culture, or approximately 64 percent of the national SESC total spent on culture, despite representing 21.7 percent of the population and 32.2 percent of the country's GDP.<sup>15</sup>

### DEMANDS FOR STABILITY

In São Paulo of the 2010s, demands for more stable musical careers have extended beyond criticisms of the complexity and inequities of cultural finance laws. During interviews in 2012 and 2013, music workers discussed an arts

development law as a logical step toward reformulating cultural funding in the city to attend to the needs of musicians. For instance, the Musicians' Cooperative (A Cooperativa de Música de São Paulo)—an association of music workers that seeks to promote music as a mode of formal employment that has had close to 2,000 members in recent years—advocated for an arts development law for music. These actors looked to municipal laws supporting theater and dance as potential models. However, many music workers also cited the sociality of theater and dance companies as distinct from that of musicians, the latter group working toward technical proficiency and professionalization alone and, therefore, presenting a challenge in political organization efforts.

Inti Queiroz, who owns the Erativa Cultural production firm and frequently leads training workshops for artists and producers interested in applying for state funding, had produced several editions of two festivals—Expresso Jazz and the instrumental rock Festival PIB (Produto Instrumental Bruto, a play on the Portuguese-language equivalent of Gross Domestic Product)—by the time she spoke to me in late 2012. Her assessment, as someone successful in earning money through state competitions and tax incentive sponsorship, paralleled some of the concerns of Germano and Dinucci. When asked about the challenges of maintaining a music festival that depended on state support from year to year, she described bureaucracy, the lack of continuity throughout the year (no permanent staff, no guarantee from the sponsor), and infrastructure as the main challenges. One of the solutions to this, she said, could be an arts development law.

Ideally, there would be an arts development law, for example—but not one that used bidding processes, rather one that worked in a different way. I think that the laws using the bidding process, at least here in São Paulo in theater and dance, haven't been working very well because it's always the same people who win, and it sort of seems like it's a mafia. . . . I think that there should be programs—at both the municipal and state levels—that financed festivals that were at least, I don't know, four or five years old, and that there could be an annual fund to support them. That would be ideal (interview with the author on December 11, 2012).

For Queiroz, such a funding source would make the festivals she organizes more sustainable. For instance, in the case of PIB, she has found a programming niche—instrumental rock bands—that is largely underserved, and she

brings several decades of working in cultural administration and music production to make execution successful. However, the yearly effort to find funding for the festival, usually through tax incentives, provides a recurring existential issue to the festival. Moreover, she echoed a frequent concern in this segment—that judges of contests for funding frequently awarded opportunities to a limited, established pool of applicants. In the context of an arts development law, for instance, these personalistic practices would not promote a growing and diverse roster of producers.

When Fernando Haddad assumed the position of mayor in 2013, his choice of Juca Ferreira, a former national Minister of Culture and native of Bahia, as Municipal Secretary of Culture marked a somewhat different approach to cultural administration in the city. The city signed on to the National Cultural System, allowing the Pontos de Cultura program, the marquee program of the national Ministry of Culture during the Lula government, to grow in the city, where it had been nearly nonexistent due to the municipal administration's unwillingness to enter into an agreement with the national government. Within the first year of the Haddad administration, the Secretariat of Culture recognized local samba (*samba paulistano*) as immaterial cultural patrimony and began a process of collaborative planning with street carnival groups, demonstrating, at least symbolically, a broader approach to musical culture in the city that encompassed explicitly non-elite musical styles.

Throughout Haddad's term, efforts to pass the arts development law for music increased, particularly in 2015 and 2016. In 2013 the Musicians' Cooperative held monthly meetings about the law and compiled a list of demands to present to the Secretary of Culture. In June 2015, the secretariat organized two open meetings of music workers with Nabil Bonduki, one of the authors of the arts development law for dance who was simultaneously serving as a Workers' Party city councilman and Ferreira's replacement as Municipal Secretary of Culture. One of these, an over-capacity forum on June 30, 2015, at the Municipal Cultural Center (CCSP), included a discussion of a proposal to hold a monthlong instrumental music festival—Festival Toca SP (or, the São Paulo Plays Festival)—at sites throughout the city, partially in an effort to address the financial and temporal concentrations of the Virada Cultural, a municipally funded twenty-four-hour music and arts festival in downtown São Paulo that attracts millions of people on an annual basis. In 2015 and 2016, Pena Schmidt, a music curator and then-director of the CCSP, led a working group to draft

the proposed legislation. Bonduki introduced the legislation on August 2, 2016, and an event on September 5, 2016, at the Centro Cultural Rio Verde in the Vila Madalena neighborhood promoted the draft legislation to the community of music producers. Throughout the last months of 2016, promotion for the legislation included seminars at the SESC-SP Research and Training Center, the Escola do Parlamento da Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, and a session at December's International Music Week (SIM SP), as well as a Facebook page that attracted over 3,000 followers.

The São Paulo City Council began hearings on “Projeto de Lei 01-00376/2016 do Vereador Nabil Bonduki (PT)” at the end of 2016, during a lame duck session of the city council following that year's municipal elections. The incoming mayor and city council were understood as being less sympathetic to the legislation than the people they would be replacing. The lame duck session thus represented the best opportunity to pass the law.

### **CITY OF MUSIC: SÃO PAULO'S ARTS DEVELOPMENT LAW FOR MUSIC**

The City of Music legislation married the sustainability concerns of a variety of interest groups typically excluded from cultural finance spending with efforts to engage music production as a form of economic development in the city. Specifically, the legislation described its main objectives as “fomenting and supporting the creation of, dissemination of, and access to music in the municipality of São Paulo.” Categories of funding in the legislation seemed to respond to musical agents and interest groups whose professional activities occur largely outside of both the state-related funding apparatus and the recording industry. However, this initiative also justified its social welfare aspects in the language of economic development, attempting to turn the city into an “advanced pole” of music creation and promoting São Paulo's musicians on national and international stages. In addition, many of the same onerous and exclusionary administrative techniques used in other mechanisms—such as the bidding process (edital), budget reconciliation (*prestação de contas*), and state-appointed selection committees—would continue to be used in the process.

By focusing on creation and dissemination, this bill explicitly demonstrated a concern with the sustainability of musical livelihoods across the production chain (*cadeia produtiva*) of music making. For instance, Article 3, Section 2,

states the legislation's objective to "Support and make sustainable the production chain of music in São Paulo, understood as the artistic, social, economic and cultural process necessary for the development of music, in all of its expressive forms and products [*fruição*]." Unlike other efforts to promote broad audience access, the term *access* refers to the opportunities for local music workers to earn support from state funding mechanisms. This becomes particularly apparent when examining the categories of music workers addressed in the legislation (see Table 1). While ostensibly open to most or all musicians, the law focuses on categories of musical agents that traditionally have had little or no access to cultural finance: street musicians, private live music venues without corporate sponsors, musicians who perform original music, instrumental musicians, choral groups, and the producers of local music festivals.

Each category included a distinct method of offering support, acknowledging some of the difficulties for each group. For instance, street musicians would be able to apply for a monthly stipend, with special consideration to those working in areas of greatest "social vulnerability." In the live music and music festival categories, the Municipal Secretariat of Culture would provide a lump sum payment. For instrumental musicians, the secretariat would offer logistical help in addition to financial support by helping to organize open-air locations and public spaces such as cultural centers where groups could perform regularly.

The City of Music proposal also embraced the idea that music work could contribute to the economic development of the city. The objectives of the law

**Table 1** Categories of Financial Support in the Proposed City of Music Law (PL 376/2016)

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- I. Creation (direct aid to artists, through a bidding process)
  - II. Mobile Stages
  - III. Live Music (privately owned, non-sponsored spaces)
  - IV. Street Musicians
  - V. National and international circulation of SP musicians
  - VI. Festivals
  - VII. Instrumental Music
  - VIII. Choral Music
  - IX. Cultural Occupations (curated events in municipal centers)
  - X. Reflection—seminars and research on music production
-

sought “[t]o transform the city of São Paulo into an advanced pole for musical creation, production, and distribution, contributing to the economic and social development of the city’s cultural economy . . . [and t]o stimulate the cultural economy, job creation, and income related to the cultural activities and to broaden sustainability.” Here, the law seemed to embrace ideas about culture as economic development, or at least include economic development as one of its selling points.

The City of Music proposal, however, promoted career stability in limited, incremental ways, rather than supporting radically different models for music creation. For instance, the law relied upon some of the administrative techniques that music workers (including Dinucci and Germano) and others have called onerous and/or exclusionary. This is the case with the production category (the category most relevant to individual musicians or musical groups), in which musicians would still have to compete in a paperwork-intensive bidding process judged by a state-selected committee. Moreover, the law allowed festivals to seek cosponsorship from other forms of support, such as cultural incentive laws, whose challenges to music workers would remain unchanged except for the possibility of extra support from the state. The law offers the possibility of a two-year-long project, but it still subjects music workers to the bureaucratic knowledge requirements implicit in editais. In this way, the City of Music Law mirrored other cases in which left-of-center governments have offered assistance to music workers navigating neoliberal economic conditions.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, guarantees in the bill in support of musical diversity and “all musical genres” were tempered by appeals to “exceptional artistic quality” and “quality original music,” especially in terms of support for live music venues.

### SEND IN THE CLOWNS: A LEGISLATIVE SETBACK

Based on developments throughout 2016, the passage of the City of Music Law seemed like a possibility for the lame duck session. On July 7, 2016, the arts development law for culture on the peripheries passed in the city council, following over a year of consideration. Then on December 6, 2016, the council passed the foment law for a circus. On December 7, the City of Music bill was approved in its first appearance, but it would need a second vote to be sent to the mayor. On December 16, Bonduki proposed a second vote on the legislation, but a group of PSDB council members with noted antipathy to Bonduki

and the Workers' Party more generally prevented the vote from happening during a seven-hour session in which the council approved a salary increase for itself. On December 20, the last day of the year's legislative session, the proposal did not make it onto the agenda and was not considered.

This legislative setback highlighted both the lack of cross-party support and the difficulty of organizing a largely freelance labor force in an immense city like São Paulo. The day after the final city council meeting, a statement on the Movimento SP Cidade da Música Facebook page also copied on the page of the Musicians' Cooperative analyzed the current organizational failure and the improbability of future change.

However, for this project to be approved in 2017 and for us to get the municipal money to fund it, we need to broaden this movement greatly. The twenty or so warriors who were at the municipal legislature almost daily since November 10th were not enough to get the law approved. . . . In times of crisis and a conservative wave, it is even more difficult for culture to advance (Facebook post by Movimento SP Cidade da Música, December 21, 2016).

The Musicians' Cooperative attempted to advocate for passage of the bill in early 2017, but these efforts quickly receded as workers across cultural practices organized against budget and program cuts, as well as censorship efforts in the administration of Mayor João Doria and Municipal Secretary of Culture André Strum. In late 2017, Doria tried to suspend the arts development funds for theater and music altogether, resulting in a substantial loss of funds for these programs. Upon Doria's election as governor of the State of São Paulo, vice-mayor Bruno Covas assumed the executive position and pushed additional cuts to all cultural departments, including those supporting the arts development laws. Throughout this time, advocates have continued to publicize the City of Music Law as a viable political project, and a more progressive city council seated in 2021 may be more likely to advance this proposal than the body that served 2017–2020.

## CONCLUSION

Like many major cities, São Paulo is a national and regional center of cultural production, including music. Subject to many of the same concentrations of

wealth and power that characterize São Paulo vis-à-vis Brazil as a whole, music and culture workers understand the city as potentially offering economically sustainable careers in the arts. However, the question of how—and for whom—São Paulo is a place for professional music making remains at the forefront of music workers' minds. People that have not found career stability, for whatever reason, in either the private recording industry or the web of state and state-related cultural funding mechanisms see the need for further state intervention that would center the career goals of music workers. In this sense, the City of Music Law promotes an aspirational idea of musical urbanity—one in which individual music workers can be more fully incorporated in a city with resources such as musical institutions, diverse performers and audiences, and a considerable revenue stream in the culture industries. By considering the position of music workers within the city's cultural infrastructure, the proposal represents a remapping of the aims of state and state-related programming for the arts, which are more often concerned with audiences than the labor that powers such production.

While such debates over the trappings of musical urbanity form the backbone of this movement for music workers in São Paulo, legislation like the City of Music proposal does nothing to address broader inequalities in arts funding—either within São Paulo or throughout Brazil. Here we see music workers seeking a remedy within the city's existing dynamics, rather than questioning the forces that enable the concentrations of urbanity. In this way, the advocates and music workers in this article understand, implicitly or explicitly, urbanity and its attendant concentrations as a resource available to advance their own careers and communities. The City of Music proposal thus demonstrates how the city is both a site for experiments in musical sociability and a constraint for such experiments, as culture workers, the state, and the broader community negotiate the rules of engagement for surviving on art in São Paulo.

## NOTES

1. Adam Krims, *Music and Urban Geography*, (New York: Routledge, 2007).
2. Georgina Born, "Introduction," in *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, ed. Georgina Born (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1–69. Marina Peterson, *Sound, Space, and the City: Civic Performance in Downtown Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).



3. Adelaida Reyes Schramm, "Explorations in Urban Ethnomusicology: Hard Lessons from the Spectacularly Ordinary," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 14 (1982): 1–14.
4. Bruno Nettl, ed., *Eight Urban Musical Cultures: Tradition and Change*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).
5. Krims, *Music and Urban Geography*.
6. Daniel Joseph Gough, "Urban" In *The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Music and Culture*, ed. Janet Sturman (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2019)
7. Fernando Kinas, "A Lei e o Programa de Fomento ao Teatro para a cidade de São Paulo. Uma experiência de política pública bem-sucedida," *Extraprensa: Cultura e comunicação na América Latina* 3, no. 3 (2010): 194–203.
8. Toby Miller and George Yúdice, *Cultural Policy*, (London: SAGE, 2002).
9. As a point of comparison, Brazil's recording industry association Pro-Música Brasil reported slightly over R\$800 million in revenues in 2016.
10. Frevo is a musical style originating from Recife, Pernambuco, in Brazil's northeast, associated with street carnival in that city.
11. A bureaucratic procedure used in various governmental and nongovernmental contexts throughout Brazil, an *edital* is both a call for bids and a process. At its most basic level, an *edital* is the means through which some administrative body makes a bidding process public through its appearance in written form in the government register and, sometimes, in newspapers or on websites. Mandated whenever a governmental unit intends to do business with the private sector, *editais* (the plural of *edital*) have become a principal bureaucratic means through which culture workers apply for and receive funding from different levels of the Brazilian state.
12. Cristiane Garcia Olivieri, *Cultura neoliberal: Leis de incentivo como política pública de cultura* (São Paulo: Escrituras, 2004).
13. Ibid. Leonardo Brant, *Mercado Cultural: Investimento Social, Formação e Venda de Projetos, Gestão e Patrocínio, Política Cultural* (São Paulo: Escrituras and Instituto Pensarte, 2001): 58.
14. Article 246 of Decreto 3000 (March 26, 1999) establishes categories of businesses that must pay taxes according to the *lucro real* scheme: any corporation whose calendar-year income is above a legally established limit (in 2013, this was raised to R\$78 million by Lei 12.814, May 16, 2013); commercial banks; investment banks; development banks; credit, financing, and investment firms; real estate investment firms; corporations of title, security, and money brokers; title and security distributors; leasing firms; credit unions; private insurance and capitalization firms; open private retirement entities; firm that have overseas profits, income, or capital gains; firms that take advantage of tax incentives or credits; firms

- that pay corporate income tax on a monthly basis; firms that provide cumulative and continuous services in credit and marketing consulting, credit management, underwriting, management of accounts payable and receivable, and factoring.
15. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, “Estimativas da população residente no Brasil e unidades da federação com data de referência em 1o de julho de 2016”, accessed December 7, 2016. [https://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Estimativas\\_de\\_Populacao/Estimativas\\_2016/estimativa\\_dou\\_2016\\_20160913.pdf](https://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Estimativas_de_Populacao/Estimativas_2016/estimativa_dou_2016_20160913.pdf); and “Contas Regionais 2014: cinco estados responderam por quase dois terços do PIB do país”, accessed December 7, 2016. <http://saladeimprensa.ibge.gov.br/noticias?view=noticia&id=1&busca=1&idnoticia=3315>.
  16. This trend had already appeared in efforts to “democratize” access to cultural funding, such as the Projeto Vai for youth and periphery-based cultural projects, in which the Municipal Secretariat of Culture offered seminars in how to apply (i.e., how to fill out the paperwork properly). For a case in New Zealand, see Michael Scott and David Craig, “The Promotional State ‘after Neo-Liberalism’: Ideologies of Governance and New Zealand’s Pop Renaissance,” *Popular Music* 31, no. 1 (2012): 143–63.

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