

Metá Metá - MetaL MetaL
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Over a squalling mess of improvised guitar and sax, a twisted, almost broken female vocal cries out to **Exu**, the gatekeeper of the **Afro-Brazilian** religion **Candomblé**. This is the 'Afro-punk' sound of **Metá Metá** - Vocalist **Juçara Marçal**, saxophonist **Thiago França** and guitarist **Kiko Dinucci** – a trio of Sao Paulo's most sought after musicians, struggling to survive the 21st century sonic schizophrenia of their home city Sao Paulo.

Metá Metá's sophomore album and debut for Mais Um Discos **MetaL MetaL** launches itself from the ancient chants of the **orixás** into a dirty brew of psychedelic samba, distorted jazz and Afro-punk. The band are all followers of **candomblé** yet Thiago is eager to point out that they are not using the **orixás** to preach certain beliefs but to provide a framework within which they tell their stories. On **MetaL MetaL** they mix these spiritual and rhythmic foundations with influences ranging from Afrobeat to Afrosambas, punk rock to be-bop to create chaotic, life-affirming music that explodes with the rage of **The Stooges** and **Sonic Youth**, the spirituality of **John Coltrane** and **Sun Ra** and the wild, avant-garde instrumentation of contemporary experimental jazz outfits such as **Melt Yourself Down** and **Polar Bear**.

The story of **Metá Metá** begins with **Juçara Marçal** in 1999. She was traveling Brazil researching indigenous and African-influenced music with her band **A Barca**. The same year she met **Kiko Dinucci**, just as he was discovering **Candomblé**. **Juçara** subsequently recorded four albums of repertoire influenced by her research but it wasn't until 2006 that she and **Kiko** went into the studio together to record **Padê**, a gorgeous acoustic album evoking a wide range of **African** influenced music and religions. In 2007 the duo asked saxophonist **Thiago França** to guest perform at a show of theirs and from the first rehearsal they knew that a very special union had been born and went on to give a riotous first performance. The trio's eponymous first album was released in 2011, now followed by **MetaL MetaL**, whose addition of **Marcelo Cabral** on bass and **Sergio Machado** on drums gloriously showcases a more driving, electrified sound.

Thiago's sax-playing has some serious experimental traction, one moment somersaulting countermelodies over **Kiko's** guitar, the next diving low to provide the brassy bass to **Juçara's** commanding vocals. He seems like Brazil's answer to **Shabaka Hutchings**, coming to his instrument from all angles, extracting an unbelievable range of sounds and timbres - on **Orunmila**, for example, his solo flees the classical arpeggios and scales that jazz solos depend on, and instead provides the rhythm of the **rum**, the bass drum traditionally used in **Candomblé** ceremonies.

Kiko is similarly influenced by the intricacies of **African** music and never plays chords, allowing for wonderful melodic interplays between himself and **Thiago**. On **Oya**, the guitar confidently strides in on a funk-driven riff, challenging the saxophone, whose immediate riposte oozes sophistication to match and elegantly paves the way for **Juçara**. "This," claims **Thiago**, "adds

drama to the songs, as you never know where the melody is going to take you. If the guitar opens with a chord, the harmonic structure has been laid out, and the listener already knows what's coming next." **Logun** is perhaps the epitome of this idea, a track in which phrases and timbres collide and echo off the other, never allowing the listener to second-guess the handbrake turns it takes as sirens career throughout the song, representing it's **São Paulo** roots. These sound effects, just like the 'dirty' recordings of **Juçara's** voice, are an accurate reflection of the imperfections and difficulties of city life: "We're the fruit of the third world, of imperfection, discomfort and worry" claims **Thiago**.

All the band members are integral cogs of the **São Paulo** arts scene; Thiago with his improv-led trio, **MarginalS** and African rooted solo outfit, **Sambanzo** was also in **Criolo's** touring band for two years. It was during his stint with **Criolo** that he met **Tony Allen**, which led to the two collaborations with him on the album. **Juçara** is a member of a cappella group (**Vesper Vocal**), experimental theatre company (**Companhia Coral**) and professor of singing at Sao Paulo's University **Anhembi Morumbi**. **Kiko** plays with **Passo Torto** a 'samba string quartet' and is a widely respected visual artist - he created the wood carving for the **MetaL MetaL** logo.

Kiko, together with **Douglas Germano**, composes the album's original tracks drawing on **Candomblé** and it's deities, or **orixás** in Portuguese, where each **orixá** possesses his or her own rhythm and chant of reverence. Thus **Metá Metá** honour **Yemanjá**, goddess of the sea, **Oxossi**, the hunter, and **Oya**, **orixá** of the storm. **Cobra Rasteira** compares our random path to a slithering cobra, while **Orunmila** tells of the oracle of **Candomblé**, who has already mapped out our predestined paths. Two original chants, **Exu**, of **Candomblé**, and **Man Feriman**, a **Nigerian** chant **Thiago** discovered in the São Paulo Central Library, have also been included.

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