

**Spok Frevo Orquestra** draws inspiration from frevo, a vibrant music of elaborated arrangements and deep roots. Spok Frevo takes tradition to the center stage, but does not renounce allegiance to freedom. It relies on what jazz is all about: improvisation.

Spok Frevo Orquestra arose in 2003 from musical experiences that date back to the late nineties, and was led by the virtuous **Inaldo Cavalcante de Albuquerque**, aka **Maestro Spok**, who plays the part of saxophonist, arranger and musical director. Spok fronts a 17 musicians group, a real big band with saxophone, trumpet, trombone, rhythm sections, bass and guitar.

These musicians engage in a crusade beyond aesthetic disputes. In the state of Pernambuco, Brazil, where centenary frevo was born, carnival bonds constrict the genre to street festivals. Spok Frevo Orquestra takes frevo from its supporting role and presents it as the leading actor, shedding light on its original texture and complex playing technique. Based on musical excellence and speaking with propriety, the group breaks patterns and reinvents tradition without subverting it.

Many critics, who recognize Spok's music as the harbinger of a new school (although still condemned by some purists) endorse his boldness. In an article for *Jornal do Brasil* (17/07/2009), musical critic Tárkide Souza writes that "the time has come for frevo-jazz", pointing to Spok Frevo as "a big band that has synthesized frevo and jazz in a blazing way". In 2005, *O Globo* newspaper ranked the Spok Frevo performance at TIM Festival as one of the ten best gigs of the year in Rio de Janeiro.

In 2009, *Passo de Anjo – Live* was awarded the Prêmio da Música Brasileira (one of the most important awards in Brazilian music) as the best CD of instrumental music of the year. Spok Frevo was elected the best group in the same category.

Spok Frevo's international career received a definite boost in 2008. The first large scale European tour proved the strength and the universality of its music. When in France, the Orchestra was invited to perform at the closing ceremony of the World Music Day (Fête de la Musique). It has played the final gig of the event at the Palais de l'Élysée, the official residence of President Nicolas Sarkozy, who attended the performance accompanied by **First Lady Carla Bruni**. Touring throughout France, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland, Spok Frevo had a strong presence in the European circuit of summer festivals, presenting the frevo as a unique musical language, as well as properly introducing the genre into the jazz and world music scenes.

## ORIGINS

**Inaldo Cavalcante de Albuquerque**, is considered to be the youngest of Pernambuco's greatest frevo maestros. He began playing at 13 by influence of his cousin and uncle, the saxophonist **Gilberto Pontes**, the Orquestra musical director and one of its founders. In Recife, he

finished his musical studies and started working with the masters of the frevo scene: **Ademir Araújo, Clóvis Pereira, Maestro Duda, Edson Rodrigues** and **Guedes Peixoto**. When Spok moved to Recife, the State's Capital, in the 80's, he studied at CPCMR, (Centro Profissionalizante de Criatividade de Musical do Recife – loosely Recife's Professional Training Center of Musical Creativity). During the 1990's the city experienced a cultural rebirth, and Spok started looking at new horizons.

"I used to watch those musicians improvising and asked myself why we could not do the same to frevo, which I used to play so traditionally, following the musical score, whereas those musicians were playing jazz." He makes it clear: "I am interested in the musical freedom. In fact, the Orquestra plays raw frevo, just like it is. We are 17 Pernambuco-born musicians in the stage, we all grew up listening to this music and there is no way for us to not play it properly. The difference is the arrangements, which are created for improvising, for allowing us to put our hearts in it."

A turning point for the band occurred in 2003. From early experiences as Banda Pernambucana and Orquestra de Frevo do Recife the group re-emerges as Spok Frevo Orquestra. In 2004 the band put out its first CD. Released independently, *Passo de Anjo* combines frevo classics with new compositions, demonstrating the inexhaustibility of the genre.

From more recent vintages, there is *Passo de Anjo*, by Spok and **João Lyra**, which became the group's signature tune. The *Passo de Anjo* CD quickly drew attention to Spok Frevo Orquestra. O Estado de São Paulo newspaper rated it as one of the best three Brazilian albums of the year. Spok Frevo's debut CD was re-released in 2006, this time by Biscoito Fino record label, which also released the DVD and CD *Passo de Anjo–Live(2007)*, from a concert recorded at Santa Isabel Theatre in Recife. With little changes in the repertoire, it features special guests Armandinho (Bahia guitar), Genaro (accordion, an ex-Trio Nordestino member) and Leo Gandelman (alto saxophone).