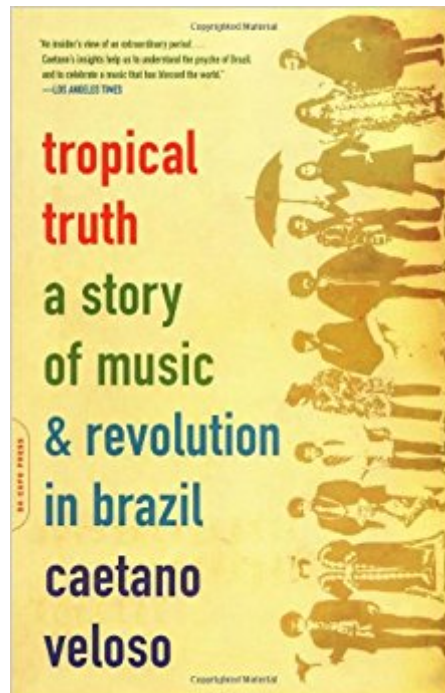




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# Tropical Truth: A Story Of Music And Revolution In Brazil



## Synopsis

Rebelling against the Elvis-based, American-imported rock scene in late '60s Brazil, Caetano Veloso suffused lyrical Brazilian folksongs with fuzz guitar, avant-jazz, and electronic music-and in doing so blew apart the status quo of Brazilian culture. Caetano and the movement he catalyzed, tropicalia, urged an adoption of personal freedom in politics, music, and lifestyle. His "rabble-rousing," as the government saw it, would get Caetano and his comrade Gilberto Gil arrested and exiled to London to wait out the military dictatorship. His fame increasing by the year, Caetano focused on writing songs about his homeland, returning to Brazil as a national hero-a mantle he still wears today. His most recent album, *Live in Bahia*, was released to international critical and popular acclaim.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Brazilian singer/songwriter most highly regarded by the First World intelligentsia, Veloso makes his U.S. publishing debut with a rambling, extremely erudite memoir focusing on his role in the late-1960s musical happening known as Tropicalia. While on the surface, Tropicalia and Veloso (often compared to Bob Dylan) paralleled the U.S. counterculture of the 1960s, the author explains the multilayered context of Brazilian politics and art that made the movement unique. From the innocence of his middle-class youth in the northern state of Bahia, to his stays in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Veloso vividly re-creates his formative years, which were immersed in French new wave cinema, progressive English rock and Brazilian letters, particularly concrete poetry. "What we

wanted to do would be... closer to Godard's films," he muses. "Masculin-feminin [sic], with... its adolescent sexuality-I saw it as one more moment in our daily lives in Sao Paulo." That Veloso is well-read is not in question-he cites everyone from Wittgenstein and Proust to Deleuze and Andrew Sullivan, while at the same time introducing non-Brazilian readers to an unknown canon of authors such as poet Augusto de Campos and essayist Oswald de Andrade. If there is any complaint with the book, it is that Veloso can get caught up in a maze of sometimes unconnected ideas that obscure his lucid descriptions of the intricacies of Brazilian music and its often equally literate stars. However, this is a must for Brazilian music fans, as well as anyone interested in how the modernist age played out in South America. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Singer/songwriter Veloso has virtually defined Brazilian music for the past 35 years. In his autobiography, first published in his native country, he exhibits a rare, vibrant erudition while tracing how in the 1960s he and his friends developed a post-bossa nova music and movement called tropicalismo (Tropic's lia in English). Inspired by an impressive range of Brazilian political and cultural figures, as well as Ezra Pound, John Cage, Anton Webern, and e.e. cummings, Veloso aimed to blend his country's traditions with the best foreign influences (including Anglo-American pop) to produce a whole new sound. Paralleling this aesthetic was his opposition to political oppression from the Left or Right, and Veloso's railing against the junta led to imprisonment and a brief exile. Although the book truly fascinates, especially in its thoughtful explanation of his music in relation to Brazilian culture and politics, the English edition curiously excludes much of Veloso's activity since the mid-1970s. While this is probably because his work over the past 25 years is best known to Brazilians, American readers would have benefited from the information. That shortcoming aside, Tropical Truth is highly recommended, though Veloso's relative obscurity here probably dictates that larger academic and public libraries will find it most useful. Christopher Dunn's recent Brutality Garden: Tropic's lia and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture covers much the same material, albeit in a more scholarly voice. [This book's publication coincides with the release of Veloso's new studio album, Livro, and a two-CD collection, Live in Bahia.-Ed.]-James E. Perone, Mount Union Coll., Alliance, O.--James E. Perone, Mount Union Coll., Alliance, OH Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I stopped read the book in the middle do to the fact that the author kept introducing new people and made it confusing to understand.

Horrible, confusing, boring. Never again.

Comparable to Ruy Castro's frank and detailed journalistic history of the Bossa Nova, a musical movement begun in the 1950s, this autobiographical account by Caetano Veloso, co-founder of the Tropicália protest movement of the 1960s, continues the story of Brazilian music. Despite the lack of footnotes, this book is scholarly and is filled with events and persons and cultural references that would please the musicologist and historian but not the general reader. Translations always have the problem of disappointing a reader versed in the original language, but I had no problem with sentence structure and wording, even if the idioms and metaphors are different. The period in world history in which this book is set is important, for the cultural revolutions and social disruptions occurring in the United States, Paris, Prague, and China were happening to an extent in Brazil. We hippies and political radicals found ourselves in jail and so did Caetano and his colleague Gilberto Gil; indeed, they were forced into exile afterwards, with London becoming temporary home. This book describes the rise of rebellion, the musical mainstream, and the 'sins' that lead to reprisal by the military government. Throughout, I am surprised how often Caetano regards himself mediocre in talent as a musician and songwriter (compared to, for instance, João Gilberto, his pal Gil, and his sister Maria Bethânia). In short, I admit to be a special case, and, for me, the book was a worthwhile read that provided a deeper appreciation of the music and its development. Others may find the book less satisfying. Consider the caveats and your own background and interests before obtaining this book.

I read this book in portuguese, when it first came out in Brazil, and i absolutely loved it. This book is not only about Caetano Veloso and his music. Caetano Veloso has a very unique way to see people and to write about them, and in his life he had the privilege to meet some of the most important people in Brazil's cultural scene. In his book he tells us many precious stories about Chico Buarque de Hollanda, Gilberto Gil, Nara Leao, Paulinho da Viola and so many others. Some important moments of his life and also of Brazilian history are also told from a very personal point of view: stories of Caetano and Gil's prison and exile during brazilian dictatorship were specially moving to me. And then there are some fabulous stories about the beginnings of Caetano's carreer, how it all started. Caetano has such an insteresting point of view about everything, it's awesome to be able to get inside his mind, and that's how i felt reading his book. I actually ended up reading it twice. I think though, that this book can be better appreciated by people who really know brazilian music and

culture well. Another reviewer mentioned that Caetano talks about lots of "obscure artists", but i don't think this is a true statement. He talks about very important people in brazilian culture, including writers, film directors and musicians. The people he mentions are very known in Brazil, and he also talks about important european and american artists. The people he mentions in his book are not obscure at all. Probably, if you know who he is talking about it makes for a much better reading experience. So, if you have a curious mind and are interested in art, music, and Brazil, this is certainly a wonderful book to read. And, like me, you may want to read it more than once...

Songwriter Caetano Veloso is one of Brazil's most iconic artistic figures; along with Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa and others, he created the "tropicalia" movement, which reconciled the magic of bossa nova with the psychedelic splendor of '60s rock. This is an English translation of his autobiography, a densely-written, super-intellectual, but also quite charming and down-to-earth account of the "heroic years" of the tropicalia movement. Veloso gives an intimate, immensely informative account of Brazilian music, from the pre-bossa "radio singers" he grew up with to the intense ideological rivalries between the hippie-ish tropicalia artists and the left-wing party-liners of the bossa nova crowd. The book is also a memoir of life under the Brazilian military dictatorship which took power in 1964, eventually sending Veloso and Gil (and countless other artists) into political exile, while attempting to censor their work and silence their voices. The role of the artist in all aspects of life -- social, spiritual and aesthetic -- resonates throughout this book, as Veloso gives an invaluable insider's view of an artistic movement that changed the course of Brazilian culture. This book basically ends in the early 1970s... it would be great if he could follow up with a second volume exploring the growth (although some might call it decline) of Brazilian music in the decades that followed. (PS - this is the perfect companion to Ruy Guerra's similarly wonderful book, "Bossa Nova, The Sound That Seduced The World.")

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