

## History

The first Rhythms of Resistance band formed in 2000 in London out of Barking Bateria to participate in the Pink&Silver bloc in the protests against the World Bank summit in Prague.

Barking Bateria was one of the first Samba bands in the UK, formed by the Radical Anthropology Group at University of East London during a strike in 1996 and taking its inspiration from the “blocos-afros” bands (such as Olodum or Ilê Aiyê) that emerged in the mid-1970s in Brazil. These bands were formed as expressions of black awareness, in defiance of a military dictatorship which viewed any “cultural” group as potentially “communist” and ruthlessly suppressed them. Blocos-afros bands were responsible for blending traditional samba rhythms with reggae, salsa and merengue to create the samba style now known as Samba Reggae. This way they reappropriated Samba, which had originally come from the Afro-Brazilian communities but had been appropriated by the white privileged Brazilian society to be used for entertainment and profit. Today many of the blocos-afros bands still campaign for freedom, human rights and equal opportunities, and fight against social injustice and racism.

Rhythms of Resistance was formed in 2000 to join the UK Earth First action against the IMF / World Bank summit in Prague. A Pink&Silver carnival bloc was organized for the first time, taking inspiration from a movement called “Reclaim the Streets” (RTS), which has been blocking streets around the world since 1995 to create “temporary autonomous zones” and street parties to take back the space usually reserved for cars. Pink&Silver replaced the sound systems of RTS with Samba bands. During the protest, a carnival bloc focused around a 55 piece band detached itself from a march of 67000 and outmanouvered police resources defending the IMF annual summit. With an international “black bloc” and a large contingent from the Italian movement, “Ya Basta”, three diverse forms of direct action worked towards a common goal and resulted in the shut down of the IMF summit. From then on, along with the movement against capitalist globalisation, one group after the other popped up – now we’re all over Europe and occasional in the rest of the world.

# **The Network**

The Rhythms of Resistance (RoR) network comprises more than 75 separate activist drumming bands all over the world. All the bands in the RoR network play the same tunes and try and use the same hand signals. This means at large events, different bands can join up to form a large and exuberant bateria.

RoR bands work on a decentralised and democratic basis. All decisions within each band are made by consensus. No-one is “in charge” and those who have just joined the band have the same voice as those who have been members for many years. Each band operates independently, joining campaigns and actions that they themselves support, but they may join together for large events. When multiple bands meet up and play together, mestres may come from any of the bands present, swapping in and out as mood and movement takes them.

Although each band in the network is an independent entity answerable only to its members, they all share some common beliefs and values that define the Rhythms of Resistance network as a whole:

## **Principles**

We are a transnational anti-hierarchical anticapitalist, antisexist and antiracist network fighting for social and ecological justice.

We are activists using tactical frivolity as a form of political action to confront any system of domination.

We also directly support everybody experiencing or struggling against exploitation, discrimination and oppression, without compromising our principles.

Our tactics include drumming and dancing inspired by samba and carnival.

We reject any false opposition between militancy and creative forms of resistance.

Even if we are different bands operating in a decentralized fashion, we aim to maximise participation in our collective process.

We are an open network to any people who share our principles.

Come with us! We have everything to play for!

# **Cultural Appropriation**

Cultural appropriation is the adoption of elements of a minority culture by members of a dominant culture, while using these elements outside of their original cultural context. These cultural properties may be forms of dress, music or art, religion, language, intellectual property or social behavior, all of which may have deep cultural meaning to the original culture, but may be used as fashion by those from outside that culture.

Often, the original meaning of these cultural elements is lost or distorted, and such displays are often viewed as disrespectful, or even as a form of desecration, by members of the originating culture. Cultural elements which may have deep meaning to the original culture may be reduced to “exotic” fashion or toys by those from the dominant culture. When this is done, the imitator, who does not experience that oppression is able to “play”, temporarily, an “exotic” other, without experiencing any of the daily discriminations faced by other cultures. Appropriation and the “fetishizing” of cultures, in fact, alienates those whose culture is being appropriated

*(From Wikipedia)*

Rhythms of Resistance takes its form of action and some aspects of its music from a Brazilian Black liberation movement, while not being part of that movement. Our selection of instruments is the same and our way of maestrating similar to real batucadas. Custard, Samba Reggae and Sheffield Samba Reggae are simplified versions of original Samba Reggae rhythms, Afoxé, Voodoo and Xangô are directly rooted in Afro-Brazilian religion. Angela Davis, Cochabamba, Crazy Monkey, Hafla, Menaiek, No Border Bossa, Ragga and possible others are based on styles of popular music from the Global South.

There is an ongoing debate in the RoR network about to what extent this is cultural appropriation, and what consequences to draw from that. Many bands have decided to stop calling themselves “Samba” or “Batucada”, but rather use alternative phrases like percussion or drumming. Some bands have decided to stop playing specific tunes.

Still it is important to acknowledge that our methods and music are inspired by Samba and Carnival and are using many elements from it.

## **RoR Player**

The RoR Player can be used on computers and smartphones to browse the tune sheets of all RoR tunes, listen to them, combine them in different ways, modify them, and even create own tunes and share them with others. It can be found at <https://player.rhythms-of-resistance.org/>. It works directly in the browser, and after being used for the first time it, it can also be opened without an internet connection. Use the “Add to Home screen” function on a smartphone to use it like an app.

The player has two modes, which can be selected on top of the screen. In “Listen” mode, you can listen and read a detailed description of each tune by selecting one from the list on the left (on mobile devices, click on the menu button on the top left first). By clicking on the pen symbol, you can see the notes of a tune or break while it is playing.

By clicking the dropdown with the Equalizer symbol, you can make specific instruments louder or quieter, adjust the playback speed, and add a whistle sound on the 1 or on each beat.

In “Compose” mode, you can modify tunes/breaks, compose your own ones, and listen to them in different combinations. You can find detailed instructions in the RoR Player user manual on:

<https://player-docs.rhythms-of-resistance.org/>

## **RoR Tube**

RoR Tube is a video sharing platform for the RoR network. It can be found on <https://tube.rhythms-of-resistance.org/>. You can find there and publish your own videos of playing tunes, the RoR dances, fixing drums, participating in actions and other creative ideas. RoR Tube is a good resource for seeing in action the things that the tune sheet can only describe in text.