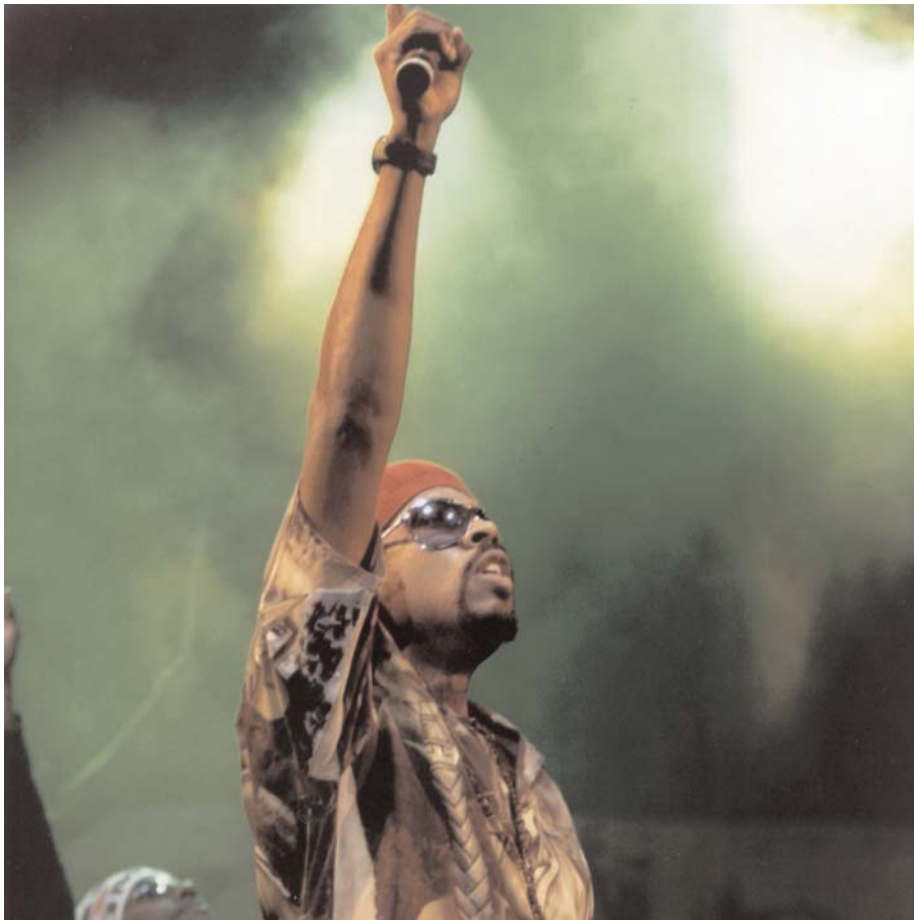


ANDERSON SA

BRAZIL 2006 AGE 27

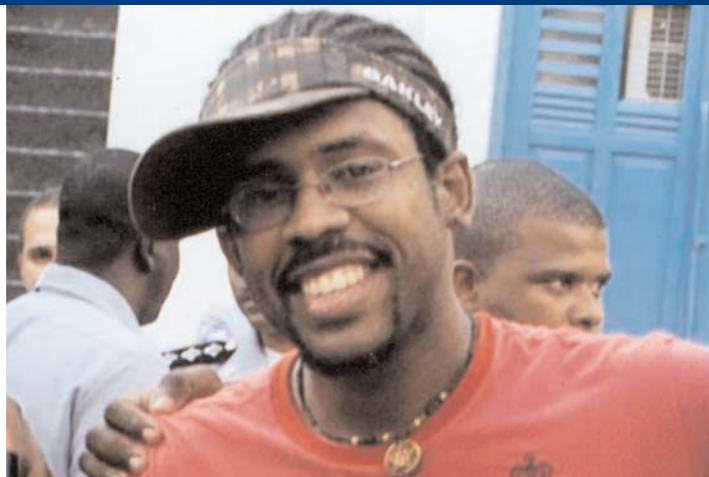
THROUGH ART, MUSIC AND EDUCATION FIGHTS TO SAVE CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE AND DRUGS



“IT WAS ABOUT THE VIOLENCE, ABOUT THE TRAFFICKING. IT SPOKE OF THE POLICE AND OUR FRIENDS WHO HAD BEEN DYING. WE ALSO WANTED TO FIND SOLUTIONS.”

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www.afroreggae.org
AfroReggae works with the youth in Rio de Janeiro's slums by promoting social inclusion and justice through art, Afro-Brazilian culture and education.



ANDERSON SA URGES YOUTH TO SHUN THE PATH OF VIOLENCE IN RIO DE JANEIRO'S SLUMS BY OFFERING THEM CULTURAL ALTERNATIVES THROUGH MUSIC AND SONG.

In 1993 Vigário Geral was one of Rio de Janeiro's most violent favelas (slums). It was also the home of what is called the city's most powerful drug cartel, the Red Command. For the thousands of poor youth living in Vigário Geral, a career in the cartel's drug army was their only option.

Like many before him, Anderson Sa hoped to join the army and at age 13 his indoctrination had begun. Soon he found himself rolling marijuana cigarettes, embedding weapons and drugs, collecting money and attacking other favelas and rival dealers. He also found his circle of friends quickly disappearing with 6 murdered and 7 arrested. The uncertainty of a drug dealer's life and the struggle to survive was becoming too much for him.

In August of 1993, after four members of the military police were murdered the police retaliated by targeting and massacring 21 innocent residents of the favela. Anderson was affected deeply and instead of joining the drug army's retaliation against the police, he quit and vowed to change things, somehow. But how?

At this same time, Jose Junior, a DJ in Rio's funk scene, was forming the Afro Reggae Cultural Group, a community-based organization dedicated to offering a cultural and artistic formation for the youth living in the favelas as a means for them to create their own citizenship and have access to alternatives to narco-trafficking and menial jobs, and to transform themselves and empower other youths along the way.

Anderson was initially drawn to the Afro Reggae Cultural Group and its capoeira workshop (capoeira is a form of martial arts). He was also drawn to reggae music and soon was asked to join the Afro Reggae band (Banda) as a founding member. Anderson chose to learn the bass guitar and drums and also found himself writing songs and singing. Anderson continued writing songs and taught kids in the favela how to play instruments. His lyrics were socially mindful and politically charged and their performances not only entertained, but also informed others about favela life - their experiences, frustrations, and outrage. It is Banda that is Afro Reggae's most public face and the group's flagship music group.

Today Afro Reggae has grown into the Community Culture Center with Anderson Sa as its president. Anderson has devoted his musical talent, energy and faith in people and their potential to change. He feels deeply that it is his duty to set an example and has worked in conjunction with various international organizations and foundations spreading Afro Reggae's message around the world. Both Anderson and Banda Afro Reggae have inspired and formed eight other music groups in the favela.

In 2006, Afro Reggae offered training and workshops to 2,000 youth in over 60 programs and began touring internationally. Afro-Reggae has grown into a successful example of a community-based organization dedicated to promoting Afro-Brazilian cultural traditions while working to develop the self-esteem, alternative life projects and sense of citizenship among youth.

And Anderson Sa? He has discovered a chance to have better opportunities in life through the sounds of drums, culture and art.

ANDERSON SA

2007

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