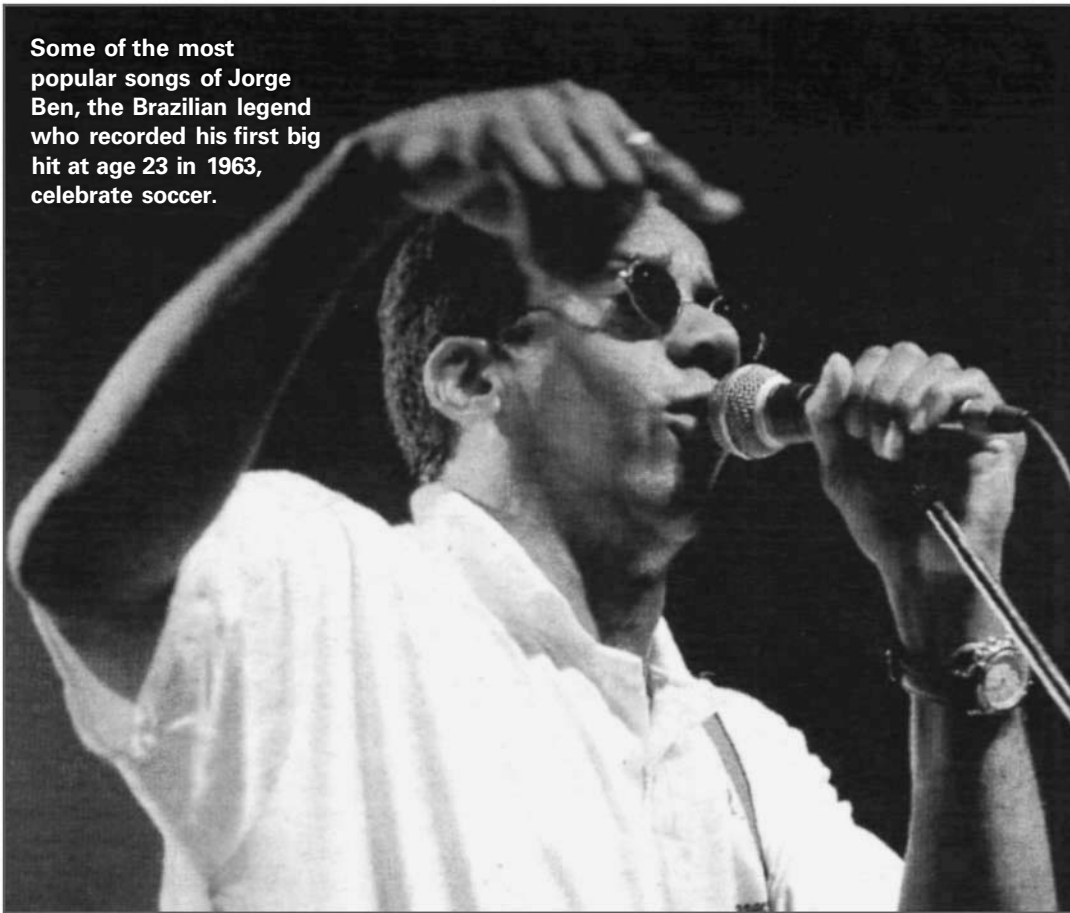


Some of the most popular songs of Jorge Ben, the Brazilian legend who recorded his first big hit at age 23 in 1963, celebrate soccer.



# Brazilian singer covers soccer's every position

**T**he Brazilian pop star Jorge Ben wanted to be a soccer player before he became a musician. That's evident when you hear his songs *about futebol*. They reveal the game's passion, complexity and subtlety.

It's a shame, really, that every soccer player in the world doesn't understand Portuguese. Although if there is a universal language beyond the game of soccer, it's music. And players or fans who appreciate music might want to get to know Jorge Ben's *futebol* songs.

Jorge Ben's song "Fio Maravilha" describes in detail the beauty of a goal. From the driving bass line that opens the song to the chorus, which you can sing at the top of your lungs more than a few times and still get goose bumps, to the clear rhythm guitar that carries it, "Fio Maravilha" is the kind of song you play to get yourself psyched up on your way to a game:

"Marvelous Fio, we like you. Make another goal, just so we can see it."

In the song, which Ben wrote about Fio, a Flamengo star in the 1970s, the striker approaches the goal with not only emotion and inspiration, but love. When he finally explodes and scores at "33 minutes into the second half," the fans go wild. It was a "celestial goal." Jorge Ben sings: "He dribbled between two defenders and made a little fake on the keeper."

The striker actually has a chance to embarrass the goalkeeper by following the ball into the goal, but he doesn't "because he has humility."

The goal is classy, "the goal of an angel." And then the crowd starts singing the chorus: "*Filho Maravilha, nos gostamos de voce. Filho Maravilha, faz um mais para a gente ver.*"

Another Jorge Ben celebration of soccer, "Ponta de Lanca Africano (Umbabarauma)," extols the beauty of a pass, and uses it as a subtle metaphor for the culture that Africans brought, or passed, to Brazil. The name of the song means "the point of an African pass."

"Play, play, play," he sings. Then he recreates the action that leads to a goal by Umbabarauma: "Jump, fall, get up, kick, make an opening, and give thanks." In "Ponta de Lanca Africano", "the whole city empties out just to see you play."

Jorge Ben doesn't leave out the defense. In "Goleiro (Eu Vou Lhe Avisar)," he advises the goalkeeper that he "can't play when he's hungry-"

In "Zagueiro" ("defender"), he sings: "To be a good back, you can't be sentimental." When you hear it, it sounds like a natural subject for a song. "You have to be subtle and elegant," he sings. "You have to have cold blood, believe in yourself, and be loyal."

— Bennett Paris



# backline

## RECORDINGS

Jorge Ben has been one of Brazil's most successful recording artists for four decades. His soccer tunes can be found on various albums.



"Ponta de Lanca Africano" opens "Beleza Tropical," the first Brazil Classics album compiled by David Byrne, released on Sire Records in 1989. It also includes "Fio Maravilha." The rest of the album is a good introduction to Brazilian music in general.



"Goleiro (Eu Vou Lhe Avisar)," came out in 1993 on the CD titled, "23." And Gal Costa recorded it in 1994 on her "O Sorriso Do Gato De Alice" ("The Smile of Alice's Cat") album.

"Zagueiro" can be found on Jorge Ben's 1976 "Africa Brazil" CD. It includes two other soccer songs, "Camisa 10 da Gavea" ("Shirt No. 10 of Gavea"), which is a tribute to the Flamengo star Zico, and "Meus Filhos, Mey Tesouro" ("My Children, My Treasure").

