



*Figure 3.9 Antônio Lisboa with his viola dinâmica in front of his festival competition trophies, Recife, Pernambuco, 2001. (Courtesy of Larry Crook)*

to the stage. With increased attention paid to the folk traditions of the rural areas of Brazil by elite cultural advocates, cantadores from all over the Northeast were soon invited to sing against each other in formal competitions. This phenomenon began in the late 1940s and coincided with the popularization of northeastern music on a national scale. A new context for the cantoria de viola emerged: the festival. In 1948, Ariano Suassuna organized what many cantadores believe was the first festival of cantoria de viola, which took place in Recife at the famous Teatro Santa Isabel. Official judges were chosen, and a formal process was instituted in which mote topics were written down and placed in sealed envelopes, replacing the older practice of calling out the motes. By the end of the 1970s, the festivals had become the dominant context for cantoria. Today, festivals