

■ OriAzul calling music talent throughout Africa

João Jorge*

OriAzul (Gold [Ori] for the sands and Blue [Azul] for the ocean of the Cape Verde Islands) is a musical band with musicians from Cape Verde, Senegal, Gabon and the Congo's, who found in the Portuguese Creole and in the Cape Verde *coladera*, the glue to homogenise the much diversified cultures, ethnicities and languages.¹ In concerts or dancing events, *coladera* followed and mixed with African rhythms warm-up, establish a peace of mind and connects diversified public. The exposure to diversification will have motivated OriAzul to the domain of education. They have worked with international schools in several African countries, with the objective of integrating students on the music environment. In Ethiopia, where the Portuguese presence is positively remembered since the 16th century and where OriAzul have enjoyed surprising success, in their five tours, the band practiced with students and integrated them in public concerts. It is rewarding for all at school, musicians and public (parents, teachers) to see musical talent revealing itself before a vibrating audience. OriAzul used a system of a sound control table, combined with the back-up of their musicians, providing big enjoyment to the public, friends, colleagues and parents, which reduced inhibitions and increased self-confidence, resulting in applause and dance. The reward that any musician, young, old, amateur or professional, desires.

Figure 1 – OriAzul workshop in a School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



* Aeronautical Engineer, MBA Thunderbird, AZ.

Figure 2 – OriAzul workshop in a School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



An interesting story deserves mentioning: a young trumpet player of a school in Addis Ababa, with no experience in public performances, saw, surprisingly, his opportunity in one of OriAzul's performances. A few days of practice, encouragement and a 400 people audience concert, where even small deviations from the young talent were received by a warm audience reaction, opened him the doors to public stages. About one year later he was accepted at Berkeley, California, in a prestigious music school in United States.

OriAzul musicians recently composed *Peace and Love*, with rhythms and for instruments of different regions. The theme was based on love and equality sentiment that addresses the public in three African languages (Wolof, Lingala and Fang) and in three European (Portuguese Creole, French and English), calling for the ending of conflicts. This piece was launched in Addis Ababa at the Peace Day Concert (21.09.2010), presented as "African Union and European Union Celebrate Together the Peace Day with OriAzul" and reported in a local EU publication.² OriAzul repertoire includes other themes that deserve attention, such as those on migration (*Manuela, Djobepami*), transmission of disease (*Control*) and peace (*Jacaba*).

Notes

¹ Available at <http://mp3.mondomix.com/oriazul>, accessed on 30.09.2010

² Available at: *Inside the Africa – European Union Partnership*, 11: 1, 27-28, accessed on 30.09.2010.