

## The '(r)evolution' of Lusophone musics in the city of Lisbon

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Music transforms experience in various degrees of affectivity and belonging. Proposing a socio-cultural analysis that is grounded in musical performance, I want to offer an ethnomusicological counterexample within the debate on postcolonial pessimism, through the possibly conciliatory role of postcolonial musics. An effective antidote to this pessimism can be to associate groups in terms of cultural systems that are interrelated linguistically rather than geographically or racially. My case study explores the integration of lusophone migrant musicians in Lisbon.

Departing from a discursive analysis of the concept of *lusofonia*, I address the ways through which it figures in the cultural policies of the Municipality of Lisbon and of governmental institutions, and how it informs their actions. I also explore the role of voluntary associations such as *Sons da Lusofonia* that evoke *lusofonia* as part of their goals. I then analyze ways through which the concept of *lusofonia* and the action of governmental institutions and voluntary associations inform the creative work and identities of migrant musicians from PALOP (African Official Portuguese Speaking Countries), Brazil and East Timor. Finally, I attempt to understand whether the concept of *lusofonia* stimulates a common identity among Portuguese-speaking migrant musicians.

Viewing music as a strong integrating element, as a bridge between communities, I follow Conquergood (1991:173) in believing that a performance paradigm privileges 'particular, participatory, dynamic, intimate, precarious, embodied experience grounded in historical process, contingency, and ideology'. I want to show that community-related performance both stimulates a sense of belonging in a new context and of being proud of one's roots.

Whereas the documentary *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução*<sup>1</sup> takes the artist as a point of departure, I want to approach music as a point of connection between lusophone migrant musicians that live together in the same, postcolonial, city. This implies looking at how music is practiced at a community level, where musicians play and how they relate to one another, and how institutions and voluntary associations interact in this process. This approach can offer interesting insights about music as a way of incorporating and democratising differences.

I call for a more socially applicable view on music, giving larger visibility to Lisbon's sizable migrant communities and their musicians. Hearing what these cultural agents have to say might give us another view on the importance of their musical

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practice. Lusophone migrant musicians in Lisbon, I argue, constitute the city's socio-cultural identity as much as do fadistas. But their battle seems to be a different one. The points of inspiration for the conception of this project, besides *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução*, have been association Sons da Lusofonia's yearly festival Lisboa Mistura (since 2006); Festival ImigrArte of the association Solidariedade Imigrante (since 2007); EGEAC's África Festival (2005-7); and my own experience of being a migrant musician and researcher in a new city.

This field research (using individual biographies and participatory observation) was carried out in Lisbon between October 2009 and February 2010. I interviewed the following musicians of the lusophone musical space: Zézé Barbosa, Celina Pereira, Tito Paris (Cape Verde); Gutu Pires, Kimi Djabaté (Guinea-Bissau); Luanda Cozetti, Jefferson Negreiros, Mucio Sá (Brazil); Tonecas, Sergio Fonseca (São Tomé and Príncipe); Aldo Milá, Ricardo Gouveia, Chalo (Angola); Júlio Silva, António da Costa Neto (Mozambique); José da Amaral (East Timor); Arvi Barbosa, Maria de Lourdes Elvino de Sousa, Virgínia Brás Gomes (Goa); Carlos Martins and António Pires (Portugal), among others. Relevant associations were also interviewed.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Documentary *Lusofonia, a (r)evolução* (Red Bull Music Academy, 2006), available at: <http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/video-archive/documentaries/3>, <http://www.myspace.com/lusofoniaarevolucao>, accessed on 25.01.2010.

## References

Conquergood, D. (1991), "Rethinking ethnography: towards a critical cultural politics", *Communication monographs*, n.º58, pp.165-80.