

Musical Travel Portugal

Portugal and the islands

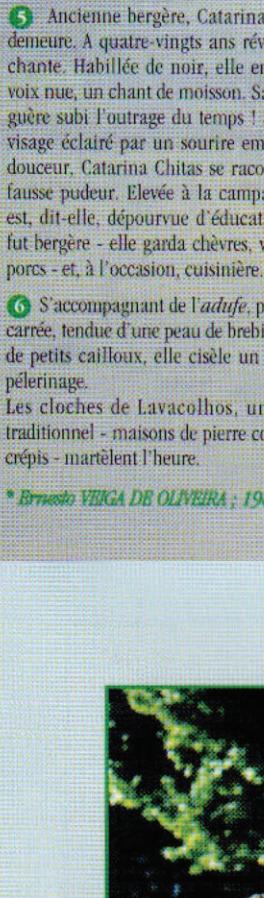


Voyage Musical Portugal

Le Portugal et les îles



PORTUGAL LA TRADITION, BERCEAU DU FUTUR



La dictature salazariste a, pendant plusieurs décennies, isolé le Portugal. Comme une île aux confins de l'Europe. Nostalgique d'un passé glorieux - l'époque des Grands Navigateurs - ce pays rural était riche surtout de la manne du tourisme et de ses émigrés. Les traditions y sont longtemps restées vivaces. Le patrimoine musical, fécond, a été folklorisé figé, confisqué par l'idéologie salazariste.

La chute de la dictature, en 1974, l'ouverture au monde et l'intégration à la Communauté Européenne ont entraîné de profonds changements. La pérennité des traditions a été de l'intrusion de la modernité et des modes planétaires : beaucoup sont tombées en désuétude.

On ne saurait pour autant regretter sans réserves le passé : ce "stade artisanal qui signifiait aussi avec certitude stagnation, pauvreté, injustice".

Figée, la tradition relève du folklore : remissons-la au musée. Ou bien au grenier. Vivante, elle évolue avec le temps et ceux qui la perpétuent. C'est la règle d'or. Ainsi, elle résiste à l'aménité. Féconde la modernité. Cette fameuse modernité qui régulièrement s'empare de Portugal.

Toute culture n'est-elle pas le fruit de la rencontre de la tradition et de l'invention ?

À la liste de la Serra da Estrela, une sentinelle, Guarda, joyau de pierre de la région de Beira Alta, sonne l'heure.

Au printemps, les genêts en fleur ensellent les flancs de la Serra da Estrela. Une armée de pins grimpe à l'assaut des monts rocheux. Des sommets érodés s'emmêlent dans l'échappée des nuages. La terre est belle. La terre est pauvre ! Dissimulé ici et là, des champs exiguës, monocultes ou des murets de pierres disjointes, rétrécissent le tracé. Des boeufs ou des ânes tirent des charrettes chargées de foins. De sa bouche un berger, vêtu de hardes, agace trois chiens qui trotteient. La beauté du paysage console-t-elle de l'avario de la terre ?

À Santarém, village niché au cœur de la Serra da Estrela, Joaquim Ambrosio invente des instruments insolites, l'hystop et ceux qui ressemblent à des familiers : dont ils pourraient être des anciêtres - et, s'accordent d'un répertoire sélectif, interprété par des formations de dimensions variables. Joaquim Ambrosio et son fils poursuivent dans la tradition locale un chant de berger et mèlent les sonorités du *fado* et de la *trompete*, respectueux succédanés du troubadour à codisse et de la trompette.

Un soir, près de Guarda, des villages de Vinhô reúnis dans un cheur mixte, toutes générations confondues, chantent, avec leur seul accompagnement une procession, le *panadero*, un extrait de la légende de Tia Baptista. Cette femme, qui vécut à la fin du XVIIIE siècle et au début du XVIIIIE, dans un couvent de Vinhô, canonnisé par la ferveur populaire ne l'est point par les autorités religieuses.

Les femmes du chœur éclatent ensuite à la faveur d'un chant de pèlerinage. Au sud-est de la Serra da Estrela, Peñita Garcia regarde vers l'Espagne. Perché au milieu des montagnes, ce village est une carte postale : maisons blanches, fleurs multicolores, femmes élues de défilé et un drapeau.

À Ancienne berger, Catarina Chitas y demeure. A quatre-vingts ans révolus, elle chante. Habillée de noir, elle entonne, à voix nue, un chant de moisson. Sa voix a guéri subi l'outrage du temps ! Son beau visage éclate par un sourire empreint de douceur. Catarina Chitas se raconte. Ses fausses dents. Elle dévoile d'éducation : elle fut bérégue - grande chèvre, vaches ou porcs - et, à l'occasion, cuisinière.

S'accompagnant du *tastafe*, percussion carree, tendue d'une peau de hibou et lestée de petits cailloux, elle cisele un chant de pèlerinage.

Les cloches de Lavacollos, un village traditionnel : maisons de pierre colorées de crépis - martèlent l'heure.

* Ernesto VIEGA DE OLIVEIRA : 1982.

À Coimbra, ville universitaire où, depuis des siècles, les traditions demeurent, battant l'eau, la ville est en fête : c'est "a quinta das fitas". Les étudiants ont revêtu l'ancien uniforme noir et gaine en bandoulière, déambulent dans les rues ensorcelées. À la terrasse d'un café, leurs camarades espagnols, en visite, chantent "A Toulé", un thème originaire d'Andalousie latente.

Dans son atelier de l'Association Académique de Coimbra, Fernando fabrique, sur commande, guitares, *carapintadas*, violes et autres accordéons diatoniques. Facteur d'instruments, il est aussi musicien et joue du *cavaco*.

Le groupe Realijo a acquis à l'un des musées de la ville. Au sein de cet ensemble, qui se nourrit de la tradition, Fernando tient la *safona* (vèle) et le *acordeão*. Incursion au cœur du *Realijo*.

Le pont du 25 avril est la voie royale qui conduit à Lisbonne. Le tramway, au cœur de la nuit lisboète.

Le cœur, d'une banale et triste modernité, de "A Tasca do Careca" ne laisse guère augurer qu'il est, chaque fin de semaine, l'un des temples du fado. Accueille, chanteurs ou auditeurs, des amateurs éclairés. Réussant ce fado amélioré qui, trop souvent, brise la nécessité, ils apprécient un fado vivant, empreint de spontanéité, voire de maladresse, mais plein d'émotion profonde.

Et de fado. Art populaire, le fado jouit d'une belle vitalité : promesseurs et amoureux des mœurs d'autrefois, avec le regard dans le fond et la main dans le dos. En chaque Portugal, sans doute un "fadista" - et, s'accompagnant d'un répertoire sélectif, interprété par des formations de dimensions variables.

À Capelas, île de São Miguel, une demeure ancienne. Solar do Conde, abrite un studio photographique et la troupe Belaúndara. Six filles et six garçons, qui depuis trente ans, renvoient avec honneur le costume traditionnel : *charantes*, *peitos*, *sapatos*. Sous le soleil de Capelas, *charantes* et *peitos* échangent des mélodies de chansons de 1200 centaines.

Le village de Pias, tout à l'ouest, a pour longtemps été le berceau du *fado* de Madère. Les portugais, au contraire, ont toujours été attirés par les îles Açores. Mais, quand grecut l'aménité, veille la mémoire des mères : Gracia Serrão, l'une des voix du groupe Crano, s'est souvenue de son enfance à Madère et... d'une heureuse !

Retour sur le continent. De Lisbonne, route vers le sud. Au-delà du Tage, la température

* "Lisbonne, la nostalgie du futur", AUTREMENT, n° 30, AVRIL 1988.

** AUTREMENT, op. cit.

For several decades Portugal was cut off from the rest of the world - indeed, from the rest of Europe, like an island, by the Salazar dictatorship. Nostalgically looking back at its glorious past - the period of the Great Navigators - this rural country's riches lay above all in that manna from heaven tourism and its emigrants. For a long time, its traditions held out, its musical patrimony remained, beneath the stilted folk tradition, misappropriated by the Salazarist ideology.

The fall of the dictatorship in 1974, the country's opening-up to the world and its membership of the European Community gave rise to profound changes. Traditions suffered from the intrusion of modernity and fashions on a planetary scale: many of them fell into disuse.

However, we cannot unreservedly regret the past: that "stage of artisanship which also meant certain stagnation, poverty and injustice".

When tradition becomes set in its ways, it falls within the province of folklore: it belongs in a museum - or an attic. When it is living, it moves with the times and with those who perpetuate it. That is the golden rule. It thus withstands forgetfulness, enriches modernity. That famous modernity which regularly takes hold of Portugal.

Is not all culture the result of a combination of tradition and invention?

On the edge of the Serra da Estrela, in Guarda - a former guard against the Moorish invasions, whence its name - a clock strikes the hour. Guarda is one of the jewels of the province of Beira Alta.

In Sanoiro, a village nestled in the heart of the Serra da Estrela, Joaquim Ambrosio invents strange instruments. They are imitations of ones we are familiar with, whose ancestors they could be. Played by groups of variable sizes, they make the best of an eclectic repertoire.

One evening in Vinhô, near Guarda, the *panadero*, a mixed choir gathers together in a mixed choir with a *panadero* (tambourine) as sole accompaniment, they sing an extract from the legend of Tia Baptista.

The woman in the choir then sing a fervent song of pilgrimage.

A former shepherd, Catarina Chitas lives there. At over eighty, she still sings. Dressed in black, she strikes up a harvesting song, which she sings unaccompanied. Her voice has hardly suffered the ravages of time.

Accompanying herself on the *adufe*, a small hand-beaten square frame drum with a sheepskin head balanced with small pebbles, she sings a pilgrim's song, her style is polished. The bells of Lavacollos, a traditional village, its stone houses coated with coloured roughcast, stir the hour.

A group of men gather in front of the church: three *bombos* (bass drums), two *caixas* (snare drums), a *afogão* (fife), and voices to give the musicians energy! For three centuries, the bells of Lavacollos, a traditional village, its stone houses coated with coloured roughcast, stir the hour.

In the environs of the Serra da Estrela, early evening it is raining. In the village cafe, accords play flat out. The style - that of the coast - is brisk and lively. This ensemble was founded on 25 April 1980, enriched and enlarged the tradition of the Minho.

Luis Gonçalves and António Gonçalves, the two highly skilled accompanists, bring the night to an end brilliantly with a duo.

Let us now sail for another world, an archipelago of nine islands in the Atlantic, the Azores. Brusil and forgotten, the *Mento* is also a victim of the norms decreed by Brusil. Over the past few years, the agricultural output has declined and many of the family farms have become secondary residences. For generations, man in the *Mento* - and particularly the peasant - has sung. In chorus. This style of polyphonic singing probably influenced by Gregorian chant, is no doubt descended from the schools of singing of the 12th century.

The island of Madère is the oldest of the fado singers: Sérgio Eduarda, treize ans ! Malgré sa verdeur, déjà quelques aubaines.

Judite Pinto, une jeune de la fado singer, has devoted over seventy of her eight-thirty years to the "artistic life"!

When it comes to José Manuel Ozorio, the lights are dimmed. His performances call for extreme concentration and intensity. A moment of grace and emotion: the singing leaves no room for the amateur and the amateur.

António Gonçalves and António Gonçalves, the two highly skilled accompanists, bring the night to an end brilliantly with a duo.

It is our duty to remember: the musical journey that is to be heard on this recording hopes to fulfil that aim. Far from being examples of fossilized folklore, it is a pledge for the future. As Carlos Fuentes writes: "Can the future be alive if the past is dead? Or should we take modernity as mean, rather than what is capable of including, which leaves out nothing that can make a positive contribution to a real future, that is to say, a future that is laden with the past, with experiences and remembrance?"

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