



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

AUDIO TAPE LOG

Accession No.: LO-02-04 Date(s): April 25, 2002

Fieldworker(s): Laura Orleans

Interviewee(s): Ana Vinagre

Event: --

Place of Recording: home of Ana Vinagre

Recording Equipment: Sony TC-D5-M Microphone(s): RE 508

Recorded in: mono Tape Brand and Format: Cassette, 60 minutes

Amount Tape Used: Cassette: 1 DAT: ABS time:

Related Accession Numbers: LO-02-06, LO-02-07

Brief summary of tape contents: personal background; Fado music; Ana's ensemble

Counter/ABS	Contents
001	Introduction <i>Halloween song</i>
004	b. October 31, 1953 in Buarcos (sp) a Moorish village on the Atlantic coast in central Portugal close to a city called Figuera da Forsh (sp).
012	Came to United States in October of 1972 to join her husband Jose Vinagre, a Portuguese man who lived in the United States. They had met the previous year through the folkloric dance troupe Ana belonged to while Joe was visiting Portugal.
020	Was 18 years old when she emigrated
022	Father worked at sea initially as a fisherman and later on large rigs. Travelled a lot, often to the United States. Mother was a seamstress, tailor made clothing going from house to house. Still sews today at age 88. Has 2 much older sisters. Speaks to eldest sister who lives in Portugal every week.
041	Attended Catholic school for kindergarten and first 4 years of grammar school. Then went to vocational school for six years where she studied painting as well as sewing and homemaking skills.
054	Some members of Ana's family were involved in an arts foundation in Portugal. Ana had planned to attend art school, but once she met her husband, she discontinued her studies.
061	Husband Joe was born in the same town as Ana in Portugal. He also sings. He has lived in US for nearly 40 years.
067	Did not have formal musical training. "It comes from . . . I don't know. Believing in God the way I do, I'm very glad that he gave me this gift. I don't know why, but I'm very happy he did. He remembered me so I'm very, very grateful."
072	Ana wears a watch with two faces one shows American time and the other shows Portuguese time. "Yeah, it's always there. Even though I love this country. I love

7 min

America and I couldn't change it. But remember, I'm Portugese and I have a lot of roots in Portugal. I have family still there, I have friends still there. And Portugal and Fado, they're in my heart all the time. All the time." L- Where is home? A- "You know there's a song about having two loves. Portugal and America, they're both, they're both my home. They are."

8:45

083 Conversation interrupted briefly.

085 Talks about a dream of someday having half the year in Portugal and half the year in America. "Every year, I have to go to Portugal, every year. And my clock, my body clock already knows when the time is to go to Portugal. It's every March, I have to go. And he (husband) gets upset with me. Why do I have to go? I have to go. If anything recharge the batteries so I can live a happier rest of the year over here. Don't get me wrong, I love this country, I do, I love this country. One of the things I would like to try is go, without a due date to come back to see how far I can go without this over her. Because I'm a very free spirit and I like to do whatever I want even though sometimes I can't. But I would like to see how far I can go without New Bedford. I love New Bedford." *The Azores - 9 islands*

105 Talks about mainland Portuguese community in New Bedford area. Azoreans are more cohesive because the islands are so small and everyone knows everyone. Portugal is different because it is so large. There are many people in this area who come from the part of Portugal from which Ana comes because of the ties to the sea. Talks about the history of immigration of other family members on husband's side.

My village is a fishermen's village

131 Works in a flower shop as a day job. Also teaches painting one day a week.

~ 17 min

145 Fado tradition. Today in Portugal Fado is performed all over the country, but mainly in Lisbon. Describes the nature of a Fado House. Describes the special door: "In almost every Fado house, they have a very ornated door, handcarved. And they have a little door, that as soon as you ring the doorbell mysteriously opens and people look to see how many people are coming in and sometimes to tell you to wait because somebody is singing so in a way they don't disturb the singer which I wish that people could do it over here in the United States, because there's no Fado houses here. There's only restaurants that have Fado. And maybe the owners don't explain to the people what Fado is and it's very very noisy. And to sing Fado you've got to have the realy ambiance for it which is low lights, no noise, because it's the blues. And when you have the inspiration to sing the blues you want to demonstrate to people the way you feel about what you're singing and if you have noise around, it's just eh, I'm singing another song. And I'm missing, because I'm in the mood to sing, and I'm missing putting everything out. And they're missing a good song. Cause I'll sing it just for the heck of it. I'll sing it cause it's my job I'm there to sing that particular night. But I feel so bad sometimes, I feel bad for the people that it's there. Because they're losing, beautiful lyrics, most of the times they don't understand it, but the music is so beautiful and the way the Fado singer is singing, even though you don't understand it, but you can feel the emotion that is going through the person that is singing it. Even that they'll miss it. I feel aggravated sometimes and sometimes I feel sorry for them. Cause they're missing a good thing. Cause Fado, I have people, a lot of American people come to me in concerts that I've had. They say to me, 'I didn't understand a word you said, but through the feelings in your voice and the feelings that you express in your face and in your hands, I loved it.' So a lot of people went there noisy, they're missing a good thing. I feel bad for them. I do. I do feel bad for them."

18:30

196 Talks about the scence in a typical Fado House.

- 198 Fado is never amplified. "If it comes from your soul, you do not need that. Fado is not sang with a microphone . . . Even I sometime, I forget that I have it in my hand. I call it a candlestick [laughs]. I forget that I have it. I don't like it. I like to sing. I like to sing without it. And I do have to confess something, without shoes. But that's me, that's a particular thing with me. Sometimes in the middle of a song, the shoes come off. I don't know when, I don't know how. It just happens. I get so into the song. And it's not because the shoes are hurting or anything but a Fado singer they express, they have, they use their faces to show the expressions and they use their hands. And maybe I try to grab the floor with my toes. I don't know, I don't have no idea why they come off, I kick my shoes off, but they do in the middle of a song. And I'm known to do that. So sometimes people, friends, people that knows my singing and go to a night, a night out to listen to my voice, sometimes they even say 'Get rid of your shoes. You sing better without your shoes.'" 19:30 min
- 222 Talks about the interaction between the audience and the musicians. Sometimes an audience that knows the singer and the repertoire will make requests. Fado night
- 233 Talks about singing requests. Likes to do what she is inspired to do. Doesn't choose material because it is popular. Doesn't listen to a lot of other female singers, because she doesn't want to copy other's style. 22 min
- 257 Talks about how traditional Fado lyrics have been updated. Has had some lyrics written for her. Does not compose her own lyrics. ✓
- 271 Talks about typical costume for Fado singers. Typically dress in black and use a shawl. In Portugal the singers are trying to get away from this tradition, but Ana sings with a shawl 99% of the time. "Sometimes it's there like a very friendly comfort blanket. Cause there's a lot of long fringes and it's there, you have something to grab on. And some of the songs, you do have a tendency of grabbing the fringes and just twisting them because there are some love songs or betrayed love songs, that comes very handy. And a Fado singer is very proud. So we might, when we first start singing, we might give the impression of being very proud and cold. But that's the song, because a lot of the songs are betrayed loves like I said, lost loves, loss of friends, loss of--life." ★
- 299 Makes the distinction between sad and melancholic. Fado is melancholic. Saudade is the emotion. "To be a Fado singer, you have to have a lot of saudade. And another thing. To be a good Fado singer, you have to suffer. In one way or another way, you have to suffer. In my case, the suffering of leaving, I was 17 and a half when I came to this country, beginning of a life. Coming to this country, I didn't know the language. Start a new life, a lot of responsibility, married. It hurts. It hurts not being understood. It hurts not to do what you always dreamed of. It hurts all of a sudden, you lose the identity that you were trying to create and you have to start all over again. And it hurts people looking at you in that word that I despise. I don't hate, because I don't hate anything or anybody, I despise the word 'immigrant' I do, with a lot of passion. Cause you're looked at as third class citizens. It's like, 'Oh what's a matter with you, poor thing. You came to this country because . . . poor thing.' Being proud the way I am, I don't like that at all. That's why I'm very happy I have a life in this country." "But just going through those changes and being the passionate person that I am it makes me a better singer." 27 min
- 356 When I'm singing, I'm trying the best way I know how, to give a message, to give the message to you that the poet that wrote the poem tried to pass along. So I have to like what I sing and respect what I sing. Cause I'm singing somebody else's passion. Sometimes I get offended when people say 'Oh it's just a song.' 28:30

Wait a minute, it's not a song. If somebody took the time and the passion to write that poem, that's, they're putting out their guts. How dare you say it's just lyrics. Uh, uh, uh. Not to me. I'm singing what somebody put out that day. It was their soul. So I have to respect that. I have to feel the same way he did. Otherwise it doesn't sound good. And respect his work, and make it my (Tape ends)

Side 2

- 001 "So I get, sometimes, I do get upset, because I do respect Fado. Because Fado is life, Fado is my life. I know someday I have to stop, stop singing for people, but I can always sing it for myself. And I do. In the car, sometimes, people may think that I'm a looney tooney, that I'm talking to myself, I'm singing. And in the bathroom, the acoustics are wonderful [laughs]. So I'm singing. And that's what I, in the car when I'm alone, when I travel to work I hit it in a way and I say 'Wow that's pretty, let's try it again.' And next time when I perform, I try it and I like it. Cause Fado is never sung the same way twice. Depends in the mood that you're in, depends in the atmosphere that's in the room that particular day. What I said before, if it's noisy, ahh. Never do it the same way twice." 30:45
- 015 Fado is sometimes sung in more informal settings, at parties in people's homes. Describes an annual birthday celebration for her husband. "Fado is the type of son that you hum to. I'm at work, I'm cutting flowers and I'm humming the music."
- 026 "Saudade and Fado, they go side by side. And you have, like I said before, you have to suffer, you have to go through a little bit to be able to be a good Fado singer."
- 029 Discussion of the meaning of the word Fado. Fado is like the blues, life. Placido Domingo once said that Fado is like a little opera. "You sing Fado about the love of your mother, the love for your father, the love of Portugal, the love of the ocean, the love of, even the smells of food you sing about." Describes a song about the smell of roasted chestnuts in the winter. "Fado is life, Fado is about everything." Describes another song about Catholic school experience. 35 min
- 051 Fado is used to describe your lot in life. Fado is "fate".
- 056 Talks about the history of Fado. The origin is unknown. A lot of people say that Fado came from African, that it went from Africa to Brazil and from Brazil to Portugal. The sound is very Moorish/Arabic. Portugal was invaded by the Moors. The Moorish influence is still very strong in the south of Portugal. The Portuguese guitar is a copy of an English citra (sp). Now the guitar is 12-stringed and made in the shape of a tear. 38 min
- 076 The Fado instruments are Portuguese guitar, classical guitar (called viola) and a larger classical guitar (called a bass). Historically the singer stood behind the musicians. Today the singers sing out front. The ensemble is supposed to include two Portuguese guitars, one classical guitar (viola) and the bass. In this country it is usually Portuguese guitar and classical guitar. There is a lack of bass guitar players here. There was also a tradition of singing Fado to the accompaniment of piano which is tuned the same as a Portuguese guitar. Other instruments which play with the Portuguese guitar to accompany Fado include accordions, flutes, violins.
- 094 Women have always performed Fado. Historically women who sang Fado were not believed to be "good women". This has changed. Traditionally it is a late night, very bohemian tradition. 41 min
- 105 Some of the more contemporary Fado musicians in Portugal are also using saxophone in the last 15 years.

- 114 Today in Portugal, Fado audience includes everyone: young, old, rich poor, men women, couples, single people.
- 118 Discussion of Coimbra style of Fado. Students at the country's oldest university sing Fado. This style is only sung by men. Guitar has a heart shaped sound hole.
- 125 Lisbon tradition is the folk tradition and this is the style that Ana sings.
- 133 Talks about how Fado was used during the 1950s and 1960s when there was a dictatorship in power as a vehicle to express political dissent with poetry. After the revolution when the dictatorship was overthrown in 1976, everyone was writing Fado and there was a lot of bad poetry being written. But more recently Fado has been re-popularized especially with the singing of Amalia, the great Fado diva. She was popular from the 1950s through the 1980s and brought a new/international respect to the genre. She performed in many different languages. She took popular songs from these countries and sang with the Fado instrumentation to give them a Fado flavor in addition to singing traditional material from the best poets.
- 183 Names some of the most important Fado poets. Poets wrote the words and musicians wrote the music.
- 193 Talks about contemporary lyrics.
- 206 Talks about nostalgia for home: "I eat a fried egg over there, it's more yellow, it tastes better. Maybe because I'm back home. It's little things like that that you have a feeling inside that I want to go back, not because of an egg, but I eat an orange and for some reason it tastes better over there. But it's that of being back home. And Fado brings you into all of that."
- 215 There are some Fado lyrics which talk of the longing for the old country. Ana translates the lyrics to one such verse.
- 228 Discussion of structure of Fado. "To be Fado music it's gotta have a little bit of Fado Menor, minor fado, and Fado Corrido. Corrido, means fast. There's two traditional ways of playing Fado. Fado Menor is very soft and slow and it gives you, especially to the women's voice, a lot of play time. And Corrido, Fado Corrido is fast and you gotta, you gotta keep that beat and it's fast. And every Fado that I do, it's gotta have a taste of one or a taste of the other."
- 255 Some Fados incorporate both the Corrido and the Menor.
- 259 The Fado singer is the leader of the ensemble. The musicians must follow the vocalist.
- 267 "When I'm performing for Americans, I always put, because in this country unfortunately we always have the Portuguese guitar and the voice. I sing a song that says, they're triplets."
- 271 Talks about one of the quarters of Lisbon called Moraria which is highly influenced by the Arabic/Moorish culture. Lists several of the neighborhoods/quarters of the city.
- 280 When Ana visits Portugal she goes to her village rather than travelling to Lisbon. There is Fado performed in the village as well as in the city.
- 293 Tells about a song that tells about how Fado came to be performed with the guitar and the viola. "When I perform for Americans I always say 'my players and I we're like a vase,' maybe because I work with flowers, I always say, 'we're like a vase with flowers. The vase being the guitar, the water being the viola, they can live together, very happy together, it's just a vase and water in it. But me, being a flower can't live without them."
- 331 "My voice, once it comes out, it's not mine anymore. That's why I says this is a gift from God, for me to give to everybody. Once it comes out, the sound, it's not mine anymore cause I can't grab it and put it back. Once it's out, it's my present to

54 min

58 min

60 min

you. So that's why I get offended sometimes and I get, too bad, they don't know what they're losing. Cause I'm trying to give them something free and they're not taking it. That's why sometimes I get frustrated. Cause I take it very, very serious. When it's just in my thoughts, it's mine and [will] always be mine, but once it comes out the sound can't grab it and put it back again, I can't. So when I open my mouth to sing, it's my gift to the world. And if I'm enjoying it, if I'm putting everything that I have, all my being into the lyrics that I'm singing, so I hope you appreciate it and I hope you take it the way I'm giving it to you. That's how, what Fado is to me. It's that important."

- 363 Used to do Portuguese folkdance as a child (age 11 on). Tells about a May Day tradition of dancing with a clay water pot weighing 20-30 lbs on the head. Met husband through one of these dance performances. (end of tape 385)

Tape 2 Side A

(CD #2)

- 001 Tells about religious procession in her village during week before Easter based on biblical story of Veronica a bread maker who cleaned Jesus' face on the way to Calvary and his face was imprinted on the cloth. Ana played Veronica for two years in the procession which has three Mary's in the back singing in Latin. This was Ana's first public performance. People were surprised that Ana was going to play Veronica because she was so tomboyish as a kid. Then she sang alto for three years as one of the three Mary's. People knew that Ana sang in the village.
- 013 "You know in Portugal we have the chimneys and they're opening to the outside. Now they're different because of the cold. But at those times we tolerated the cold better than we do now. And sometimes I would be doing the dishes and I would be singing and they would knock on my door."
- 018 Older sister has a beautiful voice, but is very shy.
- 020 Listened to a lot of Fado on the radio while growing up. Never liked rock and roll. Always liked classical music. Talks about how her reputation grew among her friends.
- 028 Tells about experiences in folklore group. Group travelled all over Europe. Director of the group had Ana sing Fado as part of the act. This was when Ana was about 12 years old.
- 035 The first song Ana performed was "Saudade, Silencio and Sombra" = "Longing, Silence and Shadow," a traditional Fado.
- 041 Tells about another song that she sang as a child called "Amar" = "Love". Translates one of the verses: "I want to love love desperately, love somebody, love everybody and not love anybody." . . . "If someday I will be dust, ashes and nothing. I hope my night is a dawn so I can get lost to find you."
- 059 "I don't sing things that are popular. It's gotta be something that says something to me. And the harder the poem, the better for me."
- 063 Talks about how Ana and her ensemble work to arrange the pieces. Ana does not read music, but her accompanists do. She learns songs from recordings and gives the musicians a recording to work from. Many times the music is similar from one Fado to another and often the musicians know the melody. Gives an example of one melody which is used for three different Fados and has three different sets of lyrics sung in three different keys.
- 087 New music is still being composed today, but many old melodies are also used to accompany new lyrics. Much of the music is well known especially the traditional material and the musicians will know how to accompany Ana if she tells them that she is going to perform a particular song in a particular key.

- 100 Ana does not have a single set of players. She plays with different musicians depending on who is available and where she is performing.
- 108 Discussion of musical influences: "I went to a restaurant, I was in the States maybe 2 or 3 years and I went to a restaurant and there was a woman there singing. And my husband said, 'Gee you can sing better than that.' I said 'No I can't.' And he said, 'Yes. My wife can sing.' So I got up and sang. And that's how it started." 11:30
- 115 Mostly self taught. Learns by listening to other singers and observing their techniques and how they breath. Speaks of another local Fado singer who she does not like as a person, but respects as an artist.
- 123 Tends to listen to male Fado singers more than women, because she doesn't want to copy another's style.
- 128 "Fado is such a beautiful way of being when you're singing Fado. To me it's a way of being period. I feel wonderful when I'm singing Fado. That's why the shoes come off. I want to be free from everything [laughs]. And maybe getting rid of my shoes, I feel, I don't know, my conscience tells me it's time to get rid of it and come off." 13 min
- 138 "I sing with my eyes closed. You know it sounds so . . . But sometimes I forget that there's people around me. I get so involved into the song. And that's a thing with Fado. We close our eyes. Not that we don't want to look at people, but we get into what we are doing. And if the shoes are just there, sometimes people takes them away from me. I say "Where are my shoes! Where are my shoes!" They play a joke on me." 14 min
- 142 "But Fado, to me it's beautiful. Like I said it's a way of being. I need Fado in my life. It will be very hard for me when someday I have to stop. It will be, it will be very sad. But like everything else, you gotta learn how to live without it. But I'll never stop singing. I'll never stop singing Fado." 14:24
- 150 Talks about the lack of appreciation the local community has for Fado how it's only when a singer comes from Portugal that they recognize the excellence of the local Fado singers. 15 min
- 155 "Fado it's fate, Fado is life, Fado is a way of being. Fado is you from head to toe.
- 157 "I have to sometimes get away from that figure, that Ana Vinagre Fado Singer and be somebody else. Not to be so serious." Talks about the different moods of Fado which has both melancholy and happy songs. Many people only know Ana as a Fado singer, only her serious side.
- 166 "This is a joke that sometimes I play. In the supermarket they say 'Oh aren't you Ana Vinagre?' 'No. She's my sister, she's fatter than I am.'
- End of interview (179)