



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

AUDIO TAPE LOG

Accession No.: LO-02-06 Date(s): May 16, 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-02-04, LO-02-07

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

| Counter/ABS | Contents |
|-------------|---|
| 002 | Introduction |
| 009 | Talks about early exposure to Fado music on the radio. Lived under dictatorship as a child and all programs were government sanctioned. One night each week there was a Fado program. Used to sing Fado around the house. |
| 021 | Danced and sang as part of a folkloric group. Was asked to perform Fado as part of the group. First song performed was called Saudade, Silencio and Sombra (Longing, Silence and Shadow). "To be honest with you my husband says that I kind of hook him with that song so I don't know. And that's how I started." |
| 036 | There was no television in Ana's village in her early childhood. Eventually tv came in and although Ana's family didn't own a television, but saw Fado singers on television at friend's house. |
| 044 | "You mentioned that I'm a very passionate person. And I am. I don't have a maybe. I have a yes and a no. And if I like something I stick to it. That's why I don't like what they're doing to Fado. They're making it modern. They're introducing a new way of singing Fado. Ok if that's the way they want to do it, fine. But I'll keep it the old fashioned way." |
| 051 | Talks about some of the changes in contemporary Portuguese Fado. Introduction of many new instruments: flute, accordion, saxophone, bass, piano. "It's fine. But why should we change something that is so beautiful? And for as long as I can, I'm gonna stay the way I am. Because I'm very comfortable." (updating the lyrics but keeping the same "traditional" style.) |
| 058 | "Fado is never sang the same way twice. Depending on the mood you're in that day" |

063 Didn't see a live performance of Fado music until coming to the United States. Saw Amalia performing at New Bedford High School. There was a man (Mr. Pena) who organized public concerts of musicians from Portugal.

067 Of Amalia: "I was very disappointed. Because she was dressed in very colorful colors like the rainbow and it was a shock."

080 Talks about Amalia and her importance to Fado and some of the changes she introduced, esp. vocal style, but always maintained the traditional instrumentation.

103 Talks about how the emotion of Fado transcends language.

111 Talks about difference of performing live and performing on a recording.

124 "I think singing for American people they can relate to the music. Like a lot of people said they don't understand the words. But the feeling, the gestures that you put in, the look in your face, the way I twist my shawl sometimes you know, the fringes of my shawl, I get so into the song that sometimes I don't even know I take my shoes off.

132 No other musicians in the family, except several female relatives, sister, mother and aunt who used to sing around the house. Ana associated the singing, certain songs and certain styles with when she was in trouble. "I always heard my mother sing, you know just humming and singing cleaning the house or cooking, you know doing regular stuff around the house. But sometimes it was a different way of singing and I knew I was in trouble."

149 Talks about relationship with older sister Midilana who lives in Portugal. They are very close. They talk every Thursday. She also sings, but does not perform.

161 Middle sister used to sing in the folkloric group, but stopped singing and lost her ability.

166 Doesn't have a favorite Fado piece.

168 Talks about places she performs locally. Sings at Portuguese community get-togethers. Performs at Sagres Restaurant in Fall River regularly three or four times each month with the house musicians (Manuel and Alvaro). "It is the only place that people can go to listen to Fado. So I'll be there until they kick me out." Has travelled widely in the US, California, New Jersey, Connecticut performing at Festivals, Portuguese affairs. Recently performed at the wedding of a woman of Portuguese descent who was marrying a Jewish man. Sang at a funeral once of a man (a Portuguese man who had been a fisherman in Gloucester) who left written instructions that he wanted to have Fado music at his funeral.

213 Talks about Cape Verdean tradition of singing and playing the violin at funerals. The Portuguese do not have this as a tradition.

220 Describes Sagres. The audience at Sagres is mostly American. Many of the Portuguese musicians who play in this country perform for American audiences rather than Portuguese-American community. At Sagres the people are there to eat first and then to listen to Fado. Usually towards the end of the night, around 11 o'clock, people are more focused on the music.

245 Talks about Fado in Portugal which typically starts around 11 at night and sometimes goes all night long. "When I go to Portugal on vacation, it's never a vacation, because I go with friends of mine that are singers and players and I come home, 5, 3, 4 o'clock in the morning. Oh we can go, I had one night that I came home at 7:30. And we were singing and playing all night. Fado is a very bohemian type of music that is sang towards, well after midnight it feels better."

259 Portuguese community in New Bedford/US says of Fado: "We have a way of putting it, that Fado is our national anthem. Can't be any better than that. And to a lot of people it is. Fado is very precious, very, it's a precious thing, Fado."

- 264 Fado audiences are not age specific.
- 267 Tells of surprise that so many Americans know Fado from having heard it in Portugal or listened to recordings. Tells anecdote about having a woman request a song and attribute it to the wrong artist.
- 287 Tells about how Fado has the power to change your mood: "I can be in an awful, mean mood, crabby, crabby, crabby and I'll put that on and it calms me down. But it can make me cry too."
- 292 Americans have really just discovered Fado.
- 300 Talks about where Fado is performed within the Portuguese American communities. Sometimes Portuguese clubs organize Fado nights. In New Bedford the fisherman's club and the Portuguese radio station (WJFD) have both organized these events.
- 319 Young people are now enjoying Fado more than they used to. Tells anecdote about a student at UMASS Dartmouth who was surprised that he like Fado having thought that it was just old fogey music.
- 329 Used to be more of a nostalgic experience for older people in the Portuguese American community. This is less true now because it's a music for all ages. It is has been revived and popularized.
- 341 Talks about Catarina Avelar, a young Portuguese American pop singer in New Bedford who is in her twenties and who is beginning to perform Fado. Talks about the need to have suffered in order to be a good Fado singer: "To sing Fado, to be a Fado singer, you have to, you have to have some hurt in your life one way or another. You have to go through some stuff to really get into it. You can have the most beautiful voice and sing Fado, but not be a Fado singer perse. You have to hurt a little bit, L-"and maybe to live a little bit too. A-Yeah. You have to live life a little bit and get a few kicks here and there to appreciate Fado.
- 367 Describes working with Catarina when they both travelled to California to perform at the same event. Gives some detail about teaching Catarina during the rehearsals.
- end of side (385)
- 001 Talks more about Catarina and her family which is very protective.
- 003 Feels that in time Catarina will be a good Fado singer, but that she is still too young even though she sings Fado occassionaly at Fado nights and when she is asked to in other performances.
- 013 Discussion of the possiblity of Ana teaching Catarina in a more formal arrangement. "I know she's got everything. I would love to put my hands on her." Discussion of what Ana would teach Catarina about Fado: 1) not to copy anybody (interrupted by doorbell) Discussion of MCC Apprenticeship Program.
- 027 Tells anecdote about an old Fado singer who lives in Cambridge and no longer sings but had come to New Bedford for a Fado night and complemented Catarina on her voice after she performed and then suggested that she should study with Ana Vinagre.
- 035 Return to the discussion of the kinds of things Ana would pass on to Catarina as a her teacher: what styles and types of songs would be appropriate for her particular voice; She would also teach her about the gestures and performance aesthetics
- 049 Talks about the happy/funny side of Fado: "I try to show people that Fado is not just serious, not melancholic, there's a happier side to Fado. There's even a frisky part of fado. There's a part of, the wild side that comes out at that time." Tells about getting into trouble with this once when she picked the wrong man from the audience to play with during one of these more frisky numbers.

064 Talks about some of the gestures that are used in Fado. "We have certain songs, we use our shoulders a lot. You know that attitude. So that's when the wild part of me comes out. The melancholic I try to be very serious. But the other side, I can have fun."

068 Catarina is American born, but of Azorean descent. She speaks fluent Portuguese. Talks about how Catarina was being recruited by music producers to go to Portugal for her career, but that she was wise to stay in America. Talks about how you have to be wary of music producers who will take advantage of you.

077 Catarina used to sing in her church (St. John the Baptist, New Bedford). She entered a contest sponsored by WJFD and won.

088 Talks about a young Portuguese man Jirmeriz in New Bedford who is also getting started singing Fado and who she would like to teach.

097 Talks about the improvised/changeable nature of Fado.

103 Uses improvisation to keep her own interest in the material when she is asked to sing a song that she may not feel like singing at a given time.

114 "You can't fake Fado, you can't."

119 When she finds herself in a performance setting that is less than ideal (a noise inattentive audience) she uses the opportunity to try new things, take chances.

131 Ana has been playing with two musicians from RI for 15-20 years. Guitar player is Jose Silva. Viola player is Viriatu Ferreira. Describes how the ensemble was formed. "I'm very, very happy they decided playing together because they were made for one another. They fill up . . . what one leaves out the other fills up. They're very compatible."

147 Talks about how strong the ensemble is and how much she can count on her musicians to be there for her on stage. Tells anecdote about the viola player introducing a samba beat when they were in performance and how it has been incorporated into their standard repertoire since then.

167 Ana as the singer leads the ensemble, but often asks the players to select songs.

181 "We stop being three and become one in a song. And it's very very important." This mutual trust allows them to improvise and take chances.

194 Gets most gigs through word of mouth. Was hired to sing at a wedding through the Chamber of Commerce.

201 Tells about singing at a wine tasting in Cambridge which was for her a surprisingly positive event.

208 Talks about a painting of Maria Severra a famous Fado singer. There are also many Fado songs written about her.

221 Does not rehearse anymore. The players all know the repertoire so Ana just gives them direction about what song, what key and what tempo. Plays with the Providence based musicians about once a month.

235 Tells about the players at Sagres. The guitar player is Manuel Leite and lives in Taunton. Alvaro Medeiros is the viola player and lives in New Bedford. The three have been performing together for 27 years. They got started when Ana and her husband were dining at Sagres and he said "my wife can sing better than her" about the performer who was there that night and Ana was given a chance to show her stuff.

245 All of the musicians are from the Azores. Even though Fado is more of a mainland tradition, the folkloric traditions are stronger in the Azores and so many of the instrumentalists have learned the Fado repertoire. Fado singers from the islands have stylistic differences from those who are from the mainland. Those

who are American born don't have the same saudade as those who were born in Portugal.

280 Talks about Jirmirez a man in his late 30s who is getting started singing Fado. He needs to loosen up a little bit, he is afraid.

290 Ana thinks that there is a lot of potential to set up an apprenticeship situation with Catarina. The same players from RI who play with Ana also play for Catarina.

310 Discussion of Ana's future goals: Would like to introduce Fado to more Americans. Could use help with self-promotion. Shys away from making additional recordings because of the cost of producing a CD. Would like to do another recording with more traditional material. The existing CD has a lot of material which is more contemporary and less serious and only one or two which are traditional.

Tape ends 387