MOBILITY, NATIONALISM AND COSMOPOLITISM: LIGHT MUSIC IN PORTUGAL AND EUROPEAN BROADCASTING (1960)

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Abstract: Through a state rhetoric that served the construction of a national cultural intimacy in the context of the Portuguese regime in the 1960s, light music has become the target of a creation of nationalist identities, inside the contrast with the organization of a common aesthetic of the European countries, supported, among others, by the broadcasting system, the commercialization of the singers and the advertising of the music industry. In this thematic case, mobility reveals its elusive meanings, where the technical and human exchanges between various radio and television European production, stressed an aesthetic-political will, through the use of the languages of light music, building a self-evident national soul in the proclamation of a national isolation.

Keywords: light music, European broadcasting, cultural intimacy, mobility, musical nationalism

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the Portuguese political regime in the 1960s, light music had a cultural, social, technical and organizational impact. It is in construction to this day. Light music has become a solid defense of the rhetoric of simplicity and amateurism, of the proclamation of isolation and of the Europeans aesthetic and cultural exchanges, by not asking for a particular experience or artistic ability, but rather to its power to attract the masses. It was the music that gave the possibility to the countries emerging from World War II to establish their own national musical identity, through, for example, the celebration of their national languages as a warranty of political and cultural unification.

2. HISTORIC REMARKS

The 1960s was the historic space where festivals of national song materialized, where national languages were encouraged to stress a union of the citizens within the frontiers of the nation-states. The theatricality of the singers and stars, the exaltation of state music production through a dense work of marketing of its actors, the creation of aesthetic/performative models common to the various cultural sectors, and the focus on the daily lives of people and their everyday emotions inserted into spaces easily recognizable by a large number of people, are just some of the instances of that staging of a self-evident national soul, using light song as its own soundtrack.

The study of radio musical setting in nationalist contexts, in these scenarios, raises questions and issues that deserve further consideration. Following a line of interpretation of Thomas Turino (2000) and Martin Stokes (2010), with respect to case studies of popular music in Zimbabwe and Turkey, it is my intention to relate the concept of human mobility, representative of cosmopolitan characteristics, with musical nationalism in the context of the commercialization of light music in the two decades after the World War II, focusing on the 1960s. The particular juncture of local and transnational musical styles analyzed by these two authors, in setting up a nationalist identity, showed how the structure of a national-conservative cultural intimacy required a constant dialogue with the surrounding world to proliferate, in a game of exchanges between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, obfuscation and revelation.

In the case of the political regime in Portugal, the internationalization illustrated by the foreign presence in its territory, particularly at a level of

technical, stylistic and performative training of people in the radio and television production industries, confirms the existence of the cosmopolitan idiosyncrasy reported by Turino and Stokes. This contribution wants to stress that light music in the 1960s and in the context of the Portuguese political system, masked a plot of international calls through the declaration and the staging of a musical nationalism.

The musical nationalism presented here is, on the one hand, the nation's staging through the exclusive use of media such as radio and television, and on the other a desire to promote elements of simplification, repetition and relief that would represent security, promoted and defended by the nation, and accepted and often sought after by its citizens. For the period concerned, we can not only look at the meanings of radio nationalism through events from a single country, because in this sense, national isolation did not belong to the plans of the international broadcasting projects of the time. On September 15, in 1948, the distribution of 121 medium-wave frequencies was institutionalized by the European Conference of Broadcasting (CER) in Copenaghen, which established points for the structuring of programs A and B, for the amplification of transmission power and the regulation of medium-wave frequencies for each member country.

Besides the rhetoric of the legacy of Empires through radio in other dictatorships such as in Italy or Germany, we can find a project of unification which involved international structuring plans and the organization of the radio system already from the first half of the twentieth century. The collaboration between radios from different countries began in 1925 in Geneva, with the creation of the UIR (International Union of Radio), but during this time did not yield many results. It is on February 1950, with the constitution of the EBU (Union Européenne de Radiodiffusion) which assimilated the UIR member, the OIR (Organisation Internacionale Radiodiffusion) as well as the BBC, that we can find more concrete results, especially regarding the exchange of information and programs between the different actors of radio and television production and the resolution of legal and technical issues common to member countries.

The efforts of the Portuguese cultural policy on moral entertainment of people were well defined, although there has never been a concrete evidence of a calculated use of the media in this cultural production, as happened in other European dictatorial realities. Examples of these efforts are, among others, the birth of the contest of the «Rei e

Rainha da Rádio» in 1961, the growth of radio programs of varieties and auditorium, children's and youth programs with a marked ideological reflection, new ways of promoting singers in centers of artistic preparation, the formation of companies dedicated to performing light music shows and the presentation of a new generation of national-pop singers artists, belonging to an international star system. In this moral implant, in terms of the education and training of a common moral, it is necessary to underline the technological changes (such as stereophonic sound in 1968, magnetic recording machines, programming in frequency modulation, etc.) with a new generation of speakers and artists, particularly in the late 1960s (Santos, 2014).

The Portuguese state policy, although strongly absent in the radio potentialities as a means of communication, led to new ways of listening and disseminating music. It promoted well-defined and standardized aesthetic values concerning light music, shaped «by an ideology of integration of various musical symbolic references in the same repertoire», unifying the light song in the form of a national aesthetic (Losa and Silva, 2010:393). In fact, a system of nationalist values incorporated by the recording industry, the trade of the singers, the advertising system and popular periodicals, radio and television programs focusing on the goal to entertaining listeners, concealed a world of human, stylistic and technical exchanges, covering the whole Europe. The European mobility, permitted in the European historical context of post-war, paradoxically meant the possibility of further intensification of nationalist rhetoric. Intensification supported, in musical and moral field, by the light song industry, where we find examples of xenophobia and homogenization fomented, among others, by the radicalization and development of the festivals of national song and the Eurovision contest, representing what Anderson (1983: 13) defined as the «imagined community», to represent the nation as a politically constructed community and as fundamentally isolated: the scene of the proclamation of a self-evident national identity.

In the historical context of the links between music and politics in the Portuguese regime, light music had the role of being the music for the people, for uneducated and illiterate masses, released through the radio industry, music, performances, cafés, casinos and the revues, constituting an oppositional argument in the rhetorical plot of distinction with the cultured music, destined to the nation's elite. However, although it is considered a «minor music»

(Middleton, 1991) with a reduced artistic interest, light music received from the administration of the Portuguese and European radio and television structures, a watchful eye and an institutional framework that revealed the consciousness of the decision-makers about its importance in the musical programming. It was important as a way to reach a large part of the public who wanted entertainment programs and variety. There is no more political music than light music, when political is understood as the plot of choices and state structures that shape the organization of a nation.

The passivity promoted by light music, understood as the ability to camouflage through the concepts of entertainment, leisure and well-fare, conveyed by the political and economic will to control social classes, indeed imposes the need to reveal its intimate and latent characteristics. This is a democratic music, in terms that it is accessible to a very large number of people, allowing them to express themselves appreciatively or deprecatingly about it. It is a song that can bring people together globally because it talks about superficial emotions; it sings and plays songs that are not too difficult or articulated and easily learned. It can awake in people the desires of fame, stardom and notoriety and, finally, it is supported by all major media who speak every day about it. There has never been such a musical domain where we can find congruencies between passivity and stylistic contents, or at the same time an European mobility (of technicians, announcers, stars, etc.) masked by a cultural isolationism or an exaltation of an identity solely and purely national.

In Portugal, the division of rhetoric between foreign and national music was a constant, fueled in particular by popular periodicals like Flama, Radio & Televisão, Plateia, which continuously alternated editorials or opinions on the need for national music and Portuguese artists. In these popular periodicals, objects of interest were the scarcity of Portuguese production, reports of the national and international festivals competitions, in particular the Sanremo Festival, or a constant reference to RTP directors, including the training of each one in foreign studios, like the Italian RAI, as in the case, among others, of Ruy Ferrão and Luis Andrade. These reveus highlighted, for example, the «Grande Prémio do Disco» and contests of soap operas, the publications on the state of broadcasting in Portugal, with publications of tables and organization of several major programs (such as Talismã, 23a Hora, Variedades, etc). Reviews were dedicated to the personal life of the most famous stars, many of which were Italians, as in the case of Gigliola Cinquetti,

216

Domenico Modugno, Marino Marini, Adriano Celentano, Rita Pavone, etc. Far from having intellectual or forefront publications, the purpose of the magazines was to update the readers, mainly belonging to the working class, through brief news and few reports and interviews.

Light song, in the Portuguese regime contest, developed its properties inside the radio system. The study of this musical domain realizes the importance of revealing the direct connection with the music industry and the initiatives of private publishers. These ones, can help to focus the relation between an aesthetic production and the mass media market, showing their political sides relating to international connections much more than national.

This study stressed that musical nationalism presupposes the existence of a cosmopolitan intelligence, familiar to other nationalisms, able to retrieve a particular cosmopolitan training. In an environment of local and transnational musical styles, focusing on the Portuguese production in particular, the isolationism created by a supposedly nationalistic aesthetic, revealed an «historical incorporation» (Nery and Castro, 1991:123) to explain and cover the mixture between inter-cultural and international meetings.

The idea of mobility fits very well in the case of nationalist cultural musical productions. The meeting, the exchange, the creation of social paradigms and structures of thought, the creation of new legislation to create rules and laws carried out by national governments, the formation and development of constitutional charters of fundamental rights of the European Union, are just some of the horizons identified by this concept, which reveals its urgency and need for reflection. The concept of mobility was assimilated with *integration*: movement of workers, students, pensioners or citizens in general integrated into new contexts, new countries, new systems that are served by a common law and a defense of the individual. Then, mobility has become the term guide for moving actors: political mobility, social mobility, mobility of information. The mobility in the European Union becomes, in this context, the guarantor of individuals that move in the European community. But if we view the significance of mobility as the 'ability to move', we soon realized that this term has itself several aspects that interfere with its political / diplomatic domain. Mobility reveals also inconstancy features, and volubility, even because it exemplifies a movement with elusive constitutions. Inside mobility, in the moving society, we can hide ourselves and be camouflaged. The ethical problem, xenophobia, nationalist rhetoric, the defense of national rights,

intra-national migration, the instances and the unjust of different legal regulations, social, cultural and moral stereotypes, apologies about the property, individual freedom or national sovereignty, economic wars, musical and aesthetic homologation, are only preliminary reflections fomented in part by that same contemporary urgency to review the meaning of mobility. A game between force and destruction, movement and paralysis. The human being of modernity is a being on move in search of protection and security.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The interest of Ethnomusicology for issues of human mobility, reveals at least two characteristics. On the one hand, the importance of understanding how the mechanical, digital and electronic technologies, related to the consumerist economic system, transformed music and sound into something ubiquitous and in constant movement: musical mobility, related to the technological world and marketing, codified a sound and performative models that entered the everyday life of people. These, moving, carry content and information, finding new links in the context of intra-national human exchanges, building new way of listening dynamics, new sound and aesthetic realities, in a constant transformation and renewal of intimacies of human communities. On the other hand, the interrogative and analysis of ethnomusicology encodes trajectories and paths of complex practices of human mobility assumed as music-making. It helps, briefly, to put together interdisciplinary studies of particular cases with general contexts, with historical gaps, cultural and aesthetic camouflages or political and ideological masks and inventions. In this sense, the ethnographic work turns the personal description a perceptual feature of everyday musical narration, where the person is not only the guarantor of a particular story, but the concrete representation of an exchange, a starting point and a destination. It reveals the intimacy that distance the dimension of artistic production constituted by the star system, with that receipt of listeners, public, staff and receivers. It is in this last dimension, the public sphere, in which we can see the difficulty in analyzing such a concept as broad as mobility and, even more, it is in this configuration that we realize the challenges of today ethnomusicological research. How can we rely on the discourse analysis, based on primary sources belonging to historical periods of lying and nationalist exaltation? How can we create a category when there are so many contradictions? How is it possible to believe in the representation of reality, itself cloaked and conveyed by stereotypes and locks? How can we represent and analyze music in a context where actors are so camouflaged? These are methodological and preliminary questions, but at the same time show an epistemological urgency.

The cultural intimacy, which on one hand helps to radicalize historical reflection, reveals at the same time its strict connection with the rhetorical inventions of a national *ex-tempore* soul, where we find a creative political act, which is based on the need of displaying a world in constant isolation. Mobility, in this sense, is a suffering feature, by identifying an escape, an oppression, incorporating a political will of control and creation of a national myth out of time and space.

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