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In the XXI century in the inner country of Portugal, non-professional musical formations are at the centre of local musical life, working on the sustainability and conjunction of the *cultural* social live and the *natural* place. Focused on the case of 'Orfeão da Covilhã', an almost centenary choral formation, the research aims to understand the reasons behind these structured sonic undertakings, which involve so many people in preparing and presenting music during long periods of time. I sustain that musicking in the scope of the Orfeão da Covilhã is a dialogue, negotiation and coexistence action within a vital whole: of the individual with the society, of the local and the translocal (the transnational and sometimes the planetary sphere), of the present time with the future, of what has been experienced and what is expected to experience, of contingencies and utopia, and of reason and resonance.

I arrived at Saint Mary's churchyard, on 2 June 2012, an hour before the concert started. People greeting each other and musicians carrying their instrument boxes were crossing the street; two young ladies, flanking the church's wide open doors, were distributing copies of the programme for the "Classical Music Grand Concert". On it, one could read that the event resulted from the collaboration of a variety of local and regional institutions, and aimed at performance, for the first time in the history of the city of Covilhã, of Vivaldi's *Gloria RV 589*...

... with the participation of more than 200 performers: the Choir of the Music Conservatoire of Covilhã, the Choir of the Music Conservatoire of Saint Joseph of Guarda, the Choir of the Orfeão of Covilhã, the Choir of Guarda Cultural Centre, the String Orchestra of EPABI, the Arts Professional School of Covilhã, all together, performing the most emblematic work by the Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi – Gloria RV 589. Additionally, each choir will perform two music pieces. The Concert will be

directed by João Pedro Delgado (Music Conservatoires of Covilhã and Guarda), Paulo Serra (Orfeão of Covilhã), Gustavo Delgado (Orfeão of Guarda Cultural Centre) and Rogério Peixinho (EPABI).

At the church's transept, on an improvised stage, people were setting out chairs, music stands, and a platform for the conductors. I took the stairs to the choir (a wooden second-floor area closed to the general public). I had not yet finished setting up the camera and already all the seats had been taken by people of all ages.

The mayor, the priest, and other local entities were sat on the first row of the improvised stage. Families of two or three generations, still entering the church, were standing on either side. The talking dissipated as the first members of the choirs set foot on stage. Each group was wearing a peculiar garment. They were standing in a "U" shape around the chairs and the music stands. The audience continued to grow as did the talking. Both sides of the church were full of standing people. Then the musicians came in, sat and tuned their instruments... And at last, the choirs' and string orchestra's conductors took the stage. Much applause, sudden silence from the audience, and the Gloria RV 589 started. About thirty minutes later the audience broke out in applause. In the half an hour that followed each of the choirs sang two small pieces individually, as announced in the programme. The choir of the Orfeão da Covilhã sung two harmonisations of local traditional music. At the end of the concert members of the choirs and of the orchestra, along with the audience, abandoned the premises.

The idea had originally been put forward by the Directive Board of the Orfeão of Covilhã, and it involved local and regional networks in the entire production of a composition they "had been wanting to sing for a long time" (inter. Barata Gomes 2012). The public concert was only possible thanks to the extensive work, developed over many months or private rehearsals, of the amateur choirs (Orfeão da Covilhã and Orfeão da Guarda) and school choirs (the Music Conservatoire of Covilhã), as well as of EPABI's student orchestra (Arts Professional School of Covilhã). A long and invisible germination process had hatched for that public performance. Besides the regular rehearsals by dozens of *musicians*, this germination process had the contribution of *invisible* people who ensured all logistics' requirements, which included negotiating with the local church to provide the space free of charge, managing the different groups and conductors' agendas, preparing garments and arranging transportation for the groups, among other activities. This process also included motivating and preparing the audience, who went on purpose

to the church to attend the concert. On the following day, the concert still resonated throughout the coffee shops and tea rooms, the facebook and in the pages of the local press. Everyone was unanimous in declaring their appreciation towards the initiative and its organisers, and that they expected further similar performances. There were even suggestions for Handel's *Messiah*.

The above described performance took place in an inner city in the centre of Portugal, Covilhã<sup>1</sup>, but it is identical to other performances that have taken place in other regions of Portugal which involve *orfeões* (a type of choral formations and cohorts that I'll develop later), other non-professional choral groups and orchestras, and a significant number of people in the local *musicking* (Small 1998). This study approaches that reality and aims to understand the reasons behind these structured sonic undertakings, which involve so many people during long periods of time.

### **Local *musicking*: reason and resonance in collective participations**

The concert described is revealing of the investment and commitment in music making by people who do not portray themselves as “musicians” and demonstrates a surprising diversity in the relations formed in the course of over six months. Their actions germinated in private contexts during more than six months and hatched in a public event, which reflected in further projects. Given the referred scope (over time, in the present, and in the future) it is difficult to think the performance as an event limited to the time of performing. And it is also difficult to think of this practice as something that only as to do with ‘musicians’.

These actions fall into the definition of *musicking* as suggested by Christopher Small. According to this author, unlike the noun music, the verb *musicking* defines music activity in all its extension better, because it emphasizes action, the way people (everyone who belongs to a given society and not just the musicians) use organised sounds in a specific manner to explore, state and celebrate values, design utopia, create relations that did not exist and try new visions of the world as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> Located in the interior centre of Portugal, the city of Covilhã had 36.356 inhabitants, according to the 2011 general population census. This city is the municipality seat of Covilhã, which covers an area of 555.60 km<sup>2</sup>.

Musicking is about relationships, not so much about those which actually exist in our lives as about those that we desire to exist and long to experience: relationships among people, as well as those between people and the rest of the cosmos, and also perhaps with ourselves and with our bodies and even with the supernatural, if our conceptual world has room for the supernatural. During a musical performance, any musical performance anywhere and at any time, desired relationships are brought into virtual existence so that those taking part are able to experience them as if they really did exist (Small 1998, 183).

The present case-study reinforces Small's suggestion. In truth, although the enormous activity described aimed at performing a music piece - *Gloria* by Vivaldi, one of the western choir music's canons - that performance went much beyond the strict reproduction of the score's music notes; it was one of many activities in which the Orfeão da Covilhã has been involved for the past 90 years that to produce the local where they emerge as an organic society (see Augé 2006), integrated in a *natural* place. But before I approach the OC institution's history, I must clarify what I mean by "local" and "local production".

Music and local is a recurring theme since the early days of Ethnomusicology. This study takes up that relationship but differs from the essentialist view that prevailed during those years, and sets local music practice in broader social processes, emphasizing interactions, ideological maps, flows and the plurality of players involved in local *musicking*. This focus aims to understand the effective relations in local micro-spheres that are activated to make music.

Modern Ethnomusicology has been giving a vast contribution in this area. Thomas Turino defended that "small is still beautiful" and sustained the real transforming power of groups and small organisations, in the face of the monopolization and mass cultural production displayed by the media and operated by political and economic consortia at a global scale (Turino 2008). According to his perspective, singing in a group, being part of a handicraft's cooperative or biological farming are small actions that expand on qualified participation opportunities and boost social transformation. But in those contexts what means social transformation, how and whom operate it? In that process what's the role of institutions such as the Orfeão da Covilhã? And the singular individuals how do they participate on that?

According to Turino, taking part in music making is a key procedure to this process. The hegemonic models of culture lead us to undervalue the disruptive potential of small scale face-to-face relationship contexts, and practices (performances) that commit everyone

involved to participate in a predetermined manner. But it is that very participation in music performance(s) that confer(s) a creative power and space to individuals. In these face-to-face contexts, more than a consensual public presentation space, participation is a turbulent space of exposure to the Other. Therefore, to analyse those small scale face-to-face relationship contexts means to place a lens over nestled processes of production and negotiation of agreements and individual and collective sonic creations, namely by the regular repetition of common practices and the consequent renegotiation of those values and meanings. This local creative action potential leads us to rethink priorities, deconstruct the current supposedly “natural” domination of *labour* over *leisure* in western capitalist society. In music, that dichotomy substantiated the base values of the professional/amateur or serious/light polarisation. In my perspective, making music in a ‘work’ or ‘leisure’ context is also a creative and valuable activity. The power of the commonly declassified “amateur” musical practice is exercised in public and private spaces and times and enacts social reality itself. This argument was actually supported by Ruth Finnegan in a study on “hidden musicians” who develop their musical activity in the English city of Milton Keynes (Finnegan 2008). The author highlighted that the “leisure” and “entertainment” designations masked how structured those practices were in “real” local life.

In fact, local music practice is not just a reflection of socially produced agreements, but it also resets them in real time and updates them in contexts open to several face-to-face participation possibilities, potentially to “all” members of society, as was the case of the above described performance. These music performance’s local contexts create relational spaces of dialogue (including conflicting dialogues), where *everyone* can establish connections, create *real* social contexts and propose new expectations.

Thomas Turino is in tune with Small and defends that when these ‘small’ actions are performed in a sympathetic network, they become a reference weaving of different visions of the world, thus allowing to build expectations, to create utopia in a participatory manner, for the emergence of new culture forms within a given society. This interpretation by Turino emphasizes the potential of the local creative action - such as face-to-face music production - to make germinate and expand new culture proposals beyond those of the hegemony of capitalist cosmopolitanism, as I mention before. However, the triple dimension of the local, mentioned by Arjun Appadurai - a structure of feelings, a space of the social life and a nestled community ideology (Appadurai 2004)

- seems to imply also that the local is produced but emphasizes that the local production is done both in that internal sense and in an external sense. The latter dimension - the external sense - evidences the role of cultural flows that cross and reconfigure the local, its heritages and social agreements. The Art Music canon referred to in a derogatory way by Bruno Nettl (who subliminally justifies the local value of productions such as *Gloria* by Vivaldi, interpreted by Orfeão da Covilhã), stems from one of those transnational cultural flows. The local and the “translocal”/transnational resonate in the practices established by groups such as Orfeão da Covilhã, in a very selective and structured way. Therefore, music, the humanly organized sound (Blacking 1978) and the sonic as a cultural expression cannot be just a set of artefacts, which only merit is the expression of something sublime. My vision differs from that disassociation; I sustain that musicking in the scope of the Orfeão da Covilhã is a dialogue, negotiation and coexistence action within a vital whole: of the individual with the society, of the local and the translocal (the transnational and sometimes the planetary sphere), of the present time with the future, of what has been experienced and what we want to experience, of contingencies and utopia, and reason and resonance.

In respect to the last relationship - reason and resonance - my argument is based on Veit Erlmann’s study on modern aurality. In his study, the author explores two concepts set in a relation of opposites, otherness and incompatibility, which became very popular in the 17th century’s western thought: reason and resonance. According to the author, the first was perceived as a reflection, associated to the mirror mechanism and to the subject and object disjunction (2010, 9); now, the second - resonance - relates to the subject and object conjunction, with the sympathetic, “the collapse of the boundary between perceiver and perceived” (2010, 10). After an extensive discussion sustained on over three centuries of literature, Erlmann revalues the role of listening immersed in knowledge production and supports reason and resonance interdependence. This approach is interesting due to the lexicon that refers to the intersection under analysis: resonance, echo, oscillation, sound, sonority, hearing, aurality, etc. While rejecting simplistic ideas such as the supposed hearing “profundity” opposed to the correlated “superficiality” of vision, the author sustains that aurality - instead of being conditioned by - plays an effective role in the production of culture, knowledge and our own “visions” of the world. In his opinion, human essence lies in the indetermination between reason and resonance, in the oscillation between knowing bodies and feeling minds (*Ibid.*, 340).

In my perspective, the music practices under analysis contextualize the oscillation referred by Erlmann.

**The sustainability of the local social life: relationality, interlocution, and the equality of creative beings.**

The Orfeão of Covilhã was established in 1926, under the motto “On behalf of Art and of our Hometown”, by “important individuals of the city, people with money, business people, such as entrepreneurs, industrialists, most of them with a university degree” (interview to Barata Gomes, 2013), following a performance by Orfeão Scalabitano that had taken place at the Covilhã Theatre on that same year. In order to gather members for the choir, the promoters joined forces with the local authority and local newspapers *O Raio* and *Notícias das Covilhã*. 280 “labourers, factory workers and employers” (*Ibid.*) were selected, out of 500 men and boys enrolled. In the following year, the *orfeão* performed in Covilhã, conducted by military musician Lieutenant Costa Lança, with a programme that integrated the local amateur instrumental group (an instrumental constitution named *tuna*), which played tunes based on traditional Portuguese music (*Tunes from Portugal* by Lieutenant Costa Lança and *Rhapsody No.1* by Hermínio do Nascimento) and classical European music (the “Escape” from *The Damnation of Faust* by Berlioz and the “Soldiers Choir” from *Les Huguenots* by Meyerbeer). The vocal repertoire is the defining element of the identity of the group. It is in fact in the repertoire that one finds the main identifiers of the place that the group represents. It should be referred that when Orfeão da Covilhã was created, the practice of collective singing and/or the overlapping of different voices was part of the daily rural life at the municipality of Covilhã, as evidenced in the ethnographic surveys carried out in that region. Also, choir singing was a regular feature in the local catholic religious practice, both in mass and in religious festivals. In truth, for its promoters, the *orfeão* meant more than just the collective singing or the overlapping of different voices/vocal chords in a choir; the *orfeão* referred to a new paradigm of society that can be summarised as the citizens being actively involved in the development of the local society.

But what is an ‘*orfeão*’?

The term *orfeão*<sup>2</sup> started to be used in Portugal at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with spellings that testify to its French and Spanish origins. It referred to choral societies or lay urban cohorts that sung on a voluntary basis. In those days, the term *orfeão* was used to allude to a new social reality that had not been coined yet; it described institutionalized choral practices outside the religious, theatrical, scholar or “spontaneous” contexts. The emergence of the term occurred in the context of modern citizenship, characterised by the participation of citizens in the urban life of the local communities to which they belonged. In those years, this phenomenon was conducted by cosmopolitan elites and it was part of a vast intervention project in the Portuguese society, which entailed a rejection of the Monarchical-Christian institutional action and the construction of a political alternative to the prevailing social and political structures. The designation *orfeão* makes reference to Orpheus. The metaphor synthesised everything which was expected from the *orfeões*. In fact, an argument in favour of the *orfeão*, which was amply disseminated by the press in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, had to do with the supposedly “decent” behaviours it could promote in the working classes, i.e., with the expurgation and sublimation of features that, in the perspective of its promoters, were anarchical or even “wild”. However, the *Orfeão* institutions were not limited to this regulatory dimension of the working classes and petty bourgeoisie. In the following years, those groups of performers stood as a social movement and as a local power, and negotiated with the municipality, the local press and local church, and sometimes they put political contestation actions into context, namely the totalitarian *Estado Novo* regime (1933-74). Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the term would take on different meanings, such as *acapella* singing or “amateur choir”; however, it should be noted that the term would keep its lay meaning and would not be used in the context of liturgical choirs.

The Orfeão of Covilhã (OC) was created at the peak of that *orfeão* movement, which saw a great development in Portugal after the implantation of the Republic in 1910. This development involved different sectors of the Portuguese society, from the local elites to the working classes, who established Institutionalised choirs in the main cities and towns

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<sup>2</sup> The ‘orfeão’ choral societies and cohorts have been at the centre of an extensive research project entitled “Music’s in-between: the ‘orfeonismo’ movement and choral singing in Portugal (1880-2012)” –(PTDC/EAT-MMU/117788/2010), that was developed at the University of Aveiro by a multidisciplinary research team thanks to the support of the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (see Pestana 2014).

of the Northern and Central parts of the country, by recruiting men (and sometimes, although rarely, women) that aimed to transform the Portuguese society according to a transnational choir model. The *orfeão* movement simultaneously inspired a massive nationalist project and colluded with ethnographers and folklorists, to establish *orfeões* and select and perform a supposed repertoire that expressed a concept of nationhood. OC's 1926 programme described above illustrates these groups' repertoire: it presented an external civilizational referent (Art music from "great composers", thought to be universal) and an internal idiosyncratic referent (traditional music, from the common people of the Portuguese nation, which were often harmonisations of rural tunes collected in the *orfeão*'s local area).

With no headquarters of its own, the Orfeão of Covilhã created a theatre group (1929) and an instrumental group (*tuna*) with amateur musicians (1930). During its first decade, the group performed at local civil events – and contributed towards raising funds to build a monument to the deceased in WW1 and towards the House Charities of Covilhã – and also in urban centres near Covilhã – Guarda, Fundão, Castelo Branco, Penamacor – and only went beyond that area in 1932, when it travelled to Santarém to repay a visit by Orfeão Scalabitano to Covilhã. The choral formation was reconstituted in 1947, after a nine-year interruption, and contemplated the creation of mixed choir (male and female). Conducted by Maestro António Gomes Coelho Nobre, the choir's concerts were broadcasted by the national radio from that year onwards. Also in that year the Orfeão of Covilhã also extended its scope to create a library and organise local chamber concerts of Art Music (by establishing partnerships of interest with external institutions and bodies, such as Pro-Arte, the United States Embassy, the National Radio, the Portuguese Musical Youth, and even São Carlos National Opera), to organise bookkeeping and English language courses, which were available to members and local workers. In 1960, the *Orfeão* integrated four choirs: a Mixed Choir, an Ethnographic Choir, a Sacred Music Choir and a Male Choir. In the following year, under the pedagogic direction of maestro and ethnographer Vergílio Pereira (the best paid maestro in Portugal in those days), the formation involved its members' personal relations to establish the base of what was to become the Regional Music Conservatoire of Covilhã, the first conservatoire institutionalized in Portugal at the inner country. The sixties saw a significant shift in the *orfeão*'s local intervention policies: up to that date they were addressed to members and to the active local society; from that date, they took on more responsibilities and started training children and young people, which showed a turn to the future generations.

Following that same trend, the Orfeão created the Arts Professional School of Beira Interior thirty-one years later. Most performers who interpreted Vivaldi's *Gloria RV 589*, at the "Classical Music Grand Concert" that I mentioned at the beginning of the present paper, belonged to different bodies of Orfeão of Covilhã (the Orfeão of Covilhã's mix choir, the Music Conservatoire of Covilhã's youth choir, the teachers and students orchestra of EPABI of Orfeão of Covilhã). The Orfeão of Covilhã's mix choir stood out among these performers, as its 50 members were neither young and neither music professionals. According to the maestro, it is the love of singing, socialising and mingle that brings this group of people together:

We are a group of people...there are industrialists, there are graduates, there are university lecturers, there are simpler people, there are unemployed people, there are people of a lower social status, and of a higher social status, but we are all the same here. We are all part of ...an *orfeão* here. And we all contributed equally to achieve that harmony. Some of them have been here for 50 years. Mas this is also a way of feeling useful, of feeling that you are fit and still active. We have in common our love for singing, our love for the *orfeão*, our love for mingling and socialising (int.to Paulo Serra 2013).

On the other hand, Barata Gomes, chairman of the board of *Orfeão da Covilhã*, considers that the choir formations aim to "contribute towards the development of people and the land, to take on responsibility for the local society, namely for the education children and young people, and for those who no longer were of a working age but who had worked throughout their life and contributed to make this town the way it is now" (Barata Gomes 2012). Those aims were recurrently referred by different elements of the choir. The aims also had to do with singing a certain type of repertoire, one that is found to be positive not only for the individual, but also for the choir and the local society, expressed through the metaphor *terra* (an ambivalent concept that refers to the land and the earth that I'll develop later); one which creates opportunities of establishing relationships outside the familiar and professional spheres (frequently described as opportunities for "social conviviality"), and which contributes to the broadening of the knowledge and the competences of the individual (lifelong learning). Barata Gomes express the symbolic game of the *social* distinction, the establishment of new relationships (including dating relationships) and the wish to take responsibilities in the building of the local social and cultural life – such as the education of children, the leisure time of workers, the occupation of the elderly, the external recognition of the *terra*.

The Orfeão da Covilhã is an institution with decades of history in the city of Covilhã.

During those years, through musicking the institution generated new *habits* (Berger and Luckmann 2010) in the social live. In what refers musicking activities, the Orfeão worked on habits such as participation, preparation, presentation, etc. The social experiences created through the musical performances are true experiences shared by the local society. This social dimension is part of *all* the society.

But at the same time, the Orfeão da Covilhã is a private sphere where individuals sung together. The individuals that have been singing within choral groups for a long period of time seem to value the way their voices have been transformed, the knowledge and the techniques they have learned and the interest they cultivated to take in certain, “more difficult”, repertoires and which they did not know before. It was also observed that a great part of the effort of the members of the groups under study was directed towards the preparation of the repertoire, of its memorisation or reading of the musical or poetic text (the levels of musical literacy amongst the members of a choir vary a lot), and the building of a univocality in the way words and music are pronounced, of an allegory of a synchronised, harmonic and unique body. When I speak with the choral singers about their experience of singing together, choral members’ replies invariably pointed to the sense of being there, being with the others, of feeling their voices within the part they belonged to and the voices of the other parts, and having to resist that confrontation. The testimonials expressed a feeling of imparting, of face-to-face giving, of exposing oneself to the relational experience of collective music making, of listening to and being listened to. To sing-with-others entails closeness and feeling of fulfilment. It implies immersion into the being-with-others (instead of the audition or the appreciation from the outside). The priority of logocentrism within “Western thought” has neglected this dimension in favour of the “order that regulates the connection”, of “language as a system of meaning” (Cavarero 2011:51). As the philosopher Adriana Cavarero has propounded, speaking about the voice of the individual, “the acoustic sphere [...], as opposed to the visual sphere, is characterized by an essential inherence when it is verbalized, and is thus an adequate manifestation [...] of relationality” (*ibid.*, 242). The experience of building a sonority together inside the choral group operationalises the relationality, the interlocution, and the equality of creative beings.

*Terra* was the metaphor mostly used in the field work, whenever seeking explanations for the reasons of the Orfeão of Covilhã’s maintenance, remembering and emphasising that singing is related with the local society, with the local place, and with the planetary sphere.

In the Portuguese language, *terra* is quite an ambivalent term that means Earth, land, and homeland. It refers to the planet as well as to the place where one is born. Those polysemous meanings are very important to this study, as it enables the understanding of the strong local inscription of the choral practice, and the utopian and universalist ambition, omnipresent in this context, of reaching a state of planetary shared humanity through musical expression. It also expresses the idea of local as being at the centre of the Earth. Despite its multiple meanings, the term remained secular and resisted as a metaphor to express that the humans share a material nature with the planet; I do not know of any equivalent in the English language. The term resisted (i) to the human and non-human spheres' dissociation used in the scientific and technological paradigm since the 17th century (Descola 2016, 125), (ii) to the modern utopia of human autonomy face to the Nature (Hamilton, 2016, 230) and (iii) to the consequent epistemological split between subject and Nature. The term *terra* encompasses and resonates concepts that have commonly polarised and differentiated meanings in *modern* discourses such as local and global, place and planet, origin and end, nature and culture. In my perspective, the holistic term *terra* express well the way music, society, individuals and the planet interplay in local musicking: in relation and dialogue.

In the context under analyses, musicking acts on the conjunction of the *cultural* social live and the *natural* place. That is why those individuals get together, or try to adhere to the existing group, that is why they establish positions of responsibility with specific competences (directive board, artistic board, with objectives and statutes democratically approved in a General Meeting), that is why they mobilise their personal networks, they set a calendar of rehearsals and public performances, they commit themselves to a project, they invest in processes of music and vocal technique learning, and they submit themselves to public scrutiny through a public performance. And they do it without asking to be paid for the time spent or for their personal involvement. It should be noted that in recent years an increasing number of other choir members pay, in fact, a monthly fee to cover expenses with the conductor, or with transportation, accommodation and food whenever the group needs to perform out of their hometown. These citizens share the willingness and the availability for being present and for acting. This way of being present in society is synonymous with *modern* active citizenship, with “having a voice” in the sense described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (*cit. in* Bologna 1987). In this sense, to give voice, or to access voice, is to ascend to citizenship, i.e., to the awareness of belonging to a community of equals, of belonging to a place. This dimension discloses the inheritance

of the Enlightenment ideals of the choral formations in Portugal. It should be noted, however, that the phenomenon was not held hostage. These non-professional musical practices – be it in the Orfeão da Covilhã or other orfeões/choirs - implying regular preparations and rehearsals, where a group of people work towards singing together a certain musical repertoire (Art music, Portuguese music, Local music, ... valuing certain musical “works” that are deemed to be timeless) in a final public performance, are still in fact framing “modern” and utopian feelings of hope for a more positive future. The efforts made to build and maintain a Conservatoire that assures the future of the young society is part of that effort. However, by integrating the older in their musical performances the Orfeão da Covilhã promote socially engaged, plural, participated and pragmatic sonic experiences. Those exemplary actions developed inside the Orfeão are then reply by *all* the people, including the audience, that collaborate and participate in the performance.

### **Conclusion. Vital ecologies: commitment and dialogue**

In this case-study, local musicking – singing in a choir and all its plural and related actions - is set on a tacit agreement of belonging and responsibility towards the choral group, the local society and the *terra*. Taken within the context of the XXI society where they conquer a place in the sun, those actions undoubtedly seem microscopic (they don’t have figure on national statistics, they do not have good visibility in terms of mass communication media; they do not have an important impact either on the local or regional economic sectors, such as tourism does). The scale of these micro-spheres of action contrasts with their capacity for local social engagement and transformation: selecting and appropriating transnational cultural flows (including hegemonic models), expressing local musical practices (constructing ‘their’ repertoires, and ‘their’ musical traditions and legacies), reinforcing intergenerational ties, enacting different people in the same vocal experiences (building the same sonority together). They are in fact micro-spheres of power which generate exemplary actions with an impact on local society, and contribute to the maintenance or disruption of the standing social and political order. In the Orfeão institution composed of ordinary citizens (they do not introduce themselves neither as “professionals” nor as “artists”), a set of bottom-up transforming actions of the society have opened up the way to new possibilities of looking at the present and the future.

The recurrent set and justification for music making in the all-encompassing domain of *terra* reinforces the relevance of immersive dialogue and indetermination (for example,

between the local and the planetary scales) in those contexts. Indetermination does not mean a drift in direction. On the opposite, indetermination is a dense field of possibilities to entail dialogues, experiences, learning, commitment, etc. In respect to immersive dialogues, I can point out the fact that musicking is a sustainable co-existence between local culture and translocal culture production, and that musical production arising from that dialogue updates local culture and takes it to wider spheres. In my perspective, immersive dialogue reaches other domains. The case-study also demonstrated the coexistence of different people with different knowledges in the same musicking action: the knowledge of the conductor that read the scores, the knowledge of the audiences that applaud the concert, the knowledge of each of the voices that sung, etc. Also, different powers coexist in the space of the musical performance: the Orfeão da Covilhã institution, the municipal, the ecclesiastic, the local press. The dialogue reaches *terra*, an invisible but meaningful presence in an ontological pluralism, where culture and nature, individual and society are immersed in the same and all-encompassing resonance.

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