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An Invisible Network: Music Consumption And The Construction Of The Portuguese Popular Song

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Introduction

The systematic study of the recording industries in Portugal began during the 1990s, in the context of preparing for the publication of the *Enciclopédia da Música em Portugal no século XX* (coord. Castelo-Branco: 2010) at the Institute of Ethnomusicology – Centre for Music and Dance Studies). Studies within the scope of the research project “The Phonographic Industries in Portugal in the 20th century” (PI Castelo-Branco), were further developed by research conducted by Losa and Belchior (2010), Belchior (2014), Losa (2014) and Pestana (2014), among others, which consolidated this field of research. Most perspectives focus on the early ‘mechanical era,’ or approach independent aspects such as industry and commerce, creation/performance, music consumption. However, they do not discuss the common network that these aspects established.

Thus, the aim of this article is to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the agents, technologies and industries involved in the construction of new patterns of musical consumption, mediated by emerging technologies, during the transition between the 1920s and the 1930s. We focus on specific agents, acknowledging the role and relevance of personalities and artists in general, particularly the Portuguese composer Frederico de Freitas (1902-1980), and the music merchant Alfredo Allen. Composer, conductor and scholar, Frederico de Freitas was a versatile artist, working in different fields within the scope of art and popular music, namely stage works for dance, theatre, *revista* (the Portuguese vaudeville), operetta, and *fado*. He was also one of the musical producers and conductors hired by the National Radio from the mid-1930s, and the first author to compose for sound films in Portugal. Alfredo Allen was the Portuguese agent for the British Gramophone Company's label His Master's Voice (HMV) between 1927 and 1931 (when EMI – Electric and Musical Industries – was founded). Freitas and Allen became close friends as well as work associates, as Freitas became the artistic director of the Portuguese branch of HMV in 1929.

The archival research for this article encompassed the correspondence between the UK Gramophone Company and Alfredo Allen – kept at the EMI Group Archive Trust, in Hayes – the correspondence between Allen and Freitas and other materials from Freitas' archives at the University of Aveiro, and the private 78 r.p.m. collections of José Rino and José Moças.

This article begins with a brief summary of the process of integrating sound recordings in musical consumptions, musical production and marketing in Portugal in the first decades of the 20th century, followed by a presentation of some of the strategies and limitations of the Portuguese delegation of HMV. Finally, this article will discuss aspects that, from our perspective, characterized the role of Frederico de Freitas between 1929 and 1931 as the artistic director of the Portuguese branch of HMV.

A Brief Contextualization

According to Malm (1992), the technology of sound recording generated new modes of musical reproduction and preservation, and effected the separation between the performer and listener, a type of separation that the composer Murray Schafer (1977) coined with the term “schizophonia.” Nevertheless, the emergence of recorded music did not cause a schism between the manners of perceiving and making music. The emergent recording industry sought consensus regarding what was popular and what was socially approved, reducing the experts’ activity to the selection of artists and repertoire previously validated in the context of live performance.

In Portugal, the recording and commercialization of wax cylinders dates from 1893, according to Jorge Silva (2012). It was only by the turn of the century, however, that Portugal became part of the itineraries of the emergent recording industry. In 1900, the American engineer William Sinkler Darby (1878-1950), one of Emil Berliner’s Gramophone experts operating in Europe (Martland: 1997), included the city of Porto in his commercial recording itinerary of the Iberian Peninsula. In Porto, Darby installed a recording studio at the Hotel Franckfurt, where he was staying, and began contacting Portuguese artists such as Acácia Reis, Duarte Silva, José Brito, and Reynaldo Varela, who sang, played or acted in different performance spaces (Pestana: 2014). He recorded *fados*, folkloric dances, hymns, and other popular musical genres, some of which were played by the Banda da Guarda Municipal do Porto, who performed every week at the Cristal Palace Gardens in the city of Porto (*ibid.*).

During the first decades of the 20th century, Portugal became a peripheral site of action for major record companies. Multinational companies such as the Gramophone Company, Pathé, and Homokord, were increasingly active in Portugal. According to Losa, initiatives by Portuguese entrepreneurs in order to create “a new industry” of “phonographic apparatus” in Portugal successively failed, limiting the Portuguese market to the commercialization of recordings, particularly in urban centers (Losa, 2014). Among the Portuguese merchants who collaborated with recording companies, Losa mentions Carlos Calderon, the owner of the Sociedade Phonográfica Portuguesa (Portuguese Phonographic Society). Calderon was a composer connected to musical theatre productions, and also a music publisher for domestic consumption and the recording market (*ibid.*). Calderon developed his own strategy, based on the selection of musical successes from theatre stages (some composed by him), and the selection of prominent artists. He disseminated this repertoire through his own musical editions and through international recording companies with whom he established partnerships (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, during the second and third decades of the 20th century, commercial recordings remained largely subsidiary to musical theatre production.

The Widespread Consumption Of *Mechanical Music*

By the beginning of the 20th century, recordings became common household items even in less affluent homes. There are few descriptions about the uses of recorded music in Portugal during the first two decades of the 20th century. Pinto de Sacavém’s description of a walk through Lisbon’s neighborhoods mentions different manners of music appreciation according to social level. In his description, the gramophone typifies the lower classes:

We hear, out of the open windows, a melody by Tosti sang by the daughter of a wealthy official, a waltz by a Brazilian girl, or a recording of the Portugueseza [the Portuguese anthem], scratched by a cheap gramophone; this latter entertainment is almost always heard in the ground floor [where families of non-specialized workers normally lived], so we can also watch all the family, thoroughly enjoying themselves! (Pinto: 1911, p. 7).

During the following years, the gramophone gradually conquered the domestic spaces. The following excerpt suggests that, by the end of the 1920s, the sonic landscape (Shaffer: 1977) of some Portuguese cities had changed.

There are times when the streets seem like corridors of a strange madhouse because of the nonsensical musical bombardment spewed from the windows into space, hurtling, crossing, melting into an illogical whole, a confused racket, requiring police intervention just as rude words and improper public actions would do. Home concerts, for family and visitors’ entertainment, and advertisements are launched by powerful machines from the upper floors to the poor passersby, and join this melomaniac delirium. But the rule of the gramophone does not stop here. There are shoeshine stores, as they call them now, where the client, maybe for the same price, can acquire the best brands of shoe polish and the best authors’ music (Gonçalves: 1944 [c. 1930], pp. 151-152).

After the so-called ‘mechanical age,’ from the second half of the 1920s in Portugal, recordings embodied new manners of music appreciation, conquered the approval of art-music lovers, and became a subject for critical reviews (equivalent to experiencing live performance). For example, in a chronicle, the ‘art-music’ musician Joaquim Gonçalves ironically mentioned

his perception of the democratization of 'good' music caused by mechanical reproduction (Benjamin: 1933). Taking into account the above-mentioned unrestricted access, Gonçalves defended the need to 'teach' this public how to hear:

A literary education should not be based on quoting titles, and neither should musical education depart from aural learning alone, and citing renowned composers as old and familiar acquaintances. Musical reproduction and transmission equipment has attained, for its marvelous achievements, a distinguished status in modern music. This is confirmed not only by its commercial success, but also by the fact that great contemporary celebrities have trusted these means in order to transmit their super-human moments of revelation, rapture and ecstasy, during which we are transported to a world that only the eyes of the soul can perceive. But it is not enough to listen: in music, to listen is to understand. The ear must be supported by the brain and the soul. [...] let us educate the ear, perfect the soul, and then we shall know how to listen (Gonçalves: 1944 [c. 1930], pp. 155-156).

For Gonçalves, the problem was not related to the medium – mechanical music – but rather that listeners, in his perspective, were not intellectually prepared to appreciate it. In fact, by the end of the 1920s, the gramophone became gradually recognized by Portuguese elite as equivalent to the live concert experience. In this process of the transformation of music into a product accessible to the masses, issues regarding 'aural education' – a sort of initiation ritual to musical listening – *distinguished* (Bourdieu: 2010 [1976]) art music, exempting popular music from this requirement.

The Commercial Strategies Of Grande Bazar Do Porto (1927-1929): Seducing The Elites

In 1927, the Grande Bazar do Porto, a commercial store patronized by the high bourgeoisie of Porto, which sold toys, perfumes and other fashionable items, started to sell HMV gramophones and recordings, a promising marketing activity, especially after the advent of electrical recording technology. The Bazar's general manager, Alfredo Allen, became HMV's agent for Portugal, thus ensuring that the Bazar, by promoting and selling products from a prestigious brand, would distinguish itself, in a Bourdieunian perspective (*ibid.*) from other commercial stores.

The sales of HMV's British-produced equipment and recordings was accompanied by a marketing strategy geared towards Portuguese art-music lovers (who had not yet adopted the new technology), and to the worldly young society of the 'roaring 1920s' (Guinote: 1990), including: (1) "elegant," large format advertisements in the main newspapers of Lisbon and Porto, and (2) placing gramophones in public performance spaces. The advertisements emphasized the equipment's reproduction quality and the superiority of HMV's artists, focusing on specific repertoires: opera, symphonic music and solo recitals by renowned art-music performers, and modern dance music performed by American and French orchestras. The Grande Bazar do Porto organized listening sessions of its gramophones in venues that were normally used for live performances, such as the Tivoli theatre, or even cafes where live music was usually presented. Using these performing venues highlighted the idea that HMV's products were authentic and truthful. This strategy reinforced the arguments presented by the Bazar's advertisements in newspapers, which claimed that HMV's products were more than a "mechanical instrument," – they were "the human voice with its life and soul, [...] the truth" (*O Notícias Ilustrado*, no. 7, 7-5-1928, 2). The Bazar's strategy also involved a discourse that laid emphasis on the *distinction* between its products and the recordings of the 'mechanical age,' which were preferred by consumers with lesser means. The more technically advanced characteristics of electrical recordings and microphones were paramount for the success of this strategy.

The alleged truthfulness of HMV's products was validated by the critics. Pioneering articles by José Ângelo in the newspaper *Notícias Ilustrado* of 1928 presented the first musical reviews of recorded music in Portugal (according to data from this current research). Through weekly columns, he shared his listening experiences of recordings with the readers, in a manner equivalent to the description of live listening (see also Maisonneuve: 2002). After reviewing the recordings of a Chopin Scherzo (HMV 1065), and Chopin Preludes (HMV 1087, HMV 957 and 960), Ângelo pointed out:

The fact that we limited the number of recordings reviewed does not mean that there are no other recordings that may be worth mentioning; it only means that, from all the recordings examined, these are the stars that shone brighter to our listening disposition (*O Notícias Ilustrado*, no. 7, 7-5-1928, 2).

In opposition to the concert hall, recordings allowed for the selection of repertoire according to the listener's state of mind. In addition, the 'quality' of HMV's recordings could provide an unparalleled experience when compared with live performance, as

it supplied the performances of renowned artists to specialized listeners.

Seeking Autonomy: The Grande Bazar Do Porto And HMV

In this context Allen, the owner of the Grande Bazar do Porto, asked HMV to allow him to engage an Artistic Director for the Portuguese branch. Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by HMV's management, Allen succeeded in hiring an artistic director, suggesting Frederico de Freitas for the job in June 1929, and proposing an additional budget of 10,000 escudos. Allen explained the purpose of that amount:

to cover all the time employed by him hearing and calling artists, preparing programme [*sic*], making all the orchestral arrangements, and conducting all the orchestral titles and accompaniments, assuming also the artistic management of the complete recording session. [...] the sales must certainly be larger as Mr. Freitas is very well known here and one of the most popular authors of musical comedies, etc (Allen to HMV, June 1929)[¹].

This proposal expressed a clear intention to initiate locally-controlled artistic productions of "Portuguese popular music." Furthermore, the correspondence suggests that Allen also had plans to record in the art music of Portuguese composers in Portugal.

Freitas was a former student of the Lisbon Conservatoire, and had studied composition and orchestration in the context of Western art music. During the 1920s he became involved with stage composition, namely for the *revista* theatre, and had many successes as song composer in this context; he became one of the most renowned and active *revista* composers during the late 1920s and 1930s. Freitas' stage experience was crucial for the ensuing circulation of artists and contexts within the different cultural industries as, by the end of the 1920s, sound recordings involved mostly artists and genres that had had previous success on stage.

In 1929, Frederico de Freitas initiated a new professional category in Portugal as 'artistic director' of the Portuguese branch of HMV, a fact that reflects the growing complexity and demands of cultural production in the context of the Portuguese recording industries.

The Grande Bazar Do Porto And Frederico De Freitas (1929-31)

When Frederico de Freitas took over the artistic direction of HMV's branch in Portugal, Alfredo Allen's situation was constrained: on the one hand, he was limited by the British company's guidelines; on the other hand, he was competing in an increasingly aggressive market. The advertising strategy of publicizing the HMV Portuguese branch's products in newspapers with wide distribution in major cities was supported by the creation of a marketing department, coordinated by Augusto Rodrigues (Allen to Gramophone Company, June 9th, 1930, EMI archives, Hayes).

Research conducted based on newspapers such as *Ilustração* and *O Notícias Ilustrado*, published during the period when Frederico de Freitas was branch director (1929 to 1931), reveals that the communication continued to be addressed to the upper-society strata, marking a difference from other advertisements for phonographic equipment and recordings in Portugal. Distinctive characteristics included: 1) changing advertisement contents and images in each new publication; 2) focusing on the international reputation of their artists, as mentioned in the following excerpt:

The Classical recordings of 'HIS MASTER'S VOICE' include the most renowned artists of the bel-canto art. These artists, who record exclusively for 'His Master's Voice', have recently recorded the magnificent opera 'AIDA' (complete) and 19 double discs with the orchestra and the choir from the SCALA in Milan (*Ilustração*, July 16th, 1929, no. 86, 4); 3) connecting its products with the elite's tastes, as implied by the following excerpts:

A fine ride! [with the image of a convertible automobile] Don't you forget the best way to enjoy the trip and entertain the travelers A 'HIS MASTER'S VOICE' GRAMOPHONE and a well-chosen set of RECORDINGS FROM THE SAME BRAND. Pay a visit to its sole representative: Grande Bazar do Porto (*Ilustração*, June 16th, 1929, no. 84, 4);

or:

Those who go on vacation at the spa or at the beach must take along a portable gramophone 'HIS MASTER'S VOICE' [the image depicts a row boat, a rower, a girl sitting on a recliner and an open gramophone] (*Ilustração*, August 16th, 1929, no. 88, 4).

The marketing strategy also included participation in representative commercial fairs in the main Portuguese cities, such as the fair organized at the Cristal Palace in Porto by the feminine magazine *Vogue* in 1929, or in festivities held at cities where the branch had distributors, such as Tomar in 1929.

Alongside these initiatives, Alfredo Allen coordinated a network of dealers spreading from northern to southern Portugal. In order to identify local tastes and the province's buying patterns, in 1930 Allen sent a questionnaire to his local distributors, asking about "the music genres that should be recorded" (Allen to Freitas, February 12th, 1930, Frederico de Freitas archives, University of Aveiro Library). The answers, as Allen admitted in a letter to Freitas, were not consistent, and did not correspond to the 'fashionable' tendencies of Allen's Grande Bazar do Porto. Local distributors preferred popular songs, *fados*, choral repertoire, religious songs, comic numbers, and music from vaudevilles, among other genres (*Ibid.*).

The study of Allen's correspondence with the Gramophone Company, in Hayes, shows that, after 1928, the recording market in Portugal became gradually more competitive, engaging the interest of several companies, as we can surmise from the following excerpt:

During the year 1928 we had only as important competitors Columbia and Odeon. In 1929 two German competitors joined our market and that became very important competitors, this due to the frequent recording they are holding in Lisbon several times a year and also to the very account of their big volume of sound and good wear. Referring to the 1st. quarter of this year we are unable to send you any statistic, but we are informed that Brunswick has increased her orders for stamps, and are doing a very big advertising campaign for a big series of Portuguese records they are going to put on sale on the 1st May. [...] By all this you see that we absolutely need to have a new recording session as soon as possible (Allen to Gramophone Company, April 25th, 1930, EMI Archives, Hayes).

This specific situation required the ability to negotiate with the major company, the Gramophone Company, and the small resellers spread all over the country. The correspondence between Allen and HMV includes numerous requests for increasing the number of new discs of Portuguese popular music that were pressed, and for allowing musical contents with a closer connection with vaudeville productions – and other musical theatre genres – that were performed at Portuguese theatres. Allen wrote to HMV in 1930:

So we would be very grateful if you would kindly look into the possibility of starting a recording session in Lisbon on the 1st June. Besides all we have exposed, this date would be very convenient because on the first days of that month two new musical comedies will appear on [sic] the Lisbon theatres (Teatro Avenida and Apolo), best hits of same we would be the first to record (Allen to Gramophone Company, April 8th, 1930).

A rejected project: recording the "best" Portuguese composers

The company rejected recording repertoires that were not popular. Nevertheless, Allen wanted to extend the scope of the recorded repertoire, and in 1929 requested permission to record the "best Portuguese composers of classical music by a Symphony Orchestra," arguing that:

Regarding the Symphony Orchestra we must also inform you that we never thought of making here by that orchestra records of classic or foreign titles. Our intention was to record some Portuguese music of our best composers for that type of music, which should not be recorded by our Light Orchestra (Allen to Gramophone Company, June 24th, 1929).

Proposals to record Portuguese art music were rejected. In fact, as referred by Gronow (1983), small countries like Portugal did not have local companies or 'press facilities,' so they had to depend on the agencies of the major companies.

Interactions between the three technologies, sound recordings, radio and sound film

Faced with the disparity of consumers' taste, the subordination to the major company and the aggressive rivalry of the other commercial records sellers, Allen decided to rely on his new artistic director, Frederico de Freitas. Freitas' artistic direction widened the dissemination of HMV's recordings, and initiated in Portugal a commercial strategy articulating the three emergent cultural industries: the phonographic industry, the radio and the sound movies. The letters exchanged between Allen and Freitas during this period reveal that they were both aware of the opportunities that the interaction between the three technologies, sound recordings, radio and sound film could create (Pestana: 2014). In 1930, Allen, in a letter sent to the Gramophone Company Ltd., mentioned the radio context:

The interest for wireless is increasing rapidly in our territory. Sometime ago we hardly had any broadcasting stations but now we have several in Oporto and Lisbon. [...] We have made arrangements with these broadcasting stations so that they will at least once a week broadcast our records. This is very interesting for us as they advertise our records and our products; after this policy was adopted we have noted an increase in sales of those records that are broadcasted (Allen to Gramophone Co, July 23rd 1930, EMI Archives, Hayes).

Among the agreements established by the Grande Bazar do Porto with radio stations that began broadcasting in Portugal during this period, we can single out the agreement with *Estação CT1BO*, from Lisbon (Pestana: 2014). This station broadcasted HMV recordings, emphasizing that "the records played belong to the famed brand HMV." Besides its own quintet and artists such as the Portuguese pianist Vianna da Motta, the station also featured HMV 'artists,' including Frederico de Freitas, in its concerts and other live presentations. An undated CT1BO's flyer announced:

Program organized by HMV's artists who participated in the last orthophonic recording: Fernanda Coutinho (fados, vira); Alice da Luz Silva Guedes de Freitas, Conchita Uliá; Celestina Luiza; Maria Teresa Carvajal. Piano accompaniments by maestro Frederico de Freitas. Portuguese guitar and guitar accompaniments by Victor Ramos and Abel Negrão. The recordings made by the artists who participated in this concert will be soon available for sale (EMI archives, Hayes).

Maybe as a justification for Freitas' salary, Allen described in an above-mentioned letter that:

[O]ur Maestro Frederico de Freitas organised in this broadcasting station, absolutely [*sic*] free, a concert with some of our artists that recorded for us during the last recording period. This concert was a great success, and nearly the every number of the programme had to be repeated as hundreds of persons telephoned to the station asking enthusiastically for several numbers of the programme to be sung again. Our Maestro's idea met with such a good acceptance that he intends repeating these concerts every month, without of course, bringing us any expense. In consequence, this concert has brought us hundred [*sic*] of orders for records that were done out in the recent session" (Allen to Gramophone Co, July 23rd, 1930, EMI Archives, Hayes).

During this period Frederico de Freitas supervised HMV's recordings in Portugal: 1) selecting artists, 2) composing, arranging and/or orchestrating, 3) selecting master recordings. Regarding the selection of artists, as mentioned earlier, Freitas held an advantageous viewpoint, as composer for musical theatrical genres such as the *vaudeville*. He knew the artists – musicians, actors/singers – and he was aware of current preferences. The recording technology that was used at that time had a noteworthy impact in the artists' selection criteria, allowing for 'natural voices' to access a recording and stage career (Marinho, Pestana and Alcobia: 2013). That process was not exclusive to Portugal. As stated by Gronow and Saunio (1998), new technologies, such as the microphone, opened up the music market to 'small' voices and led to the emergence of new selection criteria such as 'charisma' or emotional appeal. Alongside the stage artists, a number of new performers tried a musical career in the recording industry, showing up for castings, sometimes at Freitas' own home. The composer complained of the many candidates he had to audition: in a letter from 1930, he wrote: "They all come looking for me: single girls, married or divorced women, widows" (Freitas to Allen, March 13th, 1930, Frederico de Freitas archives, University of Aveiro Library). Freitas worked regularly with a group of artists that primarily included actors/singers who had worked previously with him on stage, such as Corina Freire. As mentioned below, Freitas was an important element in the creation of a new network involving these actors and their circulation between the theatre, recordings, radio and sound films.

In fact, HMV recordings of Portuguese music, identified by the reference EK, were already favoring Freitas' compositions for the

revista theatre. Available data suggests that the recordings undertaken by the Foz Melody Band in 1927, in Lisbon, under the supervision of Gramophone Company technicians, included songs from the *revista Água Pé*, by Frederico de Freitas (Vernon, 1998). When Freitas became artistic director of HMV's Portuguese branch, his compositions were more frequently featured in HMV catalogs.

Freitas' activities were further complemented by other tasks: orchestrating traditional Portuguese songs, coordinating other orchestrators and arrangers, constructing new, more intense and brighter sonorities. As a composer and arranger of popular music, Freitas contributed to the emergence of a new style, characterized by the use of different instrumental ensembles (excluding wind bands), and rhythmically flexible accompaniments with varied harmonies; voices, in this context, due to the use of recent technology such as the electrical microphone, stood out clearly. By doing this, Freitas distanced himself from other composers and sellers who had become involved in the recording market before him, like Calderon, who was the agent for Odeon at the time (Losa: 2014). As a composer, he gave the orchestra an unusual role, in a context of popular music, constructing a more sophisticated and 'modern' sonority. His early studies of orchestration may have contributed for his activity as phonographic composer. Nevertheless, as he admitted to a journalist, composing popular music had specific difficulties. When the journalist commented that composing popular music was "extremely easy," Freitas answered:

Not as much as you may imagine. Music for *revista* must be interesting and, at the same time, so easy that the audience may leave the room whistling it. That's the most difficult thing to overcome (*Ilustração*, May 16th, 1930, no. 106, 36-37).

In 1930 Frederico de Freitas was invited by the film director Leitão de Barros (1896-1967) to compose the music for the first sound film in Portugal, *A Severa*, premiered in 1931. Freitas seized this opportunity and inaugurated a new commercial strategy, by proposing the recording of some 'hits' from the film to the Gramophone Company, in January 1931. Freitas was certainly aware of similar practices in other countries. The technical resources employed in this film were used to convey an image of *portugality*: Portuguese stories, Portuguese composers, Portuguese musical icons, and Portuguese actors. This film followed the footsteps of earlier productions by Invicta Film, a film company based in Porto that, between 1919 and 1921, produced silent movies based on Portuguese novels and contexts, accompanied by music expressly composed for that purpose by the nationalist composer Armando Leça (Pestana 2012). In fact, the sound film *A Severa* presents many 'Portuguese' references.

The film, based on a novel and theatre play by Júlio Dantas (1876-1962), presents the story of Severa, a *fado* singer who portrayed and embodied the mythical origins of *fado* in the first half of the 19th century; in addition, the film featured a number of 'Portuguese' cultural icons such as bull fights, and musical genres such as *fado* and folk music, resorting to an assumed expression of 'sentimentalism.' Its songs became perennial icons of Portuguese song, associated to the *fado* genre. Nevertheless, as Frederico de Freitas defended, this imagery was constructed according to a large spectrum of 'popular' references that included not only *fados* (as the heroine of the film suggested) but also more cheerful 'popular' genres. When a journalist asked whether all the music in the film would be *fado*, Freitas answered:

No, not at all. If anybody got that impression, forget about it. The music, my friend, is not art music. It does not have universal characteristics. It's Portuguese, genuinely Portuguese, anywhere in the world. But one should not say, therefore, that the music of "Severa" is a *fado* monopoly. Quite the contrary. The score is all popular music, indeed, but it's joyful, extremely joyful (*Sonoarte*, May 15th, 1931).

Freitas and Allen anticipated the possibility of a commercial success for the film's songs, and, in fact, the recording of the songs and of the musical soundtrack were undertaken simultaneously, according to the correspondence exchanged during that period. This decision introduced a new agent in the musical industries field: the sound cinema, which would progressively overtake the musical stage as the main influence in defining successful genres and performers. The success of this decision was immediately announced to Freitas by Allen, in a letter describing the favorable record sales and revenues:

Fado-Chica	545
Timpanas-Arraial	484
Romão-Valsa	234

(Allen to Freitas, July 8th, 1931, Frederico de Freitas archives, University of Aveiro Library)

The impact of this first sound film and its songs was paramount for the recording industry and for the radio, since radio programs relied heavily on recorded repertoire, even if this practice was sometimes condemned. The success of many songs began thus in the cinemas and musical theatres, followed by their recording release, and the printed edition as voice and piano scores.

The folk songs and *fados* published by HMV do not explore any particular syntax that could stand against the tonal models from central-European art music. On the contrary, Frederico de Freitas combined 'folk' elements with the orchestral technique of art music, and the new techniques of sound recording in a novel 'modern' and 'international' manner.

The dialogue between Portuguese traditional (national) songs and 'modern' international styles, explored by Freitas in the field of the cultural industries, would, in the following years, be extensively developed in the context of the cultural policies of the New State autocratic regime.

Under Freitas' coordination, popular music and songs were played or/and sung by artists with a significant public impact (as mentioned earlier, they circulated among different performance and media contexts) and recorded in Lisbon, at the Gramophone studios in London, or at the Compagnie Française du Gramophone studios, in Paris. Moreover, as referred above, Freitas entered the world of the recording industry when electrical recordings were widely replacing acoustic recordings, and microphones played a relevant part. Both as a composer and as a recording producer, Freitas explored that technical advance to its fullest extent. Songs from the film *A Severa* were recorded with two microphones – one for the voices and the other for the orchestra – under the label His Master's Voice.

The Grande Bazar do Porto and Alfredo Allen's decline

After the commercial success of the recordings of the *Severa* film, the Grande Bazar do Porto suffered progressive sales losses, and experienced growing problems in the negotiations with the Gramophone Company. This coincided with the merger of the Gramophone Company with Columbia Graphophone, resulting in the company EMI. Correspondence from this period is scarce, limiting the access to information about events. Two important events occurred, however: 1) the store Valentim de Carvalho, in Lisbon, started distributing HMV equipment and recordings; 2) London implemented the distribution of HMV products according to "national groups," imposing its worldwide market policies on small shop keepers (J. Humphries to Mr. Shields, May 24th, 1934, EMI Archives, Hayes). From that moment on, Allen's and Grande Bazar do Porto's distribution area was drastically reduced:

The fortieth parallel of latitude, although as we informed Mr. Benning we could expect to have on our side the whole province of Beira Baixa [...]. To avoid possible future disappointments, we remind you here, once again, that we remain with the control of much smaller part of the country which is also the poorest part and positively the one which is since a few years much more affected by the situation created by the attitude of Brazil and more recently much affected too by the crisis in the wine, cotton and other trades (Grande Bazar do Porto to Gramophone Company Ltd, August 10th, 1939).

The store Valentim de Carvalho must have been a more interesting business venture since, unlike Grande Bazar do Porto that proceeded with its strategy of recordings and HMV products sales in a context of luxury items market, Valentim de Carvalho specialized in music. During a period marked by the increasing association of recorded music with the live listening experience, specialized music stores became the preferred context for new musical artifacts.

Conclusion

When Alfredo Allen opened a Portuguese HMV branch at the Grande Bazar do Porto, music critics and art-music lovers were gradually becoming more interested in recordings, due to the technological advances of electrical recording and reproduction. After this period, listening to records became a specialized mode of listening, and HMV's art-music recordings contributed to that change. Nevertheless, HMV's distribution in Portugal was not limited to that genre.

Owing to Allen's marketing strategy, between 1927 and 1931 HMV recordings won over a large spectrum of consumers in Portugal: 1) Advertising campaigns were directly addressed to a high-end clientele (who patronized his store), focusing on

recordings and other HMV products, using terms such as ‘erudite’ and ‘fashionable’ to emphasize social distinction; 2) Allen established a partnership with the composer Frederico de Freitas – a well-known composer of *revista* and stage music, with a significant profile within the art-music context as well – for the production of Portuguese recordings (*i.e.* recordings with Portuguese popular music, texts and artists), aiming to gain the support of national resellers, and to take over market shares controlled by other companies. The ambivalence of this composer (linked to Western art-music styles, but also modern styles, and, whenever necessary, popular styles) was commercially advantageous for the Grande Bazar do Porto, since, through homology, it allowed the transfer to the brand of the prestige he had acquired in the domain of musical composition.

After the Gramophone Company disallowed the recording of the “best Portuguese composers,” the Portuguese branch chose to focus its activity on the production of Portuguese popular music. Both as a composer and as a recording producer, Freitas explored technical developments to their full extent, enlarging and recycling some old ‘Portuguese popular songs’ with new ‘fashionable’ orchestral sonorities. Together with Alfredo Allen, they inaugurated a new relationship between the phonographic industry and the emerging radio and sound film industries (traditionally limited, for decades, to the relationship between music publishing and/or show business). In this way, the tradition of the stage musical (namely of genres such as the vaudeville, operetta, *revista*) was transferred to and embodied by the new musical industries (film, recording, radio).

This process of transfer and appropriation by the radio, in the case of Freitas, highlights the role of composers, singers and technology in the creation of a varied range of genres and styles of performance, marked by the context of the promotion of nationalism and *portugality* during the early years of the dictatorial regime in Portugal (1926-1974). Freitas’ popular Portuguese music was in consonance with the new aesthetics of the regime, as proposed by António Ferro, one of the ideologists of the autocratic regime. Freitas’ popular Portuguese music combined the ‘traditional,’ the idealization of the rural world, and ‘Portuguese folk music,’ with ‘fashionable’ (international) and cheerful sonorities. Significantly, in years to follow, Frederico de Freitas would become a pivotal figure in the production of ‘Portuguese music’ under the tutelage of the regime.

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Notes

Alfredo Allen was not a native English speaker. We are aware that there are errors in the excerpts from his letters, but they do reproduce the original documents, which were written in English by Allen.

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