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THE BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF FADO IN MOÇAMBIQUE UP TO 1973

BY

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Not only was the fado heard in Lisbon, but it was also heard in Moçambique, particularly in Lourenço Marques, which was the capital city of one of the largest Portuguese overseas territories (1). In conception, Portugal does not have colonies, but the overseas territories were all considered Provinces of Portugal and each province had representation in the Parliament and the Central Government of Metropolitan Portugal in Lisbon (1). Since 1970 there were changes and some of the Government of Moçambique territory was delegated directly to that province (1). Now Moçambique is independent.

With the basic fact in mind that Lourenço Marques was a city within the organization of Portugal, it can be clearly seen that one of the characteristic arts of Portugal, namely the singing and presentation of fado, formed an active part in the life of its citizens (2).

As in Lisbon, in Lourenço Marques there were meeting places where those who wished could go to hear fados sung. Probably the Adega da Madragoa (2), which was in the basement of the Clube dos Lisboetas in the

(1) This was originally written in 1972-1973.

(2) Adega da Madragoa, Clube dos Lisboetas, Avenida de Brito Camacho, 580, Lourenço Marques.

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upper part of the city on the hill approaching the Polana area, was the most typical in its setting. The Adega functioned on Thursdays and Saturdays and sometimes more frequently during peak holiday seasons. There was also another meeting place called the Tertúlia Festa Brava. This was a semi-open-air meeting place in amongst the trees bordering the Esplanade and the Avenida da República. This fado-house functioned now on most days and also on Sundays. In 1972 yet another fado meeting place, O Ribotejano, opened in the Bairro Marcello Caetano in Vila Salazar (Now Matola), just outside Lourenço Marques. This place normally functioned on the week-ends.

There used to be another meeting place, the Restaurante Típico O Fado, which tended to cater more for the tourist, especially the tourists from neighbouring South Africa. The standard was good but, I felt, not quite so critical and particular as the standard in the Adega da Madragoa. In Restaurante Típico O Fado, the main artists were António Matos, Maria Vicente, Branco Portugal and José António for the singing of the fado. The guitar player (i. e., Spanish guitar player) was Hermenegildo Lopes and the viola player (i. e., the Portuguese guitar player) was Carlos Lopes. The Restaurante Típico O Fado has now closed but most of the artists have performed in the Tertúlia Festa Brava.

As in Portugal, the accompaniment to the Fado in Lourenço Marques was provided by the two guitarists, the Portuguese guitar providing the melody and the Spanish guitar providing the harmony, often a ground bass.

The Adega da Madragoa, although catering for the tourist trade was somewhat more sophisticated. Many of the students and younger intellectuals of the city were attracted to Adega and met there.

Most of the people who performed in the fado meeting places were amateurs, but amateurs of a high standard. However, Maria Vicente and Branca de Portugal who used to sing at the Restaurante Típico O Fado were professional fado singers. They also sang at the Tertúlia, the Rádio Clube de Moçambique or even sometimes in the Adega. Eulália Duarte, who for some time ran the Adega da Madragoa, was also a professional fado singer. She was very conscious of the traditions of fado singing and in the early seventies she made another trip to Metropolitan Portugal to study the trends in both Lisbon and Coimbra. Eulália Duarte as a devotee of the Lisbon fado and she sang the many types of variations of the Fado theme heard there. At the Adega, Eulália was usually assisted



by several other performers, notable amongst these were Joel Henriques (who also sang in Beira and Luanda), Joaquim Bica and sometimes Hermenegildo Lopes. Lopes also used to play and sing in the Restaurante Típico O Fado and he sometimes performed in the Tertúlia.

Joel Henriques was a young man who came from Angola and he studied the art of fado singing in Lisbon. Travelling a good deal in the African Provinces of Portugal, he was often asked to sing in the various cities he had to visit for business reasons. Henriques usually sang the more serious and sentimental type of fado, the typical feeling of *saudades* emanating from his performances. His voice is that of a strong baritone, produced artistically, and he has the ability to control the volume extremely well. He was also able to express his emotional feeling with the dynamics and enunciation of the words.

Joaquim da Bica was an older man and he has a light baritone voice. he was also an amateur but a competent performer who had specialised in what might be called the group fado. He had a delightful sense of humour and he was able to develop a style whereby he could, with great ease, get the audience to join in the chorus of the fado.

Hemenegildo Lopes was, I thought, more suited to the playing and singing of the Coimbra style of fados. His performance was much more reminiscent of the Portuguese Renaissance style of the *jongleurs* and the *troubadours*. He had a light baritone voice and he sang and plays in a manner very suitable to the performance of the older type of ballad.

The two guitar players at the Adega were Alves Martins on the Portuguese guitar and António Fonseca on the Spanish guitar. Alves Martins was a very clever improviser and he as remarkably quick to pick up snatches of melody and accompany any fado singer. António Fonseca was very well versed in the art of ground bass and frequently improvised delightful contrapuntal phrases above his ground to add to the beauty of the melody of the Portuguese guitar.

Alves Martins made a special study of the musical form of *Air and Variations*. He has written many compositions based on the folk music of Metropolitan Portugal. During an evening at the Adega it as usual for the guitarist to play a set of *Air and Variations* as a solo work.

Although most of the fados performed in Lourenço Marques came from Lisbon there were examples of locally produced fados. Artur Fonseca, the brother of António Fonseca, the guitar player, studied music in Lisbon and he is a composer of considerable repute. One of his best



successes is the fado «Uma Casa Portuguesa». This fado is internationally known and has been sung and recorded in Lisbon by many famous singers including Amália Rodrigues, who is still regarded by most as the «Queen» of fado singers. The libretto of «Uma Casa Portuguesa» was written as a poem by two young Lourenço Marques poets, Matos Sequeira and Reinaldo Ferreira. The first performance was given in Lourenço Marques in the Spring of 1954 <sup>(3)</sup> at the Rádio Clube de Moçambique and the singer was Sara Chaves.

Fado canção, «Triste Viuvinha» (The sad young widow) is another fado written and composed in Lourenço Marques. The words are by Reinaldo Ferreira and the music by Artur Fonseca. Fonseca did not remember the actual date of composition but it is from the same period as «Uma Casa Portuguesa».

Before meeting places such as the Adega became established, much was done by the Radio Clube de Moçambique to propagate the love and opportunity of listening to fado for the people of Moçambique. Each week on Monday evenings the Rádio Clube present a programme of fados at nine o'clock usually before an invited audience because this helped to create a better atmosphere. All the professional and amateur performers of Lourenço Marques perform at these Rádio Clube sessions. When occasion warrants, such as the visit of a famous fado singer from Lisbon, special performances were arranged at the Rádio Clube and in some of the fado houses.

A fado singer of considerable repute who was born in Lourenço Marques is Maria João Quadros. She recorded four fados, «Malmequer Desfolhado», «Sou do Fado», «Rosa da Madrugada» and «Não Troces». This record was generally released in Moçambique and Southern Africa during 1970.

A new fadista <sup>(4)</sup> was proclaimed in April 1968 at the Adega in Lourenço Marques. Her name is Rosa Feiteira. She had a very humorous

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<sup>(3)</sup> The exact date of the first performance does not appear to be recorded but it is thought by Artur Fonseca to have been in September 1954. He composed the work during the winter period (June/July) of that year. It was first recorded by Amália Rodrigues on a 78 r. p. m. record during the latter part of 1955.

<sup>(4)</sup> Fadista — the name given to a fado singer who has by public acclaim been voted as a worthy, accurate and correct performer of the art of fado singing.

portrayal of the fado and she received a great ovation for her interpretation of group fado.

Amongst the younger generation of students there were two promising aspirants — Manuela Lobo and Zito Pereira. They both have a good background of fado singing in the classical manner and they sang many times in the Adega. Zito was acclaimed fadista in the Johannesburg Portuguese Club and by invitation he performed fados in the Portuguese National Pavillion at the Rand Easter Show, Johannesburg <sup>(5)</sup>. He had in 1971 and again in 1972 the main billings as fadista at the Adega in Lourenço Marques.

In Lourenço Marques there is an Association of old students of Coimbra University. Amongst these old students was a lawyer, Dr. Almeida Santos, who, whilst in Coimbra, was regarded as an expert in the art of fado singing. Dr. Santos along with the guitarists, Engineer Roxo Leão, Engineer Caseiro da Rocha and Dr. António Pinho de Brojo formed a group in Lourenço Marques. They made an interesting recording <sup>(6)</sup> with the help of the Rádio Clube de Moçambique. The inscription on the record says that Dr. Santos and his friends dedicate the recordings to the «Homage of the second Holiday Course of the University of Coimbra». Dr. Santos also claims that these fados represent «the most sublime lesson of Portuguese intellectuality». He goes on to say «that Coimbra taught us; it is neither life nor time with its vicissitudes and contradictions which will be able to destroy the Coimbra spirit, tradition or academic solidarity because it is a live inheritance which connects the present with the past of which Portugal is so proud». Dr. Santos tells us that in the Coimbra fado «rests another link between all the scholars of Coimbra of all generations and of all time».

Namaacha is a small town up in the Lebombo Mountains not far from Lourenço Marques. Being much cooler in the hot summer weather, it was a popular resort of the Lourenço Marquians. The owner of the bookshop, Livraria Académica, Dr. A. Nunes, used to get together a small group of people who sometimes arranged fado evenings in Namaacha.

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<sup>(5)</sup> This happened in April 1968. He sang as a fully fledged fadista at the Adega da Madragoa, in Lourenço Marques (July 1972).

<sup>(6)</sup> «Coimbra em Lourenço Marques» — Alvorada AEP 60 544.



These evenings tended to follow the Coimbra tradition rather than the Lisbon tradition.

Fado singing was also done in Beira but it was not so well organized as in Lourenço Marques. There is not a special fado house but in the Boîte — «Ronda do Fado» at the Hotel Moulin Rouge there were periodically fado evenings. The Ronda do Fado was run by Alfredo Duarte Marceneiro, who is the son of the famous Lisbon fadista, Alfredo Marceneiro. Alfredo Duarte Marceneiro was not very happy in Lisbon so apparently at quite a young age he ran away and eventually settled in Beira after a chequered career as a comedy entertainer. In Beira he conceived the idea of a fado house but eventually resorted to the odd fado evenings instead of the usual cabaret at the Boîte. He sang fado himself but tended to be more of a comedian rather than a fadista. When occasion warranted it, Eulália Duarte, Alves Martins, António Fonseca and Zito Pereira flew up to Beira to present Fado in the «Ronda do Fado». There were one or two very amateur groups in Beira who kept the art of fado singing alive at private parties but they were nothing like the standard of the amateurs available in Lourenço Marques.

In Nampula in the north of Moçambique they also tried occasionally to organize fado evenings. Unfortunately there was no resident guitarist so it was usually a visitation the Adega group in Lourenço Marques with a few of the local amateur fadistas joining in.

Johannesburg in South Africa, a close neighbour by African standards to Lourenço Marques, supports a large Portuguese community. Largely due to the excellent work of the Social Centres of the Catholic Church at the Cathedral of Christ the King and at St. Patrick's in La Rochelle, fado evenings are now regularly held in Johannesburg. These evenings started off as purely small local affairs in Cathedral Place and in the Parish Hall in La Rochelle but they have now spread considerably in the City and recently two fado houses, the Chave d'Ouro and the Vasco da Gama have opened in Johannesburg. These two places function basically as Portuguese restaurants but now at the weekends they arrange for the best Portuguese talent available in Johannesburg to perform. For special occasions the group from Adega da Madragoa were invited to Johannesburg. Since the Independence of Moçambique quite a number of fadistas from Lourenço Marques now live in Johannesburg. One of the people who was responsible for the upsurge of interest

in fado in Johannesburg was Sr. Rui Forjaz de Brito, formerly *Noticias* correspondent in Johannesburg. His family are the owners of the fado house in Lisbon by the name of «Timpanas» where they specialise in Modern Fado.

Presently fado is enjoying tremendous popularity in Southern Africa, particularly in Johannesburg. It has been very much encouraged formerly in Lourenço Marques and now in Johannesburg as a morale booster. The war activities sapped a lot of the young man-power for the fighting forces who went up to the North of Moçambique. The singing and performance of fado creates a solidarity amongst all the Portuguese peoples wherever they are in the world.

Article originally written in early 1973 in Johannesburg.  
Brought up to date in January 1976.