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Syncretic Musical Experiments #19: developing a live performance during a pandemic

Companhia de Música Teatral's (CMT) work is strongly based in collaborative creative processes and often involves close interaction between performers and audiences. In 2020, due to the pandemic, several of CMT's planned activities were limited or outright forbidden. New paths had to be discovered and the Zoom™ video-conference platform became an important tool to carry on working on CMT's projects. It supported a series of new creations that were built taking into consideration the platform's distinctive features. One of these was the music-theater piece *O Céu Por Cima de Cá* (trans. Heaven Above Here), a live performance offering two different points of view (at the theater and via Zoom™).

O Céu Por Cima de Cá was the result of further developing ideas that emerged throughout the pandemic times in projects such as *Poemário*, *Poemário Vivo* and *ZygZag&Zoom*. These formed a path of learning, creativity and resilience that established the grounds for a two-week long artistic residency at *Casa das Artes* of Vila Nova de Famalicão where the piece took its final shape.

This paper is proposed by the artistic team that participated in the creation and performance of *O Céu Por Cima de Cá* and aims to unveil the concepts underlying the piece, the sources of inspiration and the collaborative methodology of working. It is a collective auto-ethnographic artistic research reflection exploring a) how the performance came to be, b) how "the stage was set" and the scenery and lights were conceived, c) the expansion on the themes of angels, birds and clouds that had been a source of inspiration, and d) how the final performance impacted not only the performers but also the audiences. *O Céu Por Cima de Cá* is enmeshed and embedded in the places where it happens, drinking from their history to build itself. This paper is not only a reflection on the final performance, but also a kind of "crew logbook" of a voyage that took us to the clouds and beyond, expanding on the webs of relations that were created between each of the artists and the audience(s).