

Back to the “black-box”: experiencing music in a Lisbon recording studio

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Doctoral Dissertation in Musical Sciences - Ethnomusicology

February, 2019

Dissertação apresentada para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Doutor em Ciências Musicais – Etnomusicologia, realizada sob a orientação científica do Professor Doutor João Soeiro de Carvalho, e a co-orientação dos Professores Simon Zagorski-Thomas e Mike Howlett

Dissertation presented to fulfill the necessary requirements for the degree of Doctor in Musical Sciences - Ethnomusicology, conducted under the scientific guidance of Professor João Soeiro de Carvalho and the co-orientation of Professors Simon Zagorski-Thomas and Mike Howlett

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Simon Zagorski-Thomas

To José António Fernandes, my father, an example of honesty, righteousness,
availability to learn and love for his family.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank everybody involved in the making of this thesis.

To my supervisor Professor João Soeiro de Carvalho, for his wise, accurate and original suggestions and corrections, with whom it was, once again, a pleasure working.

To Professor Salwa Castel-Branco and INET, for the academic support and funding for some of the international conferences I attended, which were essential for the outcome of this thesis.

To Professor Maria de São-José Corte-Real, for the motivation and advice.

To Professors Simon Zagorski-Thomas and Mike Howlett, for accepting my invitation to co-supervise this thesis and for the availability shown whenever requested.

To Joaquim Monte, for the availability to open Namouche recording studio`s doors for this research.

To all the musicians, sound engineers, producers and other informants I interviewed along these seven years of research. A special thanks to all the musicians who let me observe their recording sessions.

To my special friends and colleagues José Dias, João Ricardo Pinto and Sofia Lopes, for their kind advice, suggestions and laughter. A special thanks to Sofia for the fundamental assistance in the formatting of the final version.

To my dogs Mike and Piko, for their silent companionship during many hours of writing.

To Jorge, for so many enlightening conversations about sound and for the companionship, understanding and love.

To my children Joana, Margarida and Guilherme, who have always been a source of motivation for every goal I set myself to accomplish, and for the unconditional love.

Last (but by no means least), this thesis is dedicated to my late father, José António Fernandes, who would have been very proud to see this day come.

De volta à “caixa-negra”: experienciando a música num estúdio de gravação em Lisboa

Isabel Maria de Campêlo Fernandes

Resumo

Ao longo dos últimos setenta anos, a experiência da música mudou gradualmente das performances ao vivo para a música gravada. Esta mudança foi reconhecida por diferentes estudiosos (Thompson 1990, Turino 2008), e por trás dessa realidade está o que denomino como locus da música gravada: o estúdio de gravação. O estúdio de gravação, uma “caixa preta” (Meintjes 2003), tem sido um segredo bem guardado na indústria fonográfica e um assunto negligenciado pela musicologia. Uma possível explicação para esta falta de informação poderá residir na escolha da música ao vivo como o objecto preferencial das etnografias musicais ao longo de várias décadas, assim como na dificuldade de acesso aos estúdios de gravação, normalmente espaços proscritos a pessoas do exterior.

Em 1982, ano em que comecei a trabalhar como cantora de sessão, a indústria fonográfica portuguesa baseava-se sobretudo em vários estúdios de gravação em Lisboa. Com o passar dos anos, alguns desses estúdios sofreram grandes mudanças, mas a maior parte deles fechou. Menos um - Namouche.

A presente tese pretende desvendar os segredos da “caixa preta” através de uma perspectiva etnomusicológica. Assim, foi realizada uma análise etnográfica das práticas de gravação na Namouche através da observação de treze sessões de gravação, que permitiram uma comparação deste estúdio com outros que foram construídos aproximadamente ao mesmo tempo (entre as décadas de 1960 e 1970) - o que denomino estúdios históricos de Lisboa - seguindo o seu curso a partir da data de abertura até ao seu encerramento. Esta comparação foi possível através do contacto com os poucos profissionais activos que trabalharam nos outros estúdios históricos para além da Namouche – Musicorde, Arnaldo Trindade, Valentim de Carvalho, Angel 1 e Angel 2 – assim como da minha própria experiência profissional a trabalhar nestes estúdios.

Através deste relato histórico, assim como do estudo etnográfico, abordo questões relacionadas com a gravação musical, parte da minha vida como profissional, assim como dos desenvolvimentos que tiveram lugar durante as décadas cobertas por esta tese: tecnologias de gravação analógica e digital; diferentes tipos de estúdios de gravação; modos de escuta; musicalidade e práticas de gravação; conceptualizações do som da música gravada; a relação entre engenheiros de som, músicos e produtores, entre outras. Todas estas questões conduziram a pesquisa no sentido de responder a uma interrogação abrangente: qual afinal o papel que estúdios de grande dimensão, acusticamente preparados como a Namouche, desempenharam e continuam a desempenhar nas práticas de gravação da música popular do presente?

A minha metodologia, baseada principalmente no método etnográfico, envolveu entrevistas com diferentes actores que fazem parte da indústria de gravação: engenheiros de som, músicos, produtores, ARs e agentes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Estúdio de gravação; gravação musical; música em Portugal; som gravado.

Back to the “black-box”: experiencing music in a Lisbon recording studio

Abstract

Over the past seventy years, experiencing music has gradually shifted from live performances to recorded music. This change has been acknowledged by different scholars (Thompson 1990, Turino 2008), and behind this reality is what I call the locus of recorded music: the recording studio. The recording studio, a "black box" (Meintjes 2003), has been a well-kept secret in the music industry and an overlooked subject in musicology. One possible explanation for this lack of information lies in the choice of live music as the preferred object of musical ethnographies along several decades, as well as the difficulty in accessing recording studios, usually proscribed spaces to people outside the recording process.

In 1982, the year I started working as a session singer, the Portuguese recording industry was mostly based on several recording studios in Lisbon. Over the years, a few of these studios underwent major changes, but the majority closed. All but one - Namouche.

The present thesis aims to unveil the secrets of the "black box" through an ethnomusicological perspective. Thus, an ethnographic analysis of the practices at Namouche was performed through the observation of thirteen recording sessions, which allowed a comparison of this studio with others that were constructed at about the same time (between the 1960s and 1970s) - what I call the Lisbon historical studios - following its course from the date of opening until its closure. This comparison was possible through contact with the few active professionals that worked in the other historical studios apart from Namouche - Musicorde, Arnaldo Trindade, Valentim de Carvalho, Angel 1 and Angel 2 - as well as my own professional experience working in these studios.

Through this historical account, as well as the ethnographic study, I consider features related to music recording, part of my life as a professional, and also of the developments that took place during the decades covered by this thesis: analog and digital recording technology; different types of recording studios; listening modes; musicianship and recording practices; conceptualizations of the sound of recorded music; the relationship between sound engineers, musicians and producers, among others. All these questions

led the research to respond to a comprehensive question: what role did large-scale, acoustically prepared recording studios like Namouche play, and keep playing in today's popular music recording practices?

My methodology, based mainly on the ethnographic method, involved interviews with different actors that are part of the recording industry: sound engineers, musicians, producers, ARs and agents.

KEYWORDS: music recording; music in Portugal; recorded sound; recording studio.

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Introduction - unveiling the “black box”

“The first image is a pair of hands over a recording console; the shot opens to a piano being played and then back to the control room, where the man behind the console makes bodily gestures, as if dancing and singing at the sound of the music apparently being recorded (but with his back turned to the recording room). Over the next minutes, the shots intersect images of several musicians in the recording room (singer/key-board player, guitar player, bass player, cello player, drummer) with the man in the control room, who goes on making gestures I have never seen being made by either a sound engineer or a producer. The singer is misplaced from the microphone (too far away), slightly shaking his head in multiple directions, as he sings; the cello and guitar player seem to be playing random notes; I can’t even hear cellos on the audio... This a video clip of a recording session. Most of it is not true” (notes by the author when observing the video of the song “Apologize”).¹

In the last seven decades, our experience of music has been marked by the mediation of an invisible entity called the recording studio. From the moment music became a commodity, mass consumed and disseminated throughout the world, it increasingly gained importance in various ways: first by capturing sound as close to the live experience as possible, later creating sounds and becoming a powerful tool in the making of the diversified configurations that popular music has gained in this period of time.

Despite its ubiquity, audiences have but a slight notion of what really happens in a recording studio. The popular music industry contributes to this lack of information, mythifying the music making processes. In video clips such as the one described, the objective seems to be to construct, primarily, a visual narrative which bears some connection to the real event through the objects displayed: there is a recording console (the first image), which immediately points to a professional recording environment; there are two distinctive rooms separated by a window (the usual configuration of a recording studio); some musicians have microphones, although not necessarily in the right position; there are various musicians playing instruments of a different nature:

¹ Timbaland - Apologize ft. OneRepublic” - https://youtu.be/ZSM3w1v-A_Y - accessed on November 2017. I was at the hairdresser when this videoclip started to show on VH1. Although I was familiar with the song, I had never watched the video clip. Later, I decided to make a closer observation and take notes.

acoustic (a cello), or electric (the bass and guitar) with no screening.² Regarding the actions, there seems to be a dissociation between the visual and the aural. The focus of the clip is also divided between the musicians and the man in the control room, who gestures in a peculiar way for a professional in that role - in fact, more similar to a performing musician (he is actually singing a riff³ of the song). There is a reason for this: this clip of the song “Apologize” “features” Timbaland, a well-known producer, who is the man behind the console, and the producer of this version.⁴

Many examples of these constructions around the recording studio - through video clips, but also in the cinema - are mentioned in this thesis, which brings me to the point I want to address: the role of the recording studio, as it seems to operate, generally speaking, and using Louise Meintjes’s expression, like a “black box” where music is made, a process that has become central to today’s music, of which very few people have knowledge.

“The studio – a critical compositional site – has historically been treated as the black box in analyses of production. That is to say, its popular representation as secret, magical, and unknowable has been taken at face value. As long as the studio was thought of as a site into which creative agents and compositional ideas would go, get compromised by technological manipulation there, then emerge packaged for consumption, there was little need for detailed analysis of its processes” (Meintjes 2003:280, note 27).

This “black-boxing” of the studio affects the perception of popular music consuming audiences, with the help of the industries mentioned above; it is becoming, however, more striking in academia. Despite the fact of being increasingly the subject of on-going researches in Popular Music Studies and Ethnomusicology, for many years the recording studio has remained obscure, leading to an incomplete understanding of music

² Screening in a recording studio is the act of separating instruments in the recording room through acoustic screens or panels, when recording several instruments playing at the same time. Screening is necessary to prevent (at least, minimize) the sound of the several instruments to leak from one microphone to another.

³ A riff is a series of notes, a chord pattern, or a musical phrase that is repeated along a song, becoming its sonic identifier. Often, riffs are used as an introduction to a song (for instance, as in the Rolling Stone’s “Satisfaction”, or Gun’s n Roses’s “Sweet Child of Mine”) - <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-a-riff-2456262> and <https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riff> - accessed on January 2018.

⁴ As I found out afterwards, this song has two different recorded versions to each of which corresponds a different video clip: the original, and a remix by producer Timbaland, who included it in one of his albums. This clip corresponds to Timbaland’s remix, justifying his prominence in the images.

performance, recording, and of sound, resulting from ethnographies traditionally based on live musical practices, often in exotic and remote places. This outcome is partially understandable, given that a dimension of secrecy seems to be part of the studio's own epistemology; the difficult accessibility to this black box when a research purpose is at stake, involving the observation of a real music recording process, makes this project a particular challenge.

Nevertheless, this is precisely what I set myself to do in this thesis: to go into the “black box” and unveil some of its “secrets”. As with many musicologists dealing with popular music, my experience as a performing musician was responsible for my choice of embracing the academic study of these processes. In this particular case, other factors informed my research project as well: most of my professional life was spent inside recording studios, participating in many sessions and musical projects as a session singer.⁵ The idea of choosing the “black box” as my research terrain allowed me, on a personal level, to use my own professional experience as preliminary fieldwork; on an academic level, to contribute to making its contents more transparent for the scientific community, deconstructing some of the processes that are behind what Adorno classified as an “illusory and mendacious” art (1938:274). Adorno stands as the first academic to point out the importance of the cultural industry in the first half of the 20th century. As stated by Van Penick (2014):

“It amazes me that Theodor Adorno recognized in early radio and the recordings of the 1930s the commercial power of a music industry still in its infancy. And it amazes me that his theories of the consumer industry vibrate with relevance today in spite of technological developments which have transformed both commerce and the arts” (ibid.).

⁵ “A session singer is a highly skilled professional vocalist, often with their own solo career, who is hired for a contractual period [...] mainly for recording purposes. Sight reading and the ability to work well with other musicians without rehearsal is usually necessary although some session singers work by 'ear'. A session singer is a performer who has no ongoing contract with the record company that employs them. In other words, they are employed, and paid, by the session.”- http://www.vocalist.org.uk/session_singers.html - accessed on January 2018. This definition resonates to most of my activity in the recording industry, although I will frame this issue in more developed terms on sub-chapter 7.3.

Although Adorno’s cultural pessimism, as referred by David Hesmondalgh (2013:25) was later contested by a group of French sociologists who proposed the term “cultural industries” to the singular “cultural industry”, a brief review of his thoughts is relevant, as it provides “the fullest and most intelligent version of the extreme, pessimistic view of the industrialization of culture” (ibid.), of which recording studios are a significant part. I will return to this subject later in this section

The illusion of “light art”: Adorno and other contemporary critical voices

“All ‘light’ and pleasant art has become illusory and mendacious” (Adorno 1938:274)

In his 1938 essay “On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening”, Adorno addresses light art - an expression which, in relation to music, stands for what would later be designated as popular music - in the terms above mentioned: “illusory and mendacious”. Referring specifically to the music pertaining to this light art, Adorno underlines the role of the listener who, in the logic of primary commercial objectives, “is converted, along his line of least resistance, into the acquiescent purchaser” (ibid:273). The word “illusion” is several times mentioned by this author, when referring the social context behind light music consumption:

“The illusion of a social preference for light music as against serious is based on that passivity of the masses which makes the consumption of light music contradict the objective interest of those who consume it” (ibid:275).

In this process of “passivity”, “the liquidation of the individual is the real signature of the new musical situation” (ibid:276). Adorno also attributes the responsibility of a regression of listening to the fetishism of music. “Contemporary listening”, he argues, “has regressed, arrested at the infantile stage” (ibid:286).

Comments similar to these, regarding the increasing infantilization of popular culture can be found today by several personalities in the cultural industry. Simon Pegg, British actor, screenwriter and producer, in an interview in *Radio Times* in 2015, made the following statement: “Nerd culture is the product of a late capitalist conspiracy, designed to infantilize the consumer as a means of non - aggressive control”.⁶

⁶ Siede, Caroline “Simon Pegg discusses geek culture and the infantilization of society”, *Boingboing* on-line magazine, May 12, 2015 - <https://boingboing.net/2015/05/21/simon-pegg-discusses-geek-cult.html>. - accessed on January 2018.

Pegg was immediately criticized for the fact of denigrating a culture which he is close to.⁷ He would later clarify the statement on his website, enlarging the scope of its meaning by referring to philosopher and cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard:

“Recent developments in popular culture were arguably predicted by the French philosopher and cultural theorist, Jean Baudrillard in his book, ‘America’, in which he talks about the infantilization of society. Put simply, this is the idea that as a society, we are kept in a state of arrested development by dominant forces in order to keep us more pliant. We are made passionate about the things that occupied us as children as a means of drawing our attentions away from the things we really should be invested in, inequality, corruption, economic injustice etc. It makes sense that when faced with the awfulness of the world, the harsh realities that surround us, our instinct is to seek comfort, and where else were the majority of us most comfortable than our youth?”⁸

In line with this process of “extended adolescence”⁹ (eventually childhood, for some) is the common observation that popular music these days “all sounds the same”. Apart from what our own ears absorb daily on public spaces and the media, according to a survey carried out by a group of scientists at the Spanish National Research Council, who have published a report on songs released between 1955 and 2010,¹⁰ “important changes or trends related to the restriction of pitch transitions, the homogenization of the timbral palette, and the growing of loudness levels” were noticeable. In other words, “not only are the melodies of songs more similar than they used to be, the timbral palette employed – the sounds of the instruments – has also grown narrower.”¹¹ This last feature

⁷ Simon Pegg’s most well-known professional work is TV sitcom *Spaced* (1999-2001), which he wrote (and acted in) with actress Jessica Stevenson (also part of the cast). The sitcom, based on the story of two Londoners who move into a flat together, despite hardly knowing each other, was defined by both authors as “a cross between *The Simpsons*, *The X-Files* and *Northern Exposure*” and “is dense with references to popular culture, including but not limited to science fiction and horror films, comic books and video games” - “*Spaced*”, Wikipedia - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spaced> - accessed on January 2018. Significantly, Pegg’s 2012 book is called *Nerd Do Well: A Small Boy's Journey to Becoming a Big Kid*, Century.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ This expression is used by Pegg in his website, when clarifying his statements: “this extended adolescence has been cannily co-opted by market forces, who have identified this relatively new demographic as an incredibly lucrative wellspring of consumerist potential” (*ibid.*)

¹⁰ Serrà, Joan, Álvaro Corral, Marián Boguñá, Martín Haro and Josep Ll Arcos “Measuring the Evolution of Contemporary Western Popular Music”, *Scientific Reports* 2, Article number: 521 (2012), quoted in Michaels, Sean “Pop music these days: it all sounds the same, survey reveals”, *The Guardian* on-line magazine, 27 July, 2012 - <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2012/jul/27/pop-music-sounds-same-survey-reveals> - accessed on January 2018.

¹¹ *ibid.*

is attributed to the amount of synthesized or digitally processed instruments, which is seen to diminish the character of their original sound.¹²

The results of this study are mentioned by Paul Joseph Watson, a controversial YouTube personality, who, in a short film about popular music, makes an interesting observation:

“Many of the songs that brace the Top 10 throughout most of the year are written by just four different people and these producers just keep cannibalizing each song to create the next hit.[...] The music industry goes to great length to hide the real identities of these producers, to maintain the illusion that someone like [...]”¹³ actually contributes to the writing of their own songs.”¹⁴

When referring to the efforts made by the music industry to hide the identities of the producers, several frames of a recording studio appear on the film, featuring the usual equipment - recording console, outboard gear¹⁵ - but there is nobody inside.¹⁶ Regardless of the general content of the film, which might easily be considered highly questionable, mixing the author’s personal musical tastes with what he believes to be “the truth”, the word “illusion” and the association of a recording studio with that illusion was what I found relevant.

The recording studio has been an active agent for the creation and perpetuation of this “illusion” that popular music conveys, which Theodor Adorno addressed in such critical terms. Being a “black-box” where few people are allowed, at the service of what has been a highly profitable industry for many decades, the secrecy of its procedures were (still are, although within a different framework) “the soul of the business”. In other working environments characterized by a certain hermeticism associated with creative processes - such as high cuisine - knowing the processes has not been part of the consumer culture - at least until recently. Although in the last ten years the growing interest for

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ I chose not to mention the name of the artist referred by Watson.

¹⁴ Watson, Paul Joseph “The Truth About Popular Music”- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP0wuWJBdMI> - accessed on January 2018.

¹⁵ Outboard gear in a recording studio is the term for the processors than can be used to alter the sound of an instrument or of a voice, which are “out of the board” (in this case, meaning outside the recording console). These can include compressors, limiters, reverberators, echoe effects, preamplifiers and much other equipment.

¹⁶ The images are mainly of an impressive control room that shows a sign saying “Hit Factory,” a well-known recording studio in New York that closed in April 2005.

cuisine and its “chef” stars has given rise to many TV shows and a whole new industry of books, DVDs, Apps and documentary films where gastronomic secrets are disclosed to audiences, I believe the real secrets of the “black-box” that a kitchen of high cuisine undoubtedly is are kept secret, as “secrecy contributes to preserve chefs’ creativity for the benefit of customer satisfaction”,¹⁷ as well as to perpetuate a growing industry of emerging new “secrets”.

It is within this logic of secrecy/disclosure that the recording industry has presented its main agent - the recording studio - to audiences, romanticizing its processes and highlighting its visual side mainly as a credible setting for a “recording” artist’s video clip. Academia, on the other hand, has, until very recently, neglected its study.

While contributing to the creation and perpetuation of the “illusion” mentioned by Adorno, the recording studio and its human agents have opened a “Pandora’s box” of new sounds that have colored our soundscapes since the end of the 1950s. Rather than mere instruments of regressive listening, they have changed compositional methods, listening habits and enabled the idea of recording as not just as a mere act of “capturing” sound. This leads me to what I briefly mentioned before about the cultural industries. Bernard Miège, a French sociologist who, together with a group of other scholars, rejected Adorno (and Horkheimer)’s approach,¹⁸ argued that

“the introduction of industrialization and new technologies into cultural production did indeed lead to increasing commodification, but [...] it also led to exciting new directions and innovations” (Hesmondalgh 2013:17).

The recording studio has been, in my opinion, one of the most important technological instruments that contributed to these “exciting new directions and

¹⁷ Surlmont, Bernard and Colin Johnson, (2005) "The role of guides in artistic industries: The special case of the “star system” in the haute-cuisine sector", *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, Vol. 15 Issue: 6, pp.577-590, <https://doi.org/10.1108/09604520510634032> - accessed on January 2018.

¹⁸ David Hesmondalgh (2013:24) mentions a group of French sociologists - Bernard Miège, Edgar Morin, A. Huet - who contested not only the term “cultural industry” proposed by Adorno and Horkheimer in 1940, but also some of its theoretical assumptions. They proposed the term “cultural industries”, as the use of the singular “suggested a ‘unified field’ where all the different forms of cultural production that coexist in modern life are assumed to obey the same logic” (ibid). Instead, they wanted to show the complexity of the different cultural industries, from the broadcasting industries to book publishing or the recording industry (ibid), proposing the term “industries culturelles”(ibid:25).

innovations” both musical and social, turning “the commodification of culture into a much more ambivalent process than was allowed for by Adorno and Horkheimer’s cultural pessimism” (ibid.). It is, therefore, my purpose in this thesis to reveal “the insides” of a recording studio, showing the specificities of these working environments which luckily have been familiar to me throughout the last thirty-eight years.

The unveiling of the “black-box” will be developed through the observation of thirteen recording sessions at Namouche, one of the recording studios where, both as a session singer and later as a solo singer, I worked the most. It is also the only one which survived the general tendency brought by the digital revolution to shut large dimension recording facilities. Because of this singular situation, Namouche will be my case study as an example of resistance and resilience within the Portuguese recording industry. In this sense, I was driven by the central comprehensive question of understanding the place of a large-dimension recording facility within the present framework of an industry where smaller recording home and project studios emerged as a general consequence of the “shrinkage” that it underwent. From this large question, and throughout the research others came up. However, I would point out, as a key question, the fundamental importance that the act of listening plays in the various stages of the chain that involves music as a cultural and (commodified) practice, from its creation, to production and reception.

A lot has been written about the evident economic advantages that smaller recording studios brought, but I believe there hasn’t been enough relevant discussion as to how smaller recording rooms can affect the performativity of a musician (and indeed how small control rooms with insufficient space between the loudspeakers can affect the sound engineer’s - and other actors’s - perception). The actors who do mention these aspects of the recording process are mainly “old timers” (like myself) who have had the experience of recording along several decades and different technologies (analogue and digital). It is important to retain their testimonies and reflections upon a subject that runs the risk of becoming a “non-subject” in a near future. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, these listening misperceptions have an impact on music creation.

My approach was outlined according to my own experience of being an insider of the field (a recording musician) and, as a researcher, an outsider. The balance between both perspectives was not easy, as described in the chapter dedicated to methodologies. Still, narrowing my field via a case study approach made the project all the more

manageable and feasible. Being an ethnomusicologist by education and conviction, I used the ethnographic method, mainly based on fieldwork (observing the sessions) as well as ethnographic interviews. These tools - observation and ethnographic interviews - were, in fact, my primary sources both for the ethnographic part of the thesis and the historical part about what I named the Lisbon historical studios. Due to lack of written sources about these Portuguese recording facilities, the reconstruction of their story was mostly done through live testimonies of the different actors that worked there - musicians, sound engineers, producers, label gate keepers and others. Some photographs and videos of these facilities (the very few that exist, to my knowledge) were kindly given to me by some of these professionals. The fact that I had worked with many of the informants facilitated the process, although creating at times a feeling of undesired proximity as a researcher who needs to keep a reasonable distance from the field. However, as I will point out extensively in the methodologies chapter, there are more advantages to being an “insider” in this field than disadvantages.

The structure of my thesis develops from a general perspective to a more particular one. Although the time line may seem unorthodox, as it dwells between past and present, it was meant to follow a certain inner logic which I will try to explain in the next paragraph.

After the introduction, state of the art, theoretical concepts and methodologies, I draw a historical account of Portugal before and after the 1974 political revolution, particularly addressing the recording industry and the effects that this revolution had regarding recorded music practices (chapter 6). I consider this chapter essential for the understanding of a number of idiosyncrasies which characterise Portugal and are transversal to several cultural fields. Chapters 7 and 8 are the result of reflections about features related to sound recording that were triggered along my career - namely the role of session musicians, the producer, analogue vs. digital technology - but which became more evident during my observation at Namouche. I therefore decided to include them before the ethnography, as a comparative background to frame the research. Chapter 9, the reconstruction of the story of the Lisbon historical studios, was purposely included near the end and also before the ethnography at Namouche (chapter 10). The idea was, again, to have a clearer perspective of the role of Namouche studios within the Portuguese recording industry. Chapter 11 is dedicated to the conclusions.

Namouche

My choice of the doctoral research object and site came at the same time something was happening in the Lisbon recording milieu: Namouche, a well-known recording studio I had worked in for many years, which I believed had shut down, was becoming a subject of conversation among Lisbon musicians. The studio was open, “alive and kicking”,¹⁹ its activity being spoken about through word of mouth by its users - the musicians themselves. This circumstance allowed me to have a clearer idea of the embedded possibilities that this particular case could offer my research. What was happening there? Who was in charge? What sort of music was being recorded there? How was the studio, after all the years that had passed since my last visit there? These were some of my initial interrogations about Namouche. But my interest in this recording studio led my memory to the other studios in Lisbon where I had worked. What had happened to the other recording facilities that were active during my professional life as session singer? The perspective of being able to use Namouche’s example as a case study of a large-scale recording studio, which had managed to survive the digital revolution, would eventually give me the opportunity to trace the history of those other Lisbon recording facilities – an as yet untold story with many memories still around.

The Lisbon historical recording studios

With such a purpose in mind, for this thesis I chose to research the following recording studios: Musicorde, Arnaldo Trindade, Valentim de Carvalho, Rádio Triunfo (the earlier name for Namouche), Angel 1 and Angel 2. I decided to name these six recording facilities as the Lisbon historical recording studios.²⁰ The reasons for my choice were, again, both personal and academic. On a personal level, these were the recording studios where I started working in - in fact, in the order they are mentioned. They were also the studios where I learned the most about being a recording studio singer, an

¹⁹ This expression is often used as it is - in English - as it bears particular significance because of U2’s 1985 song with the same title - “Alive and Kicking”.

²⁰ I focused on Lisbon recording studios, because Lisbon is my city and that is where I have worked all my life. From my personal and professional experience, as well as the sources used, I believe Portugal’s music recording industry in the thesis’s proposed time frame (particularly until the 80s) was mostly situated in Lisbon.

expertise in those years associated with the technology used (analog), and where I participated in many important Portuguese popular music recordings. On an academic level, these studios bear similarities that justify my choice of gathering them into a particular group. For instance their longevity: most of them were built between the 1960s (Valentim de Carvalho, 1964 and Musicorde 1969²¹) and the 1970s (Arnaldo Trindade 1975²², Rádio Triunfo 1973), with the exception of Angel 1 and Angel 2 (1979 and 1982²³). Some of them were associated to the label-studio model - Arnaldo Trindade, Valentim de Carvalho and Rádio Triunfo - which was the most common corporate/entrepreneurial model that recording studios operated under until the end of the 1980s in Portugal. The ones which weren't owned by recording labels (Musicorde and Angel 1 and 2) nevertheless had in record companies their main source of income. Technologically speaking, at the time of the opening they all used the analog recording process, supported by analog tape machines and recording consoles, and continued to throughout the years in which I mostly worked there. Their historic value is justified by the artists that marked these studio's walls with their presence, as well as iconic recordings that were created there. Of these I will speak in more detail in Chapter 9. In the beginning of this chapter, I will also frame these Portuguese recording studios in relation to different models of recording facilities that emerged from the second half of the 20th century in the USA and the UK, according to different variables, from size to technology among others.

²¹ This is, in fact, the date of the creation of Musicorde as a company. Rui Remígio, the only living partner whom I interviewed, started working in the studio in 1973, but doubts remain around the exact date of the studio's construction. It would have been between 1969 and 1973.

²² As will be stated in sub-chapter 9.3, Arnaldo Trindade bought the studio in 1975, but this facility already existed, under the name of Polysom. I don't know the exact date of its construction, as I couldn't trace any living or bibliographical source with that information.

²³ In 1980, another recording studio in the Lisbon area - Miraflores - emerged in the recording industry: Tcha-Tcha-Tcha. Although I worked there very often, I chose not to include it amongst these selected facilities, for a number of reasons. Being the property of two well-known musicians - Shegundo Galarza (1924-2003), a Basc piano player living in Portugal since 1924, and his son, Ramon Galarza - the purpose of the facility was "to have autonomy to carry out Tcha-Tcha-Tcha's productions" (Ramon Galarza, email interview, November 2016). In this sense, I would consider it a production studio, a different entrepreneurial studio model. Tcha-Tcha-Tcha began as a home studio - in the house of Ramon Galarza - with analogic recording consoles (eight and sixteen channels), having, later, moved to a location nearby which was adapted for professional recording purposes. There, the number of analogic tracks raised to thirty-two, plus thirty-two digital tracks with "the horror of the ADATS in SVHS" (Ramon Galarza, email interview, November 2017). The studio is still working, despite cost reduction that, from 2008, Ramon Galarza (and many other studio owners) was obliged to do (ibid).

There is also a common feature regarding these studios: all of them have ultimately shut down,²⁴ with the important exception of Rádio Triunfo, known as Namouche since 1985. This fact bears an added value when framing the circumstances that surrounded their closure with the very specific case of Namouche as a chosen case study.

Objectives and Interrogations

In this thesis, I aimed to cover two main objectives: to make an ethnographic study of a recording studio, a subject that, as stated before, is understudied in Ethnomusicology as a whole, and has never been done regarding the Portuguese recording industry; and to draw the history of what I denominated as the Lisbon historic recording studios - Musicorde, Valentim de Carvalho, Arnaldo Trindade, Rádio Triunfo (the earlier name of Namouche), Angel 1 and Angel 2, which have all shut down except Namouche. In the process of this research further questions with a broader scope emerged: what is the meaning of music “recording” today, when everyday objects - cellular phones, computers, tablets – have made the act of recording a commonplace in our lives? What is the added value - if any - of recording in a studio like Namouche? What are the feelings of the musicians regarding the whole musical experience? Does it make sense to maintain a recording facility with Namouche’s characteristics? In the course of this seven-year research, and particularly after the ethnographic fieldwork in the studio started, other questions came up, which are considered in the section dedicated to methodologies.

²⁴ Valentim de Carvalho recording studios have not shut down (the story of the enterprise is developed in Chapter 9.6), but their largest studio (Studio 1), which was the one built in 1964 following the model of Abbey Road’s Studio 1 was, at the time of my visit there, sub-rented to a bank, as a TV studio. It is no longer an audio-recording studio.

1. Preliminary doubts and thoughts

An ethnomusicological approach to record production

With its “global approach to music, regardless of area of origin, style or genre”,²⁵ Ethnomusicology seemed the adequate discipline to theoretically frame my working experience as fieldwork. In 1992, Helen Myers would state:

“Ethnomusicology includes [the study of] music in oral tradition and living musical systems” [as well as] conceptual issues such as the origins of music, musical change, music as symbol, universals in music, the function of music in society, the comparison of musical systems and the biological basis of music and dance” (Myers 1992:3).

However, despite the discipline’s broad scope as defined by Myers, it seemed to overlook the part that interested me the most.

“The properties and possibilities of music recordings remain surprisingly under-theorized despite recorded music’s ubiquity in contemporary musical life and the increasing attention technologically mediated musics have received from researchers in a variety of disciplines” (Wallach 2003:34).

In the same year, Louise Meintjes would corroborate:

“Ethnomusicology has been particularly slow to recognize the creative potential and semiotic nuance of technology in music making and to include its analysis within the field’s interpretive frameworks. This is in part an outcome of the facts that ethnomusicologists have privileged live performance, expected technology to take away from both creative processes and from the experience of music, and have focused historically on musics that have, or seem to have, a life of their own outside the music industry” (Meintjes 2003:280).

²⁵ <http://www.ethnomusicology.org/?page=whatisethnomusicol> - accessed on March 2012.

Years later, Simon Frith (2007) would admit that “the study of recording has been a marginal concern in the academic study of music” and “record production has also been a neglected topic in popular music studies” (ibid.). Accounting for this fact, and together with the reasons pointed out by Meintjes was perhaps the central question of the difficulty of regarding recorded music – and records - as music.

In 2003, when I started my Masters in Musical Sciences - Ethnomusicology - I occasionally had the feeling that there were bounded territories in certain disciplines regarding music genres. In the first semester, there was practically no mention of the kind of musical practices I had worked with during all my professional life. The episode of a colleague presenting himself as a “jazz musician” in the first day, was significant: I sensed this sort of musical “hierarchy” to be not just a part of some teacher`s mentalities, but of some fellow student`s as well.²⁶

Gradually, I learned that ethnomusicology`s - after all - broad scope could include the study of popular music,²⁷ a novel concept to me, where apparently the musical practices I had been in contact for many years belonged, and where expressions like “groove”, “riff”, “punch in”, and “overdub”²⁸, part of my professional language, were considered “emic” and, therefore, objectified as academic matters of interest. There was,

²⁶ As stated before, as a studio professional, I sang backing vocals in records of very distinctive *genres*, from pop, to rock, pop-rock, light, traditional, etc. Should I have presented myself as a singer of all these genres?

²⁷ Definitions of what popular music is or is not, and should or should not include have been a frequent ground for discussion and contestation by academics and researchers in the music domain (Middleton 1990; Middleton and Manuel 2001; Shuker 2006; Fabri 2013). In fact, “popular music” has resisted a rigid and unitary definition (Castelo-Branco and Cidra 2010:875). However, in its broadest sense, popular music is associated to “processes of mass production and transformation of music into a commodity, produced and marketed by cultural industries, specifically by the music industry” (ibid:876). It must also be highlighted that “while popular music conveyed in the English language a mass production and, therefore, a widely popular one, in Portugal the connection to the people and the “popular classes” shaped the meaning attributed to the concept” (ibid:876). I would also add that only recently this broader scope of the concept has been used in Portugal, as for many years the “connection to the people and the ‘popular classes’” mentioned by Castelo-Branco and Cidra meant also music from a rural tradition. For a more enlightening clarification of the concept in Portugal, see Castelo-Branco, Salwa and Rui Cidra “Música Popular” in Castelo-Branco, Salwa (coord.) (2010) *Enciclopédia da Música em Portugal no Século xx*, Vol. 3, pp. 875-878. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores/Temas e Debates.

²⁸ The term “groove” is used among Portuguese musicians as such, without translation, either as a noun (“this musician has groove”) or as a verb, in this last sense with a Portuguese verbal suffix (“let`s groove” would be “*vamos groovar*”); riff (already defined on note 3) can be used as such, or with the Portuguese equivalent *malha*; as for punch in and punch out, these words have Portuguese equivalents (*picar* and *despicar* – this last form not so much used), as well as overdub (in Portuguese *dobrar*). These expressions, very much studio-related, will be defined further in this thesis.

after all, some exoticism in this new “popular” to the point of being assimilated to the discipline’s once high-profiled objects of study.²⁹

Approaching the field was not easy. Having done most of my Master’s field-work on the road (which embraced one of ethnomusicology’s preferred topics, live music performance), I decided to focus on recording studios for my doctoral thesis. Some of the reasons for my decision, as stated before, were the lack of recording-studio based ethnographies (which could also constitute a problem), particularly covering Portuguese territory; it seemed a feasible research, as I know many recording studios and their managers; last but not least, I like the recording studio environment and all its infinite capacities to transform sound.

But again, as with my Master’s, I had difficulty in finding the theme. There was always this feeling of not having “important-enough” questions around this “probably-too-close” terrain” I had chosen. Would the recording studio have enough ethnomusicological credibility and legitimization as a setting to justify a doctoral thesis *per se*?

As Timothy Warner states,

“There was popular music before recording was invented, and there are types of popular music that continue to thrive without being recorded, but for the past 70 years or so the sonic and musical characteristics of much popular music have been informed by the processes and technologies of audio recording” (Warner in Scott 2009:131).

I believe that experiencing music, and particularly popular music in its broadest sense, is nowadays primarily done by listening to recorded music.

How does Ethnomusicology embrace the study of recording, and of popular music recording specifically? Six years after Louise Meintjes’s quote, Derek B. Scott (2009) compares Popular Music Studies to Popular Musicology, with a brief reference to Ethnomusicology within the possibilities for a theoretical framework for the study of popular music:

²⁹ As I will develop further in this thesis, some books – namely Charles Keil and Steven Feld’s 1994 *Music Grooves* – were fundamental for my personal framing in the discipline.

“[Stan Hawkins and I] both felt dissatisfied with lack of musicological engagement with popular music in the early 1990s, despite the significant work being done in the sociological field of ‘popular music studies’. [...] Popular musicology addresses this neglect and embraces the field of musicological study that engages with popular forms of music, especially music associated with commerce, entertainment and leisure activities. It is distinct from ‘popular music studies’ in that its primary concern is with criticism and analysis of the music itself, although it does not ignore social and cultural context” (Scott 2009:Introduction).

Once more, “music associated with commerce” is too much of a vague definition to trigger an understanding of the type of music referred to: the concept of popular music, as used in this thesis, embeds the notion of “commerce” or, better said, industry -the recording industry. But let us return to the role played by Ethnomusicology. Scott mentions a number of questions that popular musicologists seek to answer, namely:

“What are the significant events or facts of popular music history? What caused the shift in popular style between Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley? Is there a popular music canon? Where do popular styles begin? Is everything always in a state of transition?” (ibid.).

He comes, at last, to Ethnomusicology:

“As popular musicologists became interested in world music, the work of ethnomusicologists exerted increasing influence. Kevin Dawe’s essay [...] examines the links between ethnomusicology and popular musicology, while exploring the output of two Greek musicians whose music bears the stamp of innovation as well as locality” (ibid.).

The association of Ethnomusicology with world music and *the exotic*, as well as “conceptual issues” (as mentioned in Helen Myers’s quote) like “locality” seems to be evident in this statement. But the relative positioning of Ethnomusicology regarding popular musicology – apparently, according to the quote, embracing only the fringe of world music - strikes me as relevant.

Jeremy Wallach (2003) offers a clear point of view about the idea launched previously of recorded music - and records - being considered (or not) “music”:

“Should music recordings be analyzed as “texts” or as “performances”? I had come to the following conclusion: music recordings are neither texts nor performances. Music recordings are music. This answer has some important implications. I maintain that recorded music is neither text nor performance because both those concepts tend to be formulated as properties of language, and as such do not fully account for the unique ways musical sound produces meaningful effects. I say that recordings are music - nothing more, nothing less - to counteract the tendency to view them as pseudo-music, as pale substitutes for authentic musical experience obtainable only through live performance” (2003:35).

Arising from this point is, naturally, the need to define music. Taking distance from old conceptions of music as language, “an argument essentially idealist in character and neglecting the social and corporeal aspects of music-making” (Théberge1997:161 quoted in Wallach 2003:35), which elides “the sonic dimension of musical experience”, Wallach suggests the notion of

“*sonic materialism*, which can provide an alternative to conventional and highly mentalist conceptions of music as a language-like, free-floating symbol system and to the enduring Romantic notion of music as a profound metaphysical communication possible only between live performers and live audiences” (ibid.).

Difficulties regarding the inclusion of recorded popular music within the theoretical framework provided by Ethnomusicology were, as seen so far, echoed by academics of different disciplines, from Sociology, to Cultural Anthropology. Moreover, this debate has raised questions regarding the ontology of recorded sounds as music. Fortunately, as the next sub-chapter will demonstrate, the situation has changed significantly from 2003 onwards.

This section’s last quote draws attention to a central concept in the present thesis, one which along the history of popular music has been subject to several definitions, conceptualizations, understandings, sensitivities, but which ultimately was the reason for my passion for music - particularly recorded music: sound (in this case, the sound of recorded music).

“Music shares certain formal elements with speech but seems to lack its special referential and reflexive capabilities; for this reason linguists, philosophers, semioticians, social scientists, and other commentators have regarded music as degraded, deficient, and semantically impoverished in comparison with language.

I prefer to view music as an expanded form of expression-one that makes full use of the properties of sound to move the human body in ways which speech cannot. Any definition or understanding of music, then - *recorded music especially* - should begin not with what it supposedly lacks (i.e., referential, semantic meaning), but with a consideration of the semiotic, formal, and experiential properties of *sound*“ (ibid.).

Recording studios as sound-embodied or sound-producing entities?

“When I first went into a recording studio, I heard music a whole new way, and I've been trying to figure out what that was ever since. I fell in love with *sound*. ... How you can twist it and shape it. And also the idea that nothing was there and then something was there”.³⁰

I consider the recording studio as a privileged set where multiple layers of possible analyses are embedded. Due to the richness of this arena, involving human, technological, social and cultural dynamics, it may, in fact, be a good setting “to develop what Geertz called ‘thick description’”(Moehn 2005:48).

Authors from multi-disciplinary contexts have referred to the recording studio in diversified ways. Paul Thompson (2014) mentions, very rightly so, that “for most people, including most musicians who pay to gain access to them, recording studios can be fortress-like, isolated worlds” (ibid.).

Eliot Bates (2012) refers a number of definitions that different academics, along decades, have assigned to recording studios.

“Antoine Hennion refers to the studio as a ‘laboratory’ (1989), Paul Théberge describes it as an isolated ‘non-place’ (2004), while Eduard Kealy alternates between dubbing the studio an ‘assembly line for record producers’ or ‘an artist’s workshop’ (1982)” (Bates 2012).

These definitions, as underlined by Bates, focus on recording studios as professional working places (which undoubtedly they are), leading us to believe that the

³⁰ Willman, Chris “T Bone Burnett vs. Silicon Valley: ‘We should go Up There With Pitchforks and Torches’”, *The Hollywood Reporter* on-line, October 31, 2013 - <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/earshot/t-bone-burnett-silicon-valley-652114> - accessed on September 2016.

outcome of whatever activities developed there “would turn out similar no matter which particular laboratory or assembly line was used” (ibid.).

But recording studios are more than working places. “Temples of sound”³¹ or “sonic highways”,³² they are very often defined as unique places, supposedly having *a vibe*, but mostly a *sound* (ibid.). This last idea - the one that argues for a sound in recording studios - although interesting, is by no means consensual, as this thesis will show.

The documentary film *Sound City*, released in 2013, produced and directed by Dave Grohl³³ features “the fabled recording studio that was located in Van Nuys, California”.³⁴ Despite the fact that it looked “kind of dumpy”,³⁵ Sound City recording studios managed to attract some of the most well-known pop-rock and rock groups, as well as solo artists between the 80s and the 90s, among them Tom Petty, Fleetwood Mac, Neil Young, Cheap Trick, Johnny Cash, Nirvana and Metallica.

What did this studio have that others didn’t? According to the documentary, firstly its analogue mixing console, a Neve A - 8078, one of the most expensive in the market, and a recording luxury very few studios could afford to have.³⁶ One that wasn’t expected to be found in a recording studio with “ground-check carpet on the wall, [...] the kind of thing you’d do to your van...”.³⁷ *Sound City* is a nostalgic trip about the analogue recording days associated to an idea of a specific recording sound – the analogue/Neve based sound - and genre - rock and roll – idealized in this studio’s story (it is not by chance that on the beginning of the trailer, we listen to a background music whose lyrics ask: “whatever happened to our rock and roll?”).

³¹ This expression is used in the title of William Clark and Jim Cogan’s 2003 book *Temples of Sound: Inside the Great Recording Studios*, Chronicle Books.

³² *Sonic Highways* is the title of Dave Grohl’s 2014 documentary series in which his band, the Foo Fighters, go through eight different American cities and recording studios to record an album. Nashville, New Orleans, Washington, Seattle, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Austin were the cities visited.

³³ Dave Grohl is the former drummer of legendary rock group Nirvana and nowadays leader of the rock group Foo Fighters.

³⁴ *Sound City*, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2306745/> - accessed on June 2014. The adjective “fabled” is by itself relevant of a kind of mysticism around this space.

³⁵ ibid.

³⁶ In the documentary, it is mentioned that there were only four other consoles such as this one in the world. Pricewise, a comparison is made between the purchase value of the console (76.000 American dollars) and the owner of the studio’s house (38.000).

³⁷ ibid. This comment, included in the documentary, is made by a musician when referring to the lining of the walls of Sound City studios.

Another reference to a studio as having a sound of its own was made by Guilherme Inês.³⁸ An excellent drummer, apart from producer and composer, he dedicated some years managing Namouche Recording Studios. There, his activities were divided between producing music for artists, groups and commercial jingles as well as accounting for management assignments. Coincidentally - or not - Namouche had a Neve mixing console the same model as Sound City had. After referring to Sir Rupert Neve³⁹ as “a genius” Inês said:

“Despite having a peculiar monitoring system, one thing was certain: we had the absolute trust that what we were listening to was, in fact, what we were recording. Without false modesties, I believe that even today you listen to things and you recognize Namouche’s sound. Because I think Namouche had a sound. It had a sound! You may like it or not, but it definitely had one. That’s a good characteristic for a studio, when people recognize its sound. And if you listen to *Sound City*, you’ll hear the Neve sound and say “Hum, with a Solid State⁴⁰ it wouldn’t sound like that”. It wouldn’t!” (Guilherme. Inês, Lisbon, February 2013).

Here again, the quality of the studio sound – or even the fact that the studio allegedly had a distinctive sound - is reported primarily to the Neve console, its feasibility and the very unique analogue sound it engenders.

A different example of a sound related to a studio was the Muscle Shoals sound. I first heard about this studio and its sound through the words of Phil Ramone (Granata 2007).

³⁸ Guilherme Inês (born in Lisbon in 1951) is a retired drummer and percussionist, having played with legendary Portuguese artists such as Zeca Afonso and pop-rock groups like Salada de Frutas and Salada. He was also one of the most hired session players in the 70s and 80s.

³⁹ Sir Rupert Neve is a British audio engineer and designer, unquestionably one of the most important figures in audio recording technology in the last century. He is specially known for “his pioneering development of the modern recording console.”-“Where Audio Comes Alive” Theme Complements AES Focus, Audio Engineering Society- Conventions and Conferences, 119th AES Convention Press Release, 2005 - http://www.aes.org/events/119/press/pr_keynote.cfm - accessed on March 2017.

⁴⁰ Solid State Logic and Neve are two manufacturers of high-end recording consoles. Usually, sound engineers tend to compare both consoles, as Inês is doing in the statement. I found many debates on the internet regarding the preference for either of the consoles: most music professionals highlighted Neve’s equalizers and pre-amplifiers (which resonates with many conversations I’ve heard about it), while Solid State Logic (usually named SSL) is positively referred in questions related to mixing. Nelson Carvalho, Portuguese sound engineer whom I interviewed, associates SSL to rock, while Jorge Barata, another Portuguese sound engineer, defines the Solid State sound as more “round”, less present compared to the Neve sound.

“The Muscle Shoals Sound Studio [...] was the legendary home to a four-man rhythm section of unrivaled brilliance. Many artists (including The Rolling Stones, who cut “Brown Sugar”, “Wild Horses” and two other tracks for *Sticky Fingers* there) flocked to the studio for the fresh approach of the band, and the unique sound of the room” (Granata 2007:162).

Ramone, a very experienced record producer who started his career in the late 50s,⁴¹ went to Muscle Shoals with Paul Simon, who insisted on going because of Aretha Franklin’s Atlantic records.⁴² There, Ramone realized that records were made *organically* (ibid.:163), a term often used by Guilherme Inês in the interview I conducted with him, as well as by many musicians and sound professionals along my research. It definitely accounts for a common understanding of music, however personal it may be. Paul Simon’s comments on the studio are quite explicit to the kind of features that, for him, effectively contributed to that particular sound.

“When you came into the studio you turned on a switch, and the sound was there [...] the drums were never moved, the bass was never moved. It wasn’t like it was in New York or Los Angeles, where you had the studio for a block of time, and when you were finished you had to break down so another act could come in later that night. Because the instruments, musicians, and studio were always ready in Muscle Shoals, you never had to struggle to find the sound”⁴³ (Granata 2007:164).

In this case, a certain musical empathy developed between a fixed rhythm section was primarily responsible for that distinctive sound, about which adjectives such as “groove, and “attitude” are used (ibid). Or, as Aretha Franklin puts it: “We just didn’t expect them [i.e the rhythm section] to be as funky or as greasy as they were”.⁴⁴

In the next quote, Phill Ramone, deceased in 2013, mentions the old world of recording studios, when “you had to paint the walls [and] keep moving the speaker”

⁴¹ Tingen, Paul (1987) “Phill Ramone: Producer- Managing People &Technology” in *Sound on Sound* online magazine, April 2005- <http://www.soundonsound.com/sos/apr05/articles/ramone.htm> - accessed on June 2014.

⁴² “I love that sound- why don’t we just record where Aretha did?” (Granata 2007:163).

⁴³ The same argument - the fact that the studio set-up would remain for days - was used by André Perry when referring to one of his recording studio’s added values, a subject developed in chapter 8.

⁴⁴ Aretha Franklin in the trailer of *Muscle Shoals* documentary film - <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2492916/> - accessed on June 2014.

avoiding it to get “wet from the mold”. He compares it to the actual “once-it-became-easy” time of the interview.⁴⁵

“I see guys mixing the old mix with seven or eight chambers but intermix all of the music...which is ok if you’re trying to make a live stage-version...but if you want the purity and the instrument to have life... and you got all of this luxury of just wonderful ways to stretch and say how long the delay and how big is the room that you’re imitating...I think *that* in itself was the master beginning for studios... because studios supposedly had a sound”.⁴⁶

Opposite to this trend of considering a recording studio a sound-embodied entity is André Perry, a French Canadian producer, musician, composer and recording engineer of whom I will speak extensively on chapter 8. For Mr. Perry, “the studio was always an instrument, it’s an addition to the musicians that are on the other side”.⁴⁷ Le Studio, his innovative environmental recording studio had, according to him, the added value (among many others) of not having a sound of its own: “we just went for what they were looking for...sometimes, out of the experience, though, came a new sound...a new sound for us...and a new sound for the group.”⁴⁸

The loci of recorded music: “sound needs space”⁴⁹

If we consider the genetic meaning of the Latin term *locus* as “the fixed place in a chromosome where a certain gene or genetic marker is located”,⁵⁰ recording studios are the true *loci* of recorded music.

Andrew Leyshon (2009) considers recording studios “sociotechnical spaces that use, in combination, the following assets: space; time; technology; expertise; and

⁴⁵ Phill Ramone (2009) – Phill Ramone on AES-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuoNnQQmfqk> - accessed on June 2014. What Phill Ramone is comparing is really analogue versus digital recording technology, (effort vs. effortless, difficult vs. easy).

⁴⁶ Phill Ramone (2009) – Phill Ramone on AES-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuoNnQQmfqk> - accessed on June 2014.

⁴⁷ Skype interview with André Perry, August 2014.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ José Manuel Fortes, interview, Lisbon, January, 2014. Born in Porto 1943, this sound engineer will be frequently mentioned in this thesis, as he is one of the main references regarding sound engineering in Portugal.

⁵⁰ <http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Locus> - accessed on April 2014.

‘emotional labour’” (ibid:1315).⁵¹ Following the first idea presented by Leyshon, a recording studio is, for me, fundamentally a space. A space with enough dimensions to generate a kind of sound with which I became familiar. A space where a certain type of listening experience is possible and where the relationship with music becomes more intense.

“When I came here for the first time, this was a gigantic thing for me and I got, on the one hand, frightened, as I’d never been in such a huge space; but on the other hand, I felt a certain comfort, as I’d never imagined that I could be playing and moving from one place to another, with the bass...I had a lot of space to play and dance at the same time!” (Francisco Rebelo, bass player, commenting his first time at Namouche).⁵²

It is not just about registering a certain sonic event; it is about how you register it, transform it, eventually reinvent it – and then listen to it. The whole process bears an extreme importance regarding the product. It is an open door to a world of new sounds. That is a recording studio’s “genetic marker”. As Dave Grohl states, “I really believe that the environment in which you create or record an album influences the musical result.”⁵³

In addition to Thompson’s definition previously mentioned (“fortress-like, isolated worlds”), I believe recording studios can be magical, almost sacred places. Like the impression one gets when entering a church, where the surrounding space - and the binary sound/silence it embodies - almost overwhelms you, a recording studio can trigger feelings both of fear (as referred by Francisco Rebelo), but also of respect and responsibility.

“The first time I came to Namouche, it was like that old saying “you can feel it”. Even not knowing a lot of its history, and all the people that recorded here. Above all, I felt the responsibility of, as a contemporary musician used to record with everything a computer allows, really play as a musician. The studio itself imposes

⁵¹ I will develop the notion of emotion labour further in this thesis.

⁵² “Casa das Máquinas - Namouche” (Antena3Docs) - <https://youtu.be/Ux5XSgvCRxo> - accessed on April 2017. Francisco Rebelo is a bassist usually associated to musical projects related to funk. As such, the importance of being able to move when recording is all the more understandable. It is also relevant that, although born in 1963 and being very active in the recording industry for the last twenty years, Rebelo’s recording experience has been confined to small studios – at least, smaller than Namouche -, as his words confirm.

⁵³ Grohl, Dave in *Foo Fighters: Sonic Highways*, HBO, 2014 – accessed on April 2017.

that from you: when you come here, you are supposed to really play, not just play and then edit” (Joaquim Albergaria, contemporary musicians, commenting his first time at Namouche).⁵⁴

There are many layers in Albergaria’s statement that deserve further comment. First, the acknowledgment of a certain feeling when entering Namouche for the first time, something not explainable by words. Then, the responsibility of really playing “as a musician” and not “just play and edit”, bringing the dichotomy analogue (“really playing as a musician”) vs. digital (“just play and edit”) to his answer. Albergaria’s words point to another aspect which, in the particular case of Namouche, turn this recording studio experience all the more special: its symbolic capital, a concept I will develop further in this thesis. “I’m sure these panels here in the studio all bear an auditory memory which would be excellent to listen to” (ibid).

Apart from recording technology (the Neve based sound) and the musical/human empathy factor centered in a particular studio (like The Muscle Shoals sound), there is a central feature lying underneath most of the quotes transcribed so far and which, for me, is at the core of the true *loci* of recorded music: acoustics. In Phil Ramone’s quote on page 19, there is mention of the “unique sound of the [Muscle Shoals] room”. In *Sound City*, attention is given to a particular spot in the recording room of the studio, where the recorded sound of the drums sounded much better than in others. Like the audio engineer’s “listening sweet spot” (Moehn 2005:73) in the control room, there was a “recording sweet spot” in Sound City’s recording room which apparently was responsible for the extraordinary recorded sound of the drums obtained in that studio. Namouche’s recording room, as we will later acknowledge, is one of the studio’s best assets. Apart from the physical space, which enables a musical performance to better include its kinesthetic competences (as the words of Francisco Rebelo corroborate), the acoustic properties of a good room are essential to the sonic experience involved in a recording studio. In the words of Tó Pinheiro da Silva, “due to its dimensions, and because it is absorbed, Namouche’s room offers a lot of individuality to the sound.”⁵⁵ This means the possibility to record, for instance, three acoustic instruments at the same time, separated

⁵⁴ “Casa das Máquinas - Namouche” (Antena3Docs) - <https://youtu.be/Ux5XSgvCRxo> - accessed on April 2017.

⁵⁵ *ibid.* Tó Pinheiro da Silva is a Portuguese sound engineer, again one of the most highly respected and still very active in the recording milieu, as well as in live shows. He will be extensively mentioned along this thesis.

by panels, with the added value of the musicians being able to watch one another. “I always have the voices super pure and the instruments very well separated.”⁵⁶

A group of people making music, feeling music, enjoying music. As we are experiencing times in which recording music has become increasingly an individualistic activity, a recording studio (understood in this sense) reminds us that music, whether recorded or played live, is, in its essence, a social experience.

Space, symbolic capital,⁵⁷ kinesthetic competence, sound purity, music’s social function are, according to the comments above, features that characterize the experience of music recording at Namouche. Experiencing music making (performing, recording, listening) in a recording studio like Namouche - large, acoustically prepared, technologically equipped according to its dimensions - is what makes me consider it as one of the true *locus* of recorded music that I have had the pleasure of working in.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ One could argue that symbolic capital is not a marker of any recording studio. However, as will be further understood along the thesis, I am referring to a type of recording studio which, in essence, due to their physical, acoustical, technological and human features, attract certain artists and events that, sooner or later, will be part of a country’s cultural history.

2. Methodologies

“Fieldwork is a slice of your life. You are there. It happens to you. [...] You are the research tool” (Kealy 1974:1-2).

Methodological tools

My field techniques include fieldwork developed in thirteen recording sessions I attended as observer in Namouche Recording Studios (chapter 10).⁵⁸ Namouche will function, in this thesis, as a case-study, a concept I will make clear in the next section. In parallel, ethnographic interviews with diversified agents in this field - musicians, composers, record producers, AR's, sound engineers and others involved in music recording in Lisbon - were central for the diachronic study of the recording studios I set myself to accomplish. Most of the information gathered lies in the memory of those who either worked in those facilities or are in some way related to the Portuguese recording industry. Unfortunately, in the course of my research, some of these central personalities have passed away.⁵⁹ Historical research from bibliographical sources (when available) was included, as well as press articles, documentary films and, of course, recorded music (chapter 6). I include an important and valuable personal interview conducted with André Perry about residential studios, and one of the most transversal issues regarding recording studios: the “quest” for sound. I tried to address - and reflect upon - what I considered central questions related to my experience as a musician who worked during two important periods of sound formation⁶⁰ - analogue and digital. This was done through the same sources mentioned previously.

⁵⁸ Apart from my thirteen observed sessions at Namouche, I believe all my professional life in recording studios will, somehow, assemble and become part of “the field” of this thesis. I will refer to this subject at the end of this sub-chapter.

⁵⁹ Since I started this project, some of my central informants for the diachronic study of the Lisbon recording studios have died, namely Hugo Ribeiro, Fernando Albuquerque and Zé da Ponte. I was fortunate to have interviewed the first two. As for Zé da Ponte, my memories of many studio sessions where professionalism equaled great laughter remain. They will be mentioned again in chapter 9, together with the studios they are mostly associated to.

⁶⁰ This concept will be defined in the next sub-chapter.

The Namouche sessions as case-study

At this stage, I should discuss the notion of case-study, as I question myself whether my thirteen observed sessions at Namouche - fragmented, many times shorter than I would have liked, often disconnected ones from the others, and scattered along a large period of time - can, in fact, embody the definition of the concept. The reason for this discontinuity was the fact that, along the years of my research (and the subsequent writing of the thesis), I never ceased to revisit my ethnographic perspective. The observed sessions were carried out on the few moments participants made available and I was myself critically prepared. When my availability coincided with sessions that I was allowed to formally observe, research took place in a very effective way.

According to various definitions I came across, a case-study is generically

“an account of an activity, event or problem that contains a real or hypothetical situation and includes the complexities you would encounter in the workplace.”⁶¹

“an intensive analysis of an individual unit (such as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment.”⁶²

“both a method of analysis and a specific research design for examining a problem, both of which are used in most circumstances to generalize across populations.”⁶³

Bearing in mind the case-studies that stand as references in the ethnomusicological domain - usually including long term stays in a foreign country, learning a new (many times “exotic”) language, immersion in a new culture, and the drawing of generalized conclusions (often through a presented model), my “case” does not configure these aspects altogether. Even in a more contemporary context of research - a recording studio, for instance - the few ethnographies available (Meintjes 2003, Porcello 1996, 2004 and 2005, Bates 2008, Williams 2007, 2009 and 2010, Moehn 2012, Thompson and Lashua 2014, Tolstad 2016) implied, for most of them, the learning of a

⁶¹ UNSW Current Students - <https://student.unsw.edu.au/what-case-study> - accessed on July 2017.

⁶² Merriam- Webster Dictionary - <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/case%20study> - accessed on July 2017.

⁶³ USC Libraries - <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/casestudy> - accessed on July 2017.

new language⁶⁴ (Bates, Moehn, Tolstad), but, above all, long-term field research. Still, for Ingrid Tolstad (2016), who developed her research during two years between Sweden and Russia, following a record company and its network of artists, her doubts regarding this subject matter led her to affirm that

“the aim of this study is not to provide some sort of generalizable model about what a music production company is [...]. However, there are a range of aspects characterizing this research project, that makes it possible to suggest that [its] findings are also applicable beyond scope of the immediate field of inquiry” (2016:28).

Like Tolstad, my aim was never to provide any sort of model about what a recording studio is or should be. When I started the Namouche sessions, I did not know what I would find. My choice had personal as well as practical/logistical reasons: as part of my professional activity, I knew the studio (although, as I later found out, in a rather different physical organization, so much so that it often seemed a novel place to me); I had met Joaquim Monte, the studio’s main responsible and sound engineer, turning accessibility to the “field” without major difficulties. The main reason for this choice was, obviously, the studio’s unexpected survival and its present dynamic activity, placing it as a singular “case” - which, in fact, I believe it is. But, like Tolstad (2016), the singularity of my “case” continuously emerged empirically along the years in the course of the research (ibid.:27), despite the research’s afore-mentioned fragmentation and discontinuity.

At Namouche: observing when, where, how, who and why?

The assumed responsibility of contributing to the making of a narrative such as this - where I am also an actor in the field - left me both enthusiastic and self-conscious. In the meantime, some unexpected difficulties arose regarding the fieldwork at Namouche.

⁶⁴ I am not associating the definition of a case-study to the learning of a new language. This feature only bears importance as to the time and involvement used during a specific research.

Paul Thompson and Brett Lashua (2014) use Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman's four initial stages of empirical research in organizations (1988) to frame their fieldwork within British recording facilities. These stages are: "getting in, getting on, getting out and getting back" (Buchanan 1988:53, quoted in Thompson and Lashua 2014:3). The "getting in" part, as stated previously, was relatively easy for me, compared to other ethnographies in recording studios (for instance, Thompson and Lashua 2014),⁶⁵ because of my previous experience as a session musician. Nevertheless, I always felt uncomfortable and resistant before going to any of the recording sessions I was allowed to attend. Asking for permission was one of the reasons I felt uncomfortable, as recording sessions are usually private to musicians, sound engineers, and whoever the artist wishes to be there⁶⁶ - what Andrew Leyshon (2009) refers as congeniality (ibid:loc.1316 of 1331). As stated by Thompson and Lashua, "fundamentally and practically, there is no other reason to be in a studio unless one is involved with the recording in some way" (2014:4). In his doctoral dissertation, Eliot Bates (2008), also defends the same point of view (one which I will try to argue later in this section)

"I quickly found that observing recording sessions to any considerable degree was impossible without being an essential participant of some sort: musician, arranger, artist or engineer. Many sessions are closed to visitors" (ibid:11).

⁶⁵ Thompson and Lashua's quoted article (2014) refers, in fact, to "different research projects conducted in different studios. Paul [Thompson]'s was focused primarily on work in professional studios, and his methods include the use of CCTV-style video recordings of studio sessions, followed by interviews with participants. Brett [Lashua]'s fieldwork involved a collaborative, youth community-led studio project [...] and methods of data generation included filed notes, audio recordings, and also interviews during studio sessions" (2014:3). Although one could argue that Thompson's research project was non-participatory, as he was not involved in the music activity (and therefore comparable to Tolstadt's and my own's), his role as ethnographer was prepared in advance since the pre-production stage of the recording of a specific band. In my case, there were different sessions with different artists (in very few cases, I was able to observe two days in a row with the same artist), which eventually could diminish the level of potential intimacy and trust regarding myself. This is relevant for what I argue in this chapter about the role of the non-participatory observer in the studio.

⁶⁶ As I came to realize later, this idea is historically based in a time where studios were very private, proscribed spaces usually owned by or associated to record labels. With the advent of digital recording technology, and as my own research would prove, studios became more informal spaces, allowing people outside the recording network to be present - friends, photographers, booking agents and managers, for instance. This does not include the figure of the ethnographer, somebody who, in principle, is outside the musicians' personal sphere of social relations. While this more informal atmosphere could also happen two or three decades ago (depending on the artist's and producer's will), the fact that the music industry (or what is left of it) is more dependable of other media channels, such as television and social networks may account for this situation.

Regarding the “getting on” stage, observing at Namouche, (a place I had only been as a professional singer/musician) also raised questions as to who, actually, observes who in a fieldwork observational context. “Outsiders” aren’t usually allowed, something I fully understand and support, as a recording session singer myself. Therefore, very often I felt like an outsider in that situation, as Ingrid Tolstad - “a researcher is per se an outsider to the everyday studio setting” (2016:37)⁶⁷ - almost as if I had no right to be there, in the first place (although my access to the observed sessions was fully permitted). I felt I was the one who was being observed, especially in the beginning of the sessions.

To compensate this uneasiness, I had to find some strategies. First, the choice of the equipment used. My options were the smallest objects possible, and the less conspicuous - a small note-book, a pen, and my mobile phone (usually out of sight). The few ethnographic interviews I conducted in the studio during field research - I soon found out, as Thompson and Lashua, that they may function as “unnecessary interruptions in the studio processes” (2014:11) - were not audio or video-recorded. The use of recording devices would definitely have contaminated my attempts at being nearly unnoticed as a researcher. Instead, I spoke in the most informal way with the actors in the terrain, attempting to quickly write down the relevant information obtained. Whenever possible, I tried to arrange for further interviews outside the studio environment (sometimes by email), which proved, in my opinion, to be a right decision.⁶⁸

Secondly, I had to place myself somewhere, and despite my few personal items, Namouche’s control room did not offer many choices. To be able to observe and write notes, I chose a specific spot where I could visually access the tracking room through a window nearby, sitting in a small couch - and, very important, where I could hardly be seen (I, actually, wished I could be invisible). That couch usually had coats, rough sacks and other belongings of the musicians, which I had to discretely move so that I could sit and write there - another intromission on my part. It was also the couch where musicians

⁶⁷ Of all the ethnographies based in a studio which address methodological questions related to the data-gathering process (Bates 2008, Thompson 2014 and Tolstad 2016), I resonate more with the latter (Tolstad 2016) as, like myself, she was not actively involved in the recording process.

⁶⁸ Regarding the use of email, one could argue that a certain degree of spontaneity may be lost. I could, however, argue the other way round: when someone, in a working environment such as a recording studio, interrupts your work flow to ask you questions, you tend to become an “interviewee”, with all the attached clichés (a sudden change of voice tone, a different choice of words, an awkward stutter) and not “the musician at work”, which, as a research object, was my main interest. On the other hand, it is my belief that there were ethnographic interviews, made through email, that showed a more profound reflection upon the apparently simple questions I asked (“Why do you still record? Why do you record here at Namouche?”), than if answered “on the spot”.

liked to sit when they made breaks after recording. Consequently, I felt obliged to leave the room when those moments occurred. Tolstad's experience was as follows:

“Sitting in on sessions as a researcher, whether it was vocal recordings, writing or mixing, usually entailed placing myself in a corner of the room, trying not to be in anyone's way, making notes of everything that I saw and heard to the best of my ability, while also recording sound on my laptop, and every now and then taking pictures and short videos with my phone” (2016:37).

Tolstadt also states, a few lines later, that she “constantly felt self-conscious about being a liability” to her research participants (ibid).

Taking photos and recording sounds was always strange for me. I felt I was “stealing” something. I never felt at ease doing any of these activities, although I was always allowed to whenever I asked. Being familiar with a recording studio environment, I would only ask to take photos or shoot small videos whenever I foresaw an uncompromising situation. This is one of the advantages of being close to the terrain, a subject I will develop further in this section.

Smoking was permitted in the control room. Although being a non-fanatic-non-smoker myself, I had to leave the room now and again, to be able to breathe a less rarefied air. Both the sound engineer and the majority of musicians present in the sessions I observed smoked heavily. At the same time, these moments were useful in terms of liberating the control room only for the “music-makers”, usually coinciding with the end of recording takes and the consequent listening phase by the musicians whom had played. Attention was, therefore, diverted from my “outsider” presence in the studio.

The pleasant part was the pleasure of being inside a recording studio and having the privilege of experiencing music that way. Although sometimes a little envious of the actual participants, I often had the illusion - maybe another illusion made possible in the “black-box” - that I was part of the music-making myself too. It also made me realize that there are certain types of music that are all the more likable the more you listen to them. I will elaborate this idea further on chapter 10.

Coming back to the resistance I felt during the observation at Namouche, in retrospect I asked myself: why the feeling of discomfort, of “outsidiness” in such an apparently familiar space to me?

Allan Williams (2007) has written about the divisions of space in audio recording studios that throughout the years evidenced the relative importance of the different actors involved in a recording session. After reading his article, some of the impressions described earlier in this section became clearer to me.

In a recording studio, there are two main spaces: the control room, where the engineer and producer (when there is one) are, and the recording room, where musicians – whether instrument players or singers – record.⁶⁹ This division became standardized with electrical recording and loudspeaker amplification, which triggered “a pronounced shift in power from musician to technician” underscored by the construction of control room windows (ibid.). As a singer, either session or soloist, I have been used to be in the recording room. Access to the control room was usually between songs or jingles, or for a short break. In the analogue days, sometimes these short breaks meant time needed to change reels. Consequently, my point of observation has been mostly the one that comes from the recording room to the control room, with the window in the middle. However, some uneasiness may arise from this perspective, both aurally and visually. On the visual side

“Such acoustically motivated construction often has the inadvertent effect of casting visual reflections of floors, equipment, and light fixtures that obscure the view of the control room interior from the musicians in the recording room. Further exacerbating this problem, many engineers employ minimal lighting within the control room, creating a dark ambience that both hides their gaze and contributes to the aura of mystery that surrounds their work” (ibid.).

In other words, very often one is seen, but does not see much. And how is one seen? Using Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon and its subsequent use by Michel Foucault (1979) on his analysis of discipline and power,

“The main effect of this design [the panopticon] is, “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of

⁶⁹ As stated before, other actors may be present. The most crowded sessions I participated in were the ones that involved advertising agencies, where clients, copy-writers, accounts and others (sometimes, it was difficult to say who was who) usually attended. My personal interpretation is that, despite the arguable real need of so many people present, these diversified actors - in particular, the clients – who most of the times were very poor music *connoisseurs*, to say the least (as was apparent by their comments), enjoyed the power exercise - underscored by the economical factor of being the ones who, eventually, were paying for everything - that we are discussing in this section.

power.⁷⁰ Similarly, the very design of recording studio control rooms, with their glass observation windows looking out on the inhabitants of the recording room, enables technicians to exercise power over the musicians involved in the recording process” (ibid.).

It is probably an overstatement to consider every recording situation as potentially embedding the power exercise as the one described above, taking place in a prison - although the parallel with the panopticon is undoubtedly interesting.⁷¹ It can, however, occur. In retrospect, I would say that it happened to me more often than I had ever realized before writing (and reflecting) upon the subject, as somehow these mechanisms are assimilated and considered to be an integral part of a recording environment. As Allan Williams states:

“The physical properties of the recording studio design impose social order designations – musician/observed/inmate, technician/observer/guard – and naturalize this order as musicians unconsciously internalize their subordinate position. According to Foucault, “He who is subjected to the field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault 1979:202-203)” (ibid).

It is only natural, then, that as an observer – *specially* as an observer, as I wasn’t part of the recording process - I didn’t want to trigger any power related feelings, or cause any added discomfort to an already emotionally charged environment as a recording session can be, due to this “I’m looking through you” kind of perspective (Williams 2007). Therefore, I chose to “hide” in the couch. Or, as Thompson and Lashua refer (2014:9), the “fly-on-the-wall” ethnographer’s position, having as less visual intervention

⁷⁰ Foucault, Michel (1979) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, p. 201(quoted in Williams 2007)

⁷¹ At this point of the dissertation, I will focus on the visual side of the division of spaces in a recording studio, as it relates to my methodological difficulties as an observer at Namouche. However, Williams develops the acoustic side as well, using a concept derived from the panopticon - the panauralcon. “Like the panopticon, the power of the panauralcon exists in the possibility, exercised or not, of microphone surveillance. While engineers and producers freely communicate behind the control room window, recording musicians must be circumspect and cautious” (Williams 2007). As a studio professional, I can confirm this to be most of the times true. Careful, undoubtedly; circumspect, very seldom... (I remember many good-humored recording sessions - I would luckily say the great majority of the ones I participated - and still participate - in). However, as my point of observation during research was the control room, the panauralcon was not my ethnographic perspective.

in the room as possible (other than my acknowledged presence there, which, under the circumstances, was more than enough).

The couch is a piece of furniture that gained its way into the control room from the moment musicians began to inhabit this space more, as a consequence of overdubbing⁷² (ibid.). I have been in recording studios where the couch is between the mixing console and the control room window, whereas in some others it is located behind the mixing console. As mentioned before, my mental framework as a professional never for once questioned most of what is being described in this section. Therefore, it never crossed my mind that this displacement of the couch could, actually, be associated to the relative power that musicians increasingly acquired throughout the years, moving from an almost invisible situation regarding the “power area” (where the mixing console, sound engineer and producer usually are located) to a position where they can not only listen more accurately to what is being recorded, but watch as well – briefly, be also “in control” (ibid.). For me, it all had to do with comfort and space and I think there is also a point in here to be made.

Namouche’s couch is positioned perpendicularly to the control room window, in the upper left corner of an 8x3,5x2,30 meter rectangular control room (see photo on the next page). There is no designated area for people to sit, as the couch is relatively small and “hidden”. Comfort, as such, is not terribly highlighted, once the atmosphere is usually very informal and musicians, producers and sound engineer are mixed together in very close areas.⁷³ Apart from the professionals directly involved in the recording and the ethnographer (myself, in this case), many other people can also be present (depending on the session and on the artist).⁷⁴ Consequently, the couch has the double function of both accommodating diversified belongings (coats, rough sacs, personal computers, bags) and people (sometimes, both these functions can occur at the same time, despite the very small dimension of this piece of furniture).

⁷² Overdubbing is a process used in multi-tracking recording in which a performer, while listening to a previously recorded track, simultaneously plays or sings (and records) a new performance along with it.

⁷³ As will become evident further in the thesis, I actually had a lot of difficulty in identifying the different actors on several observational sessions.

⁷⁴ See note 70.



Photo 1 - Namouche's recording room. My observational spot was behind the small right-hand window on the ground floor, marked yellow (photo by the author)



Photo 2 - The actual couch (photo by the author)

Nevertheless, this discomfort was very comfortable regarding the fieldwork observational perspective. It allowed me to remain almost invisible most of the times, occasionally standing up or moving around whenever I wanted to observe more attentively or take a picture.⁷⁵ Most importantly, I could listen reasonably well, not only what was going on in the recording room (the music and the communication between musicians and the control room), but the discourses taking place in the control room as

⁷⁵ Standing up can, actually, be a very risky move, as Ingrid Tolstad told in the IASPM Northern branch conference in December 2014, at Oslo University. When observing a session, as she wanted to get a closer perception of what was happening, she stood up and approached the mixing console where both the musicians and the sound engineer were. As she approached the area, she heard one of the musicians utter a sentence involving a word similar to “spy” (they were Russian and Tolstad understood some words). She got quite nervous, but a few moments later they started laughing.

well (these ones, not so accurately, as the mixing console was a little further from the couch and I wanted to move as less as possible from where I was).

Listening as a research tool

Since our starting point in Musicology is, by definition, music, it seems appropriate to develop the subject of listening as a research tool. So far, I have mentioned the physical constraints of observing at Namouche - where to stay, where to sit, attempts not to be seen, etc. But observing, *lato sensu* and in this particular context, should mean, above all, to listen as well as to see. I remember, many years ago, listening to an interview on television, by the famous Portuguese dancer and choreographer Vera Mantero. When asked which performing art she enjoyed the most she mentioned music. Because, she justified, in a world dominated by the visual arts, music could, nevertheless, surpass all of the others in its ability to reach audiences and touch people. It comes in resonance with Thompson and Lashua's statement, when referring Lashua's fieldwork and some of the "noise" present in the studio (2014:17).

"the importance of sound in this context [is] in stark contrast to the visually dominant culture of the arts and social science research, in which a visualist framework often privileges what is seen over what is heard" (Bull 2000; Bull and Back 2003, quoted in Thompson 2014:17).

The "ethnographic ear" (ibid; Tolstadt 2016:41) is, then, of the utmost importance, and participant listening, rather than (or together with) participant observation, the methodological tool that, in my particular case, helped me the most during field research, both in the Namouche sessions and in the historical reconstruction of the Lisbon studios.

"Because of sound's perspectival and relational nature [...] it is always experienced from particular subjective and embodied, physical and social locations" (Born 2013:17, quoted in Tolstadt 2016:41).

By being in the privileged position of an active, participant listener, and because the sound of the human voice can be so emotionally charged (even when attempting not

to be), I was able to grasp very complex and delicate recording moments in terms of interpersonal and social interactions (like the one described in sub-chapter 7.4). I could also appreciate in closer detail certain music genres that are unfamiliar to me (classical music, contemporary and jazz, for instance), as well as its recording practices. As mentioned previously, the highlight of the observational process was not so much the observation *per se*, but listening to the “observed” music. I was fortunate to have attended, in general, very special recording sessions, where I listened to beautiful music, extremely well performed. In some of the sessions, I was truly sorry to be obliged to interrupt the observation, as the music listening had a comforting effect on me and made me, somehow, momentarily forget about the difficulties that “getting there” usually involved.⁷⁶

However, my “ethnographic ear” posed unexpected challenges regarding the interviews I conducted for the historical part. The first difficulty was to choose the interviewees. Although as I stated earlier many of the original music professionals associated to the historical studios have deceased, for some of the studios there was more than one relevant informant; how to choose? The second difficulty, not obvious when conducting them, was the length of the interviews. Because I knew practically all the informants and had had a professional connection of some sort with them in the past, interviews were usually conversations, long and (mostly) interesting, which took several months to transcribe and translate into English. My informal tone - not fabricated - triggered the memories of the informants (usually with ages close to 70 and more) in ways unforeseen. As much pleasurable as it was, it became, at times, a methodological mistake: most of the times, I had too much information, some of it with no specific relevance. However, it was beautiful to listen to the pride and passion that most of these professionals spoke about their work - particularly the sound professionals.

⁷⁶ Buchanan, Body and McCalman (1988) refer to fieldwork in organizations as “permeated with the conflict between what is theoretically desirable on the one hand and what is practically possible”(ibid.). Bearing in mind the difficulties that are referred by these scholars in relation to the “getting in” process in several occasions, I can only feel extremely fulfilled that, regardless of my “insider” status in the field (which I will discuss in the next section), I was allowed to “get in” in another role.

“Inside outside. leave me alone.

Inside outside. nowhere is home” (The Who, Quadrophenia)

Pete Townsend’s verses of his 1973 song *Quadrophenia*⁷⁷ may function as a short parable for my initial stage of the observational process at Namouche.

One of my main concerns was the question of being “inside” the field. Having been a studio professional for more than three decades, the familiarity with the “field” would, eventually, cause me difficulties - what other researchers have designated as “home deafness” (Tolstadt 2016:44), or “initial subjective proximity” (Thompson and Lashua 2014:8). My biggest fear was that my sessions at Namouche would show me nothing “exceptional”, and that the result of the observational process would only be a confirmation of the “normal.”⁷⁸ This was also due to the fact that, as stated previously, I did not have a precise idea of what I was going to find, to begin with; and, on the other hand, whether my “findings” would be of any relevance, academically and scientifically speaking.

Discussions with my supervisor helped me go into the “outsider” perspective that I seemed to lack. His experience with recording was more associated with classical music, which triggered interesting and unexpected questions regarding my own recording experience and the sessions at Namouche. Also, as the sessions went on, the other side of the initial worrying “insidness” began to emerge, and I began feeling more at “home”, using Pete Townsend’s verse at the beginning of this section.

If, as some academics defend, “doing ethnographic fieldwork on subjects, people or locations that one is already (too) familiar with, is considered methodologically problematic” (Tolstad 2016:43), in a recording studio it can also become an advantage. The first one being trust. Joaquim Monte’s interference was fundamental for this feature, as his introduction to my presence in the studio legitimized the process in very efficient terms and helped my “getting in”, with the accordance of “the unacknowledged gatekeepers of a recording studio session, not studio owners, or session engineers, but

⁷⁷ *Quadrophenia* is the main title of the 1973 homonymous album of British rock group The Who. All songs are written by Pete Townsend, the group’s bass player.

⁷⁸ As Eliot Bates refers, “the impossibility of knowing to what extent observations are normative (or exceptional), and to what extent research results are generalizable”(2008:18).

musicians” (Thompson and Lashua 2014:6). I was one of “them” (“Isabel is a singer who is now doing a doctoral research”), but in a different role. Bearing in mind the type of personal relationship that in general all clients maintained with Monte, his assurance was crucial. I resonate with Tolstadt, when she mentions that

“the level of trust (...) enabled me to obtain increased access, and to be entrusted with information and knowledge that I might not otherwise have been able to obtain” (2016:44).

Thompson and Lashua mention another aspect which, for me, was not a problem - what they designate as “studio etiquette”: “certain social expectations that govern the behavior of the personnel in the recording studio” (2014:10).⁷⁹ Although I was not doing participant-observation (unlike Thompson and Lashua) and, therefore, could hardly be considered “personnel” in that context, my understanding of “social expectations” and “behavior” is generalized to the point of, as stated before, being extra careful as to where I physically placed myself in the control room, and keeping in silence as much as I could. Most of the times, people seemed to forget I was there, which was exactly what I wished.⁸⁰

Being an “insider” also enabled me to understand most of what was happening in the observed sessions, as studio technical language is generally familiar to me. That way, I could “de-emphasize ‘the other’” (Bates 2008:17), being alert to what in those sessions was singular and substantially different.

Contrary to some of the academics that conducted ethnographic research in recording studios, I do not believe that “observing recording sessions to any considerable degree” is “impossible without being an essential participant of some sort: musician, arranger, artist or engineer” (Bates 2008:11). What I do believe is that it is, probably, virtually impossible to conduct observation in a recording studio without being an “insider” of some degree - musician, arranger, artist or engineer - but not necessarily

⁷⁹ In a more extended definition, here is what engineer and producer Darren Jones explained to Paul Thompson what studio etiquette was: “judging about how vocal you can be about certain things because it can be quite a delicate situation and quite often if people are unsure about what they’re doing, or are coming out with new ideas, then to stay neutral in the situation is important” (2014:10).

⁸⁰ I only had one (almost very) unpleasant situation in one of the observed sessions - actually, the first one: at the end, as I was speaking with the producer, he demanded to see my notes. I was astonished by the unusual request, and I almost denied; however, I had the clear notion that, if I did, I would probably lose the entire session (as he could refuse to let me use all the data, and it had been an extremely interesting session - see chapter 7.4). Later, after he read my notes, he apologized and explained the reasons for his attitude. My decision was the right one. But it was lucky that my notes did not include any more personal comments about the events and people described (which often they did).

participating actively in the sessions. It depends on the purpose and scope of the research which approach to choose: for Bates, for instance, his search for the markers of the sound of Turkish CDs⁸¹ could hardly have been possible without his deep immersion into the recording studios as sound engineer.⁸² Thompson and Lashua (2014) “draw from separate research projects conducted in different studios”, Paul’s research focusing “primarily on work in professional studios”, and Lashua’s involving “a collaborative, youth community-led studio project” (ibid:3). However, I argue that one can be a participant listener (as I have defended before), an “insider” (musician, artist) in the role of “outsider” (researcher, ethnographer), and a non-participant observer who does not interfere with “the action” of the recording session itself, being able to almost “melt” with the walls.⁸³

I asked some of the academic researchers who have conducted fieldwork in a recording studio to develop this issue further - namely, the difficulty in adopting an observational perspective in a very close terrain. Commenting about his experience as researcher/sound-engineer in a recording studio, Alan Williams stated:

“I think for me, the crucial distinction was between observation and participant-observation. I had many more issues with the straight observation methodology,

⁸¹ Bates explains his research topic in the following terms: “I could pick out a Turkish-produced CD in a few seconds. There was something consistent to the sound of Turkish CDs.[...]Was it [...] the practice of engineering? Or perhaps [...] the technology of engineering? I decided that the combination of my own audio engineering background, some initial contacts in the Turkish music industry and a set of questions that had no explanation in the existing literature on Turkish (or, more broadly speaking, “Middle Eastern”) music pointed to this as an ideal research topic” (2008:7).

⁸² According to a Portuguese sound professional, for a sound engineer to be in a recording studio without actually exercising his professional activity is something difficult to handle. Even if, as an academic, Eliot Bates could have coped more easily with the situation, there was the social context of the Turkish recording milieu, according to which there was no place for observation: “There was no category or comfortable accommodation for observational visitors, and the potential for worrisome risks involved with initiating such a category” (Bates 2008:12).

⁸³ Tolstadt refers an awkward episode that happened to her: in a recording session she was observing, as she was sitting in a chair with her laptop, “a great place to sit in all these concerns” (where she could get “a good overview of what was going on”, make notes and record sound with her computer), two of the artists for whom the music being recorded on that day was destined came to the studio, but had no chair to sit in the control room. Instead of standing up and free her seat (which she thought of doing), she decided to keep her head down “and let one of the songwriters give up her chair”(2016:48). She didn’t feel comfortable doing so, but she did it anyway, for fear of losing the observational spot. At other times, she was asked to leave the studio as vocals were being recorded, which made her feel extremely uncomfortable and set apart (“I was politely kicked out of the studio during vocal recording sessions, based on the reason that it was ‘too crowded’”) (ibid). While admitting, as I have been doing throughout this chapter, that doing ethnography in a recording studio is not an easy task, I think one has to bear in mind that the most important thing happening in a studio is the recording/mixing/mastering activity taking place, and the professionals involved. Everything else is...something that should not be happening at all (no matter how legitimized and justified). In non-participatory ethnographies, I believe one should preferably act as a sort of humanized, almost unnoticed piece of furniture rather than up-lift our ethnographer “self”, therefore avoiding potential unpleasant situations.

and early in the research chose to primarily function as participant-observer” (Allan Williams, email interview, May 2014).

Contrasting both methods, Williams stated:

“One of the earliest sessions I attended purely as an observer illustrated to me the challenges of outsider presence in the studio. The musicians were generally fine with me being there [...]. But the engineer was a little unnerved by my presence in the control room, especially when it came to light that I was teaching in the Sound Recording program at UMass Lowell [...]. The engineer became very self-conscious about his methodology, apologizing for the below-par equipment, etc. There was nothing I could say that would alter that dynamic, [...] the time in the control room yielded nothing, and I feared might have even had a negative impact on the session itself as the engineer’s attention became directed more at me than at the musicians and music being recorded” (ibid.).

As stated before, this comment resonates with my experience but in opposite terms: after presenting myself (or being presented) as a doctoral student doing fieldwork, I became the object of observation (however subtle, most of the times). But the self-consciousness that Williams refers was felt, in my particular case, when trying to conduct ethnographic interviews in the studio: some informants were subject to a speech transformation (including the tone of their voices, as if speaking in an “old school” radio program), the minute I turned the tape recorder on. Regardless of my efforts to avoid the “I” word (“interview” - I always used the word “talk” instead) and placing my small portable tape recorder as hidden as possible, it still had a restraining effect on the musicians/informants.

Returning to Allan William`s comments about participant observation:

“By being a participant-observer, my presence was always explained, though with perhaps a different or at least incomplete understanding of my purpose. As a musician being recorded, I was privy to a different kind of interaction, and certainly able to filter my reflexive stance (‘why do I feel different with headphones on?’) into the comments and actions of my fellow musicians and the communications with technical folks on the other side of the glass (‘why doesn’t somebody ask me about the headphone mix?’)” (ibid.).

But how to conduct participant-observation when you are recording?⁸⁴ Can you shift your “self” from insider to outsider (Tolstadt 2016:47), bringing the ethnographer to the forefront and leaving the musician behind the barricades?

The PitS project – Performance in the Studio – is a project sponsored by the UK AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) which aims to develop “a new methodology for studying Musical Performance in the Recording Studio [...] also applicable to a variety of other forms of creative practice in the digital age.”⁸⁵ Based on a staged recording session involving a singer, a record producer, a sound engineer, a small rhythm section and a string quartet, the session, which lasted three days (one for rehearsal and two for actually recording), was filmed and the whole process further accompanied by “interviews with the participants, analyses by various network members,⁸⁶ responses to the analyses by the participants and discussions between the academics and the practitioners.”⁸⁷

From this project a conference on line was held, during April 2013, where discussion around questions concerning recording and a vast number of surrounding topics (listening, creativity, performance live and in the studio, recording classical vs popular music, among others) emerged. I participated in this conference, becoming involved in the several debates, as well as other researchers, academics and practitioners.

I wanted to know how the participants of the recording session (who are, some of them, researchers as well) dealt with the issue of participant-observation.

“[Although] in PitS we deliberately kept it so that no one was ‘officially’ both participant and observer [...] I don’t think this is any different from the ‘-emic’ versus ‘-etic’ debate in ethnomusicology and more generally in anthropology. There is no objectivity possible and the debate about whether it’s better to observe from the inside or the outside is relatively pointless: the best you can do is to flag

⁸⁴ Based on my working experience, my two possible alternatives for conducting participant observation would be either singing or doing vocal coaching/directing in the studio, as I have done many times. I eventually tried, but both options seemed confusing and nearly impossible to do, when considering the possibility of doing research at the same time.

⁸⁵ <http://www.artofrecordproduction.com/index.php/ahrc-performance-in-the-studio/about-pits> - accessed on June 2014.

⁸⁶ “The core members of the network are Amanda Bayley (University of Bath Spa), Amy Blier-Caruthers (Royal College of Music), Anne Danielsen (University of Oslo), Mine Dogantan-Dack (Middlesex University), Morten Michelsen (University of Copenhagen), Thomas Porcello (Vassar College), Alan Williams (University of Massachusetts Lowell) and Simon Zagorski-Thomas (London College of Music, University of West London)” (ibid).

⁸⁷ ibid.

up the ways in which you may be subjective” (Simon Zagorski-Thomas, email interview, June 2014).

Referring to his own role in the project, Zagorski-Thomas would further send me the following comment (in resonance with my own feelings regarding fieldwork at Namouche):

“On the one hand you can argue that I come with preconceptions that skew my objectivity and on the other you can say that my ‘insider’ understanding of the process allows me to see nuances of the process that an outsider would miss. Both are true and both make my interpretation incomplete and flawed. But this isn’t science” (ibid.).

“[...] as a researcher all I can do is to create a schematic representation of the messy reality that I am observing: I choose particular features - such as a particular phrase spoken by one musician to another - as important and, perhaps causative of some musical event, and I choose to ignore other features [...] as irrelevant, as non-causal variables. This schematic explanation is as much a social construction as the musical phenomenon it is seeking to explain. It has no objective truth but it can have use or value in a social situation. [...] By that measure, my personal distance from the subject of my investigation is only a problem if it makes my explanation less convincing to others” (ibid.).

Mike Howlett, record producer involved in the PitS project, musician, producer and researcher,⁸⁸ would advise recurring to methodological approaches such as auto ethnography and reflective practice, a subject I will develop in this sub-chapter, in the section “Constructing the narrative.

⁸⁸ Mike Howlett was, in fact, the record producer involved in the PitS project. His career includes a Grammy-award prize for the production of “I Ran (So Far Away)” (1982), by British band A Flock of Seagulls, and other music collaborations as a bass player, such as Strontium 90, a band featuring himself (bass), as well as the future members of The Police: Sting (vocals), Stewart Copeland (drums) and Andrew Summers.

Note taking

Note taking was a feature of the fieldwork that deserved some reflection on my part. In the field, it was a comfortable activity, once it kept me busy, with my head down whenever there were musicians in the control room. It also involved my work in an aura of credibility (or so I believed), equating inscription with the legitimization of my ethnographer “self”, with the added advantage of contributing to the “non-presence” I wished to have there. As anthropologist Michael Jackson suggests, “field notes have their appropriate place, out of sight, or perhaps they should not be taken at all”.⁸⁹ However, like Gregory Barz (2008), I argue that

“Field notes - often personal and inconsequential, forgotten, and missing from archives and collections of field materials-seldom, if ever, assume an authority in ethnographic writing” (ibid:208).

While agreeing with this statement, I decided to make use of my field notes, fearing, in the process, that my personal, perhaps inconsequential and often unorganized writings on my notebook would not conform to what a field note should, in fact, be. What is a field note? What facts should we register, and what others should we overlook? These questions emerged as I was about to begin my observational sessions at Namouche. I decided to write everything that came to my mind, including the obvious description of what was happening in the studio (the main reason I was there for in the first place), but, very often, how I felt in that particular situation. The result was an interesting mixture of an ethnographic document with a cathartic diary. Or perhaps these two writing objects are one and the same thing - field notes.

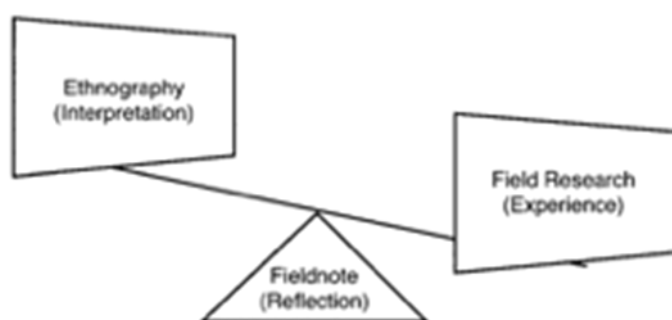
Doubts about the relevance of my notes only diminished when I later re-read them, and transcribed them, entering, thus, in the process of “getting back” into the field. I discovered, as I went through my notes, that not only was I able to re-connect myself to the ethnographic situation and to the specificities of each session, but that the construction of the narrative triggered further thought and reflection upon the events described. As

⁸⁹ Michael Jackson quoted in Barz 2008:217.

such, the inclusion of other voices, apart from the one still in the field, seemed appropriate.

Again Gregory Barz (2008) suggests the use of “selected field notes in tandem with other voices”: a voice still in the field, “a voice of reflection after the note was written” and a third voice more distanced from experience (2008: 207). For each of these voices, a specific type of lettering is used. My model, adapted from this one, involves the use of three voices, but it differs from the one proposed by Barz in questions related to their representation and the time line through which they extend themselves. Barz uses an italic typeface to represent the initial note (as I will use), capital letters for the second voice - to which he calls “headnote” following Simon Ottenberg’s (1990) designation - and a roman typeface for the third voice. I will use the roman typeface for the second and third voices, with the difference that the second voice is transcribed with single spacing. Regarding the time line, my three voices report three distinctive moments in time: the moment the note was written, the moment the note was transcribed (which, apart from further reflection, allowed clarification regarding certain content that I believed was necessary), and a third moment of analysis, where the fundamental musicological aspects of each session are pointed out, connecting them to the content of chapters 7 and 8. Between the time of each voice, several months, even years have passed (depending on the session).

Following the suggestion of the three voices included in the field notes, Barz presents a model, in which the three levels involved - field research (experience), field note (reflection) and ethnography (interpretation) - maintain a fluid interaction between them, placing field notes as the fulcrum, supporting both interpretation and experience (ibid:215) (fig. 1), rather than the more static model where the three categories are locked into place (ibid.) (fig. 2).



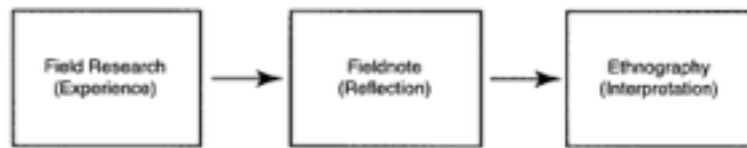


Figure 2 - A simpler model of fieldnote placement (ibid.)

The fact that my field research occurred over a long period of time (seven years) with equally long time lapses between each session, underlines the option for the first model presented, where “the field note(s) mediates between experience and interpretation” (ibid:217).

Constructing the narrative - other helpful methodological tools

As stated before, the assumed responsibility of contributing to the making of a narrative where I am also an actor in the field led me to reflect upon the type of writing that would eventually result from both my research and my own professional experience. As such, and by suggestion of Mike Howlett, the notions of auto-ethnography and reflective practice emerged in the process.

Qualitative research methods such as auto-ethnography seem to be “gaining momentum within the creative and performing arts as a research tool”, in the words of Steven Pace (2012), providing an excellent opportunity to combine the researcher’s personal and professional experience with ethnography, while engaging in a critical reflection upon it (ibid.). Defined as “a form or method of research that involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic fieldwork and writing” (Marechal 2009), auto-ethnography displays three main intersecting qualitative research traditions: analytic, subjective experiential and postmodern/poststructuralist. (ibid)

The aim of this thesis is also to deepen ethnographic methods in the field of studio research; as such, I acknowledge the importance of justifying my association with any of

these approaches, bearing in mind the specific features that characterize analytic auto-ethnography as defined by Marechal (2009), where

“a researcher is personally engaged in a social group, setting or culture as a full member and active participant but retains a distinct and highly visible identity as a self-aware scholar and social actor within the ethnographic text” (ibid.).

I would argue that my methodology is more in accordance with this tradition than with any of the others mentioned by this author.⁹⁰ Along this thesis, my personal feelings and experiences within the field I am describing and where I have professionally belonged for many years will be included in the ethnographic narrative, hopefully containing relevant data for the understanding of the world observed (ibid.). Within this approach, the sub-genre of autobiographical ethnography, where personal experience interjects with ethnographic writing, seems to apply to the final result of my narrative (ibid.).

Using “embedded” or “insider” research methodologies⁹¹ requires, from the ethnographer, an extra awareness regarding certain features involving fieldwork.

“Insider’s workplace ethnography is hard work requiring constant attention to the phenomena to which one is exposed, as well as constant evaluation and reevaluation of one’s frames of reference and the influence of one’s role on the social and cultural nature of the organizational and social practices that take place within the

⁹⁰ Apart from analytic auto-ethnography, Garance Marechal defines subjective experiential auto-ethnography writing as aiming “to account for the subjective density of ethnographic fieldwork, often in an *expressive*, emotional and existential way. Concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness and introspection shape interpretive ‘tales of the self’ where the narrators’ subjective experience is the central focus of the ethnography.”, and postmodern/poststructuralist auto ethnography as “a blurred genre of methodological creative practices, texts and autobiographical performances that turn inward and are waiting to be staged. These contribute to remaking self and identity as a site for the negotiation of social, cultural and political dialogue, often in a carnivalesque form.”(ibid.) Although, according to Ellingson and Ellis (2008) “the meanings and applications of auto-ethnography have evolved in a manner that makes precise definition difficult” (ibid: 449), it is broadly assumed as a methodology which allows the integration of the personal into academics (Chang 2008:10).

⁹¹ Eliot Bates defines “embedded” or “insider” research methodologies as the ones conducted by “a researcher who works in a somewhat normal capacity within an occupational setting as their primary mode for conducting ethnographic research” (2008:16) Although, as I have stated, my role was a non-participatory one, I resonate with some of the features evoked by Bates regarding his own experience in Turkey.

worlds of work we seek to (re-)present” (Brannan et al. 2007:400 quoted in Bates 2008:17).

In the process of “getting back” to the field, the act of writing about our own professional experience, turning it into an academic object, engages us likewise in a continuous process of reflection. In my particular case, great efforts had to be made in order to be closely attentive to details the studio activity involves, which for me constituted everyday practice for many years. As such, reflective practice can be a helpful approach. “A way of studying your own experience”,⁹² “examining practice reflectively and reflexively”,⁹³ reflective practice has been used for health professionals, but has extended its scope of use to other professionals. For practitioners who, like myself, are using their personal professional experience academically, it is a useful methodology in helping to obtain the necessary distance and detachment adequate to a critical reflection upon daily actions which might, otherwise, remain disregarded or understudied.

Of the several models created for a better usage of reflective practice, I chose the one that seemed more adequate to my process in the field. The Gibbs Reflective Cycle model (1988), proposed by Graham Gibbs, said to “relate strongly to ideas about empathy”,⁹⁴ is also commonly known as “standing/walking in someone else’s shoes”.⁹⁵ In my case, this subject (the researcher) would have to be a person with the necessary naivety, open-mindedness and delivery to be able to place oneself in a space/place (the recording studio) as if it was the first time. A difficult task to endure, as for me a recording studio, and particularly Namouche, includes a set of diversified experiences - visual, aural, emotional, physical - embodied for decades.

⁹² “What is reflective practice?” in *Brightside - online mentoring* - <https://www.brightknowledge.org/knowledge-bank/medicine-and-healthcare/spotlight-on-medicine/what-is-reflective-practice> - accessed on June 2017.

⁹³ Bolton, Gillie (2010) [2001]. *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*, Los Angeles: Sage Publications. p. xix.

⁹⁴ “Reflective Practice” in *Businessballs.com* - <http://www.businessballs.com/reflective-practice.htm> - accessed on June 2017.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*



Figure 3 - The Gibbs Reflective Cycle model (1988)

Brief summary

Practice-based research methodologies, involving research in a familiar terrain, can be very useful in the Creative Arts and Humanities. They are imbued with a level of legitimacy and credibility only possible as they are carried out by practitioners, who are also “insiders” in the field.

If proximity towards the field can be considered a methodological problem, in a recording studio - a very specific research field - it can bring a number of advantages which may facilitate the observational process (whether participatory or non-participatory).

Based on my personal experience at Namouche and contrary to some opinions of other colleagues, I argue that it is possible to conduct an observational process in a recording studio without actively participating in the recording activities. I defend a

position of “fly-on-the-wall” observer, almost non-visible and hardly heard. However difficult as it may be - among other reasons, for lack of physical conditions for “observation” in control rooms - one should adopt a body language adapted to the circumstances and be humble in the objectives, not wishing to see, record, and write everything every day. Instead, the idea of being a participant listener who carefully and steadily chooses the moments to use other research tools - recording, filming, taking photos, even writing - seems to me to be the most appropriate. I also defend that, instead of the idea of “an essential participant of some sort” (Bates 2008:11) as a *sine qua non* condition for conducting observation in a studio, one should be “an essential insider of some sort”- musician, arranger, artist or engineer - although *not necessarily in a participatory role*.

This sub-chapter will hopefully contribute towards a reflection upon research methodologies, when dealing with a terrain too close to the researcher, as was my particular case. Bringing the emic/etic debate into these cases of proximity between researcher and researched field seems, as Zagorski-Thomas mentioned previously, “relatively pointless”: the “ethnographic truth” (if ever there is one), will always be a mixture of “inside” and “outside”. As Gustav Jahoda (1995) asks: can we ever capture it? I believe all we can actually do is keep on pursuing it. These methodological concerns are worth deep and careful reflection.

Apart from the initial questions mentioned in the introduction, which were elaborated before fieldwork, research in Namouche triggered some others more centered /focused in the observed sessions: was there a common message from all the actors in this particular terrain that a recording studio is? Was there a corporate attitude on the part of the informants? How much, being “non-exotic” and close to the field, did I actually observe? How close (or far) from the truth was I, in the process? What is the “secret” for the commercial success of a studio that went from nearly “closed for business” – like many high-end recording studios all over the world - to being fully occupied by Portuguese as well as foreign musicians? What keeps a recording studio “alive”? What are the main features of a studio, that make it “your” studio?

3. State of the art and theoretical framework

As stated in the previous sub-chapter, there are not many ethnographies based on recording studios. It is undeniable, however, that in the last two decades the number of musicians and music professionals that have become researchers in this field has increased exponentially. As a consequence, there are more bibliographical sources available, despite the fact that recording studios - and specifically, the ones which fall out of the designation of home studios - are difficult to access. The distinct parts that are comprised in this doctoral thesis - historical survey and studio ethnography - required diversified sources of an equally diversified nature. I will start by the bibliographical.

Edward Kealy (1974; 1979) and Antoine Hennion (1989; 2003; 2008) were the first authors I was suggested to consult, as a result of my first participation in the Art of Record Production conference in 2011.⁹⁶ The participation in this conference was crucial at a time I was searching for books, authors and a theoretical framework to proceed my research. I will come back to this subject later in this sub-chapter.

Kealy's works point out the role of the sound mixer⁹⁷ during the 60s and 70s and its evolution "from craft to art" (1979), accounting for the passage of a primarily technical professional activity to an aesthetic one. In his doctoral thesis's first chapter (1974), Kealy states his difficulties in getting in the field (apparently a common problem throughout the years for researchers in recording studios). "Sitting in" on recording sessions" (1974:17) is described in a rather personal tone, mentioning episodes familiar to myself, both as a musician and ethnographer. Hennion, a sociologist like Kealy, deals with the notion of a sociology of music based on the "object seen now through the 'feedbacks 'and reactions it enables", rather than "leading us away from the sterile oscillation between the meaning contained in the works and the meaning projected arbitrarily onto them" (2008). His idea of "listening understood as a performance enacted in situation" (ibid.) resonates with my thesis in many aspects - particularly during fieldwork at Namouche. He also draws attention to the role of the producer as an intermediary between production and consumption, representing the public to the singer (1989:402), an idea which, although

⁹⁶ These (and other readings) were kindly suggested by Eliot Bates, in an email exchange after the conference, at my request.

⁹⁷ Edward Kealy uses the term "sound mixer" for the profession that throughout the years I heard being named either sound technician or sound engineer. Along this thesis, I will use the term sound engineer, despite resistance shown by some of them for "not being engineers". I find this last term more qualifying of their work, regardless of the fact of them having (or not) a sound engineering degree.

historically dated, is valuable regarding the development of the agency of producers along the years within popular music recording.

Paul Th  berge's research (1997; 2004; 2012) is central for the present thesis, whether in its approach to the role of recent digital technologies in the production of popular music and the industries that supply them - like the musical instrument industry or the magazine industry (1997) - but based on the other articles mentioned as well. His reflections upon the network studio (2004) were important for the understanding of the contents of sub-chapter 7.4, where long-distance recording sessions are debated. Based on "an idealized form of sound-recording practice" (ibid:760) proposed by the Rocket Network, a company which between 1995 and 2003 offered "a server-based technology" allowing multiple users to access and update digital audio files via the Internet" (ibid:759), Th  berge questions the path from the "brick and mortar" studio model to "a placeless, virtual studio"(ibid:760). Equally important, his overview of the changing role of the recording studio within the last five decades in North America (2012: loc. 2002-2309 of 7567) provided helpful information to the framing of Namouche within a wider, international scope of recording studios built around the same time. "The End of the World as We Know It" (ibid.) constitutes a basic reading for a historical approach of the recording studio such as the one present in this thesis.

The work of Virgil Moorefield (2005) featuring the role of the producer along the history of popular music recording traces the agency of producers from the early 1930s, where electric recording did not allow more than a "talent scout", critical intervention, helping to "bring out the best in a performer" (2005: loc138 of 1935), to the days of songwriters/producers in the 1950s like Libber and Stoller (ibid: 181 of 1935), and seminal characters like Phil Spector, Brian Wilson, George Martin and Brian Eno, among others. These producers, being active presences in the recording studio from the 1960s until the 21st century (in the cases of George Martin and Brian Eno), each in its own particular way, used the recording studio as instrument, taking full advantage of the possibilities that tape recording offered. Together with Hennion's article above mentioned (1989), Moorefield's diachronic approach was helpful when confronting the present stage in recording, where digital technology helped the role of the producer to be increasingly performed by the musicians themselves *in loco*, or - as in the case described in sub-chapter 7.4 - by a "virtual" presence.

Music as Social Life, Thomas Torino's 2008 book, presents an analytical framework where four fields of music-making are proposed: presentational, participatory, high-fidelity and studio-audio art. The first two fields refer to live music, whereas the two last ones are named "the recording fields" (ibid:66). The author expands his views regarding each of the proposed fields, divided into two different chapters. Briefly, presentational music refers to "situations where one group, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing" (ibid:26), participatory to "artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants", and where "the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role" (ibid), high-fidelity to "the making of recordings that are intended to index or be iconic of live performance" (ibid:67) and finally studio-audio art to "the creation and manipulation of sounds in a studio or on a computer to create a recorded art object not intended to represent real-time performance" (ibid:27). While I admit having some difficulty in considering these music fields as separate entities,⁹⁸ I agree with the author when he states that "the cultural conception of music has shifted toward recordings – the form in which most cosmopolitans experience music – as the 'real thing', not as a representation of something else" (ibid:25). Nowadays, I believe this reality is transversal to both cosmopolitans and non-cosmopolitans: experiencing music through records – or, better said, through recorded music – is probably the main form of experiencing music. I will return to this subject matter in the conclusions.

Richard Middleton (1990) and Simon Frith's works (1996 and 2012) constitute relevant background readings when dealing with popular music and popular culture. These sociologist's contribution regarding assertions of the "popular" in academia provide the theoretical framework for popular music studies, shared by this thesis. "Studying Popular Music" (Middleton 1990) is still today, after almost three decades since its first edition, a basic and broaden reading for studio researchers. Providing a developed reflection about the complexities of studying such a difficult object to define

⁹⁸ For instance, in a presentational performance, the audience (any audience) is physically engaged in the auditory process, which for me is participating in the music live act (participation can be in ways other than the actual making of the music); also, if I tap my foot, clap my hands, snap my fingers or even dance in a presentational performance (as it has often happened in pop, rock or jazz live acts), does it become a participatory performance because of that? Likewise, and to me more difficult to accept is the separation of the proposed two recording fields – high-fidelity and studio-audio art, as I believe that the features that are pointed as defining one field can often be found on the other.

as “popular music” (deeply scrutinized in its first chapter), the author advocates an interdisciplinary method to accomplish the task. Simon Frith’s 1996 book *Performing Rites* was, for a set of different reasons, a very important means for my immersion in the popular culture universe within academia. Frith’s writings embody the very object he deals with, in the sense that within popular culture, and from a sociological perspective, anything can be discussed, from “last night’s TV, Take That’s hit record, the new Clint Eastwood film” or, “the latest headline in the *Sun*” (ibid:4), and the arguments valued, in its various levels of objectivity and subjectivity. Simon Frith has been engaged in the discussion of recorded music within the ASARP,⁹⁹ having written for its on-line journal JARP¹⁰⁰ in its first issue and being co-editor, with Simon Zagorski-Thomas, of *The Art of Record Production: an Introductory Reader for a New Academic Field* (2012), a collection of expanded essays presented in several ARP¹⁰¹ conferences along the years. This book is focused on questions related to recording, which turned it into a valuable source along this thesis, in particular the articles by Paul Théberge (loc 2022-2309 of 7567), Susan Schmidt Horning (loc 825-1189 of 7567) and Simon Zakorski-Thomas (loc 1564-2004 of 7567).

The contribution of some of ethnomusicology’s seminal authors and mentors could not be overlooked. Alan Merriam’s (1964) understanding of music as social behavior relates to the music behaviors I observed at Namouche within performing practices in a recording studio (see next section). Likewise, the compilation of articles included in Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley’s book (2008), gathering a number of important scholars in the discipline was essential for the previous sub-chapter on methodologies. Besides presenting a diachronic perspective of “five centuries of ethnomusicological fieldwork” (ibid:3), the essays compiled in this book are meant to provide “a forum for making explicit contemporary theories involving fieldwork in ethnomusicology” (ibid). In it “the new fieldwork, as the editors designate it (ibid:14), is also discussed, bearing in mind the diversity and novelty of terrains available for a music researcher. The recording studio, although not mentioned in this forum, is undoubtedly a “new field”. As stated before, being a secret, reserved, confined space to insiders, it presents an ethnographic situation that adds new dimensions to fieldwork and its techniques. Such specific research scenario deserves reflection when considering the ethnographic tools that historically

⁹⁹ Association for the Study of the Art of Record Production.

¹⁰⁰ Journal on the Art of Record Production.

¹⁰¹ Art of Record Production.

have been used and their efficiency in this particular field. It is reasonable to assume that any future academic work dedicated to ethnographic methodologies within musical practices will hopefully include the recording studio as an effective and valuable field of research, as Barz and Cooley's would possibly have, had it been launched a few years later (bearing in mind the increasing number of academic thesis, articles and books that have been released since 2008, the date of this book's last edition).

Mark Katz *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (2010) provides a very useful and still up-dated discussion on the effects of technology in music practices. From classical to popular, Katz describes the adaptations that mediating musical sound through recording triggered in various perspectives - compositional, performative - and the relationship between technology and human agency, a "two-direction flow", as "users themselves transform recording to meet their needs, desires, and goals, and in doing so continually influence the technology that influences them" (2010:3). His proposed concept of the phonograph effect will be extensively developed in the section dedicated to concepts.

Despite "his elitist theories about the music industry", the dense writing style, his consideration of "people who listen to popular music 'infantile', 'neurotic' and 'neurotically stupid'" (Van Penick 2014:1-2), Theodor Adorno (1938) remains a reference for popular music researchers, and one which is not as historically grounded as one might consider through a quick examination of his thoughts. As stated in the introduction, his views on the cultural industry and the illusory character of light art (where popular music is included) suggests an intrinsic association between the recording studio (where popular music is created, perpetuated, industrialized) and an infantilized, deluded audience. The cultural industry, a singular entity for Adorno, prevents "individuals from becoming autonomous, independent, capable of consciously judging and deciding."¹⁰² As much as I tend to consider Adorno's views regarding the infantilization of audiences still relevant, David Hesmondhalgh's work (2013) offers a new approach to discussions around the cultural industries. Leaving the unified view of the field aside, his book presents a very complete and thorough study of the cultural

¹⁰² Silva, Daniel Ribeiro da Silva "Adorno e a Indústria Cultural", Ano I - Nº 04 - Maio de 2002 - Quadrimestral - Maringá - PR - Brasil - ISSN 1519.6178 - http://www.urutagua.uem.br/04fil_silva.htm (translation by the author).

industries, from theoretic and analytical frameworks to its historical course since the 80s.¹⁰³

Before referring to ethnographies in recording studios, a brief comment on Michael Denning's (2015) cultural studies book, focusing on a "noise uprising" (the title of the book) that took place in port cities between 1925 (the introduction of electrical recording) and 1930, recording local musical idioms (son, rumba, samba, fado) by "vernacular musicians" (ibid:loc 94 of 8460). Exploring a side of popular music less developed in academia, outside the sphere of the recording studio as a central agent, Denning describes the intense musical practices that were recorded in makeshift studios around the world, responding to the urgency of capturing an emerging cultural urban reality.

Pointing now to ethnographies in recording studios, I would first mention Louise Meintjes's work (2003 and 2005). The experience of Zulu artists in recording studios in Cape Town, South Africa described both in her book and article was my first contact with an academic work where the recording studio is central in the ethnography. I have mentioned Meintjes's consideration of the recording studio as a "black box", a constant metaphor which motivated my own research and its potential academic value. Apart from descriptions of a typical studio environment, involving language use, discussions over sound and technology, as well as social relations between the different agents in the recording setting – what she designates as "the social inside the studio"(2005:28), her notion of "overseas" (2005:25) resonates with a Portuguese idiosyncrasy - "estrangeiro" - which, likewise, indexes quality.¹⁰⁴ *Wired for Sound* (2005), a collection of essays by several academics, was my first contact with Louise Mentjes. This book led me to other fundamental authors for my theoretical framework: Thomas Porcello and Paul D. Greene (editors of the book), Frederick Moehn, and Jeremy Wallach.

Thomas Porcello's (1998, 2004 and 2005) article on the "Austin sound" (2005) provided an insightful framework to sub-chapter 8.1, where questions regarding the "LA sound" in relation to Portuguese produced records are discussed. Equally relevant for the same sub-chapter, his article on discourses in the recording studio (2004) was essential

¹⁰³ There are two other authors and respective books whom I believe should be mentioned in this section, although only brief quotations by them appear along the thesis: Georgina Born (*Music, Sound and Space - Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, 2013, Cambridge University Press, UK, p.1- 69) and Albin Zak (*The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records*, 2001, University of California Press, London). Albin Zak is also mentioned through his articles in collaboration with the JARP.

¹⁰⁴ This concept will be more clearly explained in further chapters.

when necessarily associating the quest for referential sounds with issues of language use. Porcello highlights “the enormous subtlety of the multiple ways in which music is talked about in studios”(2004:753) and although the focuses of this article are discourses among sound engineers of different apprentice modes and experiences and producers,¹⁰⁵ this is a transversal subject to all the recording community (instrument players, singers, and other eventual actors in the recording scenario)¹⁰⁶ and to the content of this thesis in its various chapters. Porcello’s reflection on the ethnographic representation of technology in music-making (1998), which draws on this author’s doctoral thesis (1996),¹⁰⁷ deals with the social phenomenology of music in various perspectives. Based on his experience as sound engineer, researcher and listener - not “mutually exclusive” (ibid:488) - Porcello highlights a number of significant issues related to the ethnographic experience in general - such as representation - but also more specifically to the recording studio ethnographic scenario. Like him, “I envisioned myself working through a series of cohabiting discourses within the physical space of the studio, discourses which aligned with various degrees of fixity to multiple professional roles and social positioning” (ibid).

Frederick Moehn, whom I met as a teacher at Universidade Nova de Lisboa during my doctoral curricular year (2010-2011), did fieldwork at Companhia dos Técnicos, Rio de Janeiro’s principal samba studio, from which ethnography the article “The Disc is not The Avenue” (2005:47-84) emerged. His accounts regarding fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro’s recording studios drew my attention to the possible drawbacks I would eventually come across when starting my research.¹⁰⁸ His book *Contemporary Carioca* (2012) constitutes a valuable and original source for the understanding of the processes of music creation and recording of a group of very interesting and original Brazilian contemporary artists.¹⁰⁹ It is, so far, the only recording studio ethnography based in

¹⁰⁵ The article focuses on two conversations held in a recording session: the first, between a long-time producer and a first-year SRT (Sound-Recording Technology) student about the tuning of a drum kit; the second, between the same producer and the studio’s veteran chief engineer (ibid:741).

¹⁰⁶ I remember publicity TV producers - the advertising professionals usually accompanying the clients to the studio - and the clients themselves as having an enormous difficulty in making themselves understood in the recording setting. Studio professionals - like myself, as well as producers and sound engineers - who engaged in this activity for many years, developed an understanding of what the language used by these eventual inhabitants of the recording studio actually meant.

¹⁰⁷ Porcello’s referred article (1998) is, actually, an adaptation of his doctoral thesis’s first chapter (1996).

¹⁰⁸ For instance, schedules. While I very smoothly felt this flexible attitude towards schedules that Latin people in general share at Namouche, Moehn’s experience was much worse, according to his account.

¹⁰⁹ These artists are Marcus Susano, Lenine, Pedro Luís and The Wall, Fernanda Abreu and Paulinho Moska. According to Silvano Fernandes Baía (2015), they are part of a music scene which took place in the Rio de Janeiro area in the 90s, characterized by the sharing of certain aesthetic assumptions - like the

Brazilian popular music (apart from the one previously mentioned by the same author). A fundamental testimony of Brazilian contemporary popular music practices in a recording setting, enlarging the scope of this country's popular music outside samba and bossa.

Jeremy Wallach's article on Indonesian recorded popular music genres (2005) is based on ethnographic fieldwork in two different recording studios in Jakarta. Likewise, his book (2008) follows this research, constituting an extremely interesting and vivid reading, both on the level of its content and of the methodological approaches (such as the inclusion of what the author calls "vernacular texts" - "T-shirts, slogans, graffiti, stickers, posters, banners, decorations on vans and buses"(ibid:8). Based on a setting which is more commonly known for its traditional musical practices - Indonesia - Wallach conducts his ethnography through multiple sites where tradition, modernity and globalization intersect. Questions related to sound (2003), have in this author a source for theoretical framework, as earlier mentioned. This is a subject to be developed in the next section.

Steven Feld is undoubtedly a necessary name to be mentioned. His importance as an acclaimed ethnomusicologist led me to inspiring readings that motivated my dedication to music research. In that sense, his 1994 book *Music Grooves* (together with Charles Keil), while still constituting a valuable source covering diversified themes associated to recorded and live music, offered a relevant contribution to the subject of music discourses, acknowledging certain features that as music listeners we identify, involving the musical and the extra-musical level - what he names as "interpretive moves" (1994:85-89). Likewise, the very structure of the book, mixing "the essayistic quality of the dialogues" with the "dialogic quality of the essays" is, still today, an innovative reference of what writing about music can be - a dynamic and passionate mixture of formal and informal discourses, of "justaposed essays and dialogues [...], an interplay of ideas, agendas, and arguments"(ibid:1) in a dialogic approach.

Recent works addressing ethnographies in recording studios have already been mentioned in the previous section (Methodologies). Eliot Bates (2008, 2012), Alan Williams (2007, 2009 and 2010), Paul Thompson and Bret Lashua (2014) and Ingrid Tolstadt (2016) are all scholars who more recently developed their research in recording

influence of bossa nova and traditional samba - but were not afraid to freely mix other Brazilian sonorities - Northeastern music, rock, hip-hop and funk, for instance - in their original work.

studios. Thompson and Lashua's work (2016) extends to the next section (concepts), as well as Thompson's collaboration with Philip McIntyre on creative practice in record production (2013). All these scholars, along with Mike Howlett (2012), Simon Zagorski-Thomas (2012)¹¹⁰, Richard Burgess (2013) and others, came to my knowledge through my participation in several Art of Record Production conferences.¹¹¹ These participations were fundamental for my contact with a network of diversified researchers (some with a more practice-based knowledge, others more academically oriented) with whom I had the possibility of not only presenting the results of my on-going research (and the corresponding feed-back from colleagues and peers), but also exchange ideas, obtain bibliographical sources and listen to acclaimed personalities of the recording industry present memorable key-notes.¹¹² My participation in other conferences also provided relevant academic stimulus and helped to expand the process of networking within the international ethnomusicological community (such as IASPM and BFE).¹¹³

Magazines *Sound on Sound* and *Mix Magazine* in their on-line version provide useful source regarding interviews with producers, sound engineers and musicians, as well as articles about music, technology and recording studios. The internet provides endless diversified and often useful sources, be it, as stated before, on line magazines, articles, but also documentary films. These add the visual dimension to music and its different actors, and provide an immediate association with so many written, soundless

¹¹⁰ Simon Zagorski-Thomas, together Katia Isakoff, were the founders of ASARP, from which association the ARP conferences emerged, as well as the conference's on-line journal JARP. Some of the objectives of ASARP, as stated in the ARP website, are to "bring together academics and practitioners to promote the study of the record production", "encourage recognition of record production as an area for scholarly research" and "encourage dialogue between the research and teaching community and industry wherever possible" - <http://www.artofrecordproduction.com/about-arp/aims> - accessed on August 2017.

¹¹¹ So far, I have participated in four ARP conferences, namely in 2011 (S. Francisco State University), 2013 (Université Laval, Quebec), 2014 (University of Oslo) and 2016 (University of Allborg).

¹¹² I would point out the key-notes of 2011 conference (Narada Michael Warden), 2013 (André Perry), and 2014 (Susan Rogers). I would also refer a panel with Jan Erik Kongshaug at the University of Oslo as one of the highlights of all the conferences I have participated.

¹¹³ As a consequence of having been at IASPM for two times (Guijon 2013 and Campinas 2015), I was included in a IASPM LIST, where researchers regularly expose their doubts and ideas, announce their latest releases and communicate about diversified subjects regarding musicology. For instance, after emailing the list requesting bibliographical help, I was suggested other studio related ethnographies by some of its members, of which I will mention the following (although not necessarily present in my thesis): Ribac, François "La Circulation et l'Usage des Supports Enregistrés dans les Musiques Popularizes en Ile de France" 2005-2007, Commandé par le programme interministériel "Culture et Territoires en Ile de France", le Ministère de la Culture (Bureau des Écritures) et le Conseil General de Seine- Saint-Denis; Mendívil, Julio "'Dos, tres, grabando': la tecnología del sonido y naturalización de los medios en el caso del huayno peruano", *Revista Argentina de Musicología* 12-13 (2012), p.103-124; Anthony, Brendan (2015) "'The Stairways to Mixing Heaven': Designs for the Optimisation of Creative Mixing Practices in Popular Music Record Production", Master thesis, Griffith University, Queensland Conservatorium; Krieger, Janet Meryl (2009) "Rough to the Board: Creating Performance in American Recording Studios", Doctoral thesis, Indiana University.

references which become sonically “real” through a finger touch. The opposite is also true: music you always loved, but whose “makers” were invisible or only visually perceived through photographs on album sleeves and other merchandise, parade before you, either in live shows or in interviews: they become “voiced” in more senses than just the musical. Despite the downsides that video music-sharing websites brought to musician’s revenues, they constitute an amazing research working tool for the immediacy of response. However, and to my knowledge so far, the recording studio hasn’t yet reached the internet, apart from occasional episodes which constitute an exception in this special terrain.¹¹⁴

Non-academic books, such as Kent Hartman’s about The Wrecking Crew (2012), Phil Ramone’s autobiography (2007) and Greg Milner’s work on recorded music (2009) are readings that provide valuable information about events that are best narrated by the people who were “there” making history while making music - or close to them.¹¹⁵ Together with academic voices (some of them, as stated before, with a professional background related to music), these testimonies (often auto-biographical) are fundamental to have a better picture of the atmosphere surrounding the early days of

¹¹⁴ Esperanza Spalding, a well-known North-American jazz bassist and composer, Grammy winner for 2011 album of the year (defeating Justin Bieber and Drake, also running for the same prize that year), decided to record her sixth album in 2017 in front of a live audience, live streaming through Facebook a 77 hour, three-day studio marathon. According to the sources I consulted (mainly, interviews with Spalding explaining her option), there were no pre-composed songs and everything was done live in the studio. The idea was “offering a raw and less manicured glimpse at her creativity” profiting from the creative momentum of having only that limited time to compose, produce and record ten songs. In the same article, Spalding was mentioned as having felt pressures, in the past, by her label “to change the choice of songs on an album”, or “add a featured guest” that would help her “reach new audiences” - ideas the artist had, so far, resisted to (although she has two guest stars in this album, pianist Robert Glasper and singer Lalah Hathaway, suggesting there might have been a certain compromise between her and the label). The idea that emerges from this decision (which ended up being supported by the label) is that of an artistic statement of this particular artist, who decided to expose her creative process (the title of the album is, in fact, *Exposure*). In a different perspective, it may also be considered a marketing strategy, although a very bold one. However, the mixing and mastering of the album were not, using the album’s terminology, “exposed”. (Russonello, Giovanni “Esperanza Spalding Will Record ‘Exposure’ in Front of the World”, *The New York Times* on line, July 26, 2017 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/arts/music/esperanza-spalding-exposure-album-livestream.html> - accessed on November 2017).

¹¹⁵ Kent Hartman is the son of one of the members of The Wrecking Crew, the book being a tribute to that group of musicians (of whom I will speak in more detail in sub-chapter 7.3). Presenting the Crew’s best working years as well as their decline, after the heydays of session musicians in the 60s, the documentary film under the same name is also an excellent historical document. Greg Milner’s book constitutes an easy and vivid reading, with many interesting interviews to musicians, producers and different actors in the music recording industry and a historical account worth considering. It is, according to Samantha Bennet, one of the phonomusicological studies of recent times which has made “significant progress in filling the scholarly void existing between popular-music performance and reception” (Bennet in Chapman 2016).

popular music recording, its actors and agency, allowing a clearer perspective of the present days.¹¹⁶

Portuguese academic sources related to the subject of recording studios are scarce. The work being developed by INET-MD, in the Nova University of Lisbon, from where the *Enciclopédia da Música Portuguesa do Século XX* (2010) under the supervision of Salwa Castelo-Branco emerged, has been extremely important. A general source on Portuguese popular music, this encyclopedia contains articles written by many of the researchers from INET-MD, as well as other researchers and music professionals, according to the subjects. The academic work developed by several Portuguese ethnomusicologists (Losa 2009, Dias 2010, Andrade 2012) was a useful resource for this thesis, covering as diversified subjects as record production in Portugal in the 60s (Losa), jazz music education (Dias) and Portuguese symphonic rock (Andrade). The academic production resulting from the Music Sciences department at Nova University will undoubtedly remain as an important bibliographical source for present and future music scholars.

Again, non-academic books written by practitioners (musicians, radio professionals) may complete the information with more personal accounts of a time from which there are not many more voices left.¹¹⁷ Apart from on-line resources (press articles, newspaper interviews, video footage), my main Portuguese source for the construction of the history of the Lisbon recording studios were, definitely, the ethnographic interviews conducted with some of the professionals that worked there (mostly sound engineers, musicians and producers).

¹¹⁶ I would also recommend *Testimony*, Robbie Robertson's auto-biography (2016, Crown Archetype, New York). As the title indicates, this book is the testimony of a popular musician's life in the 60s. Robertson, lead guitar and composer of group The Band (which was, for some years, Bob Dylan's support group, as Martin Scorsese's music documentary *The Last Waltz* shows) narrates extensively episodes of life on the road from a very early age (fifteen), his passage through a number of different bands until forming The Band, his experience in recording studios once he became a recording artist (which took several years), and personal episodes involving his group mates. It is undoubtedly a portrait of a unique time and place for popular music creation.

¹¹⁷ I would definitely recommend *O Programa Segue Dentro de Momentos (The Show Will Go On in a Couple of Minutes)*, by Júlio Isidro, an excellent Portuguese TV and radio professional with a fifty-eight year career. Isidro, with whom I had the pleasure of working for many years in TV projects is, apart from an outstanding professional and a remarkable human being, a great story teller (2016, Marcador, Lisbon). Another book, *Eu Sou Outro Tu (I Am Another You)*, an official biography of Tó Zé Brito, musician, producer and composer, covers fifty years of Brito's long career, while simultaneously offering an important account of Portuguese popular music history between the 70s and the present days (2017, Luciano Reis, Parsifal PT).

4. Concepts

Sound

One of the most important concepts related to my area of research is sound and its relation to electronics. As a listener, from a very early age, the discovery of what was “beyond” music was one of the reasons for my love for music, mainly developed through record listening. Later, my professional life would deepen this connection to the different timbres, sonic textures and colours that this “sound” embodies, turning my experience of music-making, singing and music listening much richer and more interesting.

“The term “sound” has taken on a peculiar material character that cannot be separated either from the “music” or, more importantly, from the sound recording as the dominant medium of reproduction. With regards to the latter, the idea of a “sound” appears to be a particularly contemporary concept that could hardly have been maintained in an era that did not possess mechanical or electronic means of reproduction” (Théberge 1997:191 in Wallach 2003:45).

“We expect songs to take forms, use vocal and instrumental techniques, and include sounds conditioned by the characteristics of microphones, amplification, multiple tracking, non-written composition methods, and so on. This affects our very conception of what music is, our imaginary soundscape. For it is above all the kinds of *sound* with which we have become familiar that define the music culture we live in” (Middleton 90:88).

“By materializing sound the multitrack recording studio has transformed definitions of music itself and given rise to competing discourses of sonic aesthetics, musical authenticity, and creativity” (Wallach 2005:138).

“Some [sound technicians] confuse the emotion of sound with the emotion of music...which is different... and some [of these sound technicians] are even musicians...” (José Manuel Fortes, Lisbon, 2015).

The concept of “sound”, transversal to the whole of this thesis, is of common usage in popular music. As an emic term related to recording studios, it is used by several actors in this scenario (musicians, sound engineers, producers), its significance being associated to the perspective embraced by each professional category (as well as personal tastes and idiosyncrasies). It is also dependent on a number of factors - time, place, musical references, for instance. In further chapters, I will mention the concept of sound associated to cities - The Austin sound, The L.A sound (sub-chapter 8.1); to recording studios - Namouche (9.5), Le Studio (8), Muscle Shoals,¹¹⁸ listening to different voices approaching this subject. Simon Zagorski-Thomas (2012) develops the notion (one which he defines as “slightly contentious”¹¹⁹) of a US sound vs. a UK sound in music production in the 1970s (ibid:1564 of 7567). As mentioned before, Eliot Bates (2008) investigated the sound of Turkish-produced CDs between 2004 and 2007. It would be interesting to understand whether a Portuguese sound could be recognizable within the time frame covered by this thesis.

As Paul Théberge states in the first quotation of this section, sound is a modern concept associated to “mechanic or electronic means of reproduction”. What the recording studio did was, in effect, “materialize” that sound, in the words of Wallach, separating it from the music. Richard Middleton (1990) points out the fundamental importance that magnetic tape had, apart from the immediate and obvious advantages - “cheapness, ease of use and a potential for editing different takes into a ‘perfect master’” (ibid:86) - for “the possibilities tape introduced for specifically ‘studio sound’” (ibid). This sound, as mentioned in the second and third quotations of this section, affects our conception of music. But for Portuguese sound engineer José Manuel Fortes, the separation of “the emotion of sound from the emotion of music” is natural. A separation that a recording studio “insider” (musician, performer, sound engineer) can easily understand.

However, as the recording studio gains momentum in popular music studies, how can researchers address this concept? How can we establish the connection between the significant “sound” and its referent, which lies beyond the usual meaning of ‘sound’? Do

¹¹⁸ As stated before, although Muscle Shoals is actually the name of a city in Alabama, USA, the Muscle Shoals sound is associated to a recording studio (FAME studios) located in that city.

¹¹⁹ Although contested by some professionals - namely British Abbey Road engineer Malcom Addey - who points out the difference in size of the two recording universes - hundreds of recording studios and engineers in the USA compared to “half a dozen major studios in London operated by a couple of dozen engineers” - according to Zagorski-Thomas this idea is defended by musicians, record producers and sound engineers active during this period. (2012:loc 1564 of 7567)

we need a conceptual tool to help us understand and define a particular ‘studio sound’ as defined by Middleton?

Sound Formation and Listening Formation

Associated to sound, the concept of sound formation suggested by Michael Denning (2015) is central in this thesis. Considering four different periods in the history of sound recording - the acoustic era (1900-25), the electric era (1925-48), the tape era (1948-80), and the digital era (1980 to the present), Denning posits that

“Though the technologies serve as a useful shorthand, this is not simply a history of new machines; each technology is a sound formation, a mix of economic forms, spatial relations, ideologies, and justifications that structure the social relations of music” (2015:loc 1483 of 8460).

I believe sound formation is crucial to individual ideologies about music. Although according to the dates presented above, my professional “era” would be the digital (I started working in the recording industry between the end of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s), I mostly worked during the third sound formation - the tape era. In the beginning of the 80s and throughout this decade the Lisbon recording studios were still analogue. Ideologies about recorded music, in general, and studio practice in particular are, therefore, in my case, associated to the third sound formation. In addition, as Denning mentions:

“the tape era witnessed the creation of recorded musical works that had never been performed ‘live’. New forms of listening emerged, as car radios, jukeboxes, and portable transistor radios played pop 45s, while high-fidelity stereo systems and FM radios played LPs in living rooms” (ibid:loc 1514 of 8460).

These “new forms of listening” are as much related to the dissemination means (as mentioned in the above quotation) as with the listening expectations that they trigger, in a continuous process of negotiation.

“These negotiations between forms of mediation and modes of listening, these sets of contradictions between the practices of audiences and the ideas of audio enthusiasts, can be understood as mutually constitutive functions of fragile coalitions called listening formations”(Devine 2013:5).

‘Listening formation’ is, according to Kevin Devine,

“A deliberately broad and inclusive concept, encompassing ‘the whole context of audition for historically specific audiences, taking account of expectations formed for them by the whole culture and technology of speech and hearing that they are a part’” (ibid).

In sub-chapter 7.5, this concept is adapted to specific circumstances involving listening, both in professional contexts and in leisure.

Phonograph effects - portability, invisibility, repeatability

Mark Katz’s expansion of the discussion around recording (2010) leads him to propose the concept of the phonograph effect.

“Simply put, a phonograph effect is any change in musical behavior - whether listening, performing or composing - that has arisen in response to sound-recording technology” (ibid:2).

These phonograph effects are multiple and characterize music experience, which is mainly a mediated experience. In my case, both professionally and personally: my love for music came, for the most part, from record and radio listening. In addition, my professional life developed in a sound recording environment.

Katz (2010) mentions a number of features that characterize recordings - tangibility, portability, invisibility and repeatability. I will develop the three last features in relation to my present work.

The idea of portability is related to the act of recording music – or capturing sound - in the present days. A feature that digital recording technology brought with greater

emphasis: not only the finished product is portable, but the recording “tools” became portable as well. Invisibility is a trait recordings brought to the musical experience - “the invisibility of performance is a fundamental part of the modern musical experience” (ibid:27). I mentioned it in the previous sub-chapter in a research context, when emphasizing an “invisible” presence actively listening during observation in the studio. Music listening is often an activity done with eyes closed. Musicians, both instrument players and singers, when performing live (and in the recording studio) do it often. Music experience can, therefore, be mono-modal (as opposed to multi-modal, when the visual channel is on) even when visual stimuli are present (for instance, in a live performance). However, there are situations in music recording where visual cues can be of the essence. As will be stated in chapter 10, a number of my observed sessions at Namouche involved musicians playing at the same time. Sub-chapter 7.4 describes a recording session with a “virtual” producer, whose physical absence in the studio is reported by some of the participants to have had a major importance in the session’s final result. Even assigning credit to the McGurk effect, according to which “what we hear is deeply influenced by what we see” (ibid:25), sometimes leading to illusive perceptions,¹²⁰ invisibility (vs. visibility) is a phonograph effect very present in this thesis, in different perspectives.

Repeatability is, to Mark Katz (2010), “perhaps the most unbridgeable difference between live and recorded music: live performances are unique; recordings are repeatable” (ibid:29). He develops this phonograph effect from three different perspectives: those of the listener, the performer and the composer (ibid). I will focus on the first and second ones, as they are more related to my music experience and to the content of this thesis. Repetition raises expectation, both in recordings and in live acts. As a listener, my expectations are almost always associated to a main reference: the recording. This is what Stith Bennett has designated as “recording consciousness” (1980:114 quoted in Middleton 1990:88):

¹²⁰ About the McGurk effect, Katz mentions several different examples of how the visual can influence the audible, of which I will choose two: the case of Milli Vanilli, a Grammy Award winner pop duo who “fell from stardom when in 1990 it was revealed that all along they had lip-synched to the recordings of two unknown performers (ibid:25)”. The other example is violinist Jascha Heifetz, considered a “cold, calm and dispassionate” music performer (ibid). Yet, the person who used these adjectives in an article to qualify Heifetz’s performance, stated that “these impressions are to some extent corrected by Heifetz’s records. There is certainly a hint of passion, of tenderness” (ibid). I could add that, from my experience, I heard many mediocre musicians full of body language (and many extraordinary performers as well). But particularly in popular music, where physicality in performance plays an important role, it is always much easier to “perform” (*lato sensu*) than actually play/sing: “What would pop be without the wriggling and jiggling, the leaping and strutting, the leather and skin, the smoke and fire? It would be merely sound, and so much the poorer for it” (ibid). “Merely sound” is exactly what I like about recordings.

“[...] this consciousness defines the social reality of popular music and live performances have to try to approximate the sounds which inhabit this consciousness. Even when they fail, or it is impracticable, an audience’s collective memory takes over and it “hears” what it cannot hear, in the ‘sketch’ provided by the band” (Middleton 1990:88).

Indeed, for some groups and artists, not sounding like the record would stand for something eventually strange and uncharacteristic, possibly leading to a fail in its sonic recognition by audiences - in fact by the musicians themselves.¹²¹ The recording stands, therefore, as a kind of sonic authority according to which a certain degree of “obedience” is expected, both by musicians and audiences.¹²²

Expectations created by repeated record listening are on the basis of the quest for referential sounds in the studio (sub-chapter 8.1). Once the free circulation of records became increasingly common - a consequence of record portability and other factors of social and economic nature¹²³ - other “sounds” were heard and taken as sonic references to be emulated. As Katz mentions, considering this as one of the most profound phonograph effects: recording affects not only instrumental technique,¹²⁴ but also music aesthetics (ibid:34). Repetition is also present when performing in the studio. The studio performer repeats constantly, in a continuous process of trial and error through several takes - in the analogue days, to a greater extent.

¹²¹ For instance, groups like The Beatles (from Sg. Peppers onwards), Pink Floyd, Prefab Sprout, Steely Dan, which have the basis of their sound in the recording process and its effects. Coincidentally (or not), most of these groups stopped performing live at a certain point of their career (The Beatles, Prefab Sprout, Steely Dan).

¹²² Even for admittedly different live versions of a song, the recorded one always stands as a reference from which something new will eventually emerge.

¹²³ Katz refers many interesting examples of how changes of a socio-economic nature can affect musical behaviors. For instance, the cassette culture in North Indian popular music and its importance in ending the “crushing power of the monotony of music soundscape”, was made possible by more relaxed regulations implemented by the Indian government in the 1980s regarding the importation of cassettes (ibid:16).

¹²⁴ In his fourth chapter, Katz develops the changes that violin players developed in recordings “to ‘add something’ to their playing - [...] an intense vibrato that helped communicate a sense of physical and expressive immediacy”(ibid:27).

The Phonograph effect vs. the Digital effect

Mark Katz's concept triggered another I would like to propose, which stands in comparison to his: the digital effect. Bearing in mind Katz's definition of the phonograph effect - "any change in musical behavior – whether listening, performing or composing - that has arisen in response to sound-recording technology" (ibid:2), I argue that digital sound recording technology, its new forms of mediation and compressed sound formats also gave rise to changes in musical behavior. Sub-chapter 7.5 deals with these changes on the perspective of the listener. Regarding music composition, it is reasonable to expect that younger generations of musicians in the popular music sphere will compose according to what they listen to and how they listen to - as will be stated further, music listening nowadays is mostly done through headphones and earplugs, mostly of poor quality. As for the performer perspective, it remains to be asserted - and researched - whether an instrument player will perform differently on account of this digital effect I am proposing. Maybe not so much technically, but in terms of - again - the *sound*. Katz (2010) mentions an aspiring rock guitar player who, when stating his preference for the record rather than the score to learn from Jimi Hendrix's performing style, said: "I want to hear how the thing sounds like, and there ain't no way a sheet of paper sounds like Jimi Hendrix (ibid:32).¹²⁵ If we replace the record for YouTube, will Jimi Hendrix still sound like Jimi Hendrix? He will definitely look like Jimi Hendrix, but he will almost certainly sound differently.

Bodily and Kinesthetic Competence

"The body has surfaced in ethnomusicological scholarship as it has in anthropology, but rarely as a perceptive organ" (Bates 2008:23).

This quote from Eliot Bates triggers an important element in music practice, which I believe has been historically more associated to live acts rather than to recording sessions: bodily and kinesthetic competence. Alan Merriam (1964), an anthropologist

¹²⁵ Stith Bennett mentions a musician referring to sheet music as follows "Sheet music is just for people who can't hear" (Bennett 1980:139 quoted in Middleton 1990:88).

more focused in non-western musical cultures, mentions the possibility of bodily characteristics being “correlated with other behavioral elements to reveal significant facts about music making” (ibid:108). Referring Gordon W. Hewes’s five levels of relevance related to posture “without specific reference to postures taken in music performance”,¹²⁶ the first level - the study of postural habits in relationship to technology - is one to bear in mind when framing this issue in the recording studio.

I have referred the “wriggling and jiggling, the leaping and strutting” (Katz 2010:25) that usually pop live acts involve, as well as physical traits in classical instrumental performance that are usually associated to conveying - or not - emotion through music. Yet, putting the visual performative side of music apart, “music is a result of bodily practices, and musicality is a result of an acute long-term training of bodily perceptions and actions” (Bates: ibid). In audio engineering practices, for instance, “remembering [...] relates to the muscle memory of tactile interacting with visual representations of sound” (ibid). This association of the tactile with the visual representation of sound is a feature that digital recording processes brought. One can, actually, “see” the sound waves in the computer monitor. In the analogue days, however, tactile competence was even more of an added value. I remember a sound engineer with whom I worked often telling me he could “spot” a good from a bad recording professional by observing the way he put his hands on the mixing console. With no possibility of “visualizing sound”, only ears and fingers could be of help. In the mixing phase, for instance, and before automation, there were often more than one pair of hands over the faders. Regarding this issue, reference to “the weight” of sound, felt over the faders¹²⁷ as a consequence of inertia, was made by a sound engineer I interviewed, a feature that seems to have been lost in digital recording.

With musicians, both instrument players and singers, bodily and kinesthetic competence is best achieved when there is space, preferably in a non-claustrophobic atmosphere only possible when there is air circulating. “Air” is an emic concept used by sound engineers in recording environments. It refers to “the surrounding acoustics of the

¹²⁶ Hewes, Gordon W. (1955) “World Distribution of Certain Postural Habits”, *American Anthropologist* 57:231- 44, quoted in Merriam 1964:108.

¹²⁷ In a recording console, faders are the devices that are used to set the balance of the reproduced sounds. They are manipulated usually by the hand fingers of both hands (except the thumbs and little fingers) in an up and down movement.

instrument, which enables a proper tracking of the sound and dynamics of that instrument.”¹²⁸

Certain instrument players - and music genres - are more dependent of bodily movements to perform freely. The case of Francisco Rebelo, the Portuguese bass player mentioned before, is significant of somebody who found in Namouche something he apparently had not found in any other recording studio: space to move, to dance, - to play. Most of the observed sessions in Namouche had various musicians playing/singing at the same time, with enough space between them not to interfere with the recording process. Briefly, one could say that bodily and kinesthetic competence is associated to music performance, which requires physical space. Thus, the idea previously defended that “sound needs space” seems to be related not only to acoustic features of the physical space - the propagation of the sound waves -, but also to the “making” of the sound by musicians, which includes a physical performance to a greater or lesser degree.

Symbolic Capital, Myth and Creativity

Defined by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) as “the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honorability” (ibid:291), the concept of symbolic capital bears relation to this thesis insofar as both people and institutions (recording studios) may embody this trait. Symbolic capital, Bourdieu argues, “gains value at the cross-section of class and status, where one must not only possess but be able to appropriate objects with a perceived or concrete sense of value” (ibid.).

Thompson and Lashua (2016) argue for the idea of producing or reproducing myths during studio sessions. Based on popular accounts about creativity inside recording studios, often mythologized and romanticized through Hollywood films and music documentaries, those myths are difficult to refute on account of - once again - “the often private and close environment of the recording studio” (ibid:71). Understood as “a story

¹²⁸ This was how Jorge Barata defined “air”(interview, November 2015). Although I have occasionally heard this concept being used, I never actually heard or read any definition of it. Susan Schmidt Horning uses it when referring to a particular music listening session at the 2000 AES (Audio Engineering Society). She says: “I had listened to those records [Elvis Presley’s “Are You Lonesome Tonight?”, Peggy Lee’s “Old Devil Moon” and cuts from Henri Mancini’s original score for the TV series “Peter Gunn”] many times before, but hearing the playback in mono, stereo and discrete three-channel sound was a transcendent experience. The music contained air, dynamics and an acoustic identity that imparted a sense of physical space” (2012, loc. 837 of 7567).

by which a culture explains or understands some aspect of reality or nature” (Fiske 1990:88 in Thompson and Lashua 2016:72), myths abound in popular music, either in representations of the recording studio, but also of well-known musicians and producers. Abbey Road is probably the most mythologized studio of popular music recording history, because of its alleged¹²⁹ technological qualities, but mainly, I would state, because The Beatles recorded there (as well as many other artists and bands, but this fact bears less or no importance regarding this matter). Le Studio, the recording studio in Canada of which I will speak extensively (chapter 8), is another example of a mythologized recording facility, particularly on account of rock band Rush, who recorded seven albums there - despite the studio’s “state of the art” technological equipment and its innovative concept of residential recording facility. The question of what, in fact, contributes to the transformation of a recording facility into a mythologized space will be further dealt in this thesis.

I want to finish this section with a reference to myth and creativity in the recording studio. As briefly mentioned above, romantic notions of creativity associated to the recording industry abound in popular culture, placing the artist in the center of creative processes and often ignoring the agency of other significant actors. Thompson and Lashua refer to the opposition between creativity and commercialization associated to rock musicians (Wicke 1990 quoted in Thompson and Lashua 2016:74), reflecting a Romantic ideology that associates creativity with lack of commercial success - and, I would add, sometimes poverty. As a personal anecdote, I felt undermined as a musician for the fact of singing jingles for a long time in my professional career as session singer in the 80s and 90s. Jingles were not considered music by popular music performers who considered themselves “not for sale”(although many great Portuguese musicians of those decades were in the advertising business). Secondly, advertising was a reasonably well paid work (compared to, for instance, club gigs and other live performances), disrupting the romantic ideal of the poor but creative artist. When it comes to the recording process, and despite the fact that recent works contradict these ideals,¹³⁰ it is difficult to break with

¹²⁹ My intention is by no means to doubt the technical qualities of Abbey Road, but to stress the fact that even a person with no specific knowledge of recording studios knows The Beatles recorded in Abbey Road.

¹³⁰ Thompson and Lashua refer a number of authors and books which are part of this thesis’s references (Kealy 1990, Meintjes 2003, Porcello 2004, Bates 2008, McIntyre 2008 and 2012, Thompson and Lashua 2014). The others are Fitzgerald, J. (1996) “Down Into the Fire: A Case Study of a Popular Music Recording Session”, in *Perfect Beat: The Pacific Journal of Research into Contemporary Music and Popular Culture* 5(3): 63-77; Gibson, C., and Connell, J. (2005) *Music and Tourism: On the Road Again*. Clevedon: Channel

such long and well established belief systems - what Pierre Bourdieu calls “doxa” (Bordieu 1977 quoted in Thompson and Lashua 2016:74).¹³¹

In the late 1980s Csikszentmihalyi presented the “systems model of creativity”, following research in cognitive science that began exploring its social and cultural dimensions. Shifting the former paradigm of centering it in the creator’s personality, the system argues that creativity emerges “from a system containing the creative individual, the surrounding field of others working in the area, and the domain or body of knowledge and prior works” (Sawyer and DeZutter 2009:81).

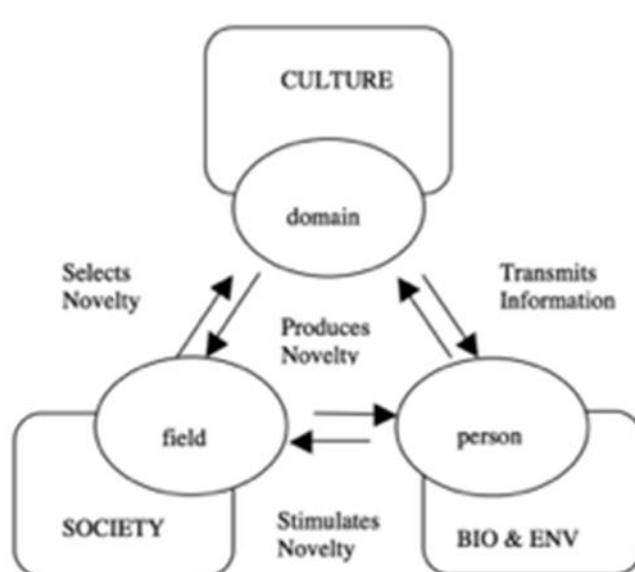


Figure 4 - Csikszentmihalyi's system model of creativity (McIntyre 2012:3728 of 7567)

Adapting the model to a music creating process in a simplified way, a “person”/musician acquires knowledge (via learning or experience), being immersed in a “domain” (music). The product of his/her creation is, then, judged by a social group, an

View Publications; Hennion, A (1990). “The Production of Success: An Antimusicology of the Pop Song, 1983”, in S. Frith and A. Goodwin, Eds. *On Record: Rock, Pop and the Written Word*. London: Routledge: 185-206; Wolfe, P. (2012) “A Studio of One’s Own: Music Production, Technology And Gender”, *Journal on the Art of Record Production* 7 - <http://arpjournal.com/a-studio-of-one's-own-music-production-technology-and-gender>; Woloshyn, A. (2009) “Imogen Heap as Musical Cyborg: Renegotiations of Power, Gender, and Sound”, *Journal on the Art of Record Production* 4 - <http://arpjournal.com/imogen-heap-as-musical-cyborg-renegotiations-of-power-gender-and-sound/>.

¹³¹ Briefly put, “doxa”, used by Pierre Bourdieu in his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977, Cambridge University Press), means what is taken for granted in any particular society, defining “what is thinkable and sayable”. It is “the universe of possible discourses” - <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-concepts-of-Doxa-and-Habitus-that-Pierre-Bourdieu-created> - accessed on March 2018.

important contributor to the process - the “field”/audiences (McIntyre 2012:3728 of 7567).

Later, in the 1990s, a second wave of research provided a new perspective on creativity, focusing on “how creative products emerge from collaborative networks” (Sawyer and DeZutter 2009:81). Sawyer and Dezutter (2009) propose a creative process known as distributed creativity which seeks to contribute to the “understanding of the interactional mechanisms that occur when creativity is distributed throughout a group” (ibid:82). Rather than focusing on the individual as the scientific level of analysis, these researchers argue for the group, as the approach “is designed to explain situations in which creativity is distributed across the members of the group” (Sawyer and DeZutter 2009). Both the system’s model and the distributed creativity approach mirror a sense of “rethinking creativity” as proposed by Philip McIntyre (2012) when it comes to analyzing specific work groups. A good example of this process is offered on Sub-Chapter 7.4 of this thesis.

Bearing in mind what has been stated so far in this section about symbolic capital, myth and creativity, I wish to launch three questions: can the “sense of value” associated to symbolic capital as defined by Bourdieu be associated to a recording space? Is Namouche a mythologized recording studio? How do creativity processes occur in a recording studio?

5. Namouche Recording Studios - a preliminary history¹³²



Photo 3 - Namouche`s entrance door (photo by the author)

Although I have previously mentioned Namouche Recording Studios, I believe it is important to underline the specificity of this recording facility with a brief preliminary history. Further along this thesis, on chapter 9, there is a more diachronic notion of Namouche's course along the history of the Portuguese recording industry from the date of its opening - 1973 - until the beginning of my ethnography (in 2011). But at this point of the narrative, it is fundamental, even if briefly, to mention why and how I ended up choosing Namouche as a case study. It is also relevant to assert that my ethnography (2011- 2018) marks a middle point in the history of Namouche, as during this period there were major transformations in the studio. There is, therefore, a history of Namouche before, during and after my ethnography, all of them part of the framework of my thesis, which I was fortunate to observe and account for.

Namouche Studios is one of the oldest and largest Lisbon audio recording studios, having staged many significant changes in the Portuguese recording industry since the 70s.

The building of the studio began in 1967, but it would only open six years later, on the 25th of April 1973 under the supervision of José Manuel Fortes, who remained there until 1979. When I started my career as a singer, it was named Radio Triunfo, the label which owned it. In my first working years – approximately from 1980 to 1985 – the

¹³² The story of this studio will be further developed on sub-chapter 9.5.

majority of sessions I was present in were for the recording industry, particularly light music.

In 1985, the studio was sold to two well-known Portuguese musicians, Zé da Ponte¹³³ and Guilherme Inês who, apart from their personal musical projects, had developed significant activity in the advertising business. Namouche, the studio's new name, was mostly occupied with sessions for advertising for approximately twelve years – an activity which supported the studio's high costs, and made other musical projects possible. In the 90s the development of digital technology regarding both audio recording and musical instruments made it even more difficult for the studio to survive from music recording; simultaneously, other studios dedicated to advertising emerged in the industry.

In 1996, Zé da Ponte left the partnership, followed by Guilherme Inês in 1998. From 1998 to 2005 the studio became the property of a third equity partner, who left it more or less abandoned. For many years, the studio was thought by part of the music community to be “closed for business” – which it never actually was. For those who thought the studio was still working, rates were said to be extremely high. These rumors contributed further for the studio's abandonment from lack of interest by musicians.

Joaquim Monte, a dynamic sound technician who had previously worked in smaller recording studios,¹³⁴ took over Namouche in 2005, initially with the help of Fred Stone, drummer of the Portuguese metal band Blasted Mechanism. The studio suffered a major turnover since then, with an intense recording activity including diversified artists and musical genres, from hard-rock to hip-hop, jazz, alternative, classical, and film scoring. A story to be completed later in this thesis.

¹³³ As previously mentioned, Zé da Ponte (1954-2015) was a Portuguese bassist, composer and music producer with whom I had the pleasure of working for many years.

¹³⁴ Monte spent most of his professional life before Namouche in Edit Estúdio (or Studio, the orthography differs), a small recording studio situated in Amadora, a Lisbon suburb (although elevated to the category of city). It was owned by Ramiro Martins, (1954 -1998) a musician who was part of a Portuguese psychedelic band – The Beatnicks. This studio recorded many metal bands, as well as African groups. Nowadays, the studio goes under the name of Virtual Estúdio - https://www.facebook.com/VirtualEstudioPT?sk=page_map - accessed on June 2014.



Photo 4 - Namouche's recording room (photo by the author)



Photo 5 - Joaquim Monte and myself in Namouche's control (March 2018)

Having learned about the studio's "second life" from friends and musicians who had recorded there recently, I decided to contact Joaquim Monte about the idea of using the studio as a case study for my doctoral thesis. The fact that this choice would involve observing sessions in the studio did not seem to be a problem; as mentioned previously, Joaquim was an enormous help and a great interface between the studio's clients and myself.

The question of the project's feasibility was, of course, central to my decision. As these were not good enough reasons, my most memorable sonic memories lie there, particularly on that recording room. Despite all the doubts surrounding the observational approach, somehow I always felt a certain connection to that space. Therefore, and using a musical term, an *ensemble* of academic, professional and personal reasons (these last two very closely linked) were responsible for my choice of Namouche's recording studios as case study.

6. Historical background

This chapter goes further back in history to the years prior to the political revolution of 1974, until the end of the same decade. This background is relevant for the understanding of this thesis in the sense that, throughout the history of Portuguese recording industry, one is drawn to reflect upon the major efforts regarding the development of recording techniques. Were they accomplished by individual actors in the process - namely sound technicians and musicians; by institutions or corporations? Despite international examples of recording innovation and creativity broadcast through the several media - radio, television and the records available for purchase - Portuguese recording studios seem to have not been, according to the following testimonies I collected mainly through ethnographic interviews, subject to technological investment. Twenty-five years later, in 2005, this is what was happening to Namouche. Although under a different framework - as by then the technological gap wasn't so much an issue - it was, again, an individual actor - Joaquim Monte - who would fight for a recording facility which, otherwise, would have been abandoned - or dismantled, as apparently was the previous owner's wishes (see last chapter "Epilogue").

"Proudly Alone"

Portugal lived under a dictatorship for forty-eight years (1928-1974). Salazar was the prime minister as well as the most prominent political figure of this period until 1968, during the fascist regime – the *Estado Novo* (New State). He believed that a closed, culturally limited society was the model for the underdeveloped Portuguese republic, as well as a context for best exercising power. The expression "proudly alone" attributed to him was used to define the Portuguese historical framework before the 1974 political revolution of the 25 April.¹³⁵ It became a common expression used by the opponents of the *regime*, outlining the international isolation of Portugal and the consequent anachronism and discrepancy regarding the political and cultural realities of other

¹³⁵ Apparently, Salazar used it for the first time in a speech referring to the Portuguese war effort in the African colonies, a "battle in which we – both the European and African Portuguese – fight without spectacle or alliances, proudly alone" (Salazar in Rodrigues 2004).

countries of the western world - namely the decolonization process through which most European countries had been submitted since the post-war era (Rodrigues 2004). The following episode – more like an anecdote – is also emblematic of the kind of society Salazar wished the Portuguese to be: in a letter to the director of Coca-Cola’s European division, Salazar defined Portugal as a “conservative, paternalistic and — thank God — ‘old-fashioned’ country,” a term he considered “appreciative rather than pejorative” (Hatton 2011:149). In the same letter, he claimed to fear the introduction in Portugal of what he detested, above all — “modernism and the famous efficiency” (ibid.).

In this historical scenario and before the appearance of pop-rock, fado¹³⁶ and light music occupied a considerable space in the musical production and dissemination, both through the radio and records.¹³⁷ During the 60s and in the first years of the 70s (the years prior to the Carnation revolution), the “nacional-cançonetismo”¹³⁸ had a strong presence on TV, particularly due to the *Festival RTP da Canção*, the Portuguese contest that chooses the song to represent the country at the Eurovision Song Contest (César & Tilly

¹³⁶ Fado is a urban Portuguese popular song, usually sung by one male or female singer and accompanied by a guitar (which, in this case, is called “viola”) and a Portuguese guitar (“guitarra Portuguesa”). It was elevated to World Cultural Intangible Heritage by UNESCO in 2011, enlarging its international visibility already relevant on account of singers like Amália Rodrigues and Mariza. For a more extensive notion of fado, see Nery, Rui Vieira (2010) “Fado” in Castelo-Branco, Salwa (coord) *Enciclopédia da Música Portuguesa do Século XX*, volume 2, pp. 433-453. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores/Temas e Debates.

¹³⁷ In Portugal, light music is a generic term covering a variety of musical styles, historically variable, involving compositions with orchestral or piano arrangements. The “canção” (song) was its central genre, often designated “canção ligeira” (light song) (Moreira, Pedro, Rio Cidra and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (2010) “Música Ligeira” in Castelo-Branco, Salwa (coord.) *Enciclopédia da Música Portuguesa do Século XX*, volume 3, pp. 872-875. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores/Temas e Debates.

¹³⁸ This expression, which translated into English stands for “national song-singing”, was used for the first time by Portuguese journalist João Paulo Guerra in an article published in 1969. The journalist was referring, supposedly in derogatory terms, to the “musical style and the poetic content” disseminated by a group of singers and composers - namely Simone de Oliveira, António Calvário, Carlos Paião and others. During the 70s, the expression was used (again in derogatory terms) to designate the opposite end, both esthetically and ideologically, to a new trend of singers and composers associated to the renewal of light music - Fernando Tordo, Paulo de Carvalho and Pedro Osório, among others. These artists were influenced by Anglo-American repertoires and the French “chanson” and showed “a growing concern with the aesthetic and ideological quality of their texts” which, unlike the previously mentioned (considered “shallow, futile and propagandistic”) were against the political regime (César, António João “Nacional-Cançonetismo” in Castelo-Branco 2010:901).

2010 in Andrade 2012). It was a major TV show, always attracting a very large audience - the country literally stopped to watch it.¹³⁹

National and international artists were regularly disseminated via radio, singing in Portuguese, but also French, Italian, Spanish and English. French singers like Sylvie Vartan, Johnny Holiday, Françoise Hardy, Jacques Trenet, together with Massiel, Rafael and Juan Manuel Serrat from Spain, or even Italian singers like Rita Pavone, Milva and Gianni Morandi were commonly heard through the radio, as I personally recall. Anglo-American singers and groups were also part of this radio soundscape, although not constituting the majority of foreign artists that had air-play. It is, nevertheless, curious that this mediated multilingualism should occur in a country extremely closed in on itself, as Salazar wished.

Yet, around the 60s, when pop-rock was becoming increasingly popular both in the USA and Europe, the media (mainly the radio) began to include Portuguese pop-rock groups in their programs. Some followed the Anglo-American paradigm closely, using both the English language and the rhythmic and melodic structures adapted from their musical references - such as The Beatles. Other groups tried to establish a distance from this Anglophone-based formula, using the Portuguese language and seeking inspiration in Portuguese history and poetry for their lyrics. An example of the former tendency was the group The Sheiks, at times considered “the Portuguese Beatles”. The use of the English language was a way of establishing a rupture with a set of values usually associated to the universe of fado and light music, as the words of Carlos Mendes, singer-songwriter and bass guitar of the Sheiks, corroborate:

“Portuguese was very much associated to fado and to the very corny songs of Tony de Matos.¹⁴⁰ It was something very grey, very weird. We wanted to do what the young people abroad did and in Portuguese that didn’t work; besides, it was ‘cooler’ to speak in English, so everything was in English. I don’t believe it was the idea of internationalization – as long as we moved away from our neighborhood, we were already in the world -, it was more the cultural Anglo-Saxon influence, specially -

¹³⁹ It is important to state that there was only one channel on national television until 1968 (RTP 1), and a second one after this year (RTP2). <http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/RTP2#Objectivos> – accessed on February 2014.

¹⁴⁰ Tony de Matos was one of the singers commonly associated to “nacional-cançonetismo”.

almost exclusively, I would say - on the radio” (Carlos Mendes, interview, April 2011).

Their music production included songs in English, French and Portuguese (sometimes “sung with a Brazilian accent, so as “to soften the sound of the Portuguese accent” (Tilly in Castelo-Branco 2010:1207). But their major hits – a version of George Gershwin’s “Summertime” (1964), “Missing You” and “Tell me Bird” (1966) - were all sung in English.

EXAMPLE N.1 “Missing you”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAwd3hA8S1Y>

José Cid and his group *Quarteto1111*, an example of the second tendency mentioned above, tried a different approach, sounding closer to what was then called symphonic rock and using lyrics inspired by Portuguese history.

EXAMPLE N.2 “A Lenda de El-Rei D. Sebastião”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikITv-Xi1v4>

The 25th of April (“The Carnation Revolution”)

In 1974, a political revolution took place in Portugal, putting an end to the forty-eight years dictatorship. The “25th of April,” or the “The Carnation Revolution”¹⁴¹ brought a strong emphasis to “canção de protesto” (protest song), a type of composition characterized by a simple melody with lyrics appealing to political and social action, usually accompanied by an acoustic guitar (Côrte-Real in Castelo-Branco 2010).¹⁴² As a consequence, the pop-rock styles that had been implemented in the 60s, lost importance in the years that followed the political revolution.

Fado, with its lyrics about passion, jealousy, abandonment and loneliness, did not exactly match the revolutionary atmosphere that characterized the first years after the revolution. This musical genre was commonly understood as one of the three Fs that upheld the New State (*Estado Novo*), along with Fatima (a very important Portuguese religious shrine and worldwide pilgrimage destination) and football. As we will see further, its importance regarding radio and TV air-play, although never disappearing, diminished considerably: according to some Portuguese recording professionals (Fortes 2014, Barata 2012), fado never ceased to be recorded. By the end of the decade, patterns of change were noticeable in the new styles of pop-rock (Cidra in Castelo-Branco 2010:1047). The Portuguese language reacquired a fresh *status*, since questions of national identity became a major topic in society. Singing in a foreign language was no longer “cool”. Portuguese was “the thing”. Attempts towards a more organic, less scholarly configuration of Portuguese rock were made by groups such as UHF, who in 1978 released the single “Jorge Morreu” by Metro-Som label.

¹⁴¹ Although there are several versions about the designation “Carnation Revolution” for the 25th of April, associating the image of the flowers to a peaceful revolution without the use of guns, and flowers in the shotgun’s barrels (a photo which became widespread as iconic of this date), the true story is somewhat different. Celeste Caeiro, who worked in a restaurant in the center of Lisbon (near the area where the revolution started, Largo do Carmo) was told by her boss to buy flowers to celebrate the venue’s first anniversary. However, because of the revolution taking place that day, the restaurant did not open. Celeste ended up distributing the carnations to the soldiers she was coming across - <http://www.tvi24.iol.pt/videos/sociedade/celeste-caeiro-a-mulher-dos-cravos/553ad3c00cf2bfe21d0ef05e> - accessed on May 2018.

¹⁴² I used what I thought to be the main features of “canção de protesto”. For a better and more complete understanding of this concept, see Côrte-Real, Maria de São José “Canção de Intervenção” in Castelo-Branco, Salwa (coord.) *Enciclopédia da Música em Portugal no Século xx*, Vol. 1, pp 220-228. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores/Temas e Debates.

EXAMPLE N.3 Jorge Morreu”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sP4xQq3I0Qc>

According to David Ferreira, who worked at Valentim de Carvalho for many years, the biggest and most significant musical rupture concerning musical practices associated to rock in Portugal was to come two years later (Ferreira 2014). In 1980, *Ar de Rock*, Rui Veloso`s¹⁴³ first LP record, took shape from this historical background, giving birth to a movement which would later be known as “Portuguese rock” (“movimento do rock Português”).

Ar de Rock ("Looks like Rock", a pun on “Hard rock”, which is how it sounds in Portuguese) was Veloso`s debut album, a fact worth considering for an artist unknown until that date. Recorded in a week (including mixing) by José Manuel Fortes, it sold over 20.000 copies and caused enormous turmoil in music circles and the press.¹⁴⁴

Showing obvious roots in the blues-rock model, although sung in Portuguese, the lyrics of the songs, written by Veloso`s lyricist and music companion Carlos Tê, were inspired in the profound social developments of a rapidly changing society. The language used was very distinctive from other popular genres at the time, particularly “canção de protesto”, where, as stated before, a strong appeal for political action and social awareness was noticeable. Instead, snapshots of Portuguese society after the revolution were displayed, using the vocabulary of “the man in the street”, musically informed by rock and roll styles and brightened by a unique vocal performance, swinging through the words, in a bluesy style – a style also present in his electric-guitar and harmonica playing. A whole new process of organizing musical sounds through sonically very distinctive words - the Portuguese – gave rise to the afore mentioned “movimento do rock Português”

¹⁴³ Rui Veloso (born in 1957) is probably the most popular living Portuguese singer-songwriter within the pop-rock universe. His work will be mentioned often in this thesis, as I consider it to be the basis of modern popular music in Portugal, with a legacy of followers throughout the subsequent generations after his first LP. A reference must also be made to Carlos Tê (born in 1955), his main lyricist, whose inspired and original lyrics were fundamental for Rui Veloso`s breakthrough in the Portuguese music scene of the 80s.

¹⁴⁴ The circumstances of the recording of this emblematic Portuguese record will be developed on Sub-Chapter 9.7.

(“Portuguese rock” movement) and labeled Veloso as its father, much to his discontentment.¹⁴⁵

“Portuguese rock” originated a generalized investment on the part of recording labels towards many emerging groups and solo artists singing in Portuguese, polarizing the attraction of media such as radio and TV. As a result, some of the Lisbon recording studios had its activity largely increased by these new groups and artists, namely Valentim de Carvalho and Rádio Triunfo.

EXAMPLE N.4 ”Cavalos de Corrida” (UHF)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usd45n7Mm98>

EXAMPLE N.5 “Chiclete” (TAXI)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5ATO2Tds8A>

EXAMPLE N.6 Portugal Na CEE” (GNR)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjCxdfk-kUM>

EXAMPLE N.7 Ribeira” (JAFUMEGA)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljtw2TbhXzQ>

EXAMPLE N.8 Patchouly” (GRUPO DE BAILE)

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Patchouly

¹⁴⁵ As I had the opportunity of mentioning in my Master thesis, Veloso’s attachment to rock by the press was considered by the musician as “uninteresting”, as he did not appreciate “being (musically) categorized” (Veloso 2003 quoted in Campelo 2010:6). On the other hand, José Cid, mentioned on p.78, stated in a number of interviews and in his recently launched book *José Cid - o Lado B de um Provocador* (*José Cid - the B side of a challenger* - my translation) that if Rui Veloso was the father of Portuguese rock, he would be the mother, claiming to himself the other half of Portuguese rock’s “parenthood” (<https://festivaiscancao.wordpress.com/2015/07/24/jose-cid-nao-poupa-rui-veloso-no-seu-livro/> - accessed on July 2015).

EXAMPLE N.9 Chico Fininho” (RUI VELOSO)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMLmv5EAOFE>

I started my professional career in 1982, two years after the great “boom of Portuguese rock”, as the movement described above is also known. In 1982, I entered a recording studio for the first time¹⁴⁶ not knowing exactly what I was about to do there but assuming it had something to do with music.¹⁴⁷ It was also by that time that I listened to Rui Veloso’s music for the first time in a well-known Lisbon square downtown – Praça da Figueira - realizing, then, that something very new was happening in the Portuguese music scene.

After Rui Veloso’s emergence in the new Portuguese rock scene, many copycat groups and artists tried to follow the same model, with less success. The recording industry was becoming, again, more diversified; by the time I started working in the studios, there were several genres being recorded in sessions: light music (which usually included many backing vocals - sometimes to “help” the poor singing quality of some artists), pop-rock (more independent from the Portuguese rock model), advertising (which was expanding as a music activity, for composers, singers and instrument players), and a genre similar to what would later be denominated “pimba”¹⁴⁸ - a sort of poor quality light music, usually sung by (not very good) performers whom I had never seen or heard of, either on TV or through the radio, who seemed to belong to a music sub-world invisible to the mainstream media and audiences. In short, there was a lot of diversified recording work, which led me to get acquainted with most of the Lisbon recording studios

¹⁴⁶ It was Musicorde, a recording studio I will mention again further in this thesis.

¹⁴⁷ In 1982, I participated in a TV show called *Prata da Casa*. The musicians playing in the band invited me to work with them, asking if I had any problems regarding the possibility of recording jingles. I had no idea what they were talking about, but it sounded interesting. It was: it gave me the opportunity to enter a recording studio for the first time.

¹⁴⁸ “Pimba”, which I resist until today considering a music genre, emerged as a recognizable and identified type of popular music practice in 1995, after the song “Pimba, Pimba” by singer-songwriter Emanuel became a hit in the summer parties and pilgrimages of “the profound Portugal” (a term used to designate the country outside the main urban centers). It became very successful and triggered a preference for this kind of music by certain television stations (particularly the private ones). The type of music that I am referring to wasn’t traceable through the usual media channels. I believe its audiences would be the emigrant communities, a subject I will discuss later in this thesis.

of the time, as well as their professionals - sound engineers, studio assistants - and the music community, especially the music recording community.¹⁴⁹

In the next section, I will mention the sonic universes that, around the same decades (between the 60s and the 80s), were emerging in Anglo-American popular music. These universes would establish sonic paradigms for some Portuguese musicians who wished their recorded music to “sound” different, closer to what they heard on the radio, but particularly through records that were bought abroad.

Anglo-American pop-rock and the creation of distinctive sonic universes

The 60s were a turning point in terms of sonic creation and innovation in the recording studio - especially after The Beatles. Before the 60s, however, musicians such as Stockhausen, André Popp, Pierre Schaeffer or Les Paul, for instance, had already expanded “the definition of recording to beyond technically capture performance to capture...*something else*”.¹⁵⁰ Phil Ramone mentions the curiosity that the record *Delirium in Hi-Fi* caused in him when he started working in recording studios in the 50s. Having been recorded in 1957 by French composer André Popp and his recording engineer Pierre Fatosome, the use of “multiple tape machines to record each instrumental and vocal part deliberately out of synch [...]” created a “surreal pastiche of echo, speed, and slap effects” (Ramone 2007:116). These “psychedelic sounds were years ahead of the LSD movement, and I spent months analyzing *Delirium in Hi-Fi* trying to figure out how they did it” (ibid.). Les Paul, an extraordinary jazz guitarist born in 1915, experimented with “‘sound on sound’ overdubbing techniques using disc-cutting lathes, adding a new part as he copied one disc to another” (White 2009). With the help of Ross Snyder, an electronics engineer who built him a multi-track tape recorder to improve his sound on sound technique (Milner 2011:155), Paul became a reference in terms of sonic creation, as his 1948 record “*Lover*” shows.

¹⁴⁹ By this expression, I mean session musicians and singers, as there were musicians and singers who were outside this community.

¹⁵⁰ Alan Williams, “Studio as Instrument” Pannel, ARP Conference 2008 (<http://www.artofrecordproduction.com/index.php/asarp-members/full-keynote-videos-> accessed January 2014).

EXAMPLE N. 10 “Lover”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6VHlqH4-xs>

Because these new creators called “into question fundamental conventions of musical meaning, especially the notion of stylistic authenticity and integrity” (Zak III 2012), they were subject to aesthetic critiques, based on the “adherence to the primacy of live musical performance and a refusal to admit that record making might be something different” (ibid.).

It was in the 60s, and particularly with the help of the Beatles and George Martin, that the “sound” of the recording and not just the music, became an entity on its own, bringing new aspects and eventually breaking some beliefs around the notion of recording. After all, recording could, as Alan Williams stated, “capture something...else”, other than the music.

“Their [The Beatles] irresistible global impact impressed nearly everyone, and what they proposed—which looked and sounded like a new pop paradigm—simply could not be ignored.[...] With their retreat from the concert stage in 1966 the Beatles asserted that record making was their chief calling, the area of musical creativity where their artistic spirits had the freest rein” (Zak III 2012).

Starting their recording career in a two-track mono facility¹⁵¹- Abbey Road Studios -, The Beatles music evolved alongside audio recording and instrumental technology. When they broke up in 1970, recording studios were already working with sixteen tracks and some even with twenty-four (Milner 2009:160). Having withdrawn from live performances since 1966, those last four years as a band were focused around the recording studio as the privileged *locus* of their musical creativity and experimentation,

¹⁵¹ A two-track mono facility is a recording studio with only two tracks and no stereo technology.

as well as instrumental performance,¹⁵² taking advantage of all the technological tools available, accessorized by extraordinary professionals such as recording engineer Geoff Emerick – and, naturally, producer George Martin, also called “the 5th Beatle”. In *Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* 20th anniversary, Martin was interviewed for TV, referring to this recording experience in the following terms:

“It was experimenting all the time. And the boys were very much into the avant-garde thing - Paul was into Stockhausen, John was listening to John Cage [...];[the Beatles] suddenly realized that they could stop doing the touring, stop doing the filming, and stop doing everything else and concentrate on the studio. So, they allocated that time to it and [...] both John and Paul started writing songs that weren’t just rock and roll songs for a rock and roll band but that had been designed to be *something else*, to be something produced in the studio”.¹⁵³

The “discovery” of the recording studio and its many possibilities had already begun in 1965, with *Rubber Soul*, a record already evidencing a move from a fan-oriented song-writing to songs “a little bit more surreal”.¹⁵⁴ Drug taking – grass and LSD – seems to bear some relation to this new stage that the Liverpool musicians had reached. Having just returned from a tour in the United States, musical influences from composers like Bob Dylan on the lyrical side, or from bands like The Birds on the instrumental sound¹⁵⁵ were also noticeable. “We were expanding in all areas, opening up to a lot of different attitudes.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² In the documentary film “The Beatles - The Making of Sgt. Pepper’s 1/5”, Ringo Starr claims that the reason for them to drop the live concerts was on account of their “turning into such bad musicians [...] the volume of the audience was always greater than the volume of the band”, which meant they could not listen to what they were playing and singing. This situation is quite evident in Ron Howards’s 2016 documentary *The Beatles: Eight Days a Week - The Touring Years*. Through the compilation of footage from concerts and interviews with The Beatles, from 1963 to 1966, one can actually realize the difficulties they had to endure, with maddening crowds screaming the whole time, and very poor amplifying equipment. - <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2531318/> - accessed on April 2017.

¹⁵³ George Martin (1987) – interview <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaliuRm5e1I> – accessed on January 2014.

¹⁵⁴ Paul McCartney in The Beatles - The Making of *Rubber Soul*- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2EWbhAvwZI> – accessed on January 2014.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Ringo Star, *ibid.*

“When we got sort of contemporary as it were...even if it was contemporary-influenced...I think *Rubber Soul* was about when it started happening. *Rubber Soul* really was a matter of having all experienced the recording studio... having grown musically as well, but mainly experienced the studio and knowing the possibilities”.¹⁵⁷

This “sort of contemporary” side of the group is associated primarily, as one listens to the record, to the recording experience in the studio. Also, time to experiment and the opportunity to focus solely on the record making was important, as *Rubber Soul*, although having been recorded in just four weeks (compared to the five months of *Sgt Pepper’s*) “was recorded during a specific period” and “the sessions [were] not dashed off in between either tour dates or during filming projects”.¹⁵⁸

EXAMPLE N.11 - *Rubber Soul*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3MgJWH2TiQ>

In the USA, *Pet Sounds*, a record by North-American group The Beach Boys, was greatly influenced by *Rubber Soul*. Composed, produced and arranged by Brian Wilson, the “driving creative force” behind the group (Zager 2012:217), it is one of the albums to be part of what has been considered a rock music canon (Zak 2012).¹⁵⁹ The group had reached the charts with a type of music enhancing the joys of being a teenager in California, “surfing in the USA” and representing “everything comfortable and good”,¹⁶⁰ in a post-war period where there was a general sense of living a dream. After some years of this successful commercial formula, these idiosyncrasies no longer filled Brian Wilson’s need to “grow” artistically, being able “to record on an atmosphere of

¹⁵⁷ John Lennon, *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ George Martin, *ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ About this idea of a rock music canon, Albin Zak (2012) would add “The Beatles, of course, had lots of company. Consider a list of late sixties albums: the Rolling Stones’ *Let It Bleed*, Jimi Hendrix’s *Electric Ladyland*, the Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds*, The Doors’ first two albums, Led Zeppelin 1 and 2, The Band’s first two albums, Dylan’s *Blonde on Blonde*, Van Morrison’s *Astral Weeks*, the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s* and *White Album* and *Abbey Road*, King Crimson’s *In the Court of the Crimson King*, the Moody Blues’ *Days of Future Passed*—a rich abundance of manifest artistic ambition. These records, of course, are only a representative few among the multitude constituting the rock music canon, to which the musicology of record production has, thus far, been chiefly devoted” (*ibid.*).

¹⁶⁰ Van Dyke Parks in PET SOUNDS - ART THAT SHOOK THE WORLD- BBC Two documentary (2002) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX-kFyt73Uw-> accessed on January 2014.

calmness”.¹⁶¹ “*Rubber Soul* blew my mind; when I heard *Rubber Soul*, I said “that’s it [...] I’m gonna make an album that really challenges me”.¹⁶²

The record was, indeed, a challenge, not only to twenty-three year old Wilson himself but to popular music as a whole, becoming a reference of sonic experimentation, creativity and sophistication. Understandably enough, it was considered “too arty”¹⁶³ for both the record company and the rest of the band.

“It was a tough thing for a record company like Capitol to want to indulge a young genius [...] like that...Brian Wilson, in the 60s, because his process took time in the studio; it was just like moving mountains and he had a rough time...”¹⁶⁴

Sonically, *Pet Sounds* is the result of Wilson’s creativity combined with the collaboration of a group of outstanding musicians known as The Wrecking Crew (of which I will speak extensively on Sub-Chapter 7.3) and the recording techniques associated to Phil Spector, a dynamic American record producer responsible for a number of hit records in the 60s.¹⁶⁵ Those techniques included the “Wall of Sound”, under which

“There was no separation of instruments in the studio; the instruments “bled” into the sonic space of the other instruments, creating a huge mass of sound [...] enhanced by an unusual amount of echo and reverberation” (Zager 2012:215).

Another technique used by Wilson, borrowed from Spector’s productions was the combination of instruments, consisting of combining different instruments playing the same notes at the same time; the result was a particular sound which was different from the sources, making it sometimes difficult to identify the instruments playing.

¹⁶¹ Brian Wilson in PET SOUNDS - ART THAT SHOOK THE WORLD- BBC Two documentary (2002) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX-kFyt73Uw-> accessed on January 2014.

¹⁶² *ibid.*

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Van Dyke Parks, *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Some of those hits were “Be My Baby” by The Ronettes (1963), or “You Lost that Loving Feeling”, by The Righteous Brothers (1964) (Zager 2012). But it was “Be My Baby” in particular that inspired Brian Wilson to use Phil Spector’s production techniques.

With The Beatles, The Beach Boys and their teams of musicians, producers and sound engineers,¹⁶⁶ the recording standard had been set up very high. “How do you approach making records anymore?”¹⁶⁷ was a pertinent question to be raised by then. The sound of the record would continue to be explored as an increasingly important element in record production.

In 1973, the Pink Floyd’s release of *The Dark Side of the Moon*, would pursue the creation of “visual art through sounds” as Graham Nash commented about *Pet Sounds*.¹⁶⁸ The result of experimentation in the recording studio – Abbey Road Studios, like *Sgt. Peppers* five years before - in a particularly creative moment of the band, whose members were, at the time, “very open”¹⁶⁹ and united by the same goal - “to become rich and famous”.¹⁷⁰ Whichever their motivation was, the facts remain: *The Dark Side of the Moon* is, even today, an impressive sonic journey. A record to “take you places”.¹⁷¹

“[In the early seventies] The increase in tracks available to people working in the professional recording studio brought with it both increased sonic fidelity and expanded creative possibilities. The most creative acts and producers enhanced both aspects of the evolving art of recording, weaving conventional songwriting and instrumentation together with sound effects, imaginative use of the latest outboard gear, and deft splicing and elaborate mixing to create vibrant new records” (Moorefield 2005:44).

¹⁶⁶ As I will later refer (Chapter 11), the fact that there was a close relationship between the process of recording and technological development”, ensuring a “laboratory-like regime” that “persisted for decades within the recording studio sector” (Leyshon 2009: loc. 1319 of 1331) would also contribute for the cultural framework in which these groups were born. Also, the political regime in both countries (USA and England), which were living a post-war situation in a democratic setting, had very positive results regarding cultural practices. Portugal, whose role in the WWII was of a supposedly neutral country, got the best and the worse out of this fact: it had no bombings, no destruction and no real threats to state: instead, it remained as a fascist regime for another 29 years (and a destructive war in Africa with it), and a dictator whose main motto for the country was “small but honoured”.

¹⁶⁷ A quote from Graham Nash, musician, former member of The Birds and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, describing the reaction he had after listening to *Pet Sounds*, in PET SOUNDS - ART THAT SHOOK THE WORLD - BBC Two documentary (2002) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX-kFyt73Uw> - accessed on January 2014.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Richard Wright, in “The Making of *The Dark Side of the Moon*” (2003) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AbIT9tSy2M> – accessed on February the 1st.

¹⁷⁰ Roger Waters, *ibid.* I particularly like this statement by Roger Waters, as it deconstructs the romantic idea of the artist as an art craftsman just for the sake of it; music, particularly popular music in the 70s, was a highly financially rewarding industry.

¹⁷¹ Robert Sandall, *ibid.*

“Music that became more soundscapes than songs”¹⁷², “total space rock”,¹⁷³ the route traced in *Meddle*, Pink Floyd’s previous album, is followed, using modern recording technology like multi-tracking,¹⁷⁴ analogue synthesizers and techniques borrowed from *musique concrète*, such as the mixture of sounds coming from musical instruments and spoken voices. With the collaboration of recording engineer Alan Parsons and producer Chris Thomas, *The Dark Side of The Moon* underlines the idea of a musical theme as “a construct”,¹⁷⁵ and of the recording studio as a compositional and arranging tool.

Another musician who was fundamental to the idea of “studio as instrument” was Brian Eno. As Andrew Jones (1995) remarks, “the recording studio paved the way for new musics” (ibid:128), and in the case of Brian Eno, musics to be composed in the studio.

“You no longer come into the studio with a conception of the finished piece. Instead, you come with actually rather a bare skeleton of a piece, or perhaps with nothing at all. I often start working with no starting point. Once you become familiar with the studio facilities, or even if you’re not, actually, you can begin to compose in relation to those facilities. You can begin to think in terms of putting something on, putting something else on, then taking some of the original things off, or taking a mixture of things off, and seeing what you’re left with - actually constructing a piece in the studio” (Eno in Rojek 2011:140).

Eno’s innovative conception of music in the 70s, according to which traditional knowledge of how to play instruments was no barrier to making music¹⁷⁶ was a premonition of what digital recording technology would bring on a larger scale twenty years later, extending to the present day. I will return to this topic later in this thesis.

¹⁷² Nigel Williamson, *ibid.*

¹⁷³ David Fricke, *ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ “The most important technical advance is the use of two sixteen-track machines, whereas *Pepper* had used three four-tracks. [...] It is also notable for its integration of live and electronic elements, as well as its use of ambience as a thematic element” (Moorefield 2005:44).

¹⁷⁵ Roger Waters in “The Making of *The Dark Side of the Moon*” (2003) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AbIT9tSy2M> – accessed on February 2014.

¹⁷⁶ “I can’t play any instruments in any technically viable sense at all [...] and it’s one of my strengths, I think, actually. Simply because I believe technique is as much a barrier as a way of opening something up.” (Brian Eno quoted in Smith 2009:121). Curiously enough, Roger Waters would point out Pink Floyd’s inability to write singles as an advantage that led to the process of composing *The Dark Side of The Moon*. (in “The Making of *The Dark Side of the Moon*” (2003) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AbIT9tSy2M> – accessed on February 2014.

Many more examples of sonic experimentation in the recording studio could be pointed out. The presented selection tried to cover examples which were mostly consensual to Portuguese popular music musicians in the 60s (within the pop-rock sub-genre) regarding sonic references to follow. Although considered by Portuguese musicians as representative of modernity and novelty, these examples of sonic quality seem to have been social constructions – the result of a political, social, cultural and technological framework in which they were created (see note 166). A good example of how the systems model of creativity can operate, highlighting the interaction between the individual (already a result of biology and environment), the domain to which he/she produces (or not) novelty and society.

To end this section, a reference to Steely Dan is also necessary. “Less a band than a concept”,¹⁷⁷ this pop unit formed by Donald Fagen and Walter Becker in the 70s became famous for its very particular musical style, combining influences from jazz, rock, funk, R&B and pop. Also, the band’s “cryptic, often ironic lyrics”¹⁷⁸ became one of their most distinctive traits. However, it is their studio perfectionism and their insistence on “pristine sound quality”¹⁷⁹ that makes their reference pertinent in this section. Despite the fact that this “pristine” audio quality (that some may find artificial) can, again, be taken as a social construction embedding an aesthetic ideology (rather than being only the result of excellent audio engineering and musicianship), it would become a sonic reference for Rui Veloso in the 80s, a Portuguese musician who constantly tried to elevate the sound quality of his records since the beginning of his career. In the next section I will develop further these Anglo-American sonic references adopted by Portuguese musicians in the referred decades (60s and 80s), bearing in mind the notions of “overseas” proposed by Louise Meintjes and Bourdieus’ notion of symbolic capital.

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/artists/steely-dan/biography-> accessed on February 2014.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*

Sonic experimentation in Portugal?

What was happening in the Portuguese recording studios at approximately the dates of the records mentioned previously? Were the Lisbon recording studios being explored as sites of new sonic universes? What were the Portuguese recorded sonic universes?

As stated before, The Sheiks released *Summertime* in 1965 and *Missing You* in 1966, the same dates that *Rubber Soul* and *Pet Sounds* were released. By listening to either of the tunes, one realizes that “the Portuguese Beatles” as they were known, were attempting to follow the Anglo-American pop-rock model in terms of beat, instrumentation, arrangements and language. Both records sound well recorded and balanced, *Summertime* resembling an early Elvis Presley mix, full of reverb, *Missing You* a more closed-mike recording, showing less room.¹⁸⁰ Both songs were recorded at Valentim de Carvalho Recording Studios.¹⁸¹ The sound engineer was Hugo Ribeiro, an experienced professional who became a reference to some of the best Portuguese sound engineers.

Ribeiro’s technical tools were mostly his ears, through which he recorded instruments and voices as they sounded (Fortes 2014; Ferreira 2014). He was very rightly considered by David Ferreira, his colleague at Valentim de Carvalho, “the man of the ear” (Ferreira 2014). His vast experience in recording different musical genres - “música ligeira”, “folclore”¹⁸², but mostly fado – justifies completely the title of the article of Portuguese newspaper *Público*: “It was through Hugo Ribeiro's ears that we learned to listen to Portugal”.¹⁸³ When confronted by a new musical idiom like pop-rock,¹⁸⁴ his approach would be the same as with any other genre.

¹⁸⁰ As a sound effect, “room reverb” is one of the most basic types of reverb (Weiss 2017). Just like different rooms have different shapes and sizes, one can emulate the sound of different rooms in a recording (ibid.)

¹⁸¹ This is one of the Lisbon historical recording studios mentioned in the introduction. Its history is developed on sub-chapter 9.6.

¹⁸² Very briefly defined, folclore, or better said “música folclórica” is a music practice based on traditional and rural cultural elements. In Portugal, “ranchos folclóricos” are the main performers associated to this practice. They are a “formerly organized group, constituted by dancers, singers and instrument players” singing and dancing songs “believed to be traditional, supposedly originating in the rural world and associated to a specific geographic area” (Castelo-Branco, José Soares Neves and Maria João Lima 2010).

¹⁸³ Frota, Gonçalo (2014) “Foi pelos ouvidos de Hugo Ribeiro que aprendemos a ouvir Portugal”- <http://www.publico.pt/culturaipsilon/noticia/foi-pelos-ouvidos-de-hugo-ribeiro-que-aprendemos-a-ouvir-portugal-1667271>- accessed on July 2015.

¹⁸⁴ It is important to acknowledge that Hugo Ribeiro started recording in the 1940s, which means that by the time pop-rock arrived at Estúdios Valentim de Carvalho, he already had a vast experience recording mostly other genres.

I interviewed Hugo Ribeiro in March 2014.¹⁸⁵ An 88 year-old-gentleman, with a great sense of humor and astonishing memory, who still went to the studio every week, in spite of being retired for many years. Mr. Ribeiro had many interesting stories about the Portuguese recording industry, which he was delighted to tell. The mere fact that he was Amália Rodrigues's¹⁸⁶ favorite sound engineer was enough to turn him into a legend. In our interview, Mr. Ribeiro mentioned his times at Les I.M.E Pathé Marconi, in Paris, in the 60s, where he went to learn about sound recording.

“[Before going to Paris], a friend of mine, Belchior Viegas, told me: ‘You go there, but you`ll come back even sadder than before, because you are going to see what you can do, but then when you come back, you can´t do anything, because you have no machinery [...]’. When my boss [Rui de Carvalho] realized that, he ordered modern machinery and from then on we started improving the quality of our work” (Hugo Ribeiro, Valentim de Carvalho Studios, March 2014).

While sonic experiments were taking place in English and North-American pop-rock, in Portugal fado singers and fado players were, at this point, occupying the recording studios, along with singers (*cançonetistas*) from “nacional-cançonetismo” and “folclore” groups (Ribeiro 2014; Fortes 2014). Although an emergence of pop-rock groups was taking place, there was no experience in recording this new idiom, nor technology to match music production abroad. José Cid, for instance, in an interview to *Pública* magazine in 2006, relates his efforts during the recording of 1967 “A Lenda de el-Rei D. Sebastião”:

“We had this idea of recording with a lot of instrumental volume, but at that time, due to lack of technical means, it was completely impossible. Then, we put the drums, the guitar and the bass in the garage, with a heavy sound, and the mikes in front of the instruments, and I went to the small car I had back then, parked 50

¹⁸⁵ As mentioned before, Hugo Ribeiro passed away in 2016.

¹⁸⁶ Amália Rodrigues was a singer, mainly of fado (in Portuguese, “fadista”), but also a fado lyricist and composer, and an actress of musical theater, cinema and television (Nery 2010:1132). She was “the most prominent and influential figure of fado and popular urban song in Portugal in the 20th century and the Portuguese personality who attracted more attention in the most relevant performing arts international circuits of her time” (ibid.). A charismatic artist who has become a national icon, her importance in the recording industry is something I had no notion of, until I did research for this thesis (see sub-chapter 9.6 “Valentim de Carvalho”).

meters from the garage. With the garage door closed, listening to the infernal noise coming from there, and with a cable that was coming out of the mixing console to the car, which worked as an isolated booth, I played the flute part there.”¹⁸⁷

According to João Carlos Callixto, Portuguese music researcher and author, Cid would actually recur to a team of sound professionals - Jorge Hipólito, Mário Soares and Paco Aiúso - to obtain the sounds he looked for, using inventive solutions like the one described above, in “make-shift” studios.¹⁸⁸

But in 1971, an extraordinary record would emerge in the Portuguese recording industry. Due to the talent of Zeca Afonso (the singer-songwriter), the creativity and imagination of José Mário Branco (the producer) and the courage of Arnaldo Trindade (the editor), *Cantigas do Maio*, Afonso’s fifth album would set, from the date of its release onwards, the sound recording quality patterns much higher.¹⁸⁹ Because of this feature, it is probably not hazardous that this record was *not* recorded in Portugal; but what is, really, astonishing is that it was from Zeca Afonso, a singer-songwriter associated to “canção de protesto”.¹⁹⁰ *Cantigas do Maio* was recorded in Strawberry Studios, at Châteaux d’Hérouville, where artists like Elton John, Cat Stevens and David Bowie would record in subsequent years. The fact that the producer, José Mário Branco, lived in France at the time¹⁹¹ was the main reason for the recording being done in that country. As for Arnaldo Trindade,¹⁹² a business man from a wealthy family of northern Portugal (Porto), his loose attitude towards his record label (which he considered “a hobby”) indulged him to record what he liked, the way he liked. Recording Zeca Afonso at the time was risk enough, due

¹⁸⁷ Quarteto 1111- Página Retrospectiva - <http://q1111.no.sapo.pt/curiosidades.htm> - accessed on July 2015.

¹⁸⁸ João Carlos Callixto, interview, April 2018. Callixto would also state that Cid, a Valentim de Carvalho artist in the 60s, would only use the label to actually release the record; everything was recorded according to the experimental processes such as the ones described by him in the quote.

¹⁸⁹ A reference must also be made to Gilles Salé, French sound engineer with whom José Mário Branco would develop a strong relationship and complicity. Before *Cantigas do Maio*, Branco had already worked with Salé when he recorded his album *Mudam-se os Tempos, Mudam-se as Vontades*, as well as producing Sérgio Godinho’s album *Os Sobreviventes*.

¹⁹⁰ Although this is a very reductive definition of Zeca Afonso as an artist, this was, in fact, his image within the political power spheres, due to his anti-fascist activism.

¹⁹¹ Singer-songwriter and producer, José Mário Branco left Portugal in 1963, as a result of his desertion from the colonial war. He stayed in France for eleven years (between 1963 and 1974), where he developed significant work in the theater as a composer and performer. He was familiar with the French recording milieu, which eventually led him to suggest Strawberry Studios, at the time a studio very much talked about.

¹⁹² Arnaldo Trindade will be mentioned further in this thesis in the sub-chapter dedicated to the Lisbon historical recording studios.

to Afonso's political activities; recording him with an investment almost impossible to recover was close to disaster.¹⁹³

Music recording in Portugal between the 60s and early 70s was, like the country, in a sort of stagnation, both technical and musical, based on the expertise of a few recording studios and sound professionals. Despite their professional competence, neither Hugo Ribeiro, nor José Manuel Fortes - the “man of the ear” vs “the man of the buttons”¹⁹⁴ - could do more than what they did, with the equipment studios had and the technically unchallenging music that was recorded - a mirror of the culturally poor and closed country Portugal was by then.¹⁹⁵

Within such a historical and cultural framework, longing for something new and creatively challenging may include looking at musical otherness with uncritical eyes.

“A thing called overseas implicitly permeates music-making processes and the musical imagination[...]" (Meintjes 2003:220)

Although Meintjes's statement refers to South Africa musicians during the 1990s, it reminded me the Portuguese expression “*estrangeiro*” and the way it is used as a circular narrative (what comes from abroad is good, and inversely what is good comes from abroad). Meintjes further defines this concept as a “value-laden discursive category” (2005:23) which refers to the Euro-American music worlds and “represents a trope of excellence” (ibid:25). I argue that, for Portuguese musicians during late dictatorship, the adaptation – even fetishization - of the Euro-American sonic models was an aesthetic and political statement, using the symbolic capital of an imagined music modernity outside the country, represented by the big centers of popular music production, regardless of the

¹⁹³ The recording of *Cantigas do Maio* costed Arnaldo Trindade 1.000.000 escudos (approximately 5.000 euros). According to Trindade himself (2015), this amount was the equivalent to buying several Rolls Royces. As it happens, and by a twist of fate, the investment was fully recovered, as one of the songs of the album - “Grândola Vila Morena” - would become one of the 1974 political revolution passwords. The song is, until this day, a symbol of anti-fascist struggle and democracy.

¹⁹⁴ David Ferreira, interview, Lisbon, June 2014. Ferreira used these two expressions to establish, according to him, the main difference between these two sound professionals. Naturally, neither Ribeiro was deprived of technical skills, nor Fortes of listening capacities.

¹⁹⁵ A reference must be made to Moreno Pinto (1934-2011), of whom I will speak on sub-chapter 9.3. Pinto was a wonderful sound engineer and according to some of his colleagues, as good or even better recording fado than Hugo Ribeiro. But Amália recorded with Ribeiro, a fact which almost neutralizes any competition on this particular subject.

fact that these sonic references from “overseas” could, themselves, be social constructions. As Meintjes refers about bringing “‘the social’ inside the studio” (2005:28):

“Without articulating in more detail what ‘the social’ means in sound recording, these engineers and production teams and the aesthetic decisions they make in the studio will continue to be represented as somehow free of social biographies and political positioning and unaffected by the contours of local histories.” (ibid)

After the political revolution: significant changes in music recording

“The implementation of the democratic regime brought greater emphasis to the problematic of culture and cultural policy, especially as an active part of a new framework of censorship abolishment, of praise for freedom of speech, of generalized ideological and political debate, and of great expansion of the structural associative movement in every social field” (Nery 2010 b): 1022).

As I had briefly mentioned before, after the political revolution some music *genres* practically disappeared from the Portuguese recording industry, whereas others had a substantial increment. José Manuel Fortes states the following:

“Until 1974, the music I recorded was based on fado and popular.¹⁹⁶ Some artists I recorded before the 25 of April were Joaquim Luis Gomes, João Nobre, Eugénia Lima, Quim Barreiros, Fernando Tordo, Carlos do Carmo, Banda do Casaco, Zeca Medeiros, Maria Fernanda, Paulo de Carvalho, Marino Silva, amongst other instrument players and cançonetistas”¹⁹⁷. After April 1974, some of that music continued to be recorded, but mostly to emigrants. Fado had a big fall, but not comparable to the one that popular music production endured, which almost disappeared. Traditional music under an urban perspective emerged that way, with many groups following that line” (Fortes 2014 b)).

¹⁹⁶ See note 27 for clarification of the notion of “popular” related to music in Portugal.

¹⁹⁷ This was the exact term used by Fortes; it means singers, but associated to “nacional-cançonetismo”.

Fado, although demonized in the media discourses of a “newly-revolutionized” country, was not absent from the recording studios; popular - here in the Portuguese narrower sense of traditional/rural - endured a reasonable fall. It is interesting to acknowledge Forte’s reference to emigration as an audience with specific demands: in the first years after the revolution, the “emigrantes” (emigrants) or “o emigrante” (the emigrant, as it is sometimes referred to in the pejorative singular form) as audience were largely responsible for the maintenance, in terms of record production, of both fado and of the most traditional forms of popular/traditional music.¹⁹⁸ In parallel, a more modern, urban type of traditional music was emerging, with emphasis in interventional lyrics, in accordance to the country’s new political state.

EXAMPLE N.12 Ao romper da Bela Aurora” (Brigada Victor Jara)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= zxcgNzS7NRA>

Together with these genres was, of course, “canção de protesto” with a strong presence in the media. This feature was, in fact, the 25th of April’s major change in terms of music recording: the preponderance of this genre over others and a new balance in airplay between the existing genres.¹⁹⁹ There was no significant change in terms of record production or recording equipment. In spite of the examples given in the previous section (the albums *Mudam-se os tempos Mudam-se as vontades*, *Cantigas do Maio* and *Os Sobreviventes*, recorded in France), which constitute exceptions in terms of both music production and sound quality, protest songs as a whole did not require very sophisticated

¹⁹⁸ Although not part of the scope of this thesis - and, to my knowledge, a subject yet to be studied - , the connection between the Portuguese music industry and Portuguese emigrants around the world is most interesting, as it constitutes, until today, a real market for live concerts for some Portuguese artists and groups during the whole year (and not seasonal - particularly in the Summer -, as usually live shows tend to be). Among the several Portuguese emigrant communities spread all over the world, the ones in France, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Germany, The United States, Canada, Venezuela and Australia are usually the most active in terms of hiring musicians and singers, particularly (but not exclusively) from the popular area (in the Portuguese sense) and “pimba”.

¹⁹⁹ It is important to mention the fundamental role that INET (Institute of Ethnomusicology) at UNL (Lisbon Nova University) has played with regard to research about “canção de protesto”. In 2016, a congress was held at Nova University, at the Human and Social Sciences Faculty (FCSH): ICP Song 16 (15-17 of June, 2016). Currently, there is a doctoral dissertation in preparation (from Hugo Castro) about the same theme.

recording production means – which may be considered an aesthetic/political statement (the refusal to “go electric”).²⁰⁰ Ultimately, this did not contribute to a significant challenge for studio professionals. There was nothing truly innovative in the recording sector. Plus, according to some sound engineers, by the end of the 70s a technological crisis was being felt amongst several recording studios.

“We [at Arnaldo Trindade] were operating with very old equipment and compared to what we were listening being recorded abroad, there was simply no way to be able to get there...we simply had no machines to do it” (Barata 2015).

José Manuel Fortes, at Rádio Triunfo Studios (today Namouche), debated himself with a quadriphonic monitoring at the control room which he had never asked for and was uncomfortable with, making him listen to his recordings outside the studio - an unbearable situation that eventually would make him leave the enterprise.²⁰¹ Recording studios were owned by people who were not primarily concerned with their technical updating, a situation which had not changed with the new political framework. As the opening quotation of this section refers, the “greater emphasis to the problematic of culture and cultural policy” brought by the revolution was not observable on record production.

But in 1979 a new paradigm was about to emerge. As a result of his decision to leave Rádio Triunfo, José Manuel Fortes would open Angel 1, his first recording studio. A brand new recording console was acquired; coincidentally (or maybe not), the first album to be recorded there was Rui Veloso’s debut album *Ar de Rock*. As stated before, 20.000 copies of this record were sold, triggering a musical movement which would rock the Portuguese recording milieu. It was, quoting Ferreira again “the biggest and most significant musical rupture” (Ferreira 2014). Finally, new challenges were on the musical horizon.

²⁰⁰ Bob Dylan was criticized when he decided to have a support band (The Band) and “go electric”, as I believe his audience associated the “acoustic” with issues of authenticity. The same sort of underlying ideology could be found in some forms of protest songs.

²⁰¹ As we will see further in this thesis, Rádio Triunfo was both a recording studio and a label.

7. Recording experiences from the 20th to the 21st century

7.1 From analog to digital

“From the early 1980s up till now, and probably for another fifteen years to come - this is the darkest time ever for recorded music. We’ll come out on the other end and it’ll be okay, but we’ll look back and go ‘Wow, that was the digital age. I wonder what that music really sounded like: We got so carried away that we never really recorded it. We just made digital records of it’” (Neil Young, 1992 in Milner 2009:185).

“Digital media does not record a direct representation of a continuous process of change. Instead, it represents that process as information, or data...That information takes the form of numbers, hence the word “digital” (Rombes 2009:1).

In the beginning of the 1980s a new technology emerged, revolutionizing the expressive practices that would make use of it in the future: digital technology. Cinema and photography are two examples. Nanã Sousa Dias, Portuguese saxophone player and photographer whom I met many years ago, stated his experience regarding both technologies - analogue and digital - as a photographer.

“The emergence of digital technologies, both in music as in photography, had, as an immediate consequence, the democratization and consequent proliferation of these two activities in the more developed countries. Anyone who owns a computer and a tablet or smartphone, is equipped to produce music or take photos with professional quality. This is, in my opinion, the major breakthrough regarding the emergence of digital technology” (Naná Sousa Dias, interview, October 2015).

The option towards one technology or the other may be connected to the type of work at stake.

“In artistic photography, however, there are still many photographers who prefer analogue technology, with cameras that use film as support. Some others combine

the two ‘environments’ - analogue and digital - using film which, after being developed, is converted to the digital environment through specific scanners” (ibid).

The reason for this hybrid process is, according to Sousa Dias, “lack of space to set up a permanent laboratory, which happens mainly to amateur photographers and semi-professionals who live in cities” (ibid.). When asked about the added values - if any - of shooting on film these days, Nanã referred that

“One of the advantages is that it continues to have a much higher dynamic range than the digital system - there is more "space" to record images that have a range from pure black to pure white, without loss of detail and information” (ibid.)

If we compare a laboratory to a recording studio, as some scholars have, and image to sound, the framework involving the passage from analogue to digital technology in music and photography is not very different. Nanã Sousa Dias pointed out another similarity, one related to the capturing of both sound and image.

“Microphones did not change, as well as objectives, or lenses ... that is to say, there is no digital “capture” at least this week!!!! This will be the real revolution, because until now, there are only digital recording means and consequent modifications through editing programs, both in music and photography. Capturing both image and sound remains analog” (ibid.).

As far as cinema is concerned, Nanã considers digital image as “cold and barren” and its colours “unreal”. Curiously enough, some of these adjectives, as we will see further along this section - namely, in sub-chapter 7.2 - are often used to classify sound - usually digital sound.

The history of sound reproduction hasn’t always been characterized by the search for an increasingly better sound quality. The social framing of music listening, together with the commercial needs of music sound reproduction manufacturers, led audiences to

choose volume over fidelity in a number of historical circumstances.²⁰² In this sub-chapter, however, which introduces chapter 7, I will focus on the period that covers the passage from analogue to digital. Because this technological transformation affected not only sound reproduction, but sound recording as well, it had a strong impact in my work as session musician - and that of many other professionals related to the recording industry. In fact, as time would eventually show, the whole music business would no longer be the same after this historical mark.

Digital recording technology was, as a whole, greatly welcomed in music. Sound professionals praised its advantages in terms of lack of noise (compared to the analogue tapes), allowing greater sound clarity, and better headroom (the amount of audio signal processing), as Portuguese sound engineer Jorge Barata stated (2012). Musicians were able to acquire their own recording equipment and the DiY culture²⁰³ would soon emerge in the recording industry. The portability of the CD, the new sound format, as well as its sound quality, with a wider frequency range and definition, were very attractive to consumer audiences. From production to consumption, storage, dissemination and even in listening habits, changes brought by digital technology to music practices were huge. What remains to be asserted is whether these changes brought an actual added value to the *sound*, - again, the emic concept - as the initial quotation by Neil Young reveals.

Both academics and musicians have written about this historical event, some of them - especially in the case of musicians - in very passionate terms. But just as changes brought by digital technology in music surpassed the recording aspect, so did the debate analog/digital extrapolated the musicological realm to the ontological. It is, as Greg

²⁰² This is a vast - and very interesting - topic: the negotiation between volume and fidelity along the history of sound reproduction. It is not my place in this thesis to develop the subject. I will only add, to clarify my statement above, that one of the reasons - perhaps *the* reason - Berliner's Gramophone surpassed Edison's cylinder in terms of sales was "[its] ability to generate enough volume to accompany live dancing" (Read and Welch 1976:122, quoted in Devine 2013:22). Despite other advantages that discs had over cylinders (all commercial) - namely, "the machines were cheaper, the discs themselves were easier to mass produce and to store and transport, pirating was more difficult (though not impossible), [...] they did not necessarily sound better" (Devine 2013:21). By contrast, the "consistent quality of sound" (ibid.) obtained through the constant surface speed of the needle is mentioned as one of Edison's cylinder assets; also, "the tone of the reproduction was thought to be more pleasing than the wax-coated zinc discs used by Berliner" (ibid.).

²⁰³ The DiY (Do it Yourself) Culture is described by George McKay (1998) in the following terms: "a youth-centered and -directed cluster of interests and practices around green radicalism, direct action politics, new musical sounds and experiences" (ibid:2). In the same book, a DiY activist states that "DiY culture was born when people got bored and realized that the only way forward was to do things for themselves" (ibid.). In the music industry, this work model emerged out of the necessity of musicians becoming increasingly independent from recording labels (or creating their own labels and studios), at a time when recording technology prices fell substantially.

Milner points out, a debate which reprised older ones: “cylinder versus disc, acoustic versus electrical, 33 1/3 versus 45 rpm” (2009:195). It goes as far as making digital correspond to an illusion, a construction, “a world that we built ourselves” (ibid:194), and analog to a substantiated reality, like... meat: “The human perception of sound is a fundamentally analog affair. Meat is analog.” (Akin Fernandez in Milner 2009:193). Or, more scientifically put: “analog is about ‘approximating perfection’, while digital is about ‘perfecting approximation’”(Ivan Davis ibid:194).

Along my research about this subject, from bibliographical sources to ethnographic interviews, analog seems to stand for something “organic, rooted and objective, against the unnatural relativist subjectivity of digital” (ibid:197). From musicians to recording company executives, sound engineers and even doctors,²⁰⁴ many voices have been involved in this fascinating debate, one which brings out a central feature about music: its ability to trigger emotions.

“Listening to a CD is like looking at the world through a screen window. [...] It’s an insult to the brain and heart and feelings to have to listen to this and think it’s music “ (Neil Young in Milner 2009:195).

Other less passionate comments include Timothy D. Taylor’s (2001), who considers that

“the advent of digital technology in the early 1980s marks the beginning of what may be the most fundamental change in the history of Western music since the invention of music notation in the ninth century” (Taylor 2001:3).

Simon Barber, writing about Soundstream, the first commercial digital audio recording company in the United States (Barber 2012), states that

²⁰⁴ “By the end of the seventies, a doctor - an actual physician-would fret that not only was digitally encoded sound “no longer music” but it was killing us by degrees”(Milner 2009:198).

“Developments in digital technologies during the last 35 years have had arguably the most profound effect on the sound recording and music industries since the invention of the phonograph record. Digital audio recording is now ubiquitous, inexpensive, and available to anyone with access to a computer and a basic audio interface” (ibid.).

Richard James Burgess (2013) also claims that

“Our industry, born of Edison’s technology, was threatened by radio, a depression, strikes, materials shortages, and recessions. Corporate consolidations negatively affect creators, and independent expansion introduces new musical movements. However, no change was as disruptive as the evolution of the digital supply chain, which was transformative from conception to consumer” (ibid:loc 5340 of 9148).

However, and quoting Timothy D. Taylor once more

“One of the ways technology works in Western culture is to call attention to itself when new, for at that moment it has no social life. It is true, of course, that it was produced as the result of a complex series of interconnected social processes, but at its moment of development [...] distribution and use, it has no social history. After a period of use, most technological artifacts are normalized into everyday life and no longer seen as “technological” at all, while whatever is new becomes viewed as ‘technological’” (Taylor 2001:6).

The Portuguese sound engineers I have interviewed along these seven years of research also had a say:

“From the moment you convert sound into numbers and you include all the mathematical evolution on top of the sonic concept, it [digital recording technology] enlarged the ideal of perfection. Today, I can get recorded voices perfectly tuned, the instruments perfectly glued. But from my personal professional point of view, it brings me a certain sadness when I spend most of my time - about 90% of it - setting things, and 10% of it actually making sound. It’s almost like a divine joke” (Tó Pinheiro da Silva 2011).

Even when you choose the best of the two worlds - combining analogue recording technology with digital - the fact remains that, at some point, the recording process almost always ends up in the digital domain - when you turn the recording into a CD or an MP3 file. Despite the “enlarged ideal of perfection” that digital technology brings,

“There is a throwback in terms of the quality of the recorded sound, apart from the case of very special recording studios, which are actually recurring to analogue, vintage equipment - which constitute the highest quality standards, even today” (ibid.)

Jorge Barata (2013), reinforces this idea, backing some of the thoughts already present in Tó Pinheiro da Silva’s interview:²⁰⁵

“You can’t blame digital recording technology for the lack of recorded sound quality; it’s what it generated - the fact that anyone these days can have a studio (or so they call it - I would prefer to call it ‘a place to register sounds’) at home, which is fine for someone to learn something. What it did to the sound was to ‘slim’ it in terms of its quality. Digital recording technology does not have, so far, the ‘fatness’ the tape sound had, that typical distortion that analogue recording had” (Barata 2013).

Digital audio recording technology also brought, according to Barata, a lack of qualitative requirements with regard to musicianship, as it is very easy to mend, splice and manipulate the eventual mistakes made by musicians during their performances in the studio (ibid.).²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ At some point of the interview, Pinheiro da Silva complains that most of the work that arrives to his hands to mix and master is very badly recorded, due to the same reasons Barata refers - recordings made in small studios, where the monitoring dimension has diminished greatly - a subject to be dealt in the next sub-chapter.

²⁰⁶ Hence, the words of Joaquim Albergaria on p. 21: “when you come here [Namouche], you are supposed to really play, not just play and then edit”. As I have stated before, although his words were about the studio, they somehow imply the debate analogue/digital as a dichotomy, once he opposes musicianship (“you are

The manipulative aspect of digital audio technologies was also referred to by producer and musician Steve Albini in his keynote speech at the 2010 ARP Conference. There, he discussed the ways in which technologies influence creative practice, suggesting that

“[...] digital audio systems are about the manipulation of sound after it has been recorded, while analogue systems are about capturing the sound in the first place. From this perspective, analogue recording is a kind of ‘service industry’ to the creative practice of musicians whilst digital systems encourage the creative practice manipulating and distorting musical practices.”²⁰⁷

José Manuel Fortes pointed another relevant aspect about this subject: the fact that, nowadays, audio mixes tend to be made taking into account the compressed formats only (radio, MP3s), unlike some years ago, when apart from mixing for the radio, you mixed for the LP:

“Oddly enough, I don’t think there is anything wrong with compressed formats...what I find wrong is that you start from the compressed format and you work for that compressed format! Once, a producer to whom I was mixing some songs, told me: ‘Don’t worry too much, because this is going to be heard on an iPod’, to which I answered: “then, my work ends up here, ‘cause I don’t like to work for cheapskates!” (Fortes, interview, 2015).

In the next sub-chapters, I will speak of different aspects in musical practices that suffered transformative effects due to the digital revolution and that are now part of this technology’s social life. Sub-chapter 7.2 will address the different types of recording studios that emerged after the digital age - home and project studios - confronting them with larger recording studios (like Namouche) and their struggle to survive. Sub-chapter 7.4 addresses the role of the producer, once a vital actor in the recording studio’s popular

supposed to *really* play”) to digital recording (“not *just* play and then edit”). For an interesting and broader perspective about musicianship in the music business, I suggest the reading of Ted Gioia’s 2016 article “Does the music business need musicianship?” - <http://thesmartset.com/does-the-music-business-need-musicianship/> - accessed on September 2015.

²⁰⁷ Steve Albini, as referred by Frith 2012: 3-4.

music recording scenario. The work of session musicians, studio music professionals of excellence - many times unknown to the general public - will be dealt in sub-chapter 7.3. This section will conclude with a sub-chapter (7.5) about listening experiences pre and post digital age.

7.2 Recording in high-end studios: an expendable audio-recording practice?

The daily presence of recorded music in Western civilization is hardly noticed, once it became a common fact since the expansion of the recording industry. Music as a commodity is everywhere – to be consumed, appreciated or ignored, available to almost everybody in different formats.

Since the digital revolution sound recording became cheaper, faster and more accessible. With the emergence of smartphones and tablets, audio recording became an even more democratic act, both for professional musicians and the general public. In this new framework, where and how do recording studios - and particularly high-end recording studios²⁰⁸ - fit in?

In this sub - chapter, I will try to offer different perspectives regarding the role of high-end professional studios within a relatively recent framework of recording availability and affordability. Following my previously mentioned choice of Namouche as a case study for this thesis, I will try to understand if and why there is a preference for such a space, a high-end studio which has been almost in the verge of closing its doors.

Recording studios as (home or pocket) sanctuaries

Having been a session singer since 1982, I have worked in several recording studios. In the 80s, audio recording technology was far beyond the financial means of the ordinary musician; this circumstance involved recording studios in a special aura, turning them into very private places only a few privileged people - musicians included - had access to. Studio time meant a lot of money; working in a recording studio - specially as session musician - meant that your professional value was in accordance with the economic context involved.²⁰⁹ Recording studios were, usually, the property of a label

²⁰⁸ By high-end recording studio, I mean a high quality recording facility with large dimension live recording rooms acoustically treated, as well as sophisticated recording equipment (sometimes analogue consoles, vintage microphones and diversified outboard gear).

²⁰⁹ This meant you had to be able to record as perfectly as possible, in the least possible amount of time.

and employed a number of professionals in charge of different sectors - from sound to maintenance engineers and, many times, a secretary and some other background staff.

This situation changed drastically over the following decade. Technology prices fell considerably in the late 80s most due to the change to digital platforms, and musicians started investing in their own recording material, having the possibility of owning their private “sanctuaries” or even bringing them home. Home studios or project studios²¹⁰ started to invade the market and with them a whole new economic framework in the music industry: the possibility for musicians to record their music with reasonable quality, regardless of having or not a label contract. They could also have more control over the recording process, choosing the right moment to work, without the presence - and often pressure - of the label’s producer or AR, a function increasingly performed nowadays by the musicians themselves. A very different professional hierarchy emerged from that of the label-owned recording studios era: apart from producer, the musician also assumes the role of sound engineer (and many times even that of secretary, maintenance and others).

A few years later, smartphones and, more recently, the fabulous world of tablets invaded the market. As Tom Kenny, editorial director of *Mix Magazine* stated, “home studios emerged in a big way in the late ‘80s”, but now “we have the iPhone, and no doubt plenty more Droid apps to come” (2010).

In an attempt to predict the recording technological near future, he would add that

“The paradigm is shifting and mobile apps will be a part of the future. When those much-hyped tablets start popping up this year, don't be at all surprised if you see one right there beside the API console and the rack full of Pultecs, Fairchilds and UA 1176s. They are all tools” (ibid).²¹¹

²¹⁰ By home studio I mean a recording studio in a house (or in parts of a house) which was not built or acoustically prepared for that purpose. They are usually the property of musicians. Project /production studios are basically the same, but can be usually installed in larger houses and have a more specific commercial purpose that home studios may not necessarily have (for instance, for advertising, or TV voice-overs). In common, these two type of recording studios have the use of digital audio technology (for a more detailed account on different types of studios, see Théberge in Frith and Simon Zagorski-Tomas (2012), loc 2022-2309 of 7567.

²¹¹ Nowadays, eight years after the article was written, the scenario described in this passage became a reality.

As time went on, recording tools became smaller and increasingly portable, fitting either in your pocket or in your bag. However, despite their efficiency, these tools provide a very limited sonic involvement, leaving out a significant part of the recording experience for a musician. In the next section, I will focus on the dynamics between high-end and home/project studios, addressing one of the main issues that seems to distinguish these recording settings: room acoustics and monitoring.

A room is a room is a room

“Buying a house is a big investment, so it's important to pick the right property, and if you're a recording musician you'll probably want it to include a suitable space for a studio” (Flint 2004).

Instead of building a studio from the ground up and conceiving a recording room following acoustic principles, the emergence of home studios brought the idea of adapting a previously existing room – which can be in your own house – to the home/project studio you can afford, thus inverting the usual process. The room, as a physical space, ceased to be a central issue; instead, virtual “rooms” emulated through plug-ins and signal processors as sound effects tried to replace it: the “room” became, primarily, a concept. In the same article quoted above, the most used rooms in a house for home studio purposes are mentioned - including the cellar, the box room, the garage, the room, the living room, the attic, the shed and the loft, - each of them with specific advice regarding acoustic treatment of the walls and diagrams regarding the best possible placement of the technological apparatus, from consoles to outboard equipment and instruments.

“Although a home studio setup can be fit into a small box-shaped room such as those shown here [...], the room's dimensions (usually something like 2 x 2.5m) can seriously interfere with the accuracy of the monitoring, making reliable mixing difficult” (ibid.).

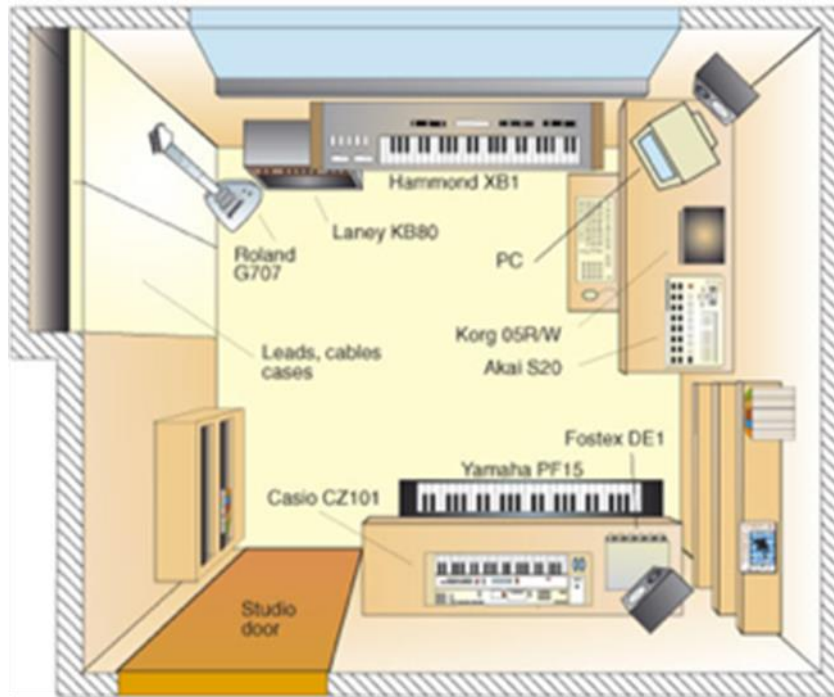


Figure 5 - Home studio setup in a box room (Photo: Diagrams Tom Flint in Flint 2004)

Mentioning the box room, Flint adds:

“The main problem with having walls that are very close together is that they create many early sound reflections, all of which are likely to interfere with the direct output from the speakers, partially canceling some frequencies, reinforcing others, and generally muddying the stereo image. In the ideal listening environment, speakers should be placed on stands, kept away from the corners of the room where bass hot spots occur, and the listening position should form one point of an equilateral triangle, of which the speakers are the other two points” (ibid.).

The garage, as quoted previously, is also a potential place to build a home studio. However, “acoustically, a garage is probably not the most ideal space. Its featureless shape and parallel walls could potentially cause unpleasant flutter echoes” (ibid.).

The examples go on, and the general idea is reinforced by the author’s final comments, according to which “all the spaces discussed in this feature are flawed in some way, and some are probably just not practical for certain types of music” (ibid.).

Comparing the monitoring of large recording studios to home studios, Jorge Barata (2012) stated:

“In a home or project studio, the monitoring dimension diminished largely, compared to the large studios, which had very large monitors in the control room. This means that the range of audible frequencies was much higher. Those frequencies are simply not audible in small studios. This situation generates many mistakes right from the recording stage²¹² (for the same lack of audible frequencies) and all these factors have turned the sound much ‘smaller’” (ibid).

A similar opinion is stated by Tó Pinheiro da Silva, when he gives the example of tracking a drum in a small dimension room: “most of the sonic energy that reaches the microphones is reflected, not direct and that is a big sonic dispersion”.²¹³

There seems to be a certain change in the listening paradigm brought by these smaller recording scenarios, due to the nature of the physical spaces involved. In addition, and according to further collected information, the type of recording technology involved – digital vs analog - is, in itself, also significant regarding listening patterns and habits – a subject I will come back in the next section.

Mike Howlett commented on the importance of high-end studios nowadays, based on his experience both as researcher, teacher and music professional.

“There is a perception amongst my students that the old school traditional high-end acoustically treated studio is a good thing. I agree because these studios will have a much larger range of good microphones - Neumanns, AKGs etc - as well as high quality analog outboard equipment - compressors, gates, mic pre-amps etc, and better headphones. There is also the psychological factor that the artists will feel like they are in a special place and perform differently²¹⁴.[...] There has also been a recommended practice for some years that high-end recording spaces are good for

²¹² By the recording stage, Barata means the sound capturing phase, the first stage of the recording process (before mixing and mastering).

²¹³ Tó Pinheiro da Silva in “Casa das Máquinas - Namouche” (Antena3Docs) - <https://youtu.be/Ux5XSgvCRxo> - accessed on April 2017.)

²¹⁴ This quote resonates with Dave Grohl’s on p.21.

tracking drums and backing tracks, and then move to smaller and cheaper studios for overdubs, but back to high-end for mixing” (Mike Howlett, interview, 2012)

“Closed for business”?

Looking for a relevant high-end studio – “large, perfectly designed”, with a “soundproofed live room, an acoustically neutral control and mixing area, and triple-glazed windows” (Flint 2004) - I tried to find one where Steely Dan had recorded one of their four Grammy award-winning albums. As stated before, this north-American group, composed by Donald Fagen and Walter Becker, has been mostly famous for their sonic obsession.²¹⁵ I came across Clinton Recording Studios in New York, but when I accessed their site, the sentence “closed for business” appeared. Despite this information, I continued my research and a new world suddenly emerged, as the photos and diagrams of Clinton`s recording rooms paraded before my eyes.

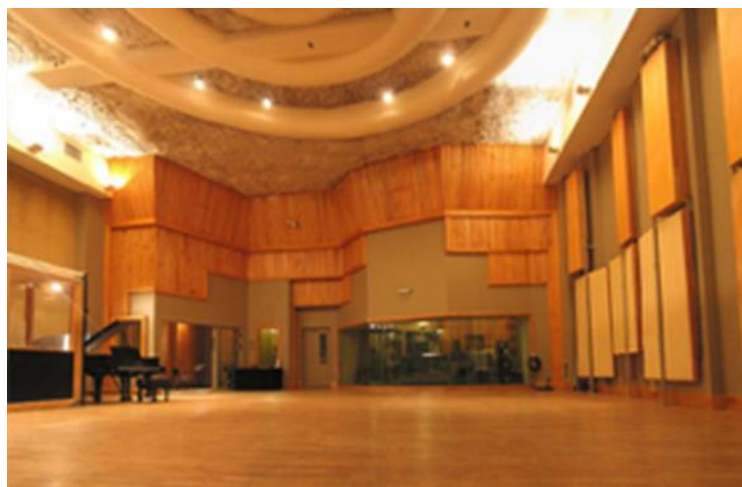


Photo 6 - Studio A, Clinton Recording Studios

Photo taken from Tim Kimsey’s blog -

http://www.timkimsey.com/About_Me.html - accessed on May 2018.

²¹⁵ In the course of this research, Walter Becker passed away on September the 3rd 2017. Donald Fagen will continue to perform live with a band whose name will be “Donald Fagen and the Steely Dan Band”, because, he states “To me, Steely Dan was just me and Walter, really – it was like a concept we had together.”- “Donald Fagen Discusses the Loss of Walter Becker and Steely Dan’s Future” in *Rolling Stone* on-line magazine, December 19, 2017 - <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/donald-fagen-on-walter-beckers-death-steely-dans-future-w514440> - accessed on March 2018.

Eliot Scheiner, one of Steely Dan`s sound engineers, refers to a recording experience at Clinton in these terms:

“I think a lot of the sound of the album [*Morph the Cat*, one of Donald Fagen`s solo albums] is the room that we recorded in. [...] I simply did what I always do, which is to capture what the musicians are playing.[...] So I go out into the studio and listen to the sounds the guys get [...] and just try to get that sound” (Tingen 2006).

The physical space of the room added to “the sound the guys get”- the quality of the session musician`s performance – seems to be decisive to the final result. But Scheiner goes further and mentions his preference for analogue recording, something he had already referred in a previous interview for the same magazine. “Analogue changes something in the sound,” he elaborates, “but I think it does something good. By contrast, digital is pristine and sterile” (Eliot Scheiner in Tingen 2003).

Such “change in the sound” is also referred by Walter Becker in the same interview:

“[...] Analogue, because it changes the sound a little bit more than digital does, tends to blend and process things so that it sounds more coherent and unified. You want to make the guys in the band sound like they`re playing together” (Walter Becker in Tingen 2003).

And again, Scheiner

“I don`t think digital will ever catch up with analogue. [...] Digital is convenient and it is good for doing trench work, but as far as sound is concerned, it`s definitely analogue” (Scheiner in Tingen 2006).

Jorge Barata speaks of the importance of the acoustic preparation of a recording room in a larger recording studio, corroborating Eliot Scheiner`s statement.

“The acoustics of those rooms was studied so as to sound “natural”, with a small reverberation time (because they were large rooms), but nevertheless the acoustics was made to sound “real”, without altering the sound of the instruments. This has to do with the dimension of the rooms, as well as the raw material used in the studio’s building” (Barata 2012).

Clinton Recording Studios closed in 30th June 2010, after 27 years of “a very successful and magical experience”, in the words of Ed Rak, its president.²¹⁶ Although his intention was “to continue operations at a new location in the near future”, that did not happen: when trying to confirm the closure of these studios, I sent an email to Mr. Rak, who not only confirmed this situation, but also suggested two other recording facilities where, apparently, he presently takes his work – Avatar Studios and Manhattan Center Studios.

Clinton’s case led me to further research about the New York City-based recording industry, given a whole new context of economic restraint.

“Big bucks” for the “big rooms”

In an article entitled “The Changing Face of New York Studios”, David Weiss (Weiss 2009) gives an account of the effort that certain recording facilities had to make in order to remain in business after the 2008 stock market crash. Referring the closure of “some notable recording rooms - including Legacy Recording’s Studio A, Philip Glass’s Looking Glass Studios, Allaire Studios and LoHo Studios”, a great many others remained, because “the people that led these facilities [...] actually saw the crunch coming and braced themselves” (Weiss 2009). The following quotations show different strategies adopted by several recording studios. The first one is by Rick Hosn, president of Quad Recording Studios:

²¹⁶ ”Brown, Janice “Clinton Recording Studios is Leaving the Building”, *SonicScoop*, May 17, 2010 - <https://sonicscoop.com/2010/05/17/clinton-recording-studios-is-leaving-the-building/> - accessed on March 2018.

“One thing is obvious: everyone is feeling the economic crunch [...] It's getting tougher and tougher to get decent rates. The label budgets are shrinking, and our [...] clients are looking for better deals. As a studio, we have to make sure we can accommodate everyone without sacrificing the quality of our service. Our clients don't want to spend the big bucks on the big rooms anymore. One way to deal with that challenge is to build the smaller rooms and offer the better deals” (Rick Hosn, president of Quad Recording Studios in Weiss 2009).

Kirk Imamura, president of Avatar Studios, has a very pragmatic view on the subject of facing a new recording paradigm.

“There is a lot of downward pressure on overall recording budgets [...]. With the different kind of rooms and resources we have in our recording complex, including mastering, we offer a complete set of options for multiple stages of production to match clients' budgetary requirements. We might do basic tracks in the big room, do overdubs in smaller ones, edit in the Pro Tools suite and then mix and master with quick iterative revisions. By keeping a project under one roof, the flow is not interrupted, the quality is maintained and projects are completed quickly and efficiently” (Kirk Imamura, president of Avatar Studios in Weiss 2009).

Germano, owner and president of Germano Studios, presents an interesting option to the traditional 70s and 80s four- to five-room recording facility.

“The world has changed and the ‘boutique’ recording facility is what is most desired [...] The bands and artists want the highest level of privacy, and that is impossible in a four or five-room studio[...]. My plan has only been to open numerous smaller studios in different cities — locations that artists would be attracted to, not necessarily locations that musicians have now become bored of. When the [Germano Studios] space in NoHo accidentally came to me, the size and intimacy put my ideas in motion” (Germano in Weiss 2009).

James Gilbert, responsible for Ishlab, a “studio/licensing/music supervision concern in the artsy/industrial neighborhood of DUMBO - Down Under Manhattan Bridge Overpass” (Weiss 2009) believes that exploring different music communities and moving away from the mainstream may be important when facing this new reality.

“It's important that the industry find other ways to make money other than as a traditional recording facility [...] By helping to carve out niche music communities that do things differently, we can all work together to promote the local recording industry. We are embarking on a couple of great opportunities right now, capitalizing on the emerging trends of audio sensory branding for commercial activities. Our background in recording, mixing and DJ'ing allows us to understand the local market, as well as trends around the globe, and turn this into opportunities for our artists and commercial clients” (Jamin Gilbert in Weiss 2009).

Interestingly enough, Clinton Studios are mentioned in the article as a large-scale studio that, due to its tracking room's characteristics, are

“an essential ingredient for orchestral recordings, Broadway cast albums, symphonic sessions and bands that like to record while playing together in the same place at the same time (...)” (ibid.)

and, therefore,” will always have jobs to bid on, albeit with tighter budgets in tow” (ibid.). Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, less than a year after this article's release, Clinton Recording Studios shut its doors permanently.

Other examples of studios shutting down around the world could be pointed out. The documentary film *Sound City*, already mentioned in this thesis, is the testimony of the end of a high-end, analogue studio. Le Studio, another high-end, environmental studio in Quebec, conceptualized by André Perry, of which I will speak in detail in chapter 8, is another example. But let us go back to Namouche, my case-study, a Lisbon high-end studio that was on the verge of “closing for business”, but managed to survive in a small country, within a small recording market.

Namouche (again)

Before definitely coming to Namouche in 2005, Joaquim Monte had already done a business proposition to the studio's owners, who did not pay much attention to it. When the owners finally agreed, he used the two recording rooms situated on the ground-floor of the studio, just beneath the main control room on the first floor, and transformed them in a control room. He realized that he quickly had to let potential clients know the studios were "back to business". As such, Monte decided to take advantage of the added values the studio had - namely its live recording room.

"For two years, I was like a real estate agent, showing the room to a different market, because I didn't want to work with the same, [African music] I was a little bit tired of it" (Joaquim Monte, interview, August 2012, Namouche, Lisbon).

Namouche's impressive live recording room seems to be one of the main – if not the main - reason for the preference for this facility.²¹⁷ Its acoustic treatment - the fact that it is an absorbed room, allowing acoustic recording of several instruments separated by panels, without losing their individual sound - was already highlighted by sound-engineer Tó Pinheiro da Silva. "Everything is so much easier, because things here sound naturally" (ibid.). This remark by Monte is not very different from those made by Eliot Scheiner about Clinton Recording.

But other reasons may be involved in the choice for this facility.

"Namouche's case is special. It reflects a sort of alignment of the planets: all the vintage equipment they have there, the incredible room, the amazing professionals

²¹⁷ When asked about the three most important features (referred as "the stars") of Namouche, Joaquim Monte referred the pre-amps, the vintage microphones, but the most important one was definitely the room. ("Casa das Máquinas - Namouche" (Antena3Docs) - <https://youtu.be/Ux5XSgvCRxo> - accessed on April 2017. A preamp is "an electronic amplifier that converts a weak electrical signal into an output signal strong enough to be noise-tolerant and strong enough for further processing, or for sending to a power amplifier and a loudspeaker. Without this, the final signal would be noisy or distorted." - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preamplifier> - accessed on May 2018. The preamps referred by Monte belong to the Neve console of the studio.

who work there...in my particular case, the fact that they have a [piano] concert Petrof there is significant... To go into a recording studio like Namouche is to be able to run away from everything, so that we can let the music simply flow. Nowadays, it's very difficult to find a place like this" (Vicente Palma, interview, June 2012).

Vicente Palma is a young singer-songwriter, the elder son of a very well-known singer-songwriter, Jorge Palma.²¹⁸ I met him at Namouche, during my observational sessions (the second), where he was recording his album. Since I didn't find appropriate to interrupt the work flow of the session by interviewing him then, I did it a few days later. At the time, he had just released his CD and was preparing his wedding. He was, nevertheless, very available regarding my questions. Vicente was one of the cases that corroborated my methodological decision of not interviewing musicians during sessions: his answers denoted reflection upon the questions I posed him and a verbal elaboration which very seldom one expects in musicians, particularly during working sessions. For him, Namouche's main assets would be the piano - a very important criterion for studio choices -, the vintage equipment - composed of Newman microphones, amongst other items - and the human factor, the "amazing professionals who work there". An assembly of features that turn the studio "special".

Joaquim Monte seems to be a fundamental reason for the preference of Namouche as well, justifying the epithet of "friend" by most of the musicians I interviewed who have recorded there along the years. But Namouche's recording room deserves this appreciation by Palma: "I've never come across a room like this - including theaters and concert halls. And I've been in many, so far" (Palma 2012).

Regarding label budget restraints and contention felt by possible clients (when facing the possibility of spending "big bucks" to have a "big room"), Monte didn't seem to have any problems. He praised his musician-clients very much, highlighting their honesty. Apart from labels, Namouche's main clients are musicians who invest in their own personal projects. As in New York, Joaquim had to adapt studio rates at levels easily

²¹⁸ Jorge Palma (born 1950) is an iconic Portuguese singer-songwriter, arranger, as well as an excellent piano player. For further information, see Cidra, Rui (2010) "Jorge Palma" in Castelo-Branco, Salwa (coord.), *Enciclopédia da Música Portuguesa do Século XX*, Vol. 3 pp. 962-964. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores/Temas e Debates.

reached by musicians either working independently, or by labels whose budgets are increasingly tighter.

“There was a time when everything was recorded at home, but then one came to the conclusion that recording in a studio, even a good one, was not that expensive. Hence the state of small studios, in ruins, because everything a small studio has people have at home; and people like to come here, to have proper recording conditions...they feel good...and they keep coming, repeatedly” (Monte 2012).

Francisco Rebelo, bass player, referred his preference for Namouche, amongst all the recording studios where he has recorded so far.²¹⁹

According to the statements collected in this chapter, as well as my own personal experience, high-end studios, due to different types of reasons – bigger recording rooms acoustically treated, spatial conditions, vintage equipment, the type of monitoring in the control rooms, analog recording technology²²⁰ - seem to provide a more accurate and comfortable listening experience in terms of the real sound of the instruments; that listening experience generates an all-involving musical experience which leads to better instrumental performances. The result is, I think, a deeper involvement with music.

These places and the musical experience lived there are described in very positive terms – “a special place”, “a very successful and magical experience”, allowing a musician “to run away from everything...and let the music simply flow” (Palma 2012). The permanence of these larger recording facilities in the recording industry, nowadays with accessible studio rates, allows a particular type of sonic experience. For some, an addictive one. Musicians – especially those concerned with and appreciative of sound – need it, either playing alone or together, turning the recording act into a personal, but mostly a collective and social experience.

²¹⁹ “Casa das Máquinas - Namouche” (Antena3Docs) - <https://youtu.be/Ux5XSgvCRxo> - accessed on April 2017.

²²⁰ This does not imply that large recording studios have to have analogue recording technology. But as José Manuel Fortes’s quote on p.20, “sound needs space”. And that space necessarily implies a different type of recording technology. It also depends on the recording stage. As stated previously, there is always a stage in the recording process where the digital “pops in” - when you turn the music into a CD or, most likely these days, into an MP3 file.

Asked about the importance of audio music recording in studios, in these days of free internet downloads, Vicente Palma would answer:

“The act of recording (...) is unique. For me, it’s where the music comes from, out of the embryo that arises from our mind and soul. Then, performed live, already grown up, it acquires the most incredible shapes we could ever imagine...” (ibid.).

As the famous Cole Porter song goes, “They can’t take that away from me”. This phrase comes to my mind when I remember the pleasure of the sonic experience of recording in high-end studios as frequently as I once did. Nowadays, my work as a session musician is often done in production studios, as I work primarily for the TV industry. Today, like myself, many musicians - particularly session musicians - most probably miss the big rooms too.

7.3 The session musician in the pre and post-digital era

During the golden years of the recording industry, music production justified the emergence of professional musicians whose expertise was performing in the studio - the session musicians. The Wrecking Crew or the Funk Brothers²²¹ are examples of such musicians, who added “that extra thing” (Hartman 2012) to the songs they played, to the point of actually replacing members of famous bands in the studio. Recently, documentary films like *Muscle Shoals– The Incredible True Story of a Small Town with a Big Sound*, *The Wrecking Crew – The Untold Story of Rock & Roll Heroes* and *Twenty Feet from Stardom*, (focused on the work of back-up singers, usually session singers themselves) have drawn the public’s attention (although probably a small *niche*) to these often overlooked actors in the music scene.

After the digital revolution and the use of new platforms for music consumption, different models for record production emerged. As a consequence, budgets available by labels to release new acts decreased. Within the industry's new framework, what is the role of session musicians - if any?

This sub-chapter aims to reflect upon the agency of session musicians. Drawing from my own experience as session singer, it will eventually clarify my personal perspective regarding the work inside the “black-boxes”, as well as give credit to a much forgotten professional category which, although practically absent from the present recording industry, deserves to be duly respected. Questions of musicianship, authorship, listening and gender will be highlighted. On what circumstances does a producer choose a session musician over a band member, eventually sacrificing the band's "feel" and how does this decision impact on the live performance? Can we consider some session musicians/singers’ participations in a song as part of the composition? How is the listening experience of a session musician relevant for the performance.

²²¹ The Wrecking Crew was a group of recording studio session players originally coming from LA who were most active between the 1960s and early 70s. Likewise, The Funk Brothers “were the brilliant but anonymous studio band responsible for the instrumental backing on countless Motown records from 1959 up to the company's move to Los Angeles in 1972. Woefully underappreciated as architects of the fabled “Motown sound,” the individual musicians were rarely credited on the records that relied upon their performances, which downplayed their importance to the label” - in “The Funk Brothers” biography by Steve Huey - <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/the-funk-brothers-mn0000070175/biography> - accessed on May 2018.

“They were only sessions!”

As stated before, my arrival into the music business was through studio work. In 1982, I participated for the first time in a TV show, with a live band. One of its members asked me if I was willing to sing commercial “jingles”.²²² Not knowing exactly what he meant, I answered “yes”.

At that time, those musicians - Zé da Ponte and Luís Pedro Fonseca²²³ - did a lot of studio work with advertising, as “jingles” were the most used media tool for product commercialization. As their work extended to the record industry as producers (as well as session players), I started working as a studio session singer – both for the record industry and for the advertising business. My professional trajectory was, then, peculiar, as the recording studio was not the usual place to start a musical career (especially in the eighties).

From the start, I got used to working with some of the best Portuguese musicians. In my mental framework, a session musician was a top musician. It was with surprise that, during an ethnographic interview conducted by myself, I heard an ex-manager of a record label refer to a group of musicians as “only sessions”. He was commenting a Portuguese band’s split many years ago on account of problems with the vocalist (a female singer); in his view, they were “jealous of her”, who was the true artist. The rest of them were “only sessions”.

On a general level, this subject is now becoming more popular – especially after the release of the documentary films mentioned previously. Of these, *20 Feet from Stardom* is undoubtedly the most well-known, after having won the 2014 Oscar for Best Documentary Feature. But the other films - *Muscle Shoals*, and *The Wrecking Crew* – are also important documents in relation to this practically unknown part of the music recording industry.

²²² A “jingle” is a vocal music theme composed to promote a brand or a product. It is usually of short duration, with easily memorable melodies and lyrics. By that time, I was far from knowing that singing (and playing) jingles was a very dynamic activity in the recording industry.

²²³ Zé da Ponte has already been mentioned in this thesis on note 59. Luís Pedro Fonseca (1950-2014), keyboard player, composer, producer, will be more extensively mentioned regarding Xangri-Lá recording studios.

On an academic level, it is yet an understudied subject, maybe because, as the subtitle of Kent Hartman's book implies (2012), it was, during many years, a record industry's well-kept secret. The works of Susan Fast (2003 and 2010) and Jacqueline Warwick (2007) about girl singing, as well as Robert Faulkner's book on Hollywood studio musicians (1971) and Alan Williams's articles (2009 and 2010) may provide a useful source of research. Non-academic books such as the above mentioned by Kent Hartman are enlightening, together with works based on famous record producers.²²⁴ There is, in fact, a large amount of information available on non-academic sources – books, articles on magazines, interviews with musicians, and the documentary films above mentioned.

Lastly, the remark made by the record label ex-manager drew my attention to the fact that what I considered an irrefutable truth – that session musicians were top musicians – was not consensual to other actors in the music business.

“Popular music [...] supports a celebrity system centered on highly visible and easily identifiable individuals. Yet much popular music is in fact made by unknown, unidentified musicians, hired collaborators who work out of the public eye in the recording studio or in the shadows of the concert stage” (Williams: 2010:59).

Alan Williams' article mentions a number of aspects related to the work of session musicians in the USA: conceptions of identity, collaboration and creativity, among others. I will address several features involved in this activity that I find relevant (some of them intersecting with Alan Williams's analysis), which, in my view, are common to session musicians working in other countries (such as Portugal). In this sub-chapter, I will compare two different musical realities – the one lived today, after the rise of the internet, the accessibility it brought to music at various levels as well as the end of the label-recording studio model; and the years prior to these events. I will speak of studio practices and cultures and the way the specific procedures of session musicians adapt to the

²²⁴ For instance, Charles Granata's 2007 *Making Records – The Scenes Behind the Music – Phill Ramone*, Hyperion, New York, several times mentioned in the thesis. I would also recommend Granata's 2003 *Sessions with Sinatra: Frank Sinatra and the Art of Recording*, Chicago Review Press, as a good example of an artist whose career went through several recording technologies and the impact it had in his studio performances.

resources available in the recording studios. The social configuration of studio sessional performers in respect to gender issues will be mentioned, as well as conceptualizations about musicianship, “feel” and artistry. Composition and authorship will be part of this sub-chapter, as they are two aspects of studio music practices seldom recognized in this activity.

Musicianship And “Feel”

Definitions of what a session musician is and does can be found in literature related to popular music studies. Michael Hannan (2003) defines them as “studio musicians”, “session players or (session singers)” (ibid:61). He divides them into two categories, the first being “the creative player who is expected to work with other musicians in a rhythm section to create the foundation groove of a track from a basic chord chart” (ibid.); the second, the “excellent sight-reader”. Usually coming from a classical music background (ibid.), these musicians “have to have the highest possible levels of instrumental (or vocal) skill [...]”, as “there is absolutely no room for any kind of imperfection in professional recording” (ibid.). In the creative category, they need to have “all the skills of the backing musicians and more” (ibid.)

As accurate as Hannan’s definitions might be, the reality I got immersed in from the 80s was composed of great readers who were not that creative as musicians. Or the opposite: creative musicians whose ability to read music was not great (in this last case, they usually had great listening skills). Their musical background was also diversified: most of them were musically educated, but not necessarily “from a classical musical background” (ibid.) - either military bands, conservatories (a minor percentage), jazz schools, or even self-taught.²²⁵ Anything was possible - as long as the studio performance

²²⁵ In the 80s, music education in Portugal was provided by very few teaching schools, namely classical conservatories, jazz schools (very few) and military bands. For an aspiring musician in the 80s wanting to play, sing and compose popular music, the idea of having to go to a conservatory or a jazz school was not very motivating. I, for instance, wanted to play the drums and for lack of option went to the Lisbon conservatory to learn. The most similar instrument available was classic percussion. Although I was accepted in the admission exam, I ended up never attending classes, as I had no available schedule. The military bands have played a huge role in music education, specially outside the urban centers. In the Portuguese music industry, brass sections, either to play live or in the studio, were usually recruited within musicians playing in military bands. Among other skills, they are usually very good music readers. There are also the frequent cases of musicians who, having been musically educated in other institutions, belong

was effective. Regarding the particular case of session singers, I will develop the subject in one of the next sections of this sub-chapter.²²⁶

Another definition, by Shelly Field, which more or less coincides with the previous one, differs in questions related to creativity. It also briefly mentions the absence of credits for the studio performance in the record sleeve:

“[...] One thing that bothers many studio musicians is that this job stifles their creativity. Another problem [...] is that the individual playing on the recording does not always get credit for his or her work. This means that the studio musician works in the shadow of another musician” (Field 2010:232).

Along popular music's history, music producers have used session musicians to play in different bands, sometimes even replacing the actual members of the bands themselves.²²⁷ A well-known case in popular music history is that of Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys. When he became a more ambitious and sophisticated producer (influenced, among others, by Phil Spector's production techniques), Wilson realized he had to use session musicians in the recording studio, instead of the actual Beach Boys. In the making of *Pet Sounds*, his band members – apart from himself, who assumed the role of producer – only came in the studio to record the vocal parts. The result was musically extraordinary, but his decision caused tension in the band.²²⁸

I witnessed situations such as these happen, often creating an unpleasant atmosphere between members of the same band, who eventually felt musically unappreciated. These decisions may imply a sub-textual message (or, at least, it may be

to military bands from one of the branches (army, navy or air force) for professional security reasons. They have a monthly fixed wage, plus benefits and in their spare time (which is reasonable) they work in live acts with different artists and/or in recording sessions.

²²⁶ In the documentary film *The Wrecking Crew* it is not always clear where the music education of the main characters focused - Tommy Tedesco, (the director's father), Hal Blaine, and others - comes from. There are cases such as drummer Earl Palmer whose music background was jazz, but realized he could earn more money playing all kinds of music - particularly rock and roll, which apparently other session musicians before the Crew did not know how to play. It is my impression that, as in Portugal, these men were musically educated from diversified sources (some coming from a more formal music education context, some less) but their performance in the recording studio was what mattered the most.

²²⁷ Interview with Kent Hartman (Part 1) in Connie Martinson Talks Books – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXpx7DhKV5k> – accessed on November 2014.

²²⁸ <http://www.austinchronicle.com/music/2000-07-21/77984/> - accessed on November 2014.

understood as such by the receivers), according to which there are two types of musicians: the ones who can perform in the studio (the ones who can actually *play*) and the others who are only good enough for the live act.

Being aware of this kind of group dynamics is what can trigger different decisions by a producer: although conscious that the players of a band may not be the best instrumentalists, he or she may not want to jeopardize the group's feel (another emic concept, like sound very hard to define).²²⁹ In *Making Records* (Granata 2007) Phil Ramone describes the beginning of his music collaboration with Billy Joel. After watching him perform live twice and listening to his first four albums, Ramone realized that the power he had seen on stage was lacking from Billy's records (ibid:72).

"I knew exactly what was missing from Billy's first four records: his band. Billy's musicians were a tight group, musically and personally. Until he remade *Turnstiles* he'd been forced to use studio musicians who lacked the intensity of what I'd seen the Billy Joel band do onstage" (ibid:73).

It was the band's "unconstrained energy" (ibid:73) – or, I suggest, the band's feel – that the producer wanted to keep in a live studio setting, rather than a performative perfectionism Ramone knew they did not have.

Artistry, Composition And Authorship

"Back then not that many people in the early sixties knew how to play rock r`n roll the right away and the Wrecking Crew did: [...] they could go in and give it an extra fell, an extra groove, that makes a difference between a song and *a song*".²³⁰

²²⁹ This concept is referred in an article by Andrew Gwilliam (2009). It is used as part of an evaluation grid to compare two recorded performances of a band. It is, however, not defined. As an emic term, however, if I use it with a musician (even a Portuguese one), there will probably be a common understanding.

²³⁰ Interview with Kent Hartman (Part 1) in Connie Martinson Talks Books – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXpx7DhKV5k> – accessed on November 2014.

During the height of the recording industry, being a session musician became, in itself, a career. For a number of reasons, according to Hartmann (2012): they were paid so well in the studios that they didn't want to lose their place in line by actually going out on the road;²³¹ secondly, they replaced many famous bands in the studio that they saw being popular one year, and then gone the next. Thirdly, most of them truly had the personality where they were happy backgrounding people.²³²

In Portugal, the most desired session players were also the most wanted to go on the road with the artists – that is, whenever the work in the studio allowed them to. The situation was rather similar to the one in the USA, but adapted to a minor scale.

Apart from high expectations regarding their instrumental or vocal performances, session musicians were also expected to add something of their own to the recordings: new musical ideas emerging from their own creativity, facilitating the producer's work and leading the recording eventually into new directions, spurring “unexpected moments of greatness” (Ramone in Granata 2007:38). Phil Ramone describes how the amazing drum groove of the song “Fifty ways to leave your lover” by Paul Simon came about in the studio – what he defines as “a happy accident”:

“Steve Gadd was warming up.[...] he began playing a drum corps-style street beat [...]Paul heard the nagging rhythm through the open door, and [...] went out into the studio.[...] As Gadd tapped away on the snare, Paul grabbed his guitar and began singing over the melody. It was a stunning combination, and Paul was delighted” (ibid:39).

The band Steely Dan and its already mentioned sonic perfectionism was due to the work of a team where the collaboration of many extraordinary sound professionals as well as the input brought by top session musicians who played in their records was of the

²³¹ In the documentary film *The Wrecking Crew*, Hal Blaine, drummer, comments that, at a certain point in his career, he earned so much money, he had a Hollywood mansion, a Rolls Royce and a yacht (all of which he ended up losing on account of a divorce law suit). Despite the fact that in those years (between the 1960s and early 70s), the recording industry generated substantial revenues for the various actors and industry structures involved (from labels to musicians), these earnings are significant of the amount of work accomplished, as well as the type of wages involved.

²³² *ibid.*

utmost importance. Choosing the right solo guitar for the theme “Peg”²³³, for instance, involved listening to many solos by several guitar players – up to eight, according to Fagen and Becker – before Jay Graydon did it “with no difficulty whatsoever”.²³⁴

Here is Jay Graydon commenting on this studio session:

“Within the first hour, I mostly played my standard pop/pop jazz solo vocabulary of the era, hunting for melodic connections. [...] We took a break and when getting back to work, Donald mentioned the key factor regarding the approach. He said something like, “Think ‘blues’ from time to time.” That was the key to the concept [...] However, after a few passes, I fell into playing/bending “double stops” (two notes at a time) in the beginning of the solo [...] The guys dug the double stop lick, hence the first four bars were on tape” (Graydon in Giles 2010).

Was it the “double stop lick”, along the “Hawaian, Polynesian”²³⁵ trait of the solo (apparently not included in the indications given by the producers) that made the difference, adding that “extra enhancement”²³⁶ the other guitar players hadn’t yet? Maybe. Asked about why this particular solo was his most famous, Graydon answered “the solo did not sound typical of commercial music of the era” (Giles 2010), which is certainly true. In the words of Alan Williams (2010), commenting on the “right” solo choice, “‘right’ in this case was not simply correct, but special, idiosyncratic, individual” (ibid:60).

Session musicians are usually comfortable with their musical ideas becoming part of the composition. Adding the “extra” factor, as we have seen so far, “comes with the job”. There are limits, however: understanding where to draw the line between what the session musician’s work is or where it becomes part of the composition is sometimes delicate. I will mention two examples, on a very different scale.

Many years ago, I worked with a TV producer who also composed jingles. In the sessions, he had the frequent habit of playing a two or three chord sequence in the guitar; then, with the text given by the advertising agency, he would ask me to sing a melody on

²³³ “Peg” is the name of a song of the 1977 Steely Dan album *Aja*.

²³⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waIBA6_0GQc- accessed on November 2014.

²³⁵ *ibid.*

²³⁶ Kent Hartman, interview.

top of the chords. In other words, compose the melody. By doing that, was I performing as a session singer or as a singing composer? Every time it happened, I alerted him for the fact, a situation which was not well accepted by him.

A well-known and polemic case is the one of session singer Clare Torry, who sang the solo of “The Great Gig In the Sky”, a song included in Pink Floyd’s 1973 album *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Clare’s contribution, after a series of trial-and-error takes in the recording session, where she got indications to sing longer notes and be increasingly more emotional (Harris 2005), became an integral part of the song. Feeling very insecure during the process, the turning point of her performance was when she thought of her voice as being an instrument; also, the fact that “there was a lovely can balance “made by Alan Parsons (“echoey, but not too echoey”) made the experience all the more extraordinary (ibid). I will come back to the importance of listening in the recording studio further in this sub-chapter.

Roger Waters, sometime later, described this as “a happy accident” (ibid.) – another to make history in popular music.

However, thirty years later, in 2004, this “happy accident” almost became an unhappy incident (depending on one’s perspective) as Tory decided to claim a co-writing credit on the song, which she won in an off-court settlement with the band in 2005.²³⁷

Back-Up Vocalists: A Special Case Of Session Musicians?

“I love my back-up singers; we all participate in what the sound is, it’s a group effort...and what the arrangement is” (James Taylor)²³⁸

I’ll consider three features that I find relevant regarding back-up vocalists (who usually are session singers): gender, status amongst other musicians and career.

²³⁷ <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/pictures/readers-poll-the-best-vocal-performances-in-rock-history-20120905/2-pink-floyd-the-great-gig-in-the-sky-0352701> - accessed on November 2014.

²³⁸ “James Taylor and his back-up vocalists” - <http://youtu.be/7N5AAbSf0fs>- accessed on November 2014.

Gender

*“Do you know any hot broads who can sing something?”*²³⁹

In the 80s, the professionalization of back-up singers within the Portuguese popular music scene was becoming a fact. There were not many people doing it; most of them were female, and sometimes not even professional singers.²⁴⁰ Of the small group of professional session singers, many were doing it temporarily, as a step towards an hypothetical solo career. But a growing recording industry, as well as the common use of musical jingles in advertising urged the need to have a specialized group of singing professionals skilled to perform in the studio.

Bearing in mind the data exposed in the previous paragraph, there is a first gender-related question to be launched: what is it about this profession that eventually attracts more female than men?

In *20 Feet from Stardom*, the number of male backing-vocalists that appear or are mentioned is much smaller than the women. Apart from David Lasley, Oren Waters and a reference to the deceased Luther Vandross as a former backing-vocalist, the documentary is focused on the lives and careers of a number of female backing vocalists.

The music industry is, even today, in the 21st century, one of the most white, male-oriented as was referred in the ARP conference held in Oslo in December 2014.²⁴¹ In the same conference, but in its 7th edition, in S. Francisco, three years before, a panel featuring several women producers and sound engineers was held. Questions related to the implementation of women performing these more technically oriented tasks – a clear minority, compared to the men who do it – were discussed.²⁴² Richard Burgess (2013) who, together with Katia Isakoff, presented this panel, dedicates a chapter of his book to

²³⁹ This was a common way of asking for back-up singers when I started my career.

²⁴⁰ By professional singer, I mean, in this case, singers like myself who were fully dedicated to this function, and not just doing it as a side job. These professional singers usually had some music education (formal or informal, but mostly informal).

²⁴¹ 9th ARP Conference, University of Oslo, Norway, 4-6 December, 2014. This idea was mentioned in a panel on Recording Aesthetics held during the conference.

²⁴² 7th ARP Conference, S. Francisco State University, 4-6 December, 2011.

this subject (ibid: loc 4321 of 9148). Among other reasons, “socially debilitating” hours and consequently, the absence of a normal life pattern are mentioned as probable causes for the lack of women in music production (ibid: 4392). Not undermining Burgess’s reference, I would like to scrutinize the reasons mentioned by this author using my own personal testimony.

First, the association of the desire to lead a “normal life” to women. As much as this was the result of interviews with women professionals in the music business, the desire for a “normal life” is outside the scope of a profession in the creative arts industries, male or female. These professionals are, mostly, “ab-normal” in the social sense of the word. They are, in the least, people living outside the “box”- the considered normal social, professional and economical patterns recognized by society: unpredictability of working schedules (at nights, on week-ends, during holidays); many unpaid working hours (usually rehearsals); absence of economic security (you only get paid if you work); absence of social benefits (health insurance, savings accounts, paid education for children) unless you pay for them; long absences from home (in the case of touring, one of the most disruptive activities in the music business). There is no “normal”, but musicians know what they are getting – and they love it.

However, if in the middle of this chaotic universe, you decide to raise a family (probably part of what is meant by a “normal” life pattern), that is when the onus of the responsibility goes to the woman. And you don’t need to be a music producer to feel the difficulty of keeping this idealized “normality”. In my particular case, it was very hard to cope my professional with my family life (which involved raising three children) – especially the long night studio sessions, the live gigs ending up in the morning and going on the road with the artists I did backing vocals with. This would not have been possible without the precious help of a number of family members and friends.²⁴³ At the same

²⁴³ Having divorced during the early stages of my children’s childhood, I had to recur to family and friends to be able to work. Those were, actually, my most active years as a back-up singer. It is significant to say that my then ex-husband was a sound engineer. The rate of success of couples who are both music professionals (with children) is, in Portugal, and according to my observation, very low.

time, along my career in the music business,²⁴⁴ I met very few women who were anything but singers in Portugal.²⁴⁵

The probable and most obvious conclusion to draw would be stating that working in the music business is hardly compatible with certain aspects of life considered “normal” and expected to be followed by women – like parenthood. In this framework, and despite the fact that the situation is changing (at least in Portugal), singing – whether solo, as singer-songwriter or as session singer – is, by far, the most common activity for a woman in the music industry, together with administrative and support positions, as mentioned in Richard Burgess’s chapter.

Status Amongst Other Musicians

“What’s the similarity between a singer and a war tank? They both destroy bridges”²⁴⁶

Is a singer a musician? More specifically, is a session singer a session musician? I asked the question to a top Portuguese back-up vocalist:

“Of course she is! A back-up vocalist does the necessary work, whether in the recording studio or live, and is paid by the hour or by a previously accorded fee for the whole work. I don’t even know why there is that doubt!” (Patrícia Antunes, interview, November 2014)²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ The situation is fortunately changing. There is a new generation of female instrumentalists (between their twenties and thirties), from keyboard to trumpet players, as well as singer-songwriters who are also instrumentalists. This is, I believe, the result of the positive leap that music education in Portugal suffered in the last fifteen years. It would be interesting, however, to understand and acknowledge the reasons why the majority of these women have no children.

²⁴⁵ Interestingly enough, and much to my surprise, I became aware, after watching the documentary film *The Wrecking Crew* that in LA, during the 50s there was a reasonable number of good women jazz instrumentalists, who did not follow a career in music, because they wanted to get married...(and eventually did). “It was more important to have a ‘Mrs.’ in front of your name than it was to have a career”. This statement is uttered by Carol Kaye, herself a bass player, and one of the most active members of the Wrecking Crew. She is the only woman in this group and the most recorded bass-player in the world.

²⁴⁶ Popular joke among male musicians about female singers.

²⁴⁷ Patrícia Antunes, Portuguese back-up vocalist, is presently, one of the most well-known Portuguese backing vocalists. Together with another Patrícia – Patrícia Silveira – they form a live act called Patrícias SA and perform backing vocals for the most important Portuguese bands and artists. They are, by far, the most sought-after backing-vocals group. – <https://www.facebook.com/patricias.sa>.

Along these almost four decades, I have heard many jokes musicians tell about singers (like the one in the beginning of this section, probably one of the lightest I have heard) – regardless of being back-up or solo -, usually implying that they are female, slutty, dumb and musically ignorant.²⁴⁸

I never felt mistreated and disrespected, or even treated differently than any other session musician. However, during some recording sessions, I witnessed a somewhat arrogant attitude from (men) instrument players – and producers – towards women singers, mostly due to a believed lack of musical education on the part of the singers – for not being able to read a score, or understanding “the musicians`s language”- which should be the singers` as well. It is a fact that, as stated previously, in the 80s, Portuguese back-up vocalists had very little music education. There was, indeed, a general lack of basic music knowledge, at times compensated by the natural ability each person showed to accomplish the function – which does not legitimize the chauvinist comments, associating lack of knowledge to gender. Currently, popular music musicians have much more chances of having a musical education, even outside a regular school – the internet has played a very important role on this subject as well – which might justify the Portuguese back-up vocalist`s reaction to my question, as she belongs to a younger generation²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ I have occasionally found references to different unions for musicians and singers, implying that there is an institutional legitimization for this separation - at least in some countries. Weissman, Dick (2006) *Making a Living in Your Local Music Market: Realizing Your Marketing Potential*, Hal Leonard Corporation, New York, p.24 and Field, Shelly (2010) *Career Opportunities in the Music Industry*, Ferguson, New York, p. 232 are examples of books where two different unions for singers and musicians are mentioned, one in Canada and the other in the United States.

²⁴⁹ In his Master`s thesis “Playing Outside: Jazz and Society in Portugal from the perspective of two schools”, José Dias, a Portuguese jazz guitar player, composer and ethnomusicologist, refers jazz education as “one of the most important educational models outside the conservatory model to form professional musicians [...] in different areas of popular music (jazz, pop, rock, etc)” (Dias 2010:73-74). In the course of his investigation, in 2010 he acknowledged the existence of twenty two schools in Portugal teaching jazz, exclusively or non-exclusively (ibid.:79).

Career

“When I was younger I had my own dreams about being a solo artist, but as I got older and really wanted to make a living, I really started to love the part of being backup singer where you get a lot of the glory but you don’t have all the pressure on your shoulders” (Kate Markowitz, James Taylor’s longtime back-up singer).²⁵⁰

“If you sing as well or even better than the artist, how come you’re always at the back?’ - people ask me. For me, being a background vocalist is like playing an instrument, only different than the one I play when I perform as lead singer...and I love it!” (Patrícia Antunes, *ibid.*).

Most of the session players I worked with did not engage in a solo career. João Maló, a Portuguese guitar player, and one of the most active session musicians in the 70s and 80s, commented on the dangers of investing a lot of time playing all sorts of music in different contexts, eventually jeopardizing your creative identity.

“When you put too much on one side, you take from another, that’s for sure. But I also took advantage from that to my own musical identity. Obviously, if I spent more time alone in my house, searching for my music...but when there is even no time to start that path, when things are good the way they are, when you start earning money, people flatter you...you leave those things for the future, and then one day you take a punch in your stomach” (João Maló, interview, October 2014, Jardins da Parede, Cascais).

With back-up singers, there seems to be a certain pressure – both internal and external – to walk those “twenty feet” that separate them “from stardom”. The homonymous documentary shows examples of back-up/session singers who embody two different cases: some who fought all their lives to walk that path, trying to earn credibility as solo artists like Darlene Love and Judith Hill. Others, like Lisa Fisher, have a different attitude towards their work. A back-up singer for artists and bands like Luther Vandross, Tina Turner and still touring with the Rolling Stones, she also recorded as solo artist,

²⁵⁰ <http://youtu.be/7N5AAbSf0fs>- accessed on November 2014.

winning a Grammy award in 1992. However, she decided to drop her solo career and continue being a back-up singer. In *20 Feet from Stardom*, she states that she just enjoys doing music and supporting other artists, refusing ideas of frustration and aspiration for “something more”.

As a session singer myself, I have been through different phases: in 1982, when I started working, everything was new. There were many different working possibilities available, – mostly recording sessions for labels and for the advertising business (I only started performing in live “gigs”²⁵¹ on a regular basis much later, in the 90s, precisely when studio work became scarce). A few years later, I became weary of the work I was doing and I felt “the calling” – what my colleague Joao Maló denominates the urge to assume a “frontman” - in this case, “front-woman” - position. I considered a solo career. However, I was faced with an unexpected problem: who was I, artistically speaking? What kind of music did I want to record? What kind of public was I targeting? I had no idea. I ended up with a record I had no personal identification with.²⁵² Maybe because, as Alan Williams states:

“Reconciling the contradictions associated with establishing a creative identity in a field where contributions are considered “works for hire,” and thus regarded as significantly less important than that of the artists they work with, is a particularly difficult endeavor, and one that many musicians wrestle with perpetually” (2010: 61).

Today, I resonate with Kate Markowitz, back-up singer of James Taylor: performing as a musical collaborator in somebody else’s process can be very rewarding.²⁵³

²⁵¹ A “gig” is a most used term amongst musicians, and stands for a live performance by a musician or a group of musicians. It is different from the term “show” in the sense that usually gigs are held in smaller venues.

²⁵² My musical references were - and still are - almost entirely from Anglo-American popular music. The label was more interested in light music, as was the producer assigned to me. The right decision should have been, eventually, not doing the record. But at that time – 1994 – having a record label, the possibility to record in a real studio (it was, actually, at Namouche) and the prospect of a different course in my career spoke louder than anything else.

²⁵³ Kate Markowitz speaks about her professional relationship with James Taylor as “having the privilege of being part of James’s process”, which I find a nice and respectful way of defining her role as back-up singer. – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N5AAbsf0fs> – accessed on January 2014. I also used the

Listening in the studio

One of the features that, along the years, increased my passion both for music and for recording music was the listening experience the studio provides (a subject already mentioned in the previous sub-chapter). Most of my professional life as session singer occurred during a period when recording in a studio took time, in accordance with the technological demands that analogue recording implied. Although most of the times not aware of it, (being very young and familiarized with these professional processes, as there were no others), studio hours could be long and tiresome. This fact ended up constituting an enormous privilege and a perfect opportunity to *listen*.

“When I closed my eyes,- which I always did – it was just all-enveloping: a lovely vocal sound, which for a singer is always inspirational” (Torry in Harris 2005). This quotation by Clare Torry comes in the sequence of the one previously transcribed, where she asserts the importance of the headphone balance made by recording engineer Alan Parsons as fundamental for the final result of “The Great Gig in the Sky” solo. The expression “all-enveloping” is, according to my own experience, perfect to describe a good headphone mix in a recording studio. So much so, as before digital recording technology, two of the most important techniques in recording – punching in and out, as well as over-dubbing²⁵⁴ – were meticulous actions, both on the part of the musicians and the sound engineers. For that, a good headphone balance was extremely important and made all the difference in the music performance.

“You’re sort of mentally in another dimension through headphones... You’re throwing your ideas out and everyone is responding just in that moment... It’s just

term “collaborator”, which I found in Alan Williams’s article, referring to the way a pianist sees her role, when accompanying a singer (rather than “accompanist”) (2010:62).

²⁵⁴ Punching in is the act of correcting a mistake on a recording take. When recording on tape, the musician/vocalist had to start the correction before the actual moment of the mistake, so as the sound engineer could track the correction and “glue” it to the rest of the recording, without any audible sign of the correction. How was that achieved with analogue recording technology? The musician would try to perform exactly the same way as he/she was doing before making the mistake - while adjusting dynamics, timbre, volume, intention, interpretation. Punching out was used at the end of the correction (for the musician, that meant stopping to play or sing). As far as the sound engineer was concerned, in case of a small mistake in the middle of a take, he had to be very quick when pressing the REC button (punching in) and unpunching it (punching out). Overdubbing (or double-tracking) is performing the same thing on top of a previously recorded track. Nowadays, with digital technology, it is possible to do this not having to perform again: all the producer/sound engineer has to do is splice the sound wave and put it on top of the other (although the result will never be the same as actually repeating the actual musical performance).

like the best thing in the world. It's just an amazing place to be... Something can change in a split second. You're processing someone else's ideas... You're almost inside this other person's brain in a way" (Williams 2009).

Binaural listening is not an exclusive feature of studio recording. Today, the use of in-ears is widespread in professional live acts; the experience of music listening by the general public is also often binaural, through earbuds belonging to the devices used. But I believe that you access that "amazing place to be" mostly – but maybe not exclusively – in a studio environment. In reality, and as stated by a session musician "the experience of making music is one of intense pleasure. It is addictive [...]" (Williams 2010:69).

The Future

*"That's the way record labels wanted it!"*²⁵⁵

"The music industry has shrunk. In shrinking it has rung out the middle, leaving the bands and the audiences to work out their relationship from the ends. I see this as both healthy and exciting. If we've learned anything over the past 30 years it's that left to its own devices bands and their audiences can get along fine" (Albini 2014).

"Do you believe me if I tell you that I haven't been to a studio in years? That in the last five or six records in which I participated, they sent me a rough mix, I recorded the saxophone here at home and then I emailed it back?" (Naná Sousa Dias, 2015)

These three quotations show how the popular music framework has changed, and how those changes reflected in studio practices and cultures of session performers in the last thirty years.

As stated by Kent Hartman in the first quotation, in the golden days of the recording industry, the work of studio-hired musicians was fundamental to keep the production line

²⁵⁵ Interview with Kent Hartman (Part 1) in Connie Martinson Talks Books – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXpx7DhKV5k> – accessed on November 2014.

of record manufacture and sale as effective as possible. However, the “shrinking” of the industry referred by Steve Albini (2014) came together with the disappearance of the major label system and the rise of the internet as a privileged mediator of music accessibility, consumption and dissemination. As such, the work of session musicians became expendable, for economic as well as professional reasons. The third quote comes from Nanã Sousa Dias, Portuguese saxophone player (see p.96 of this thesis). The new digital recording paradigm brought along this procedure of recording at home, eventually causing the emergence of a new professional category – what Sousa Dias calls, with bitter irony, “studio hermits” (ibid.).

The configuration of the advertising business, for years an important source of income for session musicians and singers, also suffered significant changes regarding music. Jingles became outdated and instrumental music ceased to be played by musicians, being often replaced by library music or music played by synthesizers. Still, according to my observation, there are session players who have been active professionals in the Portuguese recording scene for decades; they are, however, in a much lesser number.

Session musicians/singers and backing-vocalists are anything but “only”. With their expertise studio performances, they added many “extra things” to popular music, to the point of having reconfigured it in ways unimaginable. As a professional, I was privileged to witness – and be part of – some of those magic moments. As a member of a vast listening audience, I don’t know - and never will – what some bands (and singers) would sound like, without their contribution. And that is, most likely, an advantage to the listeners.

It is my firm belief that session musicians should earn more credit for their anonymous work, on a general as well as an academic level. It would be important to clarify the type of contribution that these truly “hidden musicians”, using Ruth Finnegan’s expression (1989), gave to music cultures associated to popular music.

7.4 The “virtual” producer

During my most active years as session musician/singer, in the analogue days, the actors in a recording session were very clear and distinctive. If we consider the recording room and the control room as the two main spaces in a recording facility, musicians and singers were the main actors of the recording room during a session; in the control room, the sound engineer, sometimes an assistant sound engineer and the producer of the session. The actors in the control room (namely the sound engineer and assistant, when there was one) were present in the recording room mostly before the beginning of the sessions - setting them, which meant microphone and panel placing, cabling and other activities. Musicians and singers, on the other hand, would only be present in the control room to listen to a take - if needed - or wait for another take. This last situation would be rare, as sessions were organized in such a manner as to avoid *tempos mortos* (studio hours were expensive). This was a presencial working environment, where communication and interaction amongst these actors emerged on the spot, as a direct consequence of the work taking place.

The producer has for many years been a central agent in recording studio sessions; the validation of this role was, in many ways, related to the producer's physical presence in the studio, to a greater or lesser extent. However, improvements in the speed of digital networks have allowed studio sessions to be produced long-distance, in real-time, through communication programs such as Skype or REDIS. How does this impact on the role of the producer, a “nexus between the creative inspiration of the artist, the technology of the recording studio, and the commercial aspirations of the record company”? (Howlett 2012)

This sub-chapter is based on the first recording session I attended at Namouche Recording Studios in Lisbon, as part of the field work for the research in which this doctoral thesis is based. As such, this session will not be referred to on chapter 10, where the rest of Namouche's observed studio sessions are described.

Due to the session's specificity, as it was produced through Skype, with a large number of participants involved, this sub-chapter explores questions regarding the role of the studio producer in such a recording context: how important is the physical presence of the producer? Is this presence an essential part of validation and authority? What are the implications and limitations on direction of the musical performances? How is performance interaction affected between what I have named central and peripheral performances in a studio setting—the central performance being the one carried out by the musicians and the peripheral those developed by both sound engineer and producer (Campelo 2012)?

Communication in the studio is a highly mediated process. Using Alan William's concept of "audioscape - the phenomenon of simultaneous multiple aural experiences that result from the use of microphones, loudspeakers, and their cousin, headphones" (2009), it can be "a tale of many audioscapes". Musicians, sound engineers and producers are, thus, involved in the management and balance of these auditory individual phenomena. Also, as stated by Frith and Zagorski-Thomas "perception involves all the senses and the fact that we can't see performers [when we listen to a record] means that we hear the music differently than we can see it being made as well" (Frith 2012: loc. 414 of 7567). Although this quotation refers to record listening, the deprivation of visual contact in a recording session - either from producer to musician, but also the other way round - can involve consequences in the musical performance. This chapter wishes to examine how long-distance directed recording sessions articulate these features. For ethical reasons, all the names mentioned apart from the recording studio and the sound engineer are pseudonyms.

The setting and its main actors

"By the door, a big crowd holding plates with food, others eating sandwiches...the same thing at the lobby and down the stairs until the recording room, where I find: the sound engineer; an English musician who seems to be producing the session; another person sitting next to the sound engineer who I actually know but do not recognize at that moment, who is mediating the communication with the musician at the live room; and another person who I don't quite know what is doing (at this

moment, he is reading the score with the English musician)” (personal field notes, 15/1/2013).

There was a lot of information—both visual and aural—to process. To summarize: a group of young people were hanging about and eating outside the studio, between the street and the lobby. As I later found out, these were the orchestra members who were already having lunch. In the studio there were four people inside the control room, two of them with clear functions, according to my perception: the sound engineer and the English composer. I was not sure who the two others were or what they were doing. A fifth person was audible, but not seen—a musician inside the live room.

Let’s identify the actors in the control room: the person who was mediating the communication with the recording room, whom I realized I had already met, was Tiago, keyboard player, pianist and music producer. The sound engineer was Joaquim Monte. The audible voice inside the live room was the conductor, Joseph. The English musician was the composer Simon, and the other person reading the score with him was the mentor of everything I was observing: António.

This orchestra is a project conceived by Antonio, a young Portuguese musician, who studies film scoring in New York. The purpose of it was to be able to record film scores with a minimum rehearsal time and great recording efficiency. All the musicians were supposed to be extremely good score readers, as well as performers. They were mostly art music students from Lisbon High School of Music from where they had been recruited (Tiago 2013).

In this recording session, António was trying to build up a portfolio of the orchestra, promoting its music skills, but also promoting the recording studio and the work of several score composers. These included himself, Simon—the English citizen at the studio—and Keil—an American colleague of António who was in New York at that moment. We will come back to him later.

As I came to realize much later on, most of the musicians had never played together and hardly knew each other. Although it was not clear as to the exact date the scores had reached the musicians’ possession, it was obvious it had been very recently. Apart from this, there had been some logistical problems during the morning session, which created

a degree of tension. Nevertheless, the orchestra sounded beautiful, as if none of these events had had any influence on the musical performance—at least, according to my perception.

Calling New York

Although for me the setting appeared mainly as confused, it was a highly charged and complex session, with a lot of aspects involved:

- a commercial aspect, as the orchestra was a project organized by António, both musician and entrepreneur, and his father;
- a musical one, as the commercial success of the orchestra would depend largely on the musical performance;
- a logistical one, as there were a lot of people involved who hardly knew each other, either personally or musically, with different needs (travel, food and others);
- a psychological/emotional one, as there was nervousness and tension, but also excitement regarding this new challenge for everybody involved.

There was another factor that increased the level of tension: Keil, the third composer mentioned, who was in New York, would be following the session on Skype. Although in this particular session, the orchestra was offering its services freely, these young composers were regarded as clients or, rather, future clients, by António, who addressed them in these terms in the following interview I conducted with him. The idea of having a “client” listening to the orchestra for the first time through such a medium, with the possibility of bad connections arising from the situation, was, to António, worrying.

Before the Skype connection was made the orchestra had been recording Simon’s pieces. It was, actually, at that stage that I entered the recording room, when I remarked in my field notes that there was “an English musician who seem(ed) to be producing the session”. Everything seemed to be in control, with the composer *in loco* assuming the role of the producer.

When the Skype connection took place, the general “tone” of the session changed. There was a lot more verbal communication going on, as well as different layers of communication.

Snake Eyes

In the first scenes of Brian de Palma’s 1998 film *Snake Eyes*, we watch a politician being killed in a boxing match; as the film continues, the same scene is presented to the viewer from different perspectives until one realizes what actually happened. That moment of revelation reconfigures the film’s main characters, assigning them different values. It took me six interviews with the different participants in this setting to be able to determine the roles played in the recording session more clearly, adopting a “snake-eyed” look. However, before initiating that dialogical moment, I will delineate the different levels of communication observed – the visual and the aural.

Visually, the Skype connection allowed, at first, the people in the control room (Monte, António and Tiago) to see Keil, and the opposite was also true. However, as the image was interfering with the sound stream, it was disconnected and the majority of the session involved audio communication only. For the most part, there was no visual contact between the composer in New York and the orchestra in Lisbon.

Aurally, the communication was taking place between: António, Keil (the composer in New York), Joseph (the conductor), and some musicians (the percussion and the brass section) in the live room; and other people in the control room would join in at times. The fact that some musicians had headphones and others did not (meaning that some could hear comments from the control room, while others could not) is relevant for the understanding of the whole communication process, as we will see later.

Following the observation of what, back then, I perceived as a unique research scenario in terms of performance in the studio, I conducted a series of interviews with some of the actors present in the setting. All of these interviews - except the one with Keil, the American composer in New York - were conducted in Portuguese and translated by me. The first of these was with Joaquim Monte, the sound engineer.

Looking for the producer

Monte's comments about the session were, first of all, related to the musicians' enthusiasm:

"They were extremely happy for the fact of having somebody on the other side of the world listening to them; I've never seen an orchestra behaving like that, as orchestras are, usually, very difficult to control, unless they have a very firm conductor, which was also the case" (Monte, September 2012).

I was interested to know whether he thought the performance had been, in any way, altered by the fact of not having someone physically present in the studio producing them.

"If the producer is good, he can do the same work being present or not; the question is the control room is not there, but away, and he can't go to the live room if he needs to. But most of the times, communication is established through the talkback system, so there isn't too much difference" (ibid.).

From Monte's words, an assumption can be seen of the producer in the session being the composer. The physical absence of the producer/composer was an additional reason for them to alter their performance for the better—particularly because he was the composer, and he was not Portuguese, a detail that seemed to validate his credibility even further. Tiago would say the same thing, in his interview.

My next informants were António and Lucas, a French horn player, both of them contacted through email. António's comments about the session were very straightforward. Referring to the streaming process as a common tool in the recording industry these days, he stated that it had worked out very well—for both the musicians and the conductor. The performance of the musicians would not have changed a great deal had the composer been physically present, because "the composer was, in fact, there, only through the internet" (António, May 2013).

The streaming session was not new for Lucas either. It required, above all, patience. This time I asked what seemed to be the “billion dollar question” (one which I had not included in the previous interviews): who was the producer there?

“The answer is not an obvious one, as everybody you mentioned—António, Keil, Tiago, Monte, Joseph—is also a producer; but the biggest and most responsible producers are the musicians, because the natural product, which later on is filtered and improved with the help of technology, comes from them” (Lucas, May 2013).

I was somewhat surprised by his answer, but as we will see further in this subchapter, it would assume greater significance. Stating that a producer is someone closer to the technical side of the session, he would attribute that responsibility to António and Joseph, the maestro. However, if he had to choose one person, that would be António.

Tiago is an experienced keyboard player, pianist and producer. He was supposed to be the music producer, although according to him:

“In an orchestra, there isn’t so much this figure of the record producer; that happens more in light *genres* where the performers don’t have music education. In this project, you had: the composer, who writes and knows what he wants; the conductor, who interprets what the composer wants, so the role of the music producer is fairly relative...” (Tiago, May 2013).

In any case, his function would be

“to establish the connection between the orchestra and the technological part, because I was the one who knew both worlds—technological and musical—and was able to decode what each of them wanted” (ibid.).

Tiago’s interventions in the session were very few, according to my observations. This idea is corroborated by my next interviewee, Joseph. Being in the most delicate position—he was at the center of the communication process between the composer, the

control room and, above all, the musicians—Joseph’s interview allowed me to reinterpret some of the features of the session. His leadership position regarding the musicians resulted in his undermining Tiago’s suggestions—at least the one regarding the use of click-track.

“I didn’t accept his suggestion, because I am not used to a figure such as that of a producer; besides, I was interfacing with the musicians, so I have to think twice before giving in to any suggestion coming from the booth” (Joseph, May 2013).

Once more, it is important to remember that some musicians had headphones on. Regarding the physical presence of the composer, Joseph was the first to state overtly that it would have made a lot of difference. What I perceived and noted in my field notes as “minor corrections” from the composer to the musician’s performances, were, according to Joseph, last minute changes that the composer had decided to try. The orchestra was already tired, so,

“had he been there, it would have been completely different, a different type of respect [...] As a conductor, my psychological approach to the orchestra is on the positive side, respecting everybody equally even with a central figure such as the conductor or the composer. For that you need contact. You need empathy, both on the musical as well as on the personal side” (ibid.).

What about Keil? How did the composer “on the other side” of the communication stream, perceive the session? His answers through email present another perspective, albeit with some points in common with Joseph, the conductor. However, what stems from his answers is the clear recognition that the session was “a very disorienting experience”, and much of the recording that he got back was not usable “due to the musicians not playing in time to the click track” (Keil, December 2013). Unlike the other interviewees, he had never been involved in a remote recording session, and this scenario presented some challenges difficult to overcome, such as the inability to see what was going on in the recording room, and the fact of not being physically present in the setting.

“The subtle body language cues from the musicians are missing. Are they stressed? Are they not getting into the music enough? Being able to jump in during a break and talk with individual musicians becomes impossible” (ibid).

Unlike the majority of the interviewees, he was not confident about the session. Apart from mistrusting Skype as an effective means to transmit music,

“There was just too much that I couldn’t observe. How were the mics set up in the room? Was the mixer being attentive enough? Was the conductor being clear and transmitting the right gestures to achieve the desired results?” (ibid.)

When asked about who was the producer in that setting, Keil stated that,

“By strict definition, a producer is essentially a manager. Who was managing that session? I definitely wasn’t. For that particular session, I took on an advisory role more than anything else” (ibid.)

A unique recording scenario?

The recognition that what I had perceived as a unique recording scenario was, in fact, a relatively common one for most of my informants came as I ended my ethnographic interviews with the participants. In a “normal” recording session, communication - verbal, visual and musical - is established between the central activities (the music-making) and the peripheral activities (what goes on in the control room). In this context, there was one central activity and two peripheral sets of activities separated in terms of space, turning the communication process into something more complex, and making it more difficult to identify ‘a producer’.

Some of the roles undertaken by a producer, as defined in Mike Howlett’s article “The Producer as Nexus” (2012), are recognizable in this set: António was both the project manager and the mediator—although there was no record company involved, he

was responsible for the ultimate result of the recording session, which would lead to an expanded portfolio for his orchestra. The role of musical director was assumed by both composers—Simon and Keil (at least, as perceived by Lucas, the French-horn player, and Monte, the sound engineer). The psychologist role in this session was divided between these two composers, as well as António, and particularly the conductor Joseph. Joseph had to make the necessary adjustments to the information he received both from the composer and from António, with the added complication that some of the musicians were using headphones, and could therefore hear his conversations with the other “producers”, while some could not. Finally, Tiago, who was supposed to be the music producer, ended up deferring from his function due to the many voices involved. With this attitude—giving space to the other collaborators—he demonstrated one of the assets usually expected from a producer, which he has been for many years: sensibility. According to the interviewees, the authority and evaluation expected from a producer was, therefore, primarily assumed by the two composers, with the disagreement of Keil, the American composer, who did not acknowledge himself as such.

The choice of this session as a case study was meant to launch questions regarding the role of the “virtual” producer in these increasingly common recording scenarios. Will these types of scenarios begin to replace the ‘normal’ recording session, with all the actors present in the setting? Can there be such a thing as a “virtual producer”?

“I believe the session would have been completely different if I were in the room. At least I would have been able to monitor the click track and would have noticed that the musicians were getting way off track. In this day and age of instant global communication, we easily forget the power of human proximity. Sometimes, there’s no substitution for just being there” (Keil, December 2013).

Having as part of my theoretical framework Mike Howlett’s article mentioned above (2012), I decided to ask him to comment on this particular session. Being a long-time producer, with more than thirty years of experience and a Grammy award, I was very interested in his perception of all the events above describe.

Comments from a non-virtual producer: Mike Howlett

I gave Mike Howlett a thorough description of the events despite the obvious drawback of his physical absence from the recording session at stake - in a way, similar to the one felt by some of its participants regarding the “virtuality” of the producer. In an interview conducted on June 2013, Howlett began by stating that “in any completed session a production is the outcome”, regardless of becoming a “good or bad production” (Howlett, June 2013). The “virtual” aspect of this session highlighted the specific question of the producer’s role as a “deliverer” of a production (ibid.).

As in any studio session, the decisions and choices about subjects such as microphone placements and performance values, among others, “will determine the nature of a given outcome” (ibid.). Quoting Simon Frith and Simon Zagorski-Thomas, editors of the book *The Art of Record Production*: “In the studio, technical decisions are aesthetic, aesthetic decisions are technical, and all such decisions are musical” (Frith 2012: loc. 357 of 7567).

However, Howlett sees the decision of the “appointed” producer Tiago “to step aside from this role in the interests of the project - an honorable course of action, and possibly a pragmatic choice” (Howlett 2013) - as problematic. Things were complicated by the many “voices” that could be heard during the session and also the conductor’s refusal to use the click track (a suggestion made by Tiago).

“This absence of a specific producer reveals much detail about the process: without a designated producer the decisions and choices that determined much of the quality of the final product were made according to a somewhat random process. In this instance, power seems to go, first, to those with a greater investment in the composition, and then to the performers, as represented by the conductor, but also to the commercial interest, as represented by António. He is the client in this instance, and, interestingly, able to say, on reflection, that he was satisfied with the outcome—that it had achieved his aims” (ibid.).

As described in the previous sections, the relative importance of the physical presence of the producer in the studio is acknowledged differently by the participants of the session. Monte, the engineer, undermined it, mentioning the use of the talkback

system as a justification. The musicians were physically close to the conductor who, to some extent, represented the role of the producer (Lucas 2013). However, “the ability to get out into the studio to discuss a specific detail, which is sometimes necessary, is, of course, not available” (Howlett 2013).

“The absence of this capacity to engage directly and spontaneously with the musicians was stated by Keil [the American composer] as a significant frustration. A viable alternative is to collaborate with fellow participants, as is seen here when the conductor interprets the composer’s changes and conveys them to the musicians. The process may be delayed somewhat, but the desired outcome is achieved, more or less. It is this “more or less” that needs further investigation: would the outcome have been closer to the composer’s intent had he been in the room? It would most likely have been different” (ibid.).

The presence of a consensual producer would have eventually managed to convince the conductor Joseph of the need to use the click track. This attitude of mistrust towards Tiago (among other reasons, in my view, because of their different musical backgrounds) would have only been overcome by an experienced producer - or the composer himself.

“As Joseph, the conductor, states: ‘I have to think twice before giving in to any suggestion coming from the booth’. The notion that to comply with an instruction “from the booth” constitutes “giving in” reveals much about his perception of the producer’s role. Had there been a producer physically in the room an alternative dynamic could have developed between these two personalities. A persuasive person could have convinced the conductor to use the click track, which would have had a material effect on the outcome” (ibid.).

Regarding the lack of visual contact mentioned by Keil during the Skype connection, a limited tool for remote recording sessions, as it “filters audio to optimize voice and dialogue and minimize musical content” (ibid.), Howlett suggests “to use Skype only for visual information and have a separate high quality communication system for the audio” (ibid.).

As suggested by Mike Howlett, a further area of research to be developed from this study is of the process of distributed creativity.

“Sawyer and DeZutter (2009) define the group creative process as “[one] that generates a creative product, but one in which no single participant’s contribution determines the result” (ibid); and also state that, “We use the term *distributed creativity* to refer to situations where collaborating groups of individuals collectively generate a shared creative product (ibid)” (Howlett 2013).

Howlett also mentions that

“Sawyer’s earlier work on creative collaboration (2003) describes “group flow” as a balance between “specific extrinsic goals” and “shared structures”, with an excessively structured, predictable framework being too restrictive, and the lack of clear goals being “chaotic and ineffective” (ibid.).

Regarding the session considered in this article

“In the session considered here, the absence of a clearly designated and functional producer allowed precisely the conditions to attain a balance between excessive structures and chaos, but although the participants were able to step up and share the responsibilities where possible and defer where necessary, the result in the end satisfied the commercial aims of António by providing material for his orchestral portfolio, but not the creative aspirations of Kiel, the composer” (ibid.).

The need to establish “clear roles, especially that of the producer, prior to the session” (ibid.) is highlighted by Mike Howlett as future advice learned from this case, one of many more to hopefully be covered by future ethnographic studies.

Having been present in many different recording sessions, I believe the creative process is distributed among several actors in these scenarios. When, as suggested by Howlett in the previous section, there is an absence of a designated producer, that distribution assumes a greater importance, as evidenced by Lucas when he stated that,

“[...] the biggest and most responsible producers are the musicians, because the natural product, which later on is filtered and improved with the help of technology, comes from them” (Lucas: May 2013).

This statement did not make as much sense to me as it did after considering the whole session in retrospect: there was a creative process going on and he considered himself an integral part of it. The "presence" of the "virtual" producer— although a contradiction in terms—exaggerates this issue. The physical absence of the producer/composer conditioned the process, strengthening the dynamics inside the recording room and reinforcing the interaction between the participants physically present there. There was always a continuous tension regarding the composer's judgment in New York - which, more than a city, works, in this situation, as a symbolic space of external credibility – a resonance of Meintje's 'overseas' which I mentioned in the theoretical framework. There were consequences in the musical performance resulting from it, added by the lack of visual contact with the composer who, for the same reason, felt his role reduced to an “advisory one” (Howlett 2013).

It also seems evident, from the case study presented above, in considering the recording studio as a setting where creative groups frequently gather, that the Distributed Creativity approach, being non-reductionist and non-individualistic, may constitute a powerful theoretical tool for recording studio ethnographies.

What will the future of recording sessions be? I hope this sub-chapter will contribute to further debates around the issue. As a final remark, and admitting a generational bias, I would repeat one of Keil's comments: “In this day and age of instant global communication, we easily forget the power of human proximity. Sometimes, there's no substitution for just being there” (Keil, December 2013).

7.5 Listening experiences

“ Talking about listening — and the listening process — is one of those seemingly impossible tasks, like writing a book on how to compose music or paint a masterpiece. We can perform the most detailed examination of the auditory process [...] but it won't tell us why we listen the way we do” (Petersen 2007).

In chapter 7.2, I have shown how digital technology gave rise to the appearance, in the late 80s, of home and project studios, usually built in small spaces and generating a specific type of listening pattern. I have also stated that, according to my field work at Namouche, there seems to be a novel interest in high-end, large recording studios which, due to its space and acoustic conditions, may offer other sonic and more involving listening experiences.

This sub-chapter, in the form of a personal reflection, has the purpose of raising questions regarding different sound formats, as well as recording and sound reproduction technologies. I am interested in the ways these may influence diverse listening modes and other areas associated to music: production, creation and consumption. This reflection was triggered by an episode which happened to me, some years ago.

Coming back from an academic conference, a colleague of mine and I found ourselves in a small airport, waiting for the return plane. My friend decided to buy a large pair of headphones at the airport's small free-shop because, he said, "I need a pair of good headphones". The fact that I already had a pair of small headphones made me rather uninterested in his purchase. That was until he asked the question: "Would you like to try them out?".

And so I did.

My friend was listening to jazz music and the moment I tried the headphones, a feeling of deep pleasure invaded my body through my ears, as if I was listening to music for the first time. When I returned them to my friend, he immediately put them on, enjoying his music listening. I tried to listen to music through my small headphones again, but I soon gave up. It just didn't sound right.

Five months later, coming from another conference, and waiting for a plane at another airport, I bought myself a pair of new headphones.

What happened when I tried my friend`s headphones was a sort of epiphany, a sensation that connected me straight to past sonic memories of pleasant listening experiences. The episode also made me reflect about the way I have been listening to music in the last years, and why many times I have decided not to listen to music.

Listening expectations, listening formations

My listening experience of music has been divided into four main contexts: the recording studio, my car, my walk along the coast and my house.

As a professional musician, I have spent hours listening to music through headphones (binaural listening), particularly the closed-backed type.

“A closed-backed headphone seals the transducer within its enclosure so that virtually no sound escapes to the outside world. Equally, little of the ambient sound gets in. This type of headphone is the best choice for the studio floor, enabling the musicians to hear what's going on without the headphone signal bleeding into the microphones” (Robjohns 2003).

In the recording studio, a musician`s performance is highly influenced by the interaction established between his/her own performance and the others - between what is being recorded in real time and what has already been recorded on other tracks. It is of the essence, therefore, to have a clear notion of what the instruments involved are playing. Depending on the type of instrument you play and also your personal sound taste, the decision of having more of one instrument than another on the sound coming from your headphones is clearly yours. You can also decide *how* you want to listen to your instrument – for instance, with or without the presence of signal processors such as reverberations or delays, which manipulate the sound. When your instrument is your voice, it is also advisable to uncover one of your ears, as this enables you to have a clearer notion of your own tuning. Establishing the right listening in a recording studio is a

complex process, involving a number of important decisions and negotiations between you and the sound engineer, which affect your musical performance. It is an essential skill for a professional musician (especially a session musician), because, as seen through Clare Torry's testimony on sub-chapter 7.3, the better you listen to yourself and the others, the better you perform.

It is reasonable to assume that this music listening "mode" informed my listening expectations in other situations. In my car, for instance, where listening is not binaural, but trans-aural (through loudspeakers), the signal-to-noise relation differs, as the brain's attention is divided between different sources - the music source, and the environmental sounds inside and outside the car. But when deciding which radio station to listen to, I choose primarily the one that *sounds* better to me through my car stereo. Similarly, when I play a CD, I tend to choose the ones that I consider to have better *sound* quality.

My walking experience along the beach coast has undergone some changes, according to the portable sound device I use to listen to music. Some years ago, I had an MP3, in which I put several different albums. In order to listen to the songs that *sounded* good - whose order of appearance in the sequence I knew by heart - I was constantly moving the device forward and backward (later, I came to realize that the shuffle mode made me listen to songs according to an arbitrary order established by the device itself, and not by the order I knew they had previously). As the MP3 was rather small, it was difficult for me to carry out that operation without my reading glasses, (an item I do not usually carry when I go for a walk). In short, the sound format, together with the small headphones and the shuffle mode (which caused an unpleasant unpredictability, making me adjust the volume more often than I wished), turned music listening in that context uninteresting and troublesome (the opposite of what it is supposed to be, relaxing and enjoyable). I eventually gave up using the MP3, so my walking experience became "musicless", which at first, and much to my surprise, constituted a relief. Until I got another sound device and, particularly, a new pair of headphones – the ones I mentioned previously.

At home, I usually listen to music at dinner time, despite the fact that I am doing something else at the same time.²⁵⁶ The volume is never overtly low, as I want to listen

²⁵⁶ Nick Southall (2006) poses the question "How often do people simply sit down and listen to a record, rather than putting on some music while they do something else?", establishing a causal relation between

to what is being played and not just have it as background (that is probably the main reason why I cannot listen to music when I am writing or reading - as the present moment: music is too involving for me to be able to have it just “there”, not listening to it). Most of the times, I prefer to play a CD, knowing in advance what I am about to listen too. Recently I have been experimenting an on-line jazz radio, with multiple channels. Again, whenever the music doesn’t *sound* right, I get up and change the channel.

What do these four music listening experiences have in common and how are they relevant to the present discussion?

First, they define me as an active listener - music, as long as it is “out there”, will steal my attention. Whether this circumstance is related to my professional activity or not is difficult to say, but it was certainly deepened by it. The fact that, in the studio and with good sound equipment (and good sound engineers), I have been able to listen to music in close detail, made me aware of the world of *sound* as a separate entity within music. Like a wine lover, who claims to be able to smell wood, orange peel, and other scents,

“It seems like nonsense until you immerse yourself in the sensations of the discipline and find that you too are scrabbling for ridiculous metaphors to describe how something tastes or sounds or smells when you realize there are more nuances than you ever imagined” (Southall 2006).

My love for music came mainly from record and radio listening, in a hi-fi device²⁵⁷ that my parents had.²⁵⁸ Later, my father offered my sister and I a Grundig analogue tape-

this hypothetical absence of listening mode and the distorted way in which people listen to music these days - “on trains, in offices, on the street”, which he considers “not a normal listening experience”. Although I sympathize with much of the referred article’s content (which I will be mentioning along this sub-chapter), the question is not solely, in my view, the various social music listening contexts, but other aspects as well: what is a “normal (music) listening experience”? Or, rephrasing, what is a “normal (music) listening experience today?

²⁵⁷ When I refer to a hi-fi device, I mean, in this particular case, the stereo sound systems which were part of a larger piece of furniture (like a console), which included a vinyl player, a cassette player and a radio. It was a beautiful piece of furniture from Grundig, with a very good sound quality. When referring to hi-fi as a concept, I mean the mediated recorded sound that faithfully reproduces the original (Emory Cook quoted on Millner 2009:352). Although many times the concept of hi-fi is associated to the idea of recreating the concert-hall in the living-room” (ibid:353), in my case it is more the idea of accessing the music the way it was conceived and heard in the recording studio, without “masking” it through bad sound reproduction devices and headphones.

²⁵⁸ It was only much later, in my late teens and early twenties, that I began listening to music through headphones, first in the recording studio, and then through a cassette Walkman (later, a CD Walkman and then a minidisc Walkman).

recorder (which, according to my recollection, had an incredible sound). This enabled us to record music directly from the radio. Similarly, my most important years as studio session singer were through analogue technology. As years went by, my music preferences remained, for the most, historically located between the 1960s and the early 1990s.²⁵⁹

It is fair to say, then, that a number of factors - professional context, music references, sound formats, diversified forms of mediation - condition the way we listen to music. These factors constitute what Kevin Devine (2013) defines as listening formations, as already mentioned on chapter 4, a concept involving “the whole context of audition for historically specific audiences, taking account of expectations formed for them” (ibid.). These expectations, which in my case include belonging to a hi-fi, album-based, analogue recorded music culture, led me further to reflect upon what other issues disturbed me in these more modern ways of music listening - the portable MP3 device and headphones.

First, binaural listening. As mentioned before, my main experience with headphones has been through the recording studio (mainly, in the analogue era). Attempts to compare the music listening experience in an analogue recording studio, with a good pair of closed-backed headphones (and a competent sound engineer to make your monitoring comfortable) to listening from an MP3, IPOD or other similar device with - even - a good pair of headphones are, in my opinion, worthless.

Secondly, the sound format: MP3. There was something about it that made music sound “small” (like the device itself). It is important to bear in mind that the music I had on my MP3 device had been, for the most, recorded in analogue studios and, therefore, had not been conceptualized to be heard through such a rather low-fi, compressing device. But even for the albums/songs that were already recorded digitally, I had the CDs at home...and they sounded different.²⁶⁰ There were “things” (let’s call them, generically, sonic events) that simply were not there.

²⁵⁹ “The early 90s are considered by many to have been a golden age of mastering and sound engineering, when the industry had become familiar with CDs” and “technology had yet to be overtaken by commercial concerns” (Southall 2006).

²⁶⁰ The music I had on my MP3 was a selection of Stevie Wonder’s greatest hits, Seal’s second solo album *Seal II*, various Beatles songs, Chiara Civello’s first solo album *Last Quarter Moon* and some more recent songs that my son had included in my play-list. - KT Tunstall’s “Suddenly I see” and “Other Side of the World” and The Feeling’s “Sewn”. As I recall, these three songs were much louder than the rest...

From CDs to MP3s and The Loudness War²⁶¹

“Arriving on the market in 1982, just after record sales began to revive following a three-year downturn, the compact disc ushered in the biggest boom in profits the record companies had known since 7” singles gave way to 12” LPs in the late 1960s. The CD persuaded many music fans to replace their vinyl collection with digital copies of music they had already paid for. And the rise of the CD permitted record companies to double the price of their basic product without incurring a huge uplift in costs” (Sandall 2007).

Apart from the economic relevance the CD brought to the music industry, on the technical side its advantages were greatly welcomed by music professionals.

“Back in the days of vinyl, physical limitations forced artists and engineers to weigh issues such as volume and EQ against track length. Later, cassette brought along its own advantages (and limitations), but digital really rocked the production world. When CD came along, engineers rejoiced in its increased dynamic range and reduced noise floor; it seemed the sky was the limit...” (Jones 2005).

This “nearly perfect creation”²⁶² offered “at least 20dB more dynamic range than LPs. It was “a vast sonic space waiting to be colonized”.²⁶³ However, the use and abuse of this added dynamic range triggered what is usually denominated as the Loudness War.

“Over time, musical peaks, and then average volume, crept closer and closer to that limit, in time exhibiting squashed dynamics, increased clipping and flat-topped waveforms — a new “wall of sound,” so to speak. There's no denying that music is louder today [2005] than ever before” (ibid.).

²⁶¹ As stated before, the negotiation between volume and fidelity has been, over the history of sound reproduction, a constant feature. Kevin Devine (2005) argues that, opposite to the singular expression Loudness War, there are several “loudness wars” throughout the years (ibid.:5). In this section, I will be focusing on what more recently has been denominated The Loudness War - the one which occurred after the emergence of the CD (1982) in the music market and supposedly ended in the early 2000s.

²⁶² Millner 2009:263. Millner uses this “common trope of science fiction”(ibid.) to refer to the CD: “Someone or something - often a synthetic creation - [which] is introduced to the world nearly perfect, except for one fatal flaw”.

²⁶³ ibid.:262.

Music reproduction devices such as the multiple CD changer, which facilitated multiple CD listening both at home and, later, in the car, helped creating amongst industry people - particularly the label representatives - the idea that “louder is better”. In this process, what mattered most was the average volume of a CD, and not its dynamic peaks. Compressing the music’s dynamic range became a necessary survival condition in the music business.²⁶⁴

As far as radio broadcasts were concerned, and because

“Broadcast processors deal with a wide variety of audio source material [voice-overs and speech, modern and old songs, commercials and jingles], processors cannot optimally treat hyper-compressed music alone” (Granville-Fall 2015:22).

The outcome would be compression over compression, “resulting in an exaggerated degradation.”²⁶⁵ But, by the nineties, radio itself as a medium became louder and louder (Millner 2009), triggering CDs to, eventually, sound like the radio. “They wanted it loud, that thick compressed sound”.²⁶⁶

According to Rip Rowan, author of two seminal articles about the Loudness War (2002 and 2009):

“The Loudness War ended in 2001, the year that Replay Gain and the iPod were introduced. These two technologies – massive MP3 jukeboxes combined with volume-leveling software – render the Loudness War null and void” (Rowan 2009).

²⁶⁴ “Mastering engineers have been under pressure from clients such as record label executives, to push the levels higher under the capitalist ideal louder sells. A&R staff would be anxious their next release would not live up to the loudness set by the current hit selling record on the radio and CD changer. If a master were not as loud as the current competitor it was sent back to the engineer for more compression. In some cases record labels would set up ‘shoot outs’ where a mix was sent to multiple engineers and the person engineering the loudest master earned the job” (Millner 2009:268 quoted in Granville-Fall 2015:14)

²⁶⁵ Robert Orban, Frank Foti, “Radio Ready: The Truth” in Katz, Bob (ed.) (2007) *Mastering Audio, The Art And The Science*, Focal Press, p. 274, quoted in Granville-Fall 2015:22.

²⁶⁶ Millner 2009:278-279. “Soon enough, there was real business incentive for mastering engineers to make a CD - which, remember, has a potential dynamic range of 96 dB- and compress it so that its range was a ‘radiofied’ 55dB” (ibid.).

I won't discuss the importance that Replay Gain had over the Loudness War. However, what Rowan considers assets of the downloadable music formats, namely that it "fundamentally changed the way we listen to music", I consider throwbacks. As such:

"The typical CD jukebox plays 1000 songs. The typical iPod plays over 10,000" (ibid.). The need for 10,000 songs in a listening device is highly questionable, as probably there won't be time to listen to all of them;

"The typical CD jukebox shuffles songs with a 5-second gap. The typical iPod shuffles songs with no gap" (ibid.). As the 60s song goes, "silence is golden"²⁶⁷. Silence is also music.

"CD jukeboxes hold entire albums" (ibid.). Coming from an album oriented music culture,²⁶⁸ I find this to be a great advantage.

"iPod listeners often collect singles – meaning, more music from different and diverse sources. So listeners hear lots of very diverse music back-to-back" (ibid.). Having heard many albums from beginning to end (some of them concept albums), I find it hard to consider collecting singles an advantage *per se* in a music reproduction device.

"And the typical iPod user may spend hours creating playlists – the 2000s answer to the 1980s mix tape – which just don't happen with a CD jukebox" (ibid.). Again, I find it hard to consider "spending hours creating playlists" an asset.

"How can I miss listening to something I have never heard?"

Rowan (2009) says one thing, however, (to which he doesn't seem to give much attention), which has my full agreement: with MP3, "sound quality is diminished". For me, that is the issue.

This statement leads me back to the initial questions I raised in this sub-chapter: my listening formation, involving the sound formats I got used to listen to music from (vinyl and CDs, mostly), the sound reproduction devices (hi-fi at home, the radio) and later my

²⁶⁷ "Silence is Golden", The Four Seasons (1964) and The Tremeloes (1967)

²⁶⁸ Millner 2009: 272. Actually, Millner speaks of "AOR" (album oriented rock), but I believe it can be adapted to a music culture based on the recording of albums and singles (which were usually part of an album), by contrast to the more recent tendency to record/purchase individual songs and launch smaller units (such as EPs – a recording unit with more tracks than a single, but less than an album).

professional experience in the recording studio allowed me to experience music as a multi-dimensional object, involving different layers of timbers, volumes, dynamics, presence and sonic events which completely vanish in a low-fi environment. Even today, when listening to music in the car (either from the radio or from a CD), I know *what that music was supposed to sound like* (in case I know the song being played), if heard in different acoustic conditions.²⁶⁹ I am that lucky. Younger generations, born and raised in low-fi music environments, aren't. And they don't even know it.

Bob Dylan is rather straight-forward in his comments in a 2006 interview:

“...I don't know anybody who's made a record that sounds decent in the past twenty years, really. You listen to these modern records, they're atrocious, they have sound all over them. There's no definition of nothing, no vocal, no nothing, just like - *static*.[...] I remember when that Napster guy came up across, it was like, 'Everybody's getting music for free.' I was like, 'Well, why not? It ain't worth nothing anyway'” (Bob Dylan in Millner 2009:356).

In a 2014 study mentioned by Nicholas Granville-Fall (2015), it is concluded that “people not specifically educated regarding compression and therefore *un-trained listeners*, preferred higher amounts of compression than those who were trained”, which leads the author to believe that

“education regarding loudness and hyper-compression can only be a positive step for change, especially for the next generation of aspiring young professionals with open access to information, software and DIY culture offered by the digital revolution. [...] This DIY approach has benefits like cost savings and maintaining full artistic control but it also runs the risk of a reduction in professional audio quality, amongst other problems like emotional attachment” (ibid:26).

In view of what has been stated in this sub-chapter, I couldn't agree more with this final quote by Greg Millner:

²⁶⁹ “When music on a CD is converted to MP3 or AAC (the IPOD default), between 80 and 90 percent of the music is simply discarded. We (supposedly) don't notice because of the psychoacoustic phenomenon called masking” (Millner 2009:357).

“High fidelity barely exists today [...] because the fundamental ethic governing recorded music has been reversed. Presence implies capturing *everything*. Today, we try to capture as little as possible while fostering the illusion of everything. We don’t want everything. We want just enough” (2009:357)

8. The locus of recording

“Location, location, location!”²⁷⁰

In the real estate business, the three main *criteria* that influence a property’s value and desirability are said to be: first - location; second - location and third - location. Having moved at least three times and, luckily, to nicer and more interesting places and neighborhoods in the process, I can only corroborate this expression. In this sub-chapter, I will focus on the importance of location in a recording studio.

Location in a recording studio is probably not equated in the same terms as for a residential house, admitting that identical recording studios - a peculiar thought, in itself - “can increase or decrease in value due to location”.²⁷¹

In chapter 7.2, I tried to draw attention to the importance of space in the act of recording and how the use of high-end studios became almost an expandable activity. As Albin Zak states (2007):

“today, the recording studio is any place where sound is captured or manipulated, and it is often staffed, and all duties performed, by one person. With any sound imaginable available in sampled form, productions can take any shape whatsoever, their sounds performed by virtual ensembles conjured in the artist’s imagination. The “artist,” of course, may be a ten-year old, a farmer, or a tax accountant” (ibid.).

It wasn’t always like that, though. In fact, there was - still is, but in lesser number - a type of recording studio where artists were supposed to stay while recording their music, not having to interrupt the creative process, their being *in the zone* - sometimes a difficult place to reach in such heavily charged environments as recording studios can be. These so-called residential studios tried to combine two main characteristics: beautiful location

²⁷⁰ Actually the name of a Channel 4 TV programme, this expression, also called “the real estate agents’ manta” (http://homebuying.about.com/od/marketfactstrends/qt/013008_location.htm - accessed on August 2015, is attributed to Lord Harold Samuel in 1944 (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/2819464/Its-location-location-location-for-Land-Secs.html> - accessed on August 2015).

²⁷¹ Weintraub, Elizabeth “Location, Location, Location - What does Location, Location, Location mean?” in *About Home* - http://homebuying.about.com/od/marketfactstrends/qt/013008_location.htm - accessed on August 2015.

(particularly close to nature) and state-of-the-art technology. The combination of these two items, plus a nice and comfortable interior decoration - and sometimes a good cook²⁷² - made these facilities the perfect setting for an artist to let go of social and familiar constraints and be able to dedicate himself/herself to the recording process in its fullest.

Several residential studios I found in the internet use the word “inspirational” in their homepage. Real World, for instance, Peter Gabriel’s project which involves a recording studio and a label, is advertised as a facility which “offers an inspiring environment containing some of the finest acoustic technology solutions and a team of people who know how to make them work for you”.²⁷³

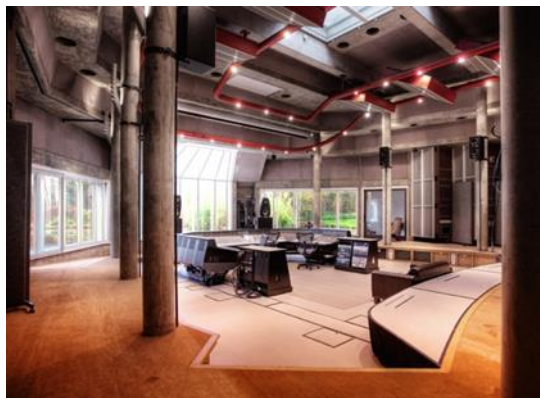


Photo 7 - The Big Room, Real World Studios, England

Photo taken from Real World site - <http://realworldstudios.com/> - accessed on August 2015.

²⁷² In the Real World studios site, there is a nice reference to the cook, Jerome, a French former bass player, as an asset to the facility. Because, as it is mentioned, “feeding the creative process can be demanding” - <http://realworldstudios.com/residential/the-kitchen/> - accessed on August 2015.

²⁷³ <http://realworldstudios.com/> - accessed on August 2015.



Photo 8 - Surrounding area (ibid.)

“If Real World does one thing better than any other studio, it is providing an environment which prevents any creative challenge from appearing insurmountable”.²⁷⁴

Another residential recording facility, Monnow Valley Studio “always provides an inspirational natural environment in which to produce the finest music”.²⁷⁵



Photo 9 - Monnow Valley Studios surrounding area, South Wales

Photo taken from <https://www.discogs.com/label/269702-Monnow-Valley-Studios> - accessed on August 2015.

Others, like *Sonic Ranch*, “the largest Residential Recording Studio complex in the world” appeal to other factors, such as a “great personnel” and “lack of distractions”

²⁷⁴ This is one of the sentences that appears in Real World’s website, while a gallery of photos (including the one of the surrounding area) are displayed.

²⁷⁵ <http://www.monnowvalleystudio.com/about/> - accessed on August 2015.

which “make for a relaxed, unique and productive atmosphere”.²⁷⁶ With an impressive diversity of studio options and technology available, this recording studio mingles a recording and relaxing environment with artistry, using decorative elements, colors and textures in resonance with the area where it is located.



Photo 10 - Mastering room, Sonic Ranch, USA

Photo present in Sonic Ranch's website -
http://www.sonicranch.com/mastering_site.html

I had heard about the existence of these studios during my most active years in the recording industry. It was only in 2013, in Quebec, during the 8th ARP Conference, and particularly listening to André Perry's keynote that my interest in this subject matter revived. Particularly in current times, when, as stated previously by Albin Zak, “the recording studio is any place where sound is captured or manipulated” (2007), one cannot stop wondering what it would be like to have a recording experience in such privileged settings.

An interview with André Perry

André Perry is a French Canadian producer, musician, composer and recording engineer. From a very early age, he became part of the Canadian music scene, first as a jazz drummer, singer and studio musician, and afterwards in the recording industry as

²⁷⁶ http://www.sonicranch.com/about_us.html - accessed on August 2015.

owner of several studios, producing, composing and engineering.²⁷⁷ His most well-known studio, and the one that motivated this sub-chapter, is Le Studio. Located outside the metropolitan area of Montreal (65 Km away), Le Studio was

“The first refined ‘environmental recording studio’ in which artists were embedded for the duration of the recording process, which sometimes lasted more than 4 months, in an atmosphere of creative protection and encouragement.”²⁷⁸

Le Studio, referred by Neil Peart, drummer of rock band Rush as “my ultimate landscape, dreamscape, soulscape”²⁷⁹ resulted from the combination of the most up-dated recording technology - something Mr. Perry confessed he enjoyed, to be on the “cutting edge, a little bit further than the rest”²⁸⁰ - with a well trained staff (including a French chef) and that “European flare”²⁸¹ that, being French Canadian and having worked with many French artists in Paris, he had somehow acquired. That was what made Le Studio not just *any* studio. But there was more to it, as I will soon refer.

After the conference, I decided to get in touch with Mr. Perry, which I did through email. Having first introduced myself and explained the reason for my contact, I asked his permission to send another email with the questions I wanted to ask him. Mr. Perry politely answered and insisted we should speak rather than contact via written code.

I had the pleasure of speaking to him through Skype for more than an hour. During a conversation that was more like a journey to the heydays of the recording industry, with someone who was an active part of the process and an innovator, Mr. Perry spoke about artists with whom he had worked and recordings in which he was involved that are, still today, part of my personal soundscape. Cat Stevens, The Bee Gees, Elton John, Rush, Chicago, Bryan Adams, David Bowie, The Police (not to mention his collaboration with French artists such as Mireille Mathieu and Julien Clerc, among

²⁷⁷ André Perry’s life is too full of important marks in the history of recorded popular music and of the Canadian music industry that it becomes very difficult and unfair to synthesize it. For more information about his life and career, see <http://www.andreperrystudios.com/biography/?lang=en>.

²⁷⁸ <http://www.andreperrystudios.com/biography/?lang=en> - accessed on August 2015.

²⁷⁹ “Le Studio Documentary series - Temple of Sound - Episode One” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlKoy94itiw> - accessed on August 2015. Rush and Le Studio are closely associated (particularly for Rush’s fans), once the band recorded there its most iconic albums.

²⁸⁰ Skype interview with André Perry, August 2014. Le Studio was the first recording studio, together with Abbey Road, which used the Solid State Logic Mastersystem console (<http://www.andreperrystudios.com/biography/?lang=en> - accessed on August 2015).

²⁸¹ *ibid.*

others) were only a few of the names he mentioned, as well as recordings such as *Saturday Night Fever* (The Bee Gees), *Chicago 13* (Chicago), *Cuts Like a Knife* (Bryan Adams), *Synchronicity* (The Police) and *The Dream of the Blue Turtle* (Sting). Suddenly, on that August day, a big part of my musical world was at my small country house in a village somewhere in the center of Portugal.

When I saw the photos of Le Studio, particularly the piano room, with glass walls, surrounded by beautiful trees and a lake, I got the impression that location was one of the most important features of this facility's concept (hence my sub-chapter's title). But the conversation with Mr. Perry showed other angles to the subject.

"There is a misconception about location, because you built [the studios] in these paradises, and people would rush over and come because 'Uau, it's wonderful, it's mystic'...it's not true. A studio that is world renowned has to be right. It doesn't matter where it is, because there were many environmental studios all over the world, [but some of them] didn't care about the music, they didn't care about the excellence, they didn't care about the studio having its own personality.[...] The location was important, but not very important" (André Perry, 2014).

Mentioning Canada's hard winters as a discouraging aspect for potential clients who only wished for "an inspiring environment" based on location, Mr. Perry developed further what the philosophy of Le Studio was.

"What was important is that it was one of the first times that, instead of working in large cities like London, LA, New York, where people work during x hours in the studio, then go to their Hotel, then "boogie" at night...in my case, they would live together and think of their project 24 hours a day [...] And the difference between a city studio and an environmental studio at that time is that they [the artists] owned it, it was theirs - the setup, everything stayed - and the studio was geared up to make them have the feeling that it was theirs. I had staff that came from all over the world - New York, England, Toronto, Switzerland - working at the studio. It was a different concept: people understood that when they came, it[the studio] was theirs. And the staff was part of creating what I call the "five minutes of magic" (ibid.).



Photo 11 - Recording room, Le Studio, Morin Heights, Canada

Photo taken from “André Perry biography” site - <http://andreperystudio.com/biography/photos/15.jpg> - accessed on August 2015.

It became clear, through Mr. Perry’s words, that location, for the philosophy of Le Studio, was important in as much as the advantages that being distant from big urban centers could bring to the continuity of a project. But there was more to it. The “five minutes of magic” that Mr. Perry speaks about, as well as the international staff he had - which made the studio look “almost like the United Nations” (ibid.) had a basic concept in its origin. Following a period of lack of motivation, where he was doing the same thing every day (“recording jingles and stuff”) when turnkey studios were appearing in the market, all sounding the same,

“[...]it was also the period when studios associated themselves with a sound - the LA Sound, Nashville, Muscle Shoals, London, New York - and the artist would go there for its sound. Me, as a musician...and also as a producer...I wasn’t satisfied with that. For me, the studio was always an instrument, it’s an addition to the musicians that are on the other side. [...]With that philosophy, I decided to build Le Studio” (ibid.).

With the purpose of creating “a new instrument that was very flexible” (Le Studio), the point was “trying to eliminate part of [the equipment] as the sound and use it as an instrument for what the artist was looking for as a sound” (ibid.).

As the next sub-chapter will show, there are many different *sounds* according to music genres, cultures, musical traditions and other features. The international staff André Perry had in the studio would work with the purpose of reaching the sound the

artists had in mind. There were times, however, when the studio's supposed versatility would be called into question, as Mr. Perry referred.

“The Bee Gees, when they did *Saturday Night Fever*, their sound came originally from Miami, Criteria,²⁸² cause they used to do a lot of Latin music and they had that kind of loose South-American kind of sound...and the Bee Gees wanted that kind of sound, so they came to our studio, they did some voice overs, but when the time to mix came...the preceding group that was at the studio was a British group and, you know, we had to give them *the British sound*...so when they came to town for mixing, they [The Bee Gees] said “We’re gonna go to Criteria to mix, because I don’t think you guys can actually give us the sound we are looking for”. So, I had all my technicians, all my people, my engineers, we worked all night, we retuned all the echo chambers, we retuned all kinds of things, and the next day we mixed some things and “Oh shit! Now we’re gonna stay here and mix it!”. [laughter] So, there’re stories like that all over...” (ibid.)

Mr. Perry also highlighted the fact that Le Studio contributed to the development of the Canadian music scene by letting local groups use the studio for very low fares or sometimes nothing. This happened in between projects, during a minimum period of time of two to three weeks, a time also used “to clear the air” (ibid).

Looking at the photos of the other residential studios mentioned in this sub-chapter, it is noticeable a possible influence - or inspiration - from Le Studio. It is also clear that location is important to all of them, to a higher or lesser degree. But Le Studio was much more than a lake, surrounded by trees in the middle of the Laurentian Mountains. At the end of the interview, I realized that restraining my dialogue with Mr. Perry to a number of written questions would not have been so enlightening and fruitful as talking to him - which was, apart from a great pleasure, an enormous privilege.

By a bitter twist of fate, location is practically the only thing left from Le Studio. In a series of documentary films made by a group of Rush's fans (Le Studio was also called “Rush's Abbey Road”), it is mentioned that the fact the studio is still “there”

²⁸² Criteria Recording Studios (presently Hit Factory Criteria Recording Studios) is a studio based in Miami. It is associated to the name of Tom Dowd, legendary producer and engineer. Among the many artists that recorded there are the names of James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Eagles, Aerosmith and others. (Weber, Bruce “Mack Emerman, founder of Criteria Recording Studios, dies at 89”, *The New York Times*, May 28, 2013 - http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/28/arts/music/mack-emerman-recording-studio-founder-dies-at-89.html?_r=0 accessed on August 2015.)

(although abandoned and in a very poor state)²⁸³ makes it even more an object of cult and a place of pilgrimage for music fans (particularly fans of this Canadian group).²⁸⁴

“The reality is that, not because I want to ring my own bell, but I think Le Studio was probably in a way...unique...and you cannot look at the whole industry on one or two unique situations that were more *avant garde* and more ahead of its time, in a way, in philosophy...but that philosophy comes from the fact that I am a musician...even though I was an engineer for a long time, but I was always mainly a musician and the marrying the technology with the music and removing the engineer, making the engineer part of the group...to create the “five minutes of magic” for me...was my goal in life” (ibid.)

8.1 The “quest” for referential sounds

“I was never that technically minded, but I had sounds in my head.”²⁸⁵

From the 1960s onwards - and particularly in the 70s and the 80s - Anglo-American popular music played a major role in establishing sonic references that musicians around the world wanted to emulate. The word *sound* started to be used outside its strict physical sense - “a vibration that propagates as a typically audible mechanical wave of pressure and displacement, through a medium such as air or water”,²⁸⁶ or “compressions and rarefactions of the atmosphere”²⁸⁷ - and began to be associated to a number of sonic

²⁸³ In the early 90’s, André Perry sold the studio to the Spectra group, which subsequently sold it to another company (a “numbered company”). It has been left to abandon since. Richard Baxter, a Canadian musician, has set a crowdfunding to buy and restore the studio, adding a museum to highlight the studio’s past. (Dalton, Melinda “Morin Heights’ Le Studio has star-studded past and uncertain future”, June the 8th 2015, CBC news Montreal - <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/morin-heights-le-studio-has-star-studded-past-and-uncertain-future-1.3104725> - accessed on August 2015). Unfortunately, on August 2017 a fire destroyed what was left of Le Studio.

²⁸⁴ “Le Studio Documentary series - Temple of Sound - Episode One” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlKoy94itiw> - accessed on August 2015. There is, actually, a Le Studio Youtube channel, with its subscribers, to whom this documentary series is, apparently, mostly addressed to.

²⁸⁵ Geoff Emerick in Massey, Howard (2000) *Behind the Glass*, Miller Freeman Books, p.84.

²⁸⁶ Wikipedia, “sound” - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound> - accessed on November the 22 2015.

²⁸⁷ José Fortes, interview, January 2014.

features that characterized certain bands, recording studios, musicians, producers or even localities.

“a highly selective and abbreviated list of style/place links would include, for instance, Liverpool (The Beatles), San Francisco (Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead, and other psychedelic bands of the 1960s and 1970s), Detroit (Motown), Los Angeles (surf music in the 1960s or skate punk and thrash in the 1980s), New York and Los Angeles (rap and hip-hop since the 1980s) and Seattle (grunge, typified by Nirvana)” (Porcello 2005:103).

To this list we could add, as already mentioned in this thesis, Phil Spector’s sound - the wall of sound -, the Muscle Shoals sound (the sound of a rhythmic section that originally played in Fame Studios in the city of Muscle Shoals, Alabama) or the Austin sound (Porcello 2005:113-117).

In Portugal, this need to follow sonic models embodied in records from the United States and England (the core countries of pop-rock in those decades) was also felt. Underlined by the huge technological bulk between recording processes here and in these Anglophone countries, the desire to attain these much sought-after sounds was a “quest” often involving a reasonable degree of frustration.

Is this “quest”, “an elusive search” in the words of Thomas Porcello,²⁸⁸ only a matter of technology?

The aim of this sub-chapter is to launch several questions regarding performance in the studio and the relations involved in the construction of distinctive conceptualizations of sound in popular music. Can a particular recording sound, conceived, created and materialized in a specific geographic, social and cultural context successfully be emulated elsewhere? What other issues, besides technology, are involved in this matter? What is the dynamics between technology and human agency in the recording studio? Who decides what for whom?

These questions will raise discussion about the power relations between the different actors present in the recording set — the artist, musicians, sound engineer, producer, the label’s AR —, but also issues concerning musicianship and its effect on the

²⁸⁸ Thomas Porcello uses this expression referring to language use in recording sessions – “[...] the elusive search for ‘the right sound’ during a recording session - when professional audition must become an overt subject of discourse” (Porcello 2004:740). Although Porcello is using the term ‘the right sound’ in absolute terms, I am considering this ‘right sound’ in comparative terms (the ‘right sound’ of another band or musician that I want for myself – what I nominate as ‘referential sound’), once this search, as the sub-chapter will demonstrate, can also be an elusive one.

sound, language and verbal communication regarding the abstract world of *sound*, technology and experience. I will use Rui Veloso as case study, as the interviews I conducted with him for my Master degree, although not addressing specifically the topic of sound, revealed defined ideas in relation to the composer's sonic ideals.

Rui Veloso, the sonic “searcher”

Rui Veloso has been mentioned several times during this thesis as a landmark in the shaping of Portuguese popular music from 1980s onwards. He is considered, rather against his will, “the father of Portuguese rock.” This epithet focuses on two features: a musical genre - rock - and a language - Portuguese. The articulation of both features, after a period of politically influenced music, sounded new and fresh – particularly on account of Veloso’s powerful vocal “bluesy” style, his guitar playing and the talented lyrics of Carlos Tê.²⁸⁹ However, I believe one of Veloso’s major assets was his constant concern for the sonic quality of his records, a feature that whoever epitomized him – mainly the music press - did not pay much attention to.

Veloso’s sound references were based on American and British pop-rock groups. One of these groups had a special impact on his sound ideal: Steely Dan. The Dan’s famous and already mentioned studio perfectionism was evident in the fact that their best known albums — *Aja* (1977) and *Gaúcho* (1980) — took months to be released, the majority of which on the studio set.

Producer/engineer Elliot Scheiner worked with the group for many years. When asked about musicians who were “sonically conscious”, Scheiner’s answer pointed immediately to Steely Dan,²⁹⁰ referring *Aja* – one of the band’s records where he was involved - as “the record that took [Steely Dan’s] obsession with sonic detail to new heights.” Recorded over a period of six months in various state-of-the-art studios across New York and LA, *Aja* highlights Steely Dan’s sonic demands, where every overdub was

²⁸⁹ Carlos Tê is probably the most well-known Portuguese pop-rock lyricist since the 1980s, mostly due to his collaboration with Rui Veloso, but also on account of other more recent collaborations with groups such as Clã, and singer-songwriter Jorge Palma (Campelo 2010).

²⁹⁰ “Well, that was primarily Steely. I’ve never worked with anyone else who was into it to that degree.” in Droney, Maureen (2003) “Elliot Scheiner” in *Mix Magazine* online, January 2003 http://mixonline.com/recording/interviews/audio_elliot_scheiner/ - accessed on June 21st 2014.

scrutinized “until every note was irrevocably in place.”²⁹¹ It was “pristinely recorded and performed” using “a jaw-dropping slew of ace session players”²⁹² which the Dan tried to combine in the most perfect way. As Rick Marotta would state “whole new bands would go, and a whole incredible other band would come in.”²⁹³ Marotta, who collaborated with the group in the recording of *Aja*, would add to the words of Scheiner about sonic details, referring something he used in his drum performance, but that so far had never been captured on a record.

“I just opened my hi-hat a hair, every couple of beats with what I was playing on my right hand on the hi-hat, and it created this little sound. I had done that but never ever heard it on a record I’d done because [with the] engineers and sounds at the time, it was a nuance, and those things didn’t exist.”²⁹⁴

So far, issues regarding the technology used (as the reference to “state-of-the-art” studios underlines) and musicianship (the “jaw-dropping use of ace session players”) stem from the quotes above. Connected to both items is the attention to detail mentioned by Rick Marotta, suggesting that his musical expertise embodied in a specific performance detail (what Marotta refers as “this little sound”), although present in other sessions (“I had done that [before]”), was not only acknowledged by the producers, but sonically captured by the engineers and therefore distinguishable on the record.

A set of situations

The recording of *Ar de Rock*, Veloso’s first hit album, in 1980, was a very different experience. Some of the reasons pointed out by Veloso were

“[In the 1980s] There were no producers and no engineers [...]. Today, I still listen to the records of Doobie Brothers and Steely Dan of 1975, 74 [...] and I wanted to

²⁹¹ Reed, Ryan (2013) “36 Years Ago: Steely Dan release *Aja*” in *Ultimate Classic Rock* on line <http://ultimateclassicrock.com/steely-dan-aja-album-released/> - accessed on June 2014.

²⁹² *ibid.*

²⁹³ Rick Marotta, drummer, *ibid.*

²⁹⁴ *ibid.*

have that *sound*... Ten years later, I wanted that sound and the fact is I couldn't have it... not for any lack of microphones; it was a set of situations. [...] There was no experience" (Rui Veloso, Vale de Lobos, May 2009).

What set of situations was Veloso talking about?

One of them, although not mentioned by Veloso, could certainly be language: language *is* sound. Portuguese and English are two very different sonic universes.

"We have much longer words, unlike English, which is loaded with monosyllables and bisyllables. Therefore, the musical sentences are much shorter. In Portuguese, the musical sentences have to be longer, you have to compose in a different way" (Tó Zé Brito, Lisbon, July 2011).²⁹⁵

Leaving the subject of language use in Portuguese popular music (particularly pop-rock) to other instances,²⁹⁶ Veloso's quote refers specifically to lack of experience in record production. José Manuel Fortes, the sound engineer who recorded *Ar de Rock*, commented technological issues in the following terms:

"As far as the equipment is concerned, I keep saying more and more that it's irrelevant... I come from the steel thread times and until the magnetic tape (the Dolby system years, around 1971, 72) a guy had some problems, particularly on account of the signal-noise relation; afterwards, that situation ceased to exist and what was done in the 80s, what was done differently from today I'm convinced that has nothing to do with equipment, but with knowledge" (José Manuel Fortes, Vilar, November 2011).

There seems to be no apparent divergence between Veloso's discourse and Fortes': both seem not to overvalue technology in relation to sound quality. However, as the interviews went on, a certain antagonist position regarding the ultimate responsibility for the recorded sound emerged.

²⁹⁵ Tó Zé Brito is a well-known musician and composer with whom I have worked many times as session singer, as well as the former AR of major recording labels such as Polygram and Universal Records.

²⁹⁶ The debate around language use in Portuguese pop-rock has been going on for the last fifty years, since the first pop-rock groups of the 60s, involving musicians, the press, industry gate-keepers and the general public. It is a subject much to my interest, having resulted in some conference papers I have presented, where I defended the idea of "a sense of otherness" that Portuguese people sometimes have in relation to their national idiom (Campêlo 2011).

“[...] Many musicians are mistaken when they believe that the sound comes from the sound engineer...they come with a reference from some guy who has nothing to do with them and they want that sound... wrong... they have to *produce* that sound first and, once they’ve done that, the sound engineer may not damage it a lot” (Fortes *ibid*).

In this quote, Fortes makes a strong claim for the recorded sound to be, first and foremost, a direct consequence of musicianship, and not the assignment of the person who “stirs” the pot - the sound engineer²⁹⁷

The “LA sound”

Attempts to emulate a certain recorded sound involve, as stated so far, “a set of situations” (Veloso) that may include the language used in the songs, technology, experience (or lack of it) and musicianship. The task becomes all the more difficult, once the desired sound is what some have named the “LA sound”.

“Aja’s got a sound that lifts your heart up... and it’s the most consistent up-full, heart-warming... even though, it is a classic LA kinda sound. You wouldn’t think it was recorded anywhere else in the world. It’s got California through its blood, even though they are boys from New York. It’s a record that sends my spirits up, and really when I listen to music, really that’s what I want.”²⁹⁸

I asked Tó Pinheiro da Silva, Portuguese sound engineer who worked with Rui Veloso in his second and third album, to define the “LA sound”.

“It is one of the easiest to define, on account of the concept of silence. Everything works wonderfully because there is this big concern around leaving free space for silence. The arrangements were never overloaded with information, where it is

²⁹⁷ This metaphor comes in the sequence of another mentioned by Veloso, comparing the recording process to cooking a dish: “[after all], it all comes down to a great pot full of food, with all its ingredients: you add EQ or not, compressor or not, reverb or not, and then you balance everything...” (Veloso *ibid*.).

²⁹⁸ Ian Dury in *Classic Albums: Steely Dan - Aja* (Video 1999), Directed by Alan Lewins, Eagle Rock Entertainment, ASIN: 6305772649 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8GwEX7nn6o> – accessed on June 26th 2014.

difficult to separate the instruments as far as timbre is concerned and therefore each one managed to accomplish its function perfectly in the spectrum” (Tó Pinheiro da Silva, Oeiras, November 2011).

This “school of silence” was central for some of the main features attributed to the LA Sound, particularly after digital audio technology appeared. *The Nightfly*, the first solo album by Donald Fagen²⁹⁹ and one of the first records to be recorded digitally, is also one of Veloso’s referential records:

“If we think about it, *Ar de Roque* was released in 1980... but in that very year, another album was released, one which for me is still a paradigm of what sound is... excellence in sound... *The Nightfly* ³⁰⁰... so while out there, stuff like that was recorded, here... it was either eight or eighty [one extreme or the other]”³⁰¹ (Veloso *ibid.*).

Again, José Fortes directs the core of the problem to questions related to musicianship rather than a new technology and its most striking advantages.

“[...] The absence of noise stopped masking the sound, which became much clearer... [...] back then, I thought that was the sound engineer’s work exclusively; of course, there is the sound engineer’s work [...]; but if we listen to the Steely Dan records [before *The Nightfly*’s release], they have stuff like that too, only not as clear... the essence was there already! And the sound engineer thought: “Wow!!! Now I can make this sound even better!” (Fortes *ibid.*).

In other words, this *essence* is musical, not technical, and takes time to acquire. Therefore, and once again, musicianship is pointed as a fundamental trait in the construction of this particular recorded sound. The fact that, as stated by Rick Marotta, Donald Fagen and Walter Becker replaced whole bands, trying different combinations of rhythm sections and soloists was not purely by chance.

²⁹⁹ Donald Fagen, key-board player, composer, singer and producer is, as stated before, one “half” of Steely Dan, the other being Walter Becker.

³⁰⁰ To be exact, *The Nightfly* release year was not 1980, but 1982.

³⁰¹ This is the translation of a Portuguese expression, which means, in this case, that a lot was being done abroad in terms of record production (what Veloso metaphorically refers as “the eighty”), compared to what was happening in Portugal around the same date (“the eight”).

António Pinho, producer of *Ar de Rock*, speaks about the process of choosing session musicians to play in the record, as the demo tape had been recorded by Veloso's non-professional musician friends. This option had two goals: to obtain a better sound quality (as both the chosen bass player and drummer were already experienced musicians),³⁰² and to cut studio time, once the time granted to record was very short.³⁰³

“Rui considered the possibility of playing in the record with his friends from Porto, but he had the good sense of accepting my suggestion of working with Zé Nabo and Ramon Galarza, two experienced session professionals, very used to working with each other. They rehearsed with Rui for two weeks and the recording of the album took one week, with the three musicians playing at the same time. Only Rui did overdubs” (António Pinho, interview, Lisbon, 2014).

Time and money could be added to the set of situations previously mentioned. José Manuel Fortes mentions his experience of recording Veloso's first album as “something very quick, which lasted one or two weeks” (Fortes *ibid.*). António Pinho spoke of only one week for everything – tracking and mixing ten songs –, as a result of his insistence in using a different studio than the one suggested by the label. But even considering the possibility of this narrow time limit to be a consequence of the label's first investment in the artist, apparently it happened in other similar situations, as corroborated by musician Manuel Paulo. Commenting on the recording of Veloso's second album *Fora de Moda* (in English *Out of Fashion* - a.t), in 1982, and particularly its sound, he said: “It all sounded very...small”³⁰⁴

³⁰² Zé Nabo (born in 1948) is one of the most respected Portuguese bass players. He was part of the first Rui Veloso's band named Banda Sonora and still plays with him today. Ramon Galarza has already been mentioned in this thesis (see Introduction, p.9, note 23).

³⁰³ See sub-chapter 9.7 of this thesis, where this subject is further developed.

³⁰⁴ Manuel Paulo, keyboard and piano player, would add that, despite the fact that Veloso was, by that time (1982, after the commercial success of *Ar de Rock*) a top-selling recording artist, there was not a lot of time to “reflect upon the mixes” and “do things the proper way”: “[...] the studio sessions were all very fast” (Manuel Paulo, Parede, June 2009 in Campelo 2010 b)).

An interesting debate would be to question whether time in the studio means necessarily more overall quality in the finished product. António Pinho defended the spontaneity of *Ar de Rock*, even with Rui Veloso himself, who was convinced that more studio time would have improved the album, particularly in terms of sound quality. “You never know...we may have started adding things and mess everything up” was Pinho's answer. *Ar de Rock* sold 20.000 copies, exceeding largely the label's expectations. David Ferreira, who worked in Valentim de Carvalho for many decades mentioned in the interview I conducted with him that lack of deadlines in the recording studio makes artists “not take decisions” and works as a hindrance for them to “make choices” (Ferreira 2014). It is clearly a subject about which there is no clear answer.

Speaking of “sound” in the studio

Language use concerning sound in the studio set can be a complicated issue: following the idea of sound that a musician has may not be the easiest task to accomplish. Rui Remígio, another Portuguese sound engineer, when asked about specific demands made by musicians in recording sessions, was prompt to answer:

“I usually approach this type of situation saying: ‘Run away from the mediocres!’[...] You see, I never had any problems working with ‘the good ones’,³⁰⁵ only with the mediocres. There were some guys who, the minute they went into the studio, would start asking for microphone *x* to be placed in the *x* position. And the best way to deal with this was to let them speak and then ‘pull the rug from their feet’, asking ‘of course...but how do you want the polar diagram of the microphone? Cardioid, omnidirectional or bidirectional? Do you want attenuation as well?’ (Rui Remígio, Lisbon, May 2014).

The recording studio is an arena where different skills – musical versus technical – can, sometimes, be displayed as almost antagonistic, and negotiated in terms of power.

Language, as cryptically used as possible, plays a powerful role in these situations, acting as a kind of code to disable one of the parties from entering a secret world of “doings” and “knowings”.³⁰⁶ In the case of the recording of Veloso’s *Ar de Rock* (1980) and *Fora de Moda* (1982), his first and second albums, both sound engineers refer the atmosphere between the musician and themselves as amicable. For different reasons though: while Tó Pinheiro da Silva pointed the fact that being a musician himself eventually facilitated communication with Veloso (Silva *ibid.*), Fortes suggested that the relative inexperience of the musician when recording his first album might have smoothed the process (Fortes *ibid.*).

³⁰⁵ When mentioning “the good ones”, Remígio referred to a number of musicians – most of them conductors, arrangers and composers – who were, in fact, the most experienced and considered at that time (in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, particularly) – Pedro Osório, Thilo Krassman, Fernando Correia Martins, and Jorge Machado, all of them deceased. I had the pleasure of working with all of them.

³⁰⁶ In the same article referred previously, Thomas Porcello mentions “how technical professions form ‘discourse communities’ that use knowledge of linguistic resources as the basis for membership, perpetuation, and internal stratification” (*ibid.*:735).

Thomas Porcello has written about language use among sound engineers from different generations (2004), highlighting “the processes by which talk is constitutive of sound-engineering” (ibid:734). When referring to different strategies used in discourses about sound, Porcello mentions, among others, association, which

“[...] involves other musicians, recordings, sounds, time periods and so forth, in a search for a common frame of reference from which to describe the timbres in question [...] These associations function ‘indexically’, invoking other musical styles, musicians, or production technologies” (Porcello 2004:747).

Having the LA sound as a reference sets an example of an association as described above. Another strategy mentioned is what Porcello calls “pure metaphor”, according to which

“Words [...] are used to describe timbral characteristics, but do not bear any acoustic similarity to the sound in question. [...] Because they lack acoustic similarity to the musical sound object, they rely exclusively on denotative or connotative meaning – as opposed to the evocation of sound similarity - in order to ‘make sense’ as representations of the timbres they describe [...]” (ibid).

This practice is frequent in Portuguese as well. Words like *escuro* (dark), *claro* (clear), *magro* (thin), *gordo* (fat), *quente* (warm) are very frequently used to describe sound. The last two ones, in particular - fat and warm - are often used to define analogue sound versus digital - thin and cold. Jeremy Wallach, referring to *dangdut* - “the quintessential Indonesian pop genre” (2005:139), recorded on analogue tape (ibid:141), states that “Indonesians have adopted the natural/synthetic and “dirty”/“clean” sonic distinctions often employed by popular music producers and consumers in the West” (ibid:142) to refer the “division of labor between analog and digital recording” (ibid). Joaquim Monte, Namouche’s sound engineer, gives this “natural”, “dirty”, “warm” “analogue sound a more technical explanation:

“The difference is increasingly smaller, but [...] tape makes a natural compression due to the process (a balance between distortion and signal) which makes what musicians describe as “warm”, increasingly less noticeable now, due to the evolution of digital recording processes, but very evident in the beginning of the

digital era” (Joaquim Monte, interview, Lisbon, Namouche Recording Studios, August 2012).

Anyone who has experienced/listened to analogue and digital recorded sound can understand the analogy between the adjectives attributed to each technological processes, which is why I do not fully agree with Porcello when he mentions “the lack of acoustic similarity to the musical sound object” (2004: 747).

As referred by Porcello, the use of metaphors is very frequent when speaking about sound. The most originals I came across during my research are José Manuel Fortes’s “fruit metaphors”. In an interview I conducted with him in September 2015, to complete the history of Angel Recording Studios, his very personal project (see sub-chapter 9.7), Fortes stated

“I know that it’s very difficult to explain the taste of an apple...it’s even more difficult to explain why I prefer this apple to that one...furthermore, it’s practically impossible for me to define the taste of two apples coming from the same apple tree...and all this has to do with sound...” (Fortes, 2015).

Between the apple and the strawberry

“[...] If somebody brings me apples, they cannot expect me to produce beautiful strawberries... no... they’re just apples... what I can do is not damage the apples... turning them into strawberries is another issue” (Fortes 2011).

The dynamics between technology and human agency is central in the control over the recorded sound, where questions regarding power, audio perception, social relations and language use intersect. Especially in the 80s, when “distinctions between musician and engineer” were not as blurred as today (Greene 2005:1). In this attempt to emulate a music recorded sound from “out there,” the value attributed to distinctive phases in the recording process is noticeable: while the sound engineer emphasizes questions regarding musicianship and miking, the musician considers recording and mixing to be essential.

The notion of “overseas” is developed by Louse Meintjes (Meintjes on Greene 2005:23). Defined as a constructed “value-laden discursive category through talk amongst engineers [...] in foreign countries, as well as through stories about the studio experience of others” (ibid.)), it resonated with two expressions used by some of my informants, very present in everyday Portuguese speech: “lá fora” e “no estrangeiro” (“out there” and “abroad,” understood as synonyms). In the cases described in this sub-chapter, they are both positively charged and represent an ideal locus where everything is done right (or, more precisely in this case, where everything *sounds* right). Using Meintjes words, “out there” can be “artistically enabling.” (ibid.:25) It can, however, become artistically discouraging, when establishing a sonic ideal almost impossible to attain. As mentioned before, longing for something new and creatively challenging may include looking at musical otherness with uncritical eyes. As such, emulating a “sound” conceived, created and materialized in a specific geographic, social and cultural context is probably an impossible task. Quoting Louise Meintjes again:

“[...] the specificities of a studio`s political context as well as its technological history and position in the global market are implicated - and often audible – in the sounds the studio produces” (Meintjes in Greene 2005:25).

The path between the apple and the strawberry, to use José Forte’s metaphor, is a long and complex one.

9. Late 20th century recording studios and labels in Lisbon

“Having a recording studio is a dream come true which only makes losses. But the satisfaction I get in having musicians like these here makes up for it. With João Barradas and Gil Goldstein, some of the best in the world. Proud!!³⁰⁷

9.1 Different models of recording studios, its actors and agents

As stated in the introduction, before describing the story behind the historical Lisbon recording studios, it is interesting to compare them with other studio models that emerged in the recording industry both in the USA and in the United Kingdom at approximately the same time (between the 1960s and the 1970s). This comparison will take into account different variables: technology; ownership and business model; overall size and proportion between the recording and the control room; and finally staff. I will make use of Paul Théberge, Simon Zagorski-Thomas and Susan Schmidt Hornig’s works (2012), as well as Edward Keally (1979) and Andrew Leyshon (2009).

According to Paul Théberge (2012), the 24-track analogue studio of the 1970s and early 1980s is the one that “established itself as something of a norm - both in practical and iconic terms” (ibid: loc 2092 of 7567). This model, the author says, is still “the primary that many think of when they use the expression ‘the studio’” (ibid). Technologically speaking this was, indeed, the model I most found in Lisbon when I started working in 1982. Musicorde had a Tascam 32-channel console with no automation and two 16-track recorders, synchronized to be able to record on 30 tracks (Rui Remígio, interview, 2018); Arnaldo Trindade an Electrodyne 511 console and a 16-track 2” Ampex recorder; Rádio Triunfo a 16-channel Neve console and an Ampex 8-track recorder; Angel 1 a 28-channel MC1 500 console with no dolby and a 24-track recorder of the same make; Angel 2 a 32-channel MCI 500 console and a 24-track recorder of the same make. However, Théberge states that this model displaced “the earlier, corporate mode of studio recording” (ibid). By this, he means a mode based on “a very old studio model: [...] large, unionized, multi-purpose recording facilities owned and operated by a major record

³⁰⁷ Rui Veloso, personal Facebook page, 15th January 2016.

company”, with “large, purpose-built recording rooms and professional staff”³⁰⁸ (ibid: loc 2055 of 7567). This description also resonates with some of the Lisbon historical recording studios regarding ownership. Valentim de Carvalho, for instance, has been until the present date a label owned studio, and Arnaldo Trindade (the Campolide studio, as it is most commonly denominated), despite having passed through different ownerships along its history, was, for a substantial period of time, owned by two labels: first Arnaldo Trindade, and later Rádio Triunfo. Rádio Triunfo, the recording studio (today known as Namouche) was also, from its opening date (1973), a label-owned studio until 1985, when musicians Zé da Ponte and Guilherme Inês bought it and renamed it Namouche. Musicorde and both Angel 1 and 2 were privately owned by sound professionals, accounting for the only exception regarding ownership that these six studios present. The old model referred by Théberge is also noticeable in the proportion of the majority of the historical studios: most of them had large recording rooms. I will come back to this subject further in this section.

Looking at the business models followed, we find different approaches, even from the studios which were label-owned. Valentim de Carvalho’s priority were the label’s artists – particularly Amália Rodrigues – although several international artists - Vinicius de Moraes, Cliff Richards or Juan Manuel Serrat, for instance - recorded there.³⁰⁹ Arnaldo Trindade, on the other hand, followed a different business model, accepting as clients both the label’s artists and others outside its catalog, as well as independent producers who, at the time, did not have their own recording facilities.³¹⁰ As the next pages will show, there was great pride in making the customer - any customer - feel at home in this facility. With a less familiar atmosphere - eventually, on account of the recording studio’s dimension and possible higher rates -, Rádio Triunfo (today Namouche) attracted

³⁰⁸ Théberge points out two books where what he calls “a kind of nostalgia - an acknowledgment that these company-owned studios are a thing of the past” (ibid) motivated the authors: Granata, Charles L.(1999) *Sessions with Sinatra: Frank Sinatra and the Art of Record Production*, Chicago: A Cappella Books, and Cogan, Jim and William Clarke (eds) (2003) *Temples of Sound: Inside the Great Recording Studios*, San Francisco: Chronicle Books. Granata’s book mentions that “from the early 1940s Columbia Records enjoyed a reputation as the top recording concern in the world”, followed by RCA Victor and Decca (Granata 2003:42). He also mentions Capitol Studios, first in Melrose Avenue, and afterwards on Hollywood and Vine, Hollywood, where Sinatra recorded in the 1950s. (ibid:109 e 114)

³⁰⁹ According to information gathered from several Portuguese sound engineers and musicians, Valentim de Carvalho’s initial policy was to use the studio for the label’s artists. However, as time went on, the studio gradually began to open its doors to other artists. The opposite also occurred: some artists who were signed to Valentim de Carvalho label used other studios (namely, the ones where José Manuel Fortes was).

³¹⁰ Such were the cases of Zé da Ponte, Guilherme Inês and Luís Pedro Fonseca who booked this studio often for publicity sessions (and I was in of many of them). This situation led, years later, to the purchase of this studio by these musicians, as will be described further along this section.

diversified customers outside the label's catalog, a policy which would be maintained by the subsequent label-independent owners (Zé da Ponte and Guilherme Inês, from 1985 until 1998³¹¹ and particularly Joaquim Monte from 2005 until today). Musicorde and both Angel 1 and Angel 2 were not, as stated above, owned by labels, but their activity was associated mainly - but not exclusively, as we will later find out - to record labels which did not own recording facilities. Musicorde had in its large-sized recording room one of its main added values, as well as an enlarged working schedule which attracted a specific type of recording artist - namely fado singers who performed either in fado houses or in *revistas*, and could only record after their performances ended (way after midnight). The African community of musicians (mostly from Cape Verde³¹²) also used this facility after performing in their venues, and would record after hours.³¹³ That was also the case of Arnaldo Trindade, in Campolide, which had their youngest sound engineers and the rookies work in this schedule (Castro 2012 and Barata 2013). Angel 1 and 2's most prominent added value was José Manuel Fortes whose professional expertise and human qualities primarily anchored its customers. These human qualities, involving a number of personal traits, are included in what Leyshon (2009) names as emotional labour (ibid:1315).³¹⁴ Records were Angel's core business, which had as its customers artists from every label, including some artists whose labels owned recording studios (Valentim de Carvalho and Rádio Triunfo, for instance).

The subject of these recording studios's size and configuration is relevant particularly when considering the relative proportion between the recording and the control rooms. As stated a few paragraphs earlier, Valentim de Carvalho, Rádio Triunfo,

³¹¹ As will be stated further in the thesis, although theoretically opened to all customers, Namouche's main recording activity would be publicity between this time frame (1985-1998).

³¹² According to Tó Zé Brito, the fact that there were musicians from Cape Verde in Lisbon (compared to the nearly absence of musicians from the other African countries of Portuguese expression - Angola, Mozambique, Guinea) accounts for the fact that there was no colonial war in Cape Verde (Tó Zé Brito, interview, February 2018).

³¹³ Due to the similarity of the recording-room's dimensions, Musicorde constituted a second choice whenever Valentim de Carvalho was fully booked (Remígio 2014). Also, the fees would be lower. Regarding these customers - fado singers and African musicians who worked after hours - these were, in some cases, artists who had no recording label, but needed to have their work recorded to be able to sell it in their shows - mostly, in the case of fado singers, in the Portuguese emigrant communities around the world. Sometimes, they would only record for cassette or car cartridge format (Tó Zé Brito 2018). Despite constituting a market niche, not having airplay in the usual broadcasting media of those days - TV, but mostly radio - these artists were a recording community who generated important revenues for a recording studio's economical maintenance.

³¹⁴ Although briefly mentioned on p.20 of this thesis, the concept of emotional labour will be dealt extensively in the conclusions, due to its relevance regarding the work which takes place in a recording studio.

Musicorde and Arnaldo Trindade had large recording rooms,³¹⁵ pointing to the old studio model referred by Théberge. Angel 1 had a smaller recording room but still able to record a small orchestra; Angel 2 had a larger recording room, but with a very different configuration than its “brother” Angel 1: it was more rectangular-shaped, and had less height. It was a less reverberant, more acoustically dead space, with similarities to the model referred by Susan Schmidt Hornig (2012) which emerged in the 60s, as a consequence of “increasing experimentation with new electronic sounds that had little or no use for natural acoustics” (ibid: loc 1075 of 7567). The control rooms were necessarily smaller than the recording rooms (given the fact that most of the studios I am describing had large recording rooms). The case where the difference between the recording room and the control room was more striking was Arnaldo Trindade’s Campolide studio: its control room was very small, narrow and short-heighted, situated in a lower level than the recording room (coming from the recording room, one had to go down a few steps to get there). It was mostly occupied by the console and other equipment, and very few people fitted there, apart from the sound engineer and producer. The control room’s configuration pointed to a studio thought for a recording framework based on the recording room, a situation which later would change, as a number of instruments would increasingly be recorded in the control room - bass, guitar, synthesizers, for instance. All the other studios had medium-sized control rooms. Angel 2, however, was the recording studio where a more balanced proportion between the recording and the control room was noticeable, and where, according to his owner José Manuel Fortes, great care was dedicated to the construction and acoustic project of the control room. This was a central feature in Forte’s sonic idiosyncrasies, as we will see further in this chapter.

Regarding staff, all of the above mentioned studios had professional staff, although not necessarily organized as described by Edward Kealy (1979). Kealy distinguishes three “modes of collaboration in record production”: the craft-union mode, the entrepreneurial mode and the art mode. The craft-union mode established itself after the second World War in the USA, and was characterized by the “professionalization and unionization” of the work force in recording studios owned by major media corporations. This gave the “sound mixers”, using Kealy’s expression, control regarding “access to the technology of recording”, which included “forbidding collaborators such as musicians, composers and record company personnel, to even touch the studio equipment at

³¹⁵ Of all these studios, I only have Rádio Triunfo/Namouche’s recording room measures: 11x12x5 meters.

recording sessions”³¹⁶ (ibid.). Formality and impersonality characterized “the relationship among collaborators at such recording sessions” and the professional value of the mixers was measured according to whether “the sound was ‘in the grooves’”³¹⁷ (ibid.). I did not find any trace of this mode of collaboration in the Lisbon historical studios, nor do I believe that it has ever existed in such a professionally unionized way. However, Kealy mentions a trait about this mode that I seemed to notice in some Portuguese sound engineers (particularly the older generation ones): “a defensive occupational ideology that locked them into a narrow, technical, instrumental role among their collaborators” (ibid.). The second mode - the entrepreneurial mode - emerged in the USA in the 1950s as a consequence of the rise of television (and the consequent decline of national network radio), as well as the increasing accessibility of studio technology, which became “much simpler, cheaper, and more flexible with the replacement of direct-to-disc recording by tape-recording” (ibid.). Studios became rented (and sometimes owned) by small entrepreneurs, who could operate studios themselves. A new recording esthetic emerged with this collaborative mode, far from the concert hall realism and high fidelity that characterized the previous one; instead,

“use of echo and reverberation devices instead of cavernous studios, recording at loud volumes, the use of novel microphone placements, electronically altering the sound’s waveform, and various forms of tape-editing in addition to the arrangements for music and new lyrics aimed at the lifestyle of its audience” (ibid).

An audience characterized by “lower-class whites, blacks and teenagers” (ibid.). This second mode is also defined by Kealy as “a more fluid and open collaboration, allowing an interchange of skills and ideas among the musicians, technicians and music market entrepreneurs” (ibid.). This was indeed the mode I came across more often during my most active years in the recording industry, although, as stated before, defensive discourses from sound engineers were often heard as a protective strategy regarding more daring and invasive musicians. As for the art mode, a consequence of the increasing

³¹⁶ In his 2016 auto-biography *Testimony*, Robbie Robertson, Canadian musician and composer who was part of the group The Band narrates an episode which took place at Capitol studios in 1968: “Union engineers worked the studios at Capitol, and the “union rules” meant John [Simon, the record producer] wasn’t allowed so much as touch the mixing board or any equipment.[...]. We showed Rex [the union engineer] how we wanted to set up in the studio, and he went along with it, no particular skin off his ass. John tried to educate him on our process as best he could, without being able to touch anything” (ibid:306).

³¹⁷ This was no small accomplishment, technically speaking, according to testimonies I recollected from sound engineers.

involvement of the musicians in the sound-mixing process, following further developments in recording technology after the 60s (ibid), I would say that traces of this mode of collaboration were only noticeable after digital technology arrived to the market. In the early 80s, there wasn't a single recording studio owned by a musician or a rock band in Lisbon, and labels and other intermediary agents were still essential for the construction of a recording career. In this respect, as in many others, the country's economic dimension bears a significant importance.

As referred earlier, Valentim de Carvalho's main sound engineer was for many years Hugo Ribeiro, who became a sound professional when the company enlarged its commercial scope to disc recording. Despite having become a reference of sound recording in Portugal, he had no specific background related to this activity; unlike many of the other sound professionals I will refer, Ribeiro did not come from the radio. He was "there", and, as previously referred, he was "a man of the ear". All the other historical studios had, in its early years, sound professionals related to the radio: Moreno Pinto (Arnaldo Trindade), Rui Remígio, Alberto Nunes (Musicorde), José Fortes (Rádio Triunfo, Angel 1 and Angel 2). From this generation of sound professionals would emerge a new one, between the 70s and the 80s, with some of its elements – Jorge Barata, Paulo Junqueiro, João Vaz de Carvalho, João Pedro Castro - having learned through practice from some of these men. This was, by far, the most common training model for future sound professionals - the practice-based one. There was no specific training for sound professionals outside this circuit in those days. It would still take some time before the first sound engineering courses emerged in the Portuguese educational market.³¹⁸

How do we frame these Lisbon facilities to the recording studio models referred in the beginning of this section? The first general idea is that the shift from reverberant, large recording rooms to smaller, acoustically dead ones took place much earlier in the

³¹⁸ An exception to this training model is Fernando Abrantes, Portuguese sound engineer born in 1960. Son of a Portuguese father and a German mother, Fernando would do his basic education in the Portuguese German School, having gone afterwards to Dusseldorf to study sound engineering for lack of educational options in this area in Portugal. He would stay in Germany between 1980 and 1987, where he worked with groups like Kraftwerk. When he returned to Portugal in 1987, he started working in Edipim, a TV production company, and in 1988 he would join Angel 2's staff (Fernando Abrantes, interview, January 2018). Abrantes is currently a very active sound engineer and a teacher in several technical schools. Tó Pinheiro da Silva, referred often in this thesis, is a trained musician, having worked for the first time as sound engineer in 1980, at Valentim de Carvalho. He did his professional training at Abbey Road, as well as having learned with José Manuel Fortes and Hugo Ribeiro (Tó Pinheiro da Silva, interview, June 2018).

USA (late 60s), later in England (late 70s)³¹⁹ than in Portugal (80s). Bearing in mind that this shift was due not only to changes in recording techniques (close miking, for instance), and the rise of electronic music instruments, but also to the emergence of independent producers, the overall dimension of the Portuguese recording industry would probably not justify such an early investment at a time when audio analogue recording was still the main technological setting in a recording studio.³²⁰ From the late 80s a number of independent digital recording studios would appear in the Lisbon area. Another important difference is the association of studio preference to the technical specifications that each facility presented, as a result of research conducted by its sound engineers. However, as Tó Pinheiro da Silva states:

“One of the things that differentiates the technological side is that abroad they were researchers... both in England and in the States there were sound research projects and in Portugal...we were imitators... we never had anyone dedicated to the construction of sound equipment, while out there there was a close association between the electronic field and the musical field, with cooperation habits from the industrial point of view; here we got the things much later than they did” (Pinheiro da Silva 2011).

The subject of research conducted in recording studios will be further addressed in the conclusions. The next sections will characterize the Lisbon historical studios, according to the order in which I began working in each of them.

³¹⁹ Zagorski-Thomas, Simon “The Us vs the UK Sound: Meaning in Music Production in the 1970s” in Frith, Simon & Simon Zagorski-Thomas (ed.) (2012) *The Art of Record Production - an Introductory Reader for a New Academic Field*, Ashgate Publishing Company, p.72.

³²⁰ Again Leyshon (2009) refers the recording studio market as characterized by oligopsony - “a market characterized by few buyers” (ibid:1317). He further states that “the demand for the services of recording studios is driven by a relatively small coterie of record, motion picture, and television companies which, for the most part, provide the investment that enables artists to use professional studios” (ibid). Considering the fact that the Portuguese movie industry has been, until the present days, much smaller than the recording industry, and that until 1992 and 1993 (when the first private Portuguese TV channels emerged) there were only two national television channels (RTP1 and RTP2), one is driven to conclude that until the early 90s Portuguese recording studios dedicated themselves almost exclusively to recording music (both for the recording industry and for the theater) and publicity (jingles and voice-overs).

9.2 Musicorde



Photo 12 - Musicorde's recording room seen from the control room (photo courtesy of Rui Remígio)

“Basically, what we did was the result of professional merits we had in the recording market, availability, passion for the job, and the people who always backed this project, such as Alberto Nunes. And, of course, the pleasure that musicians had in being here” (Rui Remígio, interview, May 2014).

As stated before, I started my musical career in 1981, when I participated as a singer in a TV contest. It was the opportunity to meet some of the most active session musicians of the 1980s.

My first studio session was a publicity session, where I was supposed to sing a jingle; the chosen studio was Musicorde, situated in the (back then) popular neighborhood of Campo de Ourique,³²¹ in the core of Lisbon. It was in a “villa” that you reached passing an arch and a small tunnel that flowed into a cluster of townhouses lined with flowers. Although back then I lived in that neighborhood, I had passed by that arch many times, without realizing what was beyond it.

³²¹ In the last decade, Campo de Ourique has become a very trendy - and expensive - Lisbon neighborhood, a very sought-after residential area by artists and young well-off hipsters. I lived there until the 80s, when the neighborhood had a very different familiar, middle-class popular atmosphere.

I remember an effusive sound engineer, with whom I would record many more times in the near future - Alberto Nunes -, a medium-sized control room and a very large recording room. In the years ahead, whenever I had sessions at Musicorde, I would also work with another sound engineer, Rui Remígio. I had a long conversation with him to know more about Musicorde's history, but particularly to understand the role of Musicorde in the context of the Portuguese recording industry from the 1980s until its closure (December 2013).³²²

As many other Portuguese sound engineers, Rui Remígio's professional background starts on the radio.

"My years in the war didn't go very well³²³... I lost seventeen friends there...others came severely injured...After my return from the military service in Angola [...] I had a friend who worked at *Emissora Nacional* [National Broadcasting Service] who told me that they had opened positions there. I joined *Emissora Nacional* in 1971 and was quite welcomed. I mostly worked in editing, but at the end of a year there, I expressed the desire to work in production...at the "radio program's factory" (ibid).

It was there, at *Emissora Nacional*, that he would meet Alberto Nunes, his top leader there who, having heard about his interest in production, would invite him to work at his own recording studio Musicorde.

"I arrived at Musicorde a little before three p.m. and to my astonishment there was maestro Fernando Correia Martins eating and writing part of a score for the afternoon recording session...multi-track recording...eight-track in Ampex...only we, Musicorde, had it...as well as Valentim de Carvalho and Polysom, I think..." (ibid).³²⁴

³²² Musicorde was originally a society under the name Musicorde - Estúdios de Gravação, Lda., created in September 1969 by two partners - Alberto Nunes and Jaime Filipe. According to Remígio, the society started working in Chiado, a Lisbon central neighborhood, but would have its own recording studios in Campo de Ourique, where he started working in 1973. Rui Remigio and Fernando Santos, another professional working at Musicorde, would be invited to share the 50% partnership of the society with Nunes, as a consequence of Jaime Filipe's serious illness which disabled him from further working. Remigio is the only living partner of Musicorde (Rui Remígio, interview, May 2014 and email interview, January 2018).

³²³ The war Rui Remígio mentions is the colonial war, which took place in the (then) Portuguese African colonies of Angola, Moçambique and Guiné-Bissau and lasted from 1961 until 1974. All the Portuguese young men who were enlisted were sent to Africa (to one of the three countries) to do the military service. Those who didn't want to participate in the war, had to leave the country and become "deserters".

³²⁴ Polysom, as stated in the introduction, would later be known as Arnaldo Trindade recording studios.

The conversation with Remígio would often show his pride in the house he worked for forty years. As I recall, apart from jingles, the studio sessions to which I was usually called there involved bands and solo artists pertaining to a sub-genre close to “pimba”, as well as light music - particularly music for *revista*. Fernando Correia Martins, the maestro mentioned in Remígio’s last quotation, who composed many scores for *revista*, was a regular customer of Musicorde. I worked with him there very often.

“[Musicorde] had a characteristic that remained: it was a replica of the BBC studios. Acoustically, it was very good...it was also in the *Patio dos Artistas* (Artists’s Pateo), with the flowers, the birds...on week-ends, it seemed as if we were in a small village! It was also wrapped in a lot of history, because of all the artists who recorded there - *fado* singers, African artists...recordings for singles, EPs, LPs, cassettes ...” (ibid).

Remígio would further specify Musicorde’s regular customers - “practically all the Cape-Verdian community - Bana, Dani Silva, *Voz de Cabo-Verde* (Voice of Cape Verde), Tito Paris, Paulino Vieira” and even “the bare-feet diva” - Cesária Évora, whom he remembers having recorded there before she went to Paris to become the famous artist in the world music area.³²⁵ But also the great *fado* singers of that time³²⁶: Hermínia Silva, Carlos do Carmo, Tristão da Silva and many others. Due to the recording room’s dimensions, the studio would also have military bands and “ranchos folclóricos” as regular clients. Remigio would also mention the great Portuguese maestros that worked at Musicorde - Thilo Krassman, Jorge Machado, Fernando Correia Martins, Rocha de Oliveira, Segundo Galarza...” Who hasn’t been here?”, he proudly launches the rhetorical question, as we speak.³²⁷

³²⁵ All the artists mentioned - particularly Cesária Évora, on an international level, but also Tito Paris and Paulino Vieira (this last one as solo artist, but also as a producer and music director of Cesária Évora) - would become successful with the emergence of world music. In the 70s and approximately until the opening of the world music market in the late 80s, they were part of a very small market *niche*, as I have previously referred, almost invisible (and inaudible) to the general Portuguese public.

³²⁶ Apart from Amália Rodrigues, who only recorded at Valentim de Carvalho with Hugo Ribeiro, as previously stated.

³²⁷ Because we were talking in Campo de Ourique, in a terrace of a *café* very close to where the studios were located, Remigio uses the adverb “here”. About the names of the producers mentioned, see Castelo-Branco, Salwa (coord.) (2010) *Enciclopédia da Música Portuguesa do Século XX*, Lisboa: Círculo de

I was curious to know why Musicorde had not become a record company - although, as an independent label (and a recording studio), it had released records throughout its existence.

“We were a small company, with a maximum of six employees. [...] But we have our archive of recordings by Musicorde Estúdios de Gravação Lda, with our logo. [...] Recently, many artists who didn’t have a record label would record here, and we would borrow them our logo” (ibid).



Figure 6 - Musicorde's label logo (courtesy of Rui Remígio)

According to Remigio, this fact placed them apart from the emergence of the Portuguese rock movement (*movimento do rock Português*).

“We were not a record company, so when Valentim de Carvalho supports the Portuguese rock, it has a marketing department, image, TV programs associated to it...we were a small studio... a small label...always independent” (ibid).

The recognition of the small size of the company fluctuates with the proud reference of an acoustic project, carried out by Alberto Nunes and Jaime Filipe, leading Remígio to consider the studio as “acoustically perfect” (ibid).

“The acoustic treatment was projected by Alberto Nunes and Jaime Filipe, who were two of the most prestigious professionals in terms of acoustic recording, coming from the radio at that time. Jaime Filipe developed the so called wind ball - anti-pop protection. Of course they did not build the [studio's] acoustic panels themselves...but had them built according to their guidelines” (ibid).

Leitores/Temas e Debates, vol.2, p.556-557 (Shegundo Galarza), p.674-676 (Thilo Krassman), vol.3, p. 726-728 (Jorge Machado), and p.748 (Fernando Correia Martins).

As we will see along this chapter, radio, “*the great school*” in Remígio’s words, was fundamental for the emergence of the first music recording professionals in Portugal. The development that radio technology endured after the second world war, turned the British radio - specifically, the BBC - into a model for many recording studios around the world (Remígio *ibid*). Musicorde was one such example, where attempts to follow the British BBC model were done not only in terms of its acoustics, but also in terms of its image.³²⁸ Because of this last feature, the studio was often required as a set-up for footage, as “that image ... that *patine* ... that piano ... those colors were from the 1950s and 1960s!” (*ibid*).

A strong visual image was not, according to Remígio, the only distinctive feature of Musicorde. Unlike other sound engineers such as André Perry, who do not believe in a recording studio having its own sound, Remígio defends the idea that Musicorde had a “personalized sound”, one recognizable by the fado singers who recorded there. In the words of a French record editor referred by Rui Remigio:³²⁹

“It is a sound marked by space, by temporality, by the way it was captured... [The other Lisbon studios of this time] ...I know them all, and I have nothing against them, ... but this sound...all you have to do is listen and you immediately think “this sound is from Musicorde!” (*ibid*).

I interviewed Remígio five months after he had closed the studio permanently. Although a certain nostalgia was noticeable, he seemed very happy with the professional achievement of being able to pass on a legacy of a historical period of the Portuguese recording industry, where Musicorde undoubtedly belongs. He was also kind enough to search for studio photos, at my request, in the middle of all the material collected during the closure process, which he allowed me to include in this thesis (see Appendix 2 at the end). Currently, Rui Remigio teaches at several professional schools.

³²⁸ Remígio considers, even today, “the acoustics of the English”, in his own words, as a major reference (*ibid*.)

³²⁹ Remígio didn’t remember this French editor’s name, but according to him, it was someone well familiarized with the African records produced at Musicorde.

9.3 Arnaldo Trindade (aka Estúdios de Campolide)



Figure 7 - Newspaper article about Arnaldo Trindade recording studios

Teles, Viriato (2010) “Um disco, um estúdio, uma história” in *Imprensa* 2010 - <http://www.viriatoteles.com/web/arquivo/imprensa-2010/269-um-disco-um-estudio-uma-historia> - accessed on August 2015.

“Campolide is the sixth album by Sérgio Godinho.[...] However, Campolide is not even the title of any of the songs belonging to this album. The name is related to the studios where it was recorded, situated in number 103 – C, Rua de Campolide, at that time the property of the label Arnaldo Trindade and known as “*estúdios de Campolide*”, where some of the most important personalities of Portuguese music recorded” (Teles 2010).

“I am not nostalgic, but our past is our legacy. I was happy, I did very well... I am very proud of having been a part of those moments of all that people. And, above all, I miss the people...” (Fernando Albuquerque, interview, July 2014).³³⁰

The second recording studio I worked in was Arnaldo Trindade - again, in a session dedicated to recording jingles. This studio is still referred by some of my older colleagues as Polysom (its name before the studio was bought by Arnaldo Trindade in 1975). It would assume other names according to the subsequent owners, as this sub-

³³⁰ As stated previously, Fernando de Albuquerque died in the course of this research, on the 5th of July 2017. I have the best professional memories of him and my interview only corroborated this fact. He was extremely kind, available and an excellent talker. A true gentleman.

chapter will show, but the most used designation is “*estúdios de Campolide*” (Campolide studios), as they were situated in the Lisbon neighborhood of Campolide.

Arnaldo Trindade, the enterprise, assembled a record label and later a recording studio; but, above all, Arnaldo Trindade, the citizen, is someone whose vision and courage as record editor left an irreplaceable legacy in the Portuguese music culture.³³¹

I interviewed Fernando Albuquerque, second cousin of the studio’s owner Arnaldo Trindade, who became the studio’s manager for eight years (1975-1983). Although from Porto, as the rest of the Trindade family, he went to Lisbon to work for the family business.

“I started in Arnaldo Trindade [the company] through family ties. I left the military service on the 16th April 1974 and I had twelve job offers waiting for me, all related to languages and import-export. On the 26th of April I had none...³³² One day, my cousin [Arnaldo] tells me ”look, we bought a recording studio down there [Lisbon]...and tomorrow you are going there to direct it...there has to be someone there to direct it, otherwise it will be a mess...”, he said” (ibid).

Albuquerque started his activity there on the 1st of January 1975. Apart from controlling bookings, he was the intermediary between the studio’s needs and its owners.

“A recording studio was set...and that was it, nothing else was going on...and it had to last a century, if necessary, because they didn’t put a cent there [...] Recording studios weren’t managed, they were just a pile of small papers with the bookings, and ‘now make a copy of that’...I was the first person to have the position of studio manager” (ibid).

More than anything else, Trindade trusted the professionals he had working in the studios, because, as he stated, recording studios were not his core business (Arnaldo Trindade, interview, Porto, November 2015).

³³¹ Arnaldo Trindade, already mentioned before in this thesis, is a fascinating personality. I had the privilege to acknowledge that personally through an interview I conducted with him at his house, in Porto on November 2015. However, for a more detailed account of Trindade’s extraordinary role as record editor, Leonor Losa’s 2009 Master thesis “*Nós Humanizámos a Indústria: Reconfiguração da Produção Fonográfica e Musical em Portugal na Década de 60*”, unpublished Master thesis, FCSH, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, (“We Humanized the Industry: Reconfiguration of the Phonographic and Music Production in Portugal in the 1960s”) provides a very useful and enlightening document.

³³² With the political revolution of the 25th of April in 1974, there was an economic turmoil that caused many enterprises to shut down.

“Recording studios? I don’t understand anything about them...and I don’t want to! [...] I would pick up the best professionals in the market, and if they were the best, they were better than me! [...] I don’t know anything about sound...but I can *listen*...and that is an entirely different subject” (ibid).

Albuquerque assumed the position of studio director in 1975, one of the “hottest” political years after the revolution. As with many enterprises back then, the studios were in self-management.³³³

“In 1975, it [the studio] was a mess, it was in self-management, and I had no idea what I was getting into - or what I was being gotten into...there was no booking book, no tape control...a total mess!” (Albuquerque 2014).

That was how Albuquerque found the Campolide facility - a metaphor of the country immediately after the revolution.³³⁴

Later, in 1981, the company (Arnaldo Trindade) would buy a second studio, which was not as unorganized and chaotic as Campolide. José Manuel Fortes, Portuguese sound engineer, kept things under control. This studio, a much larger one, would be known as AT2 (the initials of Arnaldo Trindade, Campolide being AT1), which later would become Rádio Triunfo, and in 1986 Namouche (see diagram on p.191). It was often called Estrada da Luz - again, the location where it stands until today. Albuquerque would manage both studios until 1983, the time when Arnaldo Trindade merged with Rádio Triunfo, another record label. Both studios - AT1 and AT2 - would then become RT1 (in Campolide) and RT2 (in Estrada da Luz).³³⁵

Apart from lack of organization, other issues - more of a technical nature - needed correction in Campolide. The recording facility was composed by two studios, one larger

³³³ Immediately after the 25th of April 1974, there were many enterprises whose bosses and/or previous owners would be fired for political reasons. Many of them would be considered by the workers as fascists, or *reaccionários* (reactionaries, closer to the old political *regime*). The management would, then, be carried out by the workers themselves.

³³⁴ Although the political revolution of the 25th of April was acclaimed by the majority of the Portuguese people, the first years after its occurrence were complicated. Regarding education, in 1975, when I was still at grammar school, there were practically no classes, but rather RGAs - *Reunião Geral de Alunos* (Students’s General Meetings), where nothing was discussed, apart from some political *clichés* that could be heard all over the country. As a result, at the end of the year there were what was then called *passagens administrativas* (administrative grade passages), whereby students would automatically pass to the next grade without having attended classes.

³³⁵ For reasons related to the organization of this thesis, I will not be mentioning Estrada da Luz (aka Namouche) in this sub-chapter, although this studio was initially the property of label Arnaldo Trindade. I will refer it in the next sub-chapter (9.4).

on the basement (Studio 2), and a smaller one, on the ground floor (Studio 1). To be able to reach Studio 2 on the basement one had to pass a long corridor, where the small studio (Studio 1) was situated, on the right hand side. As there was no acoustic isolation, whenever there were recording sessions upstairs, nobody could pass that corridor and go to the larger studio on the basement, as sound engineers Jorge Barata and João Vaz de Carvalho stated.³³⁶ They had to wait at the small entrance.

According to Fernando Albuquerque, the position of studio manager was a big innovation in the Portuguese recording industry of those days.

“Recording studios, back then, were all owned by record companies...and our advantage as a studio, having me as public relations and manager, was the fact that we could accept smaller labels (which didn’t own studios) as clients, creating in them the idea that Campolide was their house too...” (ibid).

An idea very close to the one defended by André Perry regarding the philosophy behind Le Studio, but on a different scale.

“I reassured the clients that the studio would work for as long as they needed...it was theirs, their house, and that, really, we were not just recording for ourselves as label - either Arnaldo Trindade or later Rádio Triunfo - but open to other labels as well” (ibid.).

Interestingly enough, the fear of bootlegging was, already at that time, a reality. There was, in fact, a “pirate” in the studio who made copies of the tapes for himself, taking them home to fabricate audio cassettes in a machine he owned for the purpose. He was caught up in the scheme and forced to resign (ibid.).

Fado singers and performers from *revista* would also record there after work.³³⁷ That meant arriving at two, three or four in the morning. The same happened at Musicorde, according to Rui Remigio. But comparisons between the two recording

³³⁶ Jorge Barata, February 2013, S.Pedro do Estoril; João Vaz de Carvalho, email interview, March 2016.

³³⁷ The *revistas* usually had two sessions, one beginning at 20:30 or 20:45 and the other at 22:30 or 22:45. Fado houses close at 2:00 a.m. Recording artists working in these areas would use the studio during the late night session (from 2:00/3:00 a.m until 9:00 a.m).

studios are delicate, having people who worked there for many years as informants. Regardless of the technological differences between the studios:

“At the end of the day, what actually held both performers and producers to the studio was the recording engineer...I have absolutely no doubt about that, because if we messed things up, they would still go after the recording engineer...they [the artists and producers] understood nothing about technical details, but they liked the final product. That is why we were always changing duty rosters” (ibid).

The sound engineers of AT1 and 2 were Moreno Pinto, Jorge Barata, Joca (João Vaz de Carvalho), Paulo Junqueiro and João Pedro Castro.³³⁸

Many artists, from fado singers to light music performers, would record in *Estúdios de Campolide*.

“In the small Studio 1[...] I did mostly copies in magnetic tape, recordings of publicity spots/voice-overs for TV and radio, but also acoustic recordings of a minor technical complexity. I remember the frequent fado recordings, with an old four-track Ampex machine, with a heavy wooden structure, already old at the time, but functioning perfectly. We used one track for the voice and the other three for the instruments - Portuguese guitar, acoustic guitar and bass guitar. With four microphones recording simultaneously, there could be no mistakes. Still, we usually recorded enough fados to complete an entire record and mix it on the same day, something only possible due to the high quality of both musicians and fado singers” (João Vaz de Carvalho, aka “Joca”, interview, March 2016).

João Vaz de Carvalho also recalls working in Studio 2, which had a sixteen-track console and a soundproofing problem: each time an airplane overflew the studio, the session had to be stopped (ibid.). Later, when Luis Pedro Fonseca bought the studio, it was the train vibrations that became more audible (Barata 2013). Still, regardless of these

³³⁸ Although briefly mentioned previously, José Manuel Moreno Pinto was an acclaimed sound engineer who died in 2011 at the age of 77. I recorded many times with him at AT1 (Campolide). Apart from a competent professional, he was a very sweet man. For a list of some of the records he recorded, please check “Homenagem a Moreno Pinto” (<http://guedelhudos.blogspot.pt/2008/02/homenagem-moreno-pinto.html?showComment=1227910380000#c1039502304564748915> - accessed on August 2015). Joca (João Vaz de Carvalho) left the recording industry in 1986 to dedicate himself to painting. He is now a well-known painter and illustrator. Paulo Junqueiro is currently A&R of Sony Records and was a member of the jury of the Portuguese version of X Factor in 2015. Jorge Barata is still an active recording sound engineer, both in Portugal and abroad, where he travels frequently with Teresa Salgueiro (the voice of group *Madredeus*, now in a solo career) and other artists. João Pedro Castro is currently working in another activity, but does live recordings as well.

hindrances, Studio 2 was considered a studio with “special acoustic features, of which everybody particularly liked” (João Vaz de Carvalho, *ibid.*).



Photo 13 - Arnaldo Trindade's control room in the 80s (photo courtesy of Jorge Barata, on the photo)

As with Musicorde, I was curious to know the role these studios - and the recording company - had regarding the emergence of the Portuguese rock movement.

“Not a lot...at that time [1980s], my cousin [Arnaldo Trindade] was no child...Mota Alves, the promotor, didn't like it...I thought there was something there, but I had no power of decision. I merely executed orders and coordinated the production. I myself functioned as any independent producer: whenever I had something to show, I recorded the demo and showed it to the bosses” (Albuquerque 2014).³³⁹

Still, Arnaldo Trindade's commercial wit would not allow the label's catalog completely out of the recording trend (Albuquerque 2014). Groups like UHF, Roxigénio, Arte e Ofício and Trabalhadores do Comércio would become Arnaldo Trindade's artists.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ Decisions were taken by Arnaldo Trindade himself, Mota Alves, the promotor, and Fernando Pereira, the three most important people in the company's hierarchy (Albuquerque 2014).

³⁴⁰ These were all groups which had some relevance within the Portuguese rock movement.

When the merging between the two recording labels Arnaldo Trindade and Rádio Triunfo took place in 1983, as a consequence of their joint victory in the *Festival RTP da Canção* (National Song Contest), Fernando Albuquerque bought Arnaldo Trindade's publishing catalog Musicat and founded the first independent Portuguese publishing company - Caramba Music - which lasted twenty years.³⁴¹

“Back in 1985, when I did the publishing, I was tired...and I had had enough of everything. When Arnaldo Trindade merged with Rádio Triunfo...between my cousin and José Serafim there was an enormous gulf ...and that was all a commercial move. So, I foresaw the breakdown of it all...and how the studios would be dismembered” (Albuquerque 2014).

Studios RT1 and RT2 (Campolide and Estrada da Luz, former AT1 and AT2) would be sold to Zé da Ponte and Guilherme Inês, in a partnership with José Serafim. The society - and the studios - would be called Namouche. AT 1 (Estúdios de Campolide) would be the first to be acquired by this society in 1985. Estrada da Luz would be next, in 1986. Later, in 1990, Campolide would be sold to another musician, Luis Pedro Fonseca, becoming Xangri-lá Recording Studios.³⁴²

My memories of Campolide are mostly related to publicity sessions with Luis Pedro Fonseca, Guilherme Inês and Zé da Ponte. Those sessions took place along the studio's different owners and names, - from AT1, to RT1, Namouche and Xangri-Lá. When the studio became property of these musicians, sessions around jingles became more frequent. Advertising was, at that time, one of the means of sustenance for session musicians and singers, and a core business for both Namouche and Xangri-Lá. There was a lot of work, and fees were extremely appealing. I also remember recording sessions with several arrangers and orchestrators, particularly Jorge Machado, who used Campolide studio very often. One of the most acclaimed light music orchestrators of the

³⁴¹ Arnaldo Trindade and José Serafim (owner of the record label Movieplay) bought Rádio Triunfo. The date, according to Albuquerque, was 1983. With the merger of both labels - Arnaldo Trindade and Rádio Triunfo -, an enormous catalog of Portuguese music would remain in this new group, including the historic records of the label Orfeu (Albuquerque 2014). However, the merger did not succeed, as in 1985 Rádio Triunfo was expelled from the AFP - *Associação Fonográfica Portuguesa* (Portuguese Phonographic Association) for illegal practices and went bankrupt in 1986. The remaining assets of Rádio Triunfo were bought by Movieplay, former label of José Serafim. Arnaldo Trindade, the firm, would go bankrupt in 2002 (Albuquerque 2014).

³⁴² Xangri-Lá as a production company was created in 1987. Like Namouche, its core business was publicity, and for many years Luis Pedro Fonseca (its owner) rented studio time to work (usually at Rádio Triunfo - former Namouche - and Arnaldo Trindade, which he would eventually buy from Namouche in 1990) (Margarida Rúbio, former Xangri-Lá production assistant, interview, January 2018).

time, he was an enchanting person and is, even today, one of the few music professionals who gathers consensus regarding his personality: everybody liked him.

At the end of my conversation with Fernando Albuquerque, I asked him what he thought about recorded music nowadays. “Today, things convey very little emotion...” was the answer. About this, he recalled a backing vocals session, this time at Estrada da Luz.³⁴³ It was a children’s record, whose producer missed the session (because, according to Albuquerque, “he was very busy with other things”). The tape had to be delivered in the factory in Porto, so Albuquerque decided to proceed with the recording session anyway, despite the producer’s absence. I was present (although I barely recall the fact) together with two other singers. The session was directed by Albuquerque himself, Jorge Barata and Paulo Junqueiro (both sound engineers of the studio).

“In between songs, you were all lying on the floor, tired...dead tired...because you had been there for so many hours. We started at 21:00, then all the punching in, doubling tracks of the backing vocals...all that is there! You can hear it!” (ibid).³⁴⁴

Estúdios de Campolide (at the time of its closure, Xangri-Lá) closed its doors in 2005. Because of Luis Pedro Fonseca’s sudden death on the 24th of August 2014, I could not have a forever postponed conversation with my friend to better understand the circumstances of the studio’s closure.

For Viriato Teles (2010), a Portuguese journalist who frequently writes about music, Estúdios de Campolide were for many years to Lisbon what Abbey Road was to London. Analogies to the London studios are claimed by informants of different studios, as we will see in these sub-chapters.

³⁴³ Again, Albuquerque mentioned the other studio by its location.

³⁴⁴ Since there was no digital editing and coping tracks like today, everything had to be done as meticulously as possible, for as many times as it was needed. Singing over and over again, keeping the same “feel” every time we doubled a track or punched in directly on tape. No copy-paste was, at the time, possible.

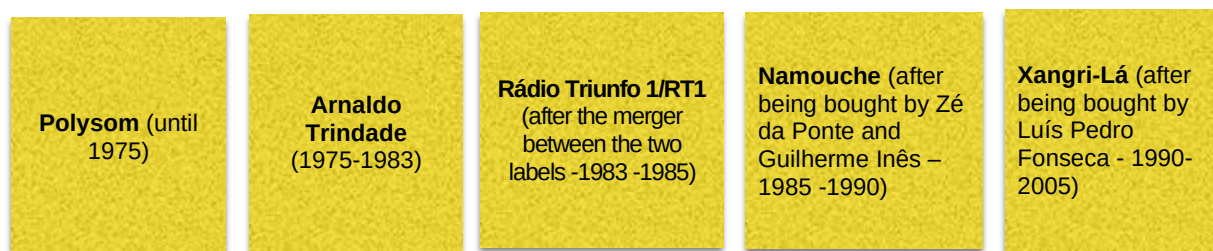


Figure 8 - Arnaldo Trindade recording studio's different names and ownerships

But the importance of Arnaldo Trindade - or simply Campolide - recording studios - to the development of the Portuguese recording industry is undeniable, despite all the problems described by its different actors. Artists from diversified music genres, from fado to light music and protest song recorded there, as well as many jingles which coloured the TV and radio soundscape of the 80s and 90s. Campolide was also the recording school for sound engineers and music producers who took their first steps there.

“It is no wonder, then, that it ended as becoming the name of an album. [...] Now, all is left are the memories of some recordings that made history. Like the record of Sérgio Godinho” (Teles 2010)

9.4 Rádio Triunfo/Namouche (aka Estrada da Luz)

The story of Rádio Triunfo has the name of José Manuel Fortes in its genesis. His professional trajectory is characterized, apart from a unanimously acknowledged technical expertise, by a strong and courageous personality, with very personal and firmly defended opinions about recording and sound. His passage through Radio Triunfo is a good example of the relevance of these last traits.

Fortes's professional life started very early, as an eight-year-old child, who liked to go to *Emissora Nacional* in Porto (National Broadcasting Service), enchanted with the buttons he saw around him (Fortes 2011). In 1961, he set up a recording studio together with Fernando Rangel (a sound technician of *Rádio Renascença*, the catholic broadcasting radio station). There, they worked for a number of recording labels - Vadeca, Arnaldo Trindade, Discoteca Santo António. At the same time, Fortes got involved with Cineclube do Porto³⁴⁵, having worked with film directors, including Manuel de Oliveira.³⁴⁶ Not a very long collaboration, because, according to Fortes, "he didn't care much for the sound [of his films]" (Fortes 2011). He also worked with Michael Giacometti, a Corsican ethnomusicologist who came to Portugal in 1959 and for years dedicated himself to the systematic data collection of Portuguese traditional music.³⁴⁷ Later, when he was still in the military service in Guinea, he got a job offer to work at Rádio Triunfo, as his name was already known in Porto's small recording *milieu*.

Rádio Triunfo was a record factory located in Porto, with a label - Alvorada. As the company had no recording studio, they used Monte da Virgem studios (the studios of the

³⁴⁵ *Cineclube do Porto* is the oldest Portuguese film club and one of Europe's oldest (<https://www.facebook.com/cineclubedoporto/info?tab=overview> - accessed on August 2015). For more information about *Cineclube*, see http://paginas.fe.up.pt/~carvalho/ccp_fundacao.html.

³⁴⁶ Manoel de Oliveira was the most internationally famous Portuguese film director, who died in April 2015, at the age of 106 - "Morreu Manoel de Oliveira - Cineasta português era o realizador mais velho do mundo em atividade" in TVI24 on line - <http://www.tvi24.iol.pt/cinebox/cinema/morreu-manoel-de-oliveira-> accessed on August 2015.

³⁴⁷ For more information on Michel Giacometti, see "Michel Giacometti" in *Museu de Música Portuguesa* on line - <http://mmp.cm-cascais.pt/museumusica/mg/michel/> - accessed on August 2015.

national television station, RTP - *Rádio Televisão Portuguesa*) in Porto, and Nacional Filmes, Polysom and APA in Lisbon (Fortes 2011).³⁴⁸

Fortes started in Rádio Triunfo in Porto cutting acetate, because the boss - Rogério Leal³⁴⁹ - believed the employees had to go through the various departments through the hierarchical chain, doing everything that needed to be done.³⁵⁰ He came often to Lisbon to record in the previously mentioned facilities, whenever needed.

When Rádio Triunfo decided to build its own studio in Lisbon, Fortes was invited to work there. The studio was built in Estrada da Luz, in the Lisbon neighborhood of Benfica. With the location's symbolic name - *estrada da luz* means, literally, road of light - the studio, like Arnaldo Trindade/Campolide, would also be known by its toponym, adding to this fact the location's symbolic significance.

Although its construction started some years before (in 1969, “in a disorderly manner”, according to Fortes), the studio would do its first recording on the 25th of April 1973³⁵¹, after some trial recordings done for Emissora Nacional: there were problems related to the digging of the land in the basement, where the recording room would be built. Practically all the area used to be a back yard (Fortes 2011).



Photo 14 - Recording room (Rádio Triunfo). From here you can see the control room, on the upper floor on the left, and the smaller recording room, on the right (photo courtesy of José Fortes)

³⁴⁸ Nacional Filmes is currently a recording studio used for dubbing films and cartoons; Polysom was, as mentioned in the previous section, the name of Arnaldo Trindade's studio in Campolide, before being bought by this enterprise; APA was, according to Fortes, the first recording studio owned by Alberto Nunes and Jaime Filipe before opening Musicorde (Fortes 2011).

³⁴⁹ Rádio Triunfo had three partners: Rogério Leal, José Cândido Silva e Manuel Lopes da Cruz.- in “Fábrica Portuguesa Rádio Triunfo”, *Indústrias Culturais, Música*, 12/4/2012 - <http://industrias-culturais.hypotheses.org/20717> - accessed on February 27th 2016.

³⁵⁰ Apparently, this was called “going through the shit circuit”(Fortes 2011)

³⁵¹ About this date, Fortes tells this amazing story: on the 24th of April 1974, as Fortes was finishing a recording session with César Batalha (a Portuguese composer and conductor) he commented: “Tomorrow should be a holiday, as it will be a year since I did my first recording here.” The rest...is literally history, as the next day - the 25th of April 1974 - the political revolution would take place. It would be a holiday from then until the present days.

The acoustic project was conceived by a French engineer,³⁵² although Fortes never met him.³⁵³ A Neve console was ordered; however, as the Portuguese noun *radio* (as in Rádio Triunfo) stands for radio, there was a misunderstanding regarding the type of console requested: in England, it was understood that a console for radio broadcasting was needed. It was Fortes who had to go to England to choose the right one - a sixteen-channel Neve. With it, a quadriphonic monitoring that Fortes did not want, but was forced to accept.³⁵⁴

With four speakers in front of him in the control room, it took five years for him to decide to leave Rádio Triunfo, on September the 28th, 1979. The reason: serious monitoring problems.³⁵⁵

“I didn’t leave earlier, on account of respect towards Mr. Leal, whom I knew since I was nine years old.[...]When Rádio Triunfo Recording Studios was opened, I cannot say that it was very different from what was happening in terms of sound in Portugal - the same formats, the same systems, the type of acoustics, the type of monitoring, the type of machines...everything was the same” (Fortes 2011).



Photo 15 - Control room, upper floor with the four monitors in front of the console (photo courtesy of José Manuel Fortes)

³⁵² The French sound engineer’s name was supposedly André Ledentou. (Fortes 2011)

³⁵³ Those were things handled by “the office people” (Fortes 2011).

³⁵⁴ Again, another decision handled by “the office people”. Fortes was told that such a monitoring “might be needed someday” (ibid.).

³⁵⁵ According to José Fortes, the only way he could overcome the monitoring problem was to take the tapes home, where he had a small machine that could read/play them, listen there, and then return to Radio Triunfo to make the necessary adjustments (Fortes 2011).



Photo 16 - Small recording room, upper floor (photo courtesy of José Manuel Fortes)

An interesting studio as “auditorium” (Forte’s way of referring to the recording room), but an inferior one in terms of control room (ibid).

However, the studio/studios were announced as “the most modern in Europe”. According to news released by the press at the time of the studio’s opening (which I found in a blog), the event was highlighted as being “the final link of [Rádio Triunfo’s] big production chain” apart from three record stores, three factories (one for pressing, another to cut acetate and the other to manufacture cartridges and cassettes), as well as its facilities in Angola and Mozambique.

“Portuguese people have always had delusions of *grandeur*!

On the eve of the 25th of April 1974, in February, Radio Triunfo opened in Lisbon, at Estrada da Luz, where Namouche is today, what they called ‘Europe’s most modern (recording) studio’.”³⁵⁶

“The new studios (they are, in fact, two, a giant one, with the capacity of accommodating a symphonic orchestra, with 11x12x5 meters, and a smaller one, with 2,70x2,30,2,30) enable Rádio Triunfo to complete the cycle of its equipment, which makes it self-sufficient.”³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ “O mais moderno da Europa” (“The most modern in Europe”) in guedelhudos.blogspot.pt, - 31st of May 2010 https://www.google.com/search?q=Rádío+Triunfo+Estúdios&tbm=isch&gws_rd=ssl#tbn=isch&q=Arnanlido+Trindade+Est%C3%BAdios+Est%C3%BAdios&imgrc=8i4NpW0 - accessed on August 2015. As we can see, the news is wrong as to the actual opening date of the studio, which was 1973.

³⁵⁷ *Alvorada*, February 1974, in “O mais moderno da Europa” (“The most modern in Europe”) in guedelhudos.blogspot.pt, -31st of May 2010 - https://www.google.com/search?q=Rádío+Triunfo+Estúdios&tbm=isch&gws_rd=ssl#tbn=isch&q=Arnanlido+Trindade+Est%C3%BAdios+Est%C3%BAdios&imgrc=8i4NpW0 - accessed on August 2015.

The ironic comment at the beginning of the blog post announces further ones, along the same page, regarding the lack of quality of the records with the label Rádio Triunfo³⁵⁸ (but not the ones recorded at their studios) - bad covers, bad pressing of the vinyls, bad sound (worse than the originals), the sort of criticism that, somehow, seems to predict the unfortunate end of the enterprise in 1986.

João Vaz de Carvalho recalls his work in Estrada da Luz.

“[...] In the meantime, a new studio, Studio 3, was about to open, after great renovation work. It had a twenty-four-track console, and it was said to be the best in the country. Bigger and better equipped than any other, it had dimensions and characteristics which enabled the recording of a whole orchestra. Estrada da Luz’s recording studio became another workstation for me where, now with a twenty-four-track console, my professional challenges and difficulties increased significantly”. (João Vaz de Carvalho, interview, March 2016).

After José Fortes’s departure in 1979, Estrada da Luz would be bought by Arnaldo Trindade in 1981, becoming AT2 Recording studios, as referred in the previous sub-chapter. It was by that time that I started to record in that facility (never having recorded with José Fortes there). I also do not recall the studio’s being acknowledged as AT2: it was always Estrada da Luz or Rádio Triunfo.

With the merger of Arnaldo Trindade and Rádio Triunfo, the studio would, again, be called Rádio Triunfo. Sessions there were, mainly, occupied by light music productions (with special emphasis to recordings associated to *Festival RTP da Canção* - RTP Song Contest). Both artists belonging to the label and others would record there. Publicity sessions - mainly with Zé da Ponte and Guilherme Inês - also abounded. As we will see in the next session, the frequency of these musicians in the studios would have a direct consequence on its future history, with the Namouche era.

³⁵⁸ Radio Triunfo represented more than one hundred and fifty international labels, according to Portuguese magazine *Flama* of March the 1st 1974 - in “O mais moderno da Europa” (“The most modern in Europe”) in guedelhudos.blogspot.pt, - 31st of May 2010- https://www.google.com/search?q=Rádio+Triunfo+Estúdios&tbm=isch&gws_rd=ssl#tbm=isch&q=Arnaldo+Trindade+Est%C3%BAdios+Est%C3%BAdios&imgsrc=8i4NpW0 - accessed on August 2015.



Figure 9 - Rádio Triunfo's recording studio's different names and ownerships

Time line: 1974-2017.

9.5 Namouche (with Zé da Ponte and Guilherme Inês: 1985-1999)

Namouche started as a production company owned by musicians Zé da Ponte and Guilherme Inês. From 1982 to 1985, the company had no recording studio of its own. As time went by, both partners realized that the amount of work they had and the money spent on studio rental would justify the investment in a recording studio. Together with a third equity partner, Namouche (the company) would buy Campolide recording studio in 1985; later in the same year, Estrada da Luz would be bought as well. Both studios would, then, be named Namouche.³⁵⁹

João Pedro Castro, Portuguese sound engineer, started his professional career in Campolide as a rookie³⁶⁰, doing the small tasks that constituted the “shit circuit” referred by Fortes previously.³⁶¹

“We would go to a copy room, get the masters, edit the masters on tape (cutting the beginning and end of the tape), we would put white stripe to separate the tracks, put the tracks in order (five tracks for side A, five tracks for side B)...we would also put green tape on the beginning, yellow tape to separate side A from side B and red tape at the end of the tape. We would edit the whole tape, with the responsibility of not cutting any parts of the tape that were necessary, and at the end we would make a security copy” (João Pedro Castro, interview, Namouche Recording Studios, April 2012).

After this initial stage, the next would involve “being put behind a recording console” (ibid), under the supervision of a more experienced sound engineer, making mistakes to be able to learn - something impossible to happen these days, according to

³⁵⁹ Guilherme Inês, interview, Lisbon, February 2013. The purchase of the recording studios and the consequent inclusion of the third equity partner would result in the following share division: Zé da Ponte and Guilherme Inês owned 25% of the shares, and José Serafim, the third partner, former owner of Rádio Triunfo and owner of Movieplay Portugal, owned the remaining 75%.

³⁶⁰ When João Pedro Castro started in Campolide, the studios were still the property of Rádio Triunfo. In that same year, however, a few months later, the studios would be bought by Namouche society (see the diagram on sub-chapter 9.3).

³⁶¹ This circuit is different, according to the historical context and the correspondent music recording technology. Fortes’s circuit, for instance, involved cutting acetate, an activity that no longer existed in 1985.

him. “No budget for that!”, adding that back then musicians practically paid for being trained by recording engineers.

Having Moreno Pinto and Jorge Barata - the oldest recording engineers in Campolide - as his supervisors, he would be “thrown into the jungle” facing “the red button panic” (the REC button in the console) (ibid). From 1986 to 1988, recording sessions were basically occupied with records and some publicity. But as Namouche’s core business became increasingly publicity productions - especially after the acquisition of Estrada da Luz recording studios³⁶²- there was not much studio space left for other works. Campolide recording studios would be sold to Luís Pedro Fonseca, becoming Xangri-Lá Recording Studios. Namouche (the company) would keep one recording studio - Estrada da Luz, aka Namouche recording studios.

According to Castro, Namouche provided a large percentage of the country’s publicity music production - jingles and soundtracks. Jingles were more Zé da Ponte’s expertise, while Guilherme Inês preferred composing soundtracks. In an interview I conducted with him in Lisbon, at Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation’s gardens, Inês stated not to have “a strong composer side”.

“Zé is a much better composer than me...but for soundtracks, I have a certain “mack”, as the Americans say” (Inês 2013).³⁶³

As with other works and productions, Namouche’s hallmark in publicity was one of great quality. Jingles sounded like pop-songs, with well thought out melodies, and well-chosen, tasteful and sophisticated instrument sounds; soundtracks sounded like small film scores. Quality of sound, choice of instrumentation, choice of players and singers - the whole production was meant to sound like any other music production, and not just a music piece with obvious commercial intentions. When it came to publicity (or any other production, I would say), Namouche would hire “people who were able to sing,

³⁶² According to Castro (2012), this would happen in 1988. However, Guilherme Inês referred a different date - 1986, some months after having bought Campolide (Inês 2013).

³⁶³ By composer side, Inês means composing jingles. This is clearly an understatement, as throughout the years I sang many jingles and other compositions by Inês that evidence the opposite. Zé da Ponte is referred to in the present tense, as he was still alive by this date. As referred previously, he would pass away on January 29th, 2015.

people who were able to play and people who could record” (Inês *ibid.*). That was clearly audible.

“We recorded publicity as if it were an album; there was no difference in the processes, but rather in the time consumed. Nothing was done any old way. Publicity is a wonderful school for many things, because, among other features it gives you a sense of macroscopy, a sense of synthesis, ... you had to synthesize your ideas! I loved working in publicity. The discipline, the power of synthesis...it was just great” (*ibid.*).

Despite the fact that publicity occupied most of their professional lives, Zé da Ponte and Guilherme Inês managed to keep their work outside publicity as music producers - either as a team (under the name Namouche) or individually - with emerging artists like Dora (who represented Portugal in the Eurovision Song Contest of 1986 and 1988) and Dulce Pontes, who also represented Portugal in the 1991 Eurovision Song Contest and would become an internationally acclaimed singer-songwriter.³⁶⁴

The boom of synthesizers and drum machines from 1992 onwards brought some changes in the recording scenario.

“Imitation arrived to the studios: it was much cheaper to have a synthesizer imitating the sound of an orchestra than the orchestra itself. The studio became much less occupied. There were no bands in the studio, no bass players, no guitar players, no drummers, all done by synthesizers and drum machines. You could do a whole production from top to bottom without musicians” (Castro 2012).

Lack of studio occupation became more evident from 1996 onwards. This was also the year when Zé da Ponte left the society. The opening of other publicity oriented recording studios in the Lisbon area, together with problems related to Namouche’s management led to the breaking of the society around 1998.³⁶⁵ The studio, however, would remain open and, apparently, inactive - until Joaquim Monte arrived in 2005.

³⁶⁴ Dulce Pontes would pursue her career with Guilherme Inês, who produced her first successful recording *Lágrima (Tears)*. It was actually recorded in Namouche, in 1993.

³⁶⁵ Xangri-lá (Campolide’s recording studios), run by Luís Pedro da Fonseca, would be one of them, although not working exclusively for the advertising business. But many others opened and remain active until these days, with their core business solely based on publicity.

“[From 1998 to 2005] Zero...zero...zero activity...or practically none.³⁶⁶ Publicity died as soon as Guilherme Inês left. There were no productions, no producers, no musicians...there was no music. And nobody came here to the studio, because a stigma was created towards Namouche. ‘They’re expensive, they’re elitists, they’re arrogant, the studio is inaccessible’ - it was even said that the studio had shut down and had become a warehouse! Of course, this was very convenient for many people” (ibid).

This situation was not given any special attention by the remaining partners, who managed the studio “long-distance” (ibid.). No investment was made in the studio. It was in this scenario of nearly abandonment that Joaquim Monte found Namouche.

Joao Pedro Castro remained alone in the studio until August 2013. He was forced to leave, due to problems related to wage delays. During my interview with him, a year prior to his forced leave, he would tell me that he would not leave the studio unless he was forced to. “Because I believe in this! This has so many possibilities...”

9.6 Valentim de Carvalho

“Like everything in life, owning a recording studio is an advantage that can become a disadvantage. [...] That studio was, cyclically, an advantage and a disadvantage” (David Ferreira, interview, Lisbon, June 2014).

The interview I conducted with David Ferreira was more revealing of the Portuguese recording industry as a whole, rather than being solely focused on Valentim de Carvalho’s recording studios, to which he was associated for most of his professional life. Very careful in his words, Ferreira has a clear historical perspective regarding the events that marked the Portuguese recording industry from the 70s (the decade he started in the music business) until today, as well as a defined personal opinion about them. One of the possible reasons for this is the fact that Ferreira has been conducting a daily radio

³⁶⁶ João Pedro recalls one, two music productions per year, from Movieplay (the third partner José Serafim’s record label).

program about popular music in Portugal.³⁶⁷ Hugo Ribeiro was also a very important informant regarding the history of this fundamental corporate group.

Valentim de Carvalho was a family business which included a recording label, a factory, record stores and recording studios. Like Arnaldo Trindade (and Rádio Triunfo, as stated by Fortes) its employees, being family or not, should go through the various stages and departments of the hierarchical chain. “Good family enterprises have that” (Ferreira 2014). Being the nephew of the owner, Ferreira started in March 1972, barely eighteen, as an assistant of Mário Martins, the label’s national and international A&R at that time. Mário Martins controlled everything that the label recorded - except Amália Rodrigues (ibid.). I will come back to Amália, as the role of this artist is seminal to the history of this enterprise, particularly regarding the recording label and the recording studios.

Because of a wage claim that was not satisfied by his boss/uncle Rui Valentim de Carvalho, Ferreira resigned; two months later, he got back to the enterprise, but this time to one of its record stores, where he stayed until 1978. He, then, went to the editorial department, having held positions in the promotion and publicity department for many years. Later, when Valentim merged with EMI in 1983, Ferreira became EMI’s director until 2007. Today, apart from the radio program, he dedicates himself to research and to the dissemination of the history of popular music through workshops. He is also a defender of intellectual property rights, although claiming that “the truths that I have to say about this matter are very poorly appreciated by the people in charge today” (ibid.).

I believe it is necessary to frame historically the enterprise to better understand the role that the recording studios had, as well as why they were built. Having started as a music instruments store at Rua Nova do Almada in Chiado, Lisbon in the 1930s, it was there, on the first floor of the store, that the first recordings were conducted “in an RCA console that recorded directly to a 78 r.p.m disc” (Hugo Ribeiro in Abreu 2013). Later, Valentim de Carvalho’s recording room would become *Clube Estefânia*, a neighborhood association very near a garden with many peacocks. The noise made by these animals, together with a pool table on the first floor of the club made recordings a hard enterprise to accomplish (ibid.). They moved the recording gear to Teatro Taborda (Taborda Theater)

³⁶⁷ “*David Ferreira a contar*” (“David Ferreira narrating”). The presentation text of the program says: “the songs from the Portuguese and its stories. How they were, the songs and the singers. How the music that was heard was. How we were. [...]”- <http://www.rtp.pt/programa/radio/p5409> - accessed on September 2015. From this text, one can perceive an analytical point of view about the related facts, which I also found in the interview.

in the 1950s. There, other problems arose, such as the poor state of the theater's stage, where Ribeiro was supposed, at times, to record military bands - "a lot of very strong, heavy men" (Ribeiro in Frota 2014). But that was not all: situated in the very popular neighborhood of Graça, the shouts of the women fish sellers (*varinas*) - announcing fish to sell could also ruin a take (ibid).³⁶⁸

All these setbacks would help shaping Hugo Ribeiro's professional expertise. He developed several recording "tricks" (of which he spoke proudly) to be able to overcome questions related to the recording environment, lack of technical means, and, very importantly, the artists's peculiar moods and tempers. In Ribeiro's words, "[artists] are always very nervous and hysterical, always with the idea that they are not singing properly" (ibid). Before the 60s, records were not central in the music industry and recording was not yet a part of an artist's routine (Ferreira 2014). But even when historically this centrality occurred, it was clear, according to my observation as a professional singer, that the relationship between a musician and the act of recording in a professional studio varies, being at times extremely difficult.

In the particular case of fado, a recording studio is a very different setting from the one fado singers and players are used to when performing live: the absence of audience, together with the passage from an acoustic performance to an electric one involving use of microphones (something that fado singers and players never use in fado venues) are some of the main differences, adding to these facts the lack of the nightly atmosphere that "*casas de fado*" (fado houses) and music clubs, as a whole, involve.³⁶⁹

These differences required some creativity on the part of sound engineers when recording "fadistas" (fado singers). Two examples mentioned by Hugo Ribeiro may enlighten this situation: those of Alfred Marceneiro and Amália Rodrigues.

Alfredo Marceneiro, or *Ti Alfredo* (uncle Alfred), as he is often affectionately named by the Portuguese people, did not like recording his voice - it "damaged his voice" (Ferreira 2014). There was also the issue of "the night": whenever they were recording during the day and there was light coming into the studio, the singer wanted to leave. Ribeiro had to "fabricate" an artificial night, the same way movie makers do when

³⁶⁸ These shouts, called *pregões* in Portuguese, are announcements made by street vendors with the purpose of selling their products - http://basilio.fundaj.gov.br/pesquisaescolar/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=874:pregoes-folclore&catid=50:letra-p&Itemid=1 - accessed on September the 27th 2015.

³⁶⁹ This is obviously very different nowadays, where emerging fado singers are born within a recording culture and are, very early in their careers, directed towards the need to build a recording career, apart from one performing in fado houses, singing live.

creating an “American night”, but with very simple and practical means, placing the scarf Marceneiro used around his neck in his eyes. Like this, blindfolded, Marceneiro was able to record twelve fados in a row, feeling the comfort of the night that he was used to (Ribeiro in Frota 2014). This episode took place when recordings of the label were still taking place at Teatro Taborda, in 1960 (ibid).³⁷⁰

Amália Rodrigues was another case that engaged Ribeiro’s intuition and capacity to solve technical problems.

“She wasn’t someone who knew how to use the microphone, so I had to find a technique to cheat her. She never knew...I placed a microphone in front of her in order to convince her that *that* was her microphone” (Ribeiro 2014).³⁷¹

It wasn’t. There were a number of microphones around her, and only one would record her voice - but not the one she thought it was. That would be another one, far from the singer. In that way, she was free to use the dynamics she was used to when singing live, without distorting the sound, because “when [Amália] raised her voice, instead of moving away from the microphone, she approached it” (ibid).

A true force of nature (ibid.), as was another musician that Hugo Ribeiro also “cheated a lot” (ibid.) in the recording studio: Carlos Paredes.³⁷²

“Paredes had this habit of bending over the microphone so much that all he could hear was “wires”. That’s why he came here to record, claiming that in other recording studios “they only recorded wires”, but here he could hear the sound of his Portuguese guitar recorded. But I never told him the secret: I had a microphone in front of him with a certain distance, with the same sound in the recording room as the one in the control room. It doesn’t take a lot of intelligence to come up with this idea...the sound was the same and he was delighted” (ibid.).

³⁷⁰ The result of this session was the classic 1961 fado album *The Fabulous Marceneiro*, by Alfredo Marceneiro (Frota 2014).

³⁷¹ I also asked a few other sound engineers if they had felt difficulty recording “old school” “fadistas”. Jorge Barata mentioned a peculiar fact regarding microphone positioning: “Because they tend to sing with their head up [a feature of fado singing, together with hands crossed below the breast, in the case of women, or inside the trousers’s pockets, in the case of men] sometimes we were forced to place the mike upside down...”. With fado players - traditionally, a Portuguese guitar and an acoustic guitar player -, it could be difficult too, as “once they got used to a sound engineer and recognized their instrument sound, they did not want to work with anybody else” (Barata, November 2015).

³⁷² Carlos Paredes (1925-2004) was a master of the Portuguese guitar, as well as composer, considered one of the most outstanding symbols of Portuguese culture. For more information, see Nery, Rui Vieira (2010) “Carlos Paredes” in Castelo-Branco, Salwa (coord.), *Enciclopédia da Música em Portugal no Século xx*, Vol. 3, pp.968-971. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores/Temas e Debates.

In 1963, Valentim de Carvalho recording studios would open in Paço d'Arcos, after the death of “the old” Valentim de Carvalho, founder of the house. Rui Valentim de Carvalho, his nephew, would head this investment - after insisting with his uncle for years - with the cooperation of Abbey Road technicians hired for the purpose. The studio itself was a *replica* of one of Abbey Road's rooms, showing the symbolic capital, apart from the technical, that in those days the London recording studio already had. After all, it was the studio where the Beatles recorded - and where Amália herself recorded too, in 1952³⁷³ - and “if The Beatles had Abbey Road, Amália would have Valentim de Carvalho Recording Studios” (Frota 2014).

³⁷³ Rato, Vanessa and others “Morreu Rui Valentim de Carvalho, pioneiro da indústria discográfica em Portugal”, *Público* on line newspaper, 11th November, 2013 - <http://www.publico.pt/culturaipilon/noticia/morreu-rui-valentim-de-carvalho-1612091> — accessed on November 2015.



Photo 17 - (also previous page) Valentim de Carvalho's recording studios in the 1970s (Studio 1) - recording session with maestro Joaquim Luís Gomes (photos courtesy of José Manuel Fortes)

From left to right: Fernando Cortês, Hugo Ribeiro and maestro Joaquim Luís Gomes (photo courtesy of José Manuel Fortes).

“Hugo Ribeiro starts recording in the 1940s, but although these facts are not sufficiently documented, I believe the central role that records had in the overall business of Valentim de Carvalho is not from the beginning of the enterprise. Records were a part of the business...and Amália changes this” (Ferreira 2014).

Amália became Valentim de Carvalho’s artist in 1952. Although she left the label between 1955 and 1958 for the French record label Ducretet-Thomson, Rui Valentim de Carvalho managed to get her back. Amália would stay in Valentim de Carvalho until her death (ibid.).

“Records were very much commerce-oriented, because my old uncle Valentim was a trader. The turning point from commerce to industry would be accomplished by my uncle Rui Valentim de Carvalho, with the record factory and the recording studios” (ibid.)

Whether or not the studios were primarily meant to be Amália Rodrigues’s recording temple, they would host other artists along the years (national and international), even outside the label’s catalog as I referred previously. Amália Rodrigues’s role in Valentim de Carvalho would also be felt in relation to contracts with other artists: Amália’s contract could never be exceeded by any other, as a result of her local and international weight in the label, but also due to Rui Valentim de Carvalho’s dedication to her.³⁷⁴ As stated by David Ferreira, “Valentim de Carvalho’s history with and without Amália is not the same” (ibid.)

Upon my question to David Ferreira about the nearest competition to Valentim de Carvalho’s recording studios during the heydays of the Portuguese recording industry - particularly the first half of the 80s - the answer was not a recording studio, but a recording engineer: José Manuel Fortes. Fortes was much more “a man of buttons” than Hugo Ribeiro, an intuitive person by nature, to whom buttons bored (ibid.).³⁷⁵ He would leave

³⁷⁴ Amália was, for instance, the only artist who could book the studio directly with Rui Valentim de Carvalho. She was allowed to turn the studio into an atmosphere as comfortable as she needed, sometimes even bringing her meals there, which she shared with the recording staff. “I’ll take some fried mackerel and then we’ll record” (Amália Rodrigues mentioned by Ferreira 2014). As stated by Hugo Ribeiro, “She was like one of us” (“Era como se fosse uma camarada nossa”) (Ribeiro in Frota 2014).

³⁷⁵ In fact, I remember a part of my interview with Hugo Ribeiro, when he mentions ironically a certain mixing console the studio presently has which, according to him, “did everything but speak” (Ribeiro 2014). The irony, somehow, seemed to embrace the feeling that nowadays the work of the sound engineer is facilitated, compared to the times when he had to come up with inventive solutions to overcome the technical problems that came up in the several recording situations and artists he had to face.

Rádio Triunfo in 1979, continuing his career in Angel Recording Studios taking many clients with him, from musicians to producers. A striking example was Rui Veloso who, despite being a signed recording artist to the label Valentim de Carvalho, would record his first album with Fortes in Angel 1 recording studio. A story to be developed in the next sub-chapter.

Several reasons may account for Ferreira's opening statement of this sub-chapter - that the studio was, cyclically, an advantage as well as a disadvantage for the label. Apart from José Manuel Fortes and his sound, the records of Zeca Afonso, José Mário Branco and Sérgio Godinho would set the recording quality of a certain period of time (1970s, before the 25th of April 1974). As I have referred, these records were recorded in France, at Strawberry Studios, a recording facility with a set of conditions like no other studio had in Portugal at the time.³⁷⁶

“There were three records which were recorded abroad, with a sound that was not heard in Portugal - *Cantigas do Maio* from Zeca Afonso - an extraordinary sound even today - *Mudam-se os Tempos, Mudam-se as Vontades*, from José Mário Branco and *Os Sobreviventes*, from Sérgio Godinho.³⁷⁷ Suddenly, there is a new quality pattern between 1971 and 1972, coming from multi-track recording, with a lot of emphasis in electrified instruments. And if we think of the great records of Valentim de Carvalho of the same period sound-wise - Amália's *Com que Voz* and Carlos Paredes's *Movimento Perpétuo* -, these were acoustic recordings which demanded much less tracks” (ibid).

EXAMPLE N.13 “Senhor Arcanjo” (*Cantigas do Maio*, Zeca Afonso)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1FIcdp3f9s>.

EXAMPLE N.14 “Gare D’Austerlitz” (*Mudam-se os Tempos, Mudam-se as Vontades*, José Mário Branco)

³⁷⁶ In 1971, the only recording studios in Lisbon were Musicorde, Polysom (the former name of Arnaldo Trindade) and Valentim de Carvalho. Neither of these studios were in any way comparable to Strawberry Studios, at Châteaux d’Hérouville, which already operated with sixteen tracks, “state-of-the-art recording equipment, ping-pong tables, mini-football games and a swimming pool.” (Willsher, Kim “For sale: ‘honky château’ where Elton John and Bowie recorded classic hits”, *The Guardian*, Sunday 4 August, 2013 - accessed on October 2015). It was, actually, a luxurious residential studio, briefly mentioned by André Perry in the interview I conducted with him, but with a more tragic history associated to it, involving ghosts and its owner, Michel Magne (who committed suicide in 1984) having to sell the studios to his creditors in 1979 (ibid).

³⁷⁷ Ferreira commented that there was actually a certain prejudice regarding the “electric” versus the “acoustic” by left-wing protest artists (ibid.), which is even more surprising when listening to the sound of these records - particularly, I would say, *Cantigas do Maio*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67gInYw1U3w>.

EXAMPLE N.15 “Romance de um dia na Estrada” (*Os Sobreviventes*, Sérgio Godinho)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fq2UD3qU-S8>.

EXAMPLE N.16 “Com que Voz” (*Com que Voz*, Amália Rodrigues)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBo6TuUoz7Q>.

EXAMPLE N.17 “Movimento Perpétuo” (*Movimento Perpétuo*, Carlos Paredes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9cqXIk2B04>.

The decision to record in France was primarily on account of Branco’s political exile situation in France and his knowledge of the French recording milieu. But the role of Arnaldo Trindade, the editor, was fundamental. Not owning any studio at that time (yet), Trindade was free to choose where he wanted to record his artists. He also had the main Portuguese singers-songwriters under a written contract, assigning them a monthly retainer. This was an offer difficult to refuse, particularly for artists who, for political reasons, could not perform live anywhere (ibid).

However, Valentim de Carvalho’s dependence on its own recording studios cannot, I believe, solely account for this situation. It is true that *Cantigas do Maio* was recorded four years before Arnaldo Trindade bought his first recording facility in Campolide (1975). But owning the studios did not change his choices, as stated in the interview I conducted with him.

“I never even thought about that...what I worried about was having the best sound engineers for my studios and the best possible conditions. But at that time, an investment in a top recording studio was huge and it was much easier to go abroad and record in a good studio... I only depended upon myself, so I could do whatever I wanted” (Trindade 2015).

Above all, the two labels had very distinct investment policies that go beyond a studio’s ownership, or a signed (and waged) group of very talented singer-songwriters - although these are certainly reasons that surely influenced the course of both labels’ history. Although records were not Valentim de Carvalho and Arnaldo Trindade’s core businesses, these would assume very different roles in both companies. Both men are referred by their nephews - David Ferreira and Fernando Albuquerque - as traders; but

Arnaldo Trindade was a more cosmopolitan, open-minded and courageous record editor than the “old” Valentim de Carvalho (as Ferreira at times named his great uncle), more careful and conservative in his investments, to whom records were also part of the business and not *the* business (Ferreira 2014). Arnaldo Trindade had other businesses as well (apart from records, which to him were “a hobby”); but these businesses would help financing the records and the artists he cherished, the way he wanted - with *grandeur*.

“We were lucky that our firm did not support itself solely from music. It was one of the most important domestic appliances distributor of the country - Philco - and the record department was created by me, because my father and my uncle, its owners, had better things to do” (ibid).

Also, there was a sense of duty regarding his label *Orfeu*, where he recorded the most notorious Portuguese poets of the epoch, as well as Zeca Afonso and other protest singer-songwriters.

“I recorded the greatest Portuguese poets, recited by themselves. [...] I was young, and I thought that things had to be done. I had an education in the USA, so I had an idea of what freedom was, and that everybody should have a voice, even if the ideas were opposite to mine. I did not agree entirely with Zeca Afonso’s ideas, but of course I was not in favor of the political situation back then. I have always been a social-democrat. And like Zeca, I believed in a better world” (ibid).

While *Cantigas do Maio* remains, even today, one of the most remarkable Portuguese records of all times (“a master-piece of the Portuguese music”, in Arnaldo Trindade’s words), Hugo Ribeiro’s acoustic recordings (particularly of Amália Rodrigues) will undoubtedly stand as sonic references of the Portuguese recording industry in the period between the 40s and late 60s.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁸ Other sound engineers would become part of Valentim de Carvalho’s staff: Pedro Vasconcelos (a cousin of David Ferreira, also one of Valentim de Carvalho’s nephews and heirs); Tó Pinheiro da Silva, from 1980 until 1986; Amândio Bastos, who worked at Valentim in two different periods (from 1984 to 1992 and from 1993 to 1996). In this last period, the company had already bought Angel Studios (1 and 2) - a fact explained in the next sub-chapters -, so Bastos came to manage the four studios (Amândio Bastos, Facebook message, November 2016); and Paulo Neves, who joined the enterprise in 1982 and left in the late 1990s, beginning of 2000 (Paulo Neves, Facebook message, November 2016).

The pioneering role that Valentim de Carvalho as a label did not play regarding what Arnaldo Trindade called *musica de tema* (“theme music”)³⁷⁹ would happen later, with the emergence of the Portuguese rock movement. In 1980, the label would grab the *momentum* with the hiring of Rui Veloso. Veloso’s debut album *Ar de Rock* was a tremendous hit, both commercially and musically, triggering Veloso’s career and that of many other artists and groups, as well as the Portuguese recording industry in an unprecedented music production activity since the emergence of rock in Portugal. It was, in the words of João Carlos Callixto,³⁸⁰ the first time that record labels invested in a concerted way in Portuguese rock.

My most memorable studio sessions at Valentim de Carvalho recording studios were in 1985, precisely for Rui Veloso’s homonymous album *Rui Veloso* (his fourth). After a two year break in the artist’s career, this was a much sought-after record, with high expectations both from the label and the pair Veloso/Tê (the lyricist). It was a very fulfilling experience, both professionally and personally. The record resulted in another sales hit, with songs that are until today part of Veloso’s core repertoire, such as “Porto Côvo” and “Porto Sentido”. The sound engineer was Amândio Bastos, although I recall the recording experience in the control room as a clear collaboration process between the sound engineer, Rui Veloso and lyricist Carlos Tê.

EXAMPLE N.18 “Porto Sentido” (*Rui Veloso*, Rui Veloso)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-x5XWQnap0>.

EXAMPLE N.19 “Directo à Cabeça” (*Rui Veloso*, Rui Veloso)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00zz3RcB0Pg>

³⁷⁹ This is a personal designation Trindade used for the musical space occupied by what others denominated “protest song” or “intervention song”, represented by artists like Zeca Afonso, Sérgio Godinho, José Mário Branco, Adriano Correia de Oliveira and others.

³⁸⁰ João Carlos Callixto, interview, April 2018. Callixto is a music researcher and author of radio shows. He has also written several books about Portuguese music, namely *Na Terra dos Sonhos* (2005) and *Canta Amigo, Canta* (2014).

Another memorable session was, once more, in 1985 with *O Lado Errado da Noite*, an album by Jorge Palma, who signed for Valentim at the date.³⁸¹ This album includes some of Palma's most popular songs, such as "Deixa-me rir". I remember particularly the recording of this theme's backing vocals, because of the hook of the refrain. Palma wanted an answer from the backing vocals to the sentence "Pois é, pois é" (more or less "and so it is", in the song's context). But he did not want the usual "lalalala"s or "ooooooooh"s. It took some time until one of us - I don't remember who - suggested the very unusual sound "why-ya-too-ya". We tried it a couple of times, and it seemed to work. It is, until today, one of the most well-known refrains of a Portuguese song. It is also a clear example of the process of distributed creativity in action. We recorded in "Estúdio 1" (Studio 1), situated on the ground floor of the building, now named "Estúdio Amália".

EXAMPLE N.20 "Deixa-me Rir" (*O Lado Errado da Noite*, Jorge Palma)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28bvYfqrCGM>.

Today, the audio recording studio is still in this building, but situated on the first floor. This studio is named "SSL", on account of its recording console (a Solid State Logic).

On the occasion of the interview with Hugo Ribeiro, I asked to see this studio. I barely recognized it, as it has been transformed into a TV studio. It is interesting, however, that in the group's institutional page, the acoustic properties of the studio, "unique in the country" (as stated, the result of the work of Abbey Road engineers) are highlighted, turning it an ideal asset "to record music programs or via cable TV."³⁸² Nowadays, I go to Valentim de Carvalho quite often, but to Studio 3, the largest TV studio the enterprise owns (with a plateau of 1.500 m²). It is here that many TV shows, particularly those with large live audiences (such as *The Voice Portugal*) are recorded.

³⁸¹ Unlike Rui Veloso, who would remain at Valentim de Carvalho - today, EMI Valentim de Carvalho - all his artistic life until today, Jorge Palma would leave the label in 1989, because of an alleged lack of interest shown by the label regarding the new songs that would be part of his next recording album *Bairro do Amor* ("Bairro do Amor faz 25 anos e Jorge Palma vai trazê-lo de volta ao Misty Fest, em Lisboa" in *Blitz* on line newspaper, 18th July 2014 - <http://blitz.sapo.pt/ibairro-do-amori-faz-25-anos-e-jorge-palma-vai-traze-lo-de-volta-ao-misty-fest-em-lisboa=f92993> - accessed on November the 8th 2015). *Bairro do Amor*, an album in which I also participated, was recorded at Namouche and released by Polygram.

³⁸² Institucional Grupo Valentim de Carvalho - <http://www.valentim.pt/INSTITUCIONAL/default.asp?idcat=INSTITUCIONAL&idContent=3A43FA34-531F-403A-BF32-ECAF6D084046> - accessed on November the 2015.

Between 1992 and 1996, with the advent of private television in Portugal, this corporate group - nowadays called Grupo Valentim de Carvalho - expanded and modernized its facilities with the building of a complex of TV studios (six) and two OB vans.³⁸³ It also created its own television production company - Valentim de Carvalho Televisão -, which constitutes today its core business area.³⁸⁴ As stated in *Público* newspaper,

“While record publishing was the activity that excelled the company both in Portugal and abroad, especially after 1963 when Rui Valentim de Carvalho [...] opened the audio recording studios at Paço de Arcos, [the group’s] core business today is divided between TV studio rental (along with its technical and human means) and TV production.”³⁸⁵

In this same article, where Valentim de Carvalho’s financial problems are highlighted, it is also stated that

“[music recording] is no longer a relevant business” and the monthly input for the general revenues does not exceed 100.000 euros. [...] The company must be able to adapt itself to a changing market, where new platforms such as streaming are emerging.”³⁸⁶

Despite the situation described above, Edições VC (the label) have a very interesting catalog of emerging artists in several musical areas and genres.³⁸⁷ Also, Valentim de Carvalho’s remaining audio recording studio - Studio 2, or “SSL” - has been very active and present in the Portuguese recording industry due to the work of a Portuguese sound engineer from Porto - Nelson Carvalho - who has been working there since 2007. A very discreet personality, Nelson started “doing live”, and afterwards began working in a small recording studio associated to the Porto School of Jazz. In the course

³⁸³ An OB (Outside Broadcasting) van is a vehicle used for outside broadcasting, where the production control room is situated.

³⁸⁴ *ibid.*

³⁸⁵ Brito, Ana “Renegociação de dívida dá novo fôlego à Valentim de Carvalho” (“Debt renegotiation brings a new life to Valentim de Carvalho”), in *Público* on line newspaper, October the 25th 2015 - accessed on November 2015.

³⁸⁶ Manuel Duque, the group’s financial manager, in Brito 2015. The group’s record stores would fall into bankruptcy in 2009 “due to the growth of record piracy and the appearance of new digital formats” (*ibid.*). It also stopped fabricating vinyl records in 1988, with the advent of the CD. (*ibid.*)

³⁸⁷ <http://www.valentim.pt/> accessed on April 4th 2016.

of our conversation, we realized we had already met there in 1997, at that particular studio in Porto, when I participated in a musical whose score was composed and arranged by Pedro Abrunhosa.³⁸⁸ The “roughs” were recorded there.³⁸⁹

For personal as well as professional reasons, Nelson moved to Lisbon where he started to work at Valentim de Carvalho. He has invested substantially in studio gear, in the absence of this initiative by the studio’s management. He also takes care of the studio’s booking. Not showing great enthusiasm about the studio’s future, despite, in his words “having tried several approaches with them [the studio’s management]”, Nelson states that “it is alive and active, but less high profile than the showy and deceptive competition.”³⁹⁰ Inherent in his words is a reference to a recording facility in the Lisbon area which has recently opened, of which I will speak in the last sub-chapter if this section.

9.7 Angel Studios (Angel 1 and Angel 2)

We must now return to José Manuel Fortes and recall the moment when he leaves Rádio Triunfo on account of “technical incompatibility” with one of its owners (Mr. Leal), to whom he had asked better working conditions regarding the studio’s monitoring problems. The request was not satisfied and José Fortes left (Fortes 2011).

It was September 1979. Fortes had decided to leave the music business for good and start a fresh professional activity. With that purpose in mind, he gave a cash advance to a baby clothing store in a shopping center (ibid).

In the meantime, about one month and a half later (in the beginning of December of the same year) Fernando Correia Martins, a close friend of Fortes and a well-known Portuguese orchestrator and arranger, asked his collaboration in a mix he was trying to do in another recording studio, “where things weren’t going well” (ibid). Martins stated he had gone to Rádio Triunfo looking for Fortes (with whom he was used to working),

³⁸⁸ Pedro Abrunhosa is a well-known singer-songwriter from Porto, whose musical style shows influences from funk, jazz, acid-jazz and hip-hop. For more information, see Silva, João and Pedro Roxo “Pedro Abrunhosa” in Castelo-Branco, Salwa (coord.) (2010), *Enciclopédia da Música em Portugal no Século XX*, Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores/Temas e Debates, vol-1, p.7-8.

³⁸⁹ Nelson Carvalho, interview, Valentim de Carvalho Recording Studios, August 2012.

³⁹⁰ Nelson Carvalho, email interview, March 2016.

but ended up renting another studio, once he found out that Fortes no longer worked there. Fortes went to that other studio - RPE (*Rádio Produções Europa*) - to help his friend.

“And there I went to help, stating to Mr. Dias Coelho (the owner of RPE) :”look, I am only here to help Correia Martins, because I am his friend, but once I have finished, I am going home again.” I stayed there for one week and a half, approximately, helping with the mix, but of course...I didn’t have the courage to go back home” (ibid.).

He went to see the owner, but this time with a different discourse: he would stay there, provided “things changed”. Dias Coelho had no objections to that; moreover “he didn’t know what to do with the money he had” (ibid). Or so he said.

“I have a problem: I don’t know what to do with my money, but I want to make this [the studio] work right”, Dias Coelho told me. “Ok, let’s make this work!”, I replied. After a year, it turned out the problem was he did not have any money at all...” (ibid).

Apparently, Dias Coelho had borrowed money from a Swiss bank, whose representative showed up at the studios, one day, unexpectedly, asking for the workers’ endorsement. As Fortes was the only worker of the studio (apart from a cleaning lady), he was forced to assume financial responsibility for the society, becoming a partner. Fortes did not want that situation, but the options were very few: either becoming a partner or closing the studio. Everything had to be settled on that very day, during a lunch break, because the gentleman was due to catch a plane in a very short period of time.

“It was a problem, because I had the studio all booked up for the rest of the year (1980) and part of the next year, as well as other professional compromises with other clients...I was in the horns of a dilemma...” (ibid).

In another interview I conducted with Fortes, he would refer to this situation in a lighter mode.

“I should have stopped, saying: “This is not for me, so please find a solution whichever way you want.” But my mistake was thinking: “I have just started something here...I was given this ‘toy’ and now somebody wants to take it away from me?” (Fortes 2015)

It is easily understandable that after the frustrated experience in Rádio Triunfo, where his technical expertise had not been fully validated, Fortes would feel the challenge of having his own recording space.

“The idea of grabbing a recording studio that was closed, abandoned...and “let’s see what you can make out of this” was interesting for me...plus the promise there was money to be spent in the process” (ibid).

Angel Studios - the studio’s new name - went ahead, with Fortes as his technical director and partner. The first studio - Angel 1 - was situated at Rua Afonso III, in the Lisbon neighborhood of Alto de S. João. New equipment was bought - an MCI 500 console and a 24 track machine (without dolby) - which was set up in a weekend (between 7 p.m of a Friday and the morning of the following Monday), along with cabling, monitoring and everything else. Rui Veloso, an artist from Valentim de Carvalho, was the first client of the studio’s new equipment - precisely the one who came in the following Monday, at 9:00 a.m. (Fortes 2011). António Pinho, producer of this record, spoke to me about the process.

“I spoke to Zé Fortes about this guy [Rui Veloso] and of my purpose to record with him. He said “Look, I am about to get this new console and track machine...”...and so he stayed the whole week-end setting things up.[...]I was pretty much used to recording with Zé Fortes...and somehow my good friend Hugo Ribeiro didn’t seem the right person to record electrical...” (António Pinho, interview, Lisbon, 2014)

The arguments used to convince the people from Valentim de Carvalho’s label were also based on the search for the right person to record that music - rock.

“Valentim de Carvalho...the weight of a hundred-year-old institution...it was not easy...but I had to tell them: “You have to think that the sound engineers you have here are not familiarized with this type of music...we are taking chances here...”. As they realized that it was a lost battle, because Rui was backing me up, they cut in studio time. We recorded in one week, five days to record, two to mix” (ibid).

As time went on, and despite the fact that the studio was always booked, there was not enough money to pay for the loan that had been contracted – which was related to the

dollar's sudden rise in the currency market. Angel 1 did not have the necessary dimension, in terms of financial revenue, to cover its expenses. A solution had to be found: to make another loan for a second, larger recording studio. That loan was possible through a society which financed manufacturing industries. Somehow, Fortes and Dias Coelho were able to convince the people from that society that a recording studio was a manufacturing industry which transformed raw magnetic tape into recorded magnetic tape...so, Angel 1's loan was paid through a second loan which allowed the opening of Angel 2, "an interesting studio" in the words of Fortes (Fortes 2011). A clear understatement to define what was probably the best Lisbon (and Portuguese) music recording studio of the 80s.

The new studio's acoustic study would be made by Wolfgang Jensen, a German acoustician from East Lake company, who was recommended to Fortes by professional colleagues. Jensen accepted the challenge of constructing Angel 2's control room, despite its small dimensions, way below the measures Jensen was used to working with. Following the firm belief that, in a recording studio, the best auditory conditions should be in the control room (and not necessarily, by comparison, in the recording room), Fortes invested all his efforts with this purpose in mind. At last, one could listen to "what was on the tape and not what was in the room, [...] the great turning point accomplished by Angel studios" (Fortes 2014).

After four or five years, Dias Coelho sold his share of the company to Marcelino de Brito, "another gentleman with a lot of money", Fortes stated ironically (Fortes 2015). As the equipment part had already been dealt with, it was time to invest in the decoration of both studios - especially in Angel 2, where a nice lounge with a bar and a snooker table were included. In February, 1989 Fortes realized there was no money to pay anything, from the staff's salaries to the studio maintenance bills. The other "gentleman with a lot of money" had committed a fraud, leaving the studio with a huge financial hole. As a consequence, Fortes was forced to contact a financial enterprise of risk capital - SFIR -, following the advice of Tó Zé Brito, to be able to save the studio from bankruptcy.

The association with this company brought Valentim de Carvalho studios to the scenario. The possibility of the merger of Angel's and Valentim de Carvalho's studios to create a unique digital recording studio also emerged.³⁹¹

³⁹¹ Fortes 2015. According to Fortes, Portugal was not a big enough country to have two digital recording studios, so the idea was to make a joint venture.

However, things did not turn out exactly as imagined by Fortes: in the process, Angel studios would submerge. Angel 1 would soon be used only for “minor work” (Fortes 2015), such as publicity and voiceovers.³⁹² As for Angel 2, after its bookings were transferred to Valentim de Carvalho, it would eventually be dismantled.

“I never understood completely why they closed and dismantled Angel 2...but I believe it was a question of commercial strategy: “We can’t have two interesting studios here - Angel 2 and Valentim de Carvalho -, so we might as well close one”. They wouldn’t close Valentim de Carvalho, because it was Valentim de Carvalho. For me, it’s quite obvious” (Fortes 2015).

A sad ending for a project which involved incommensurable professional effort, as well as personal sacrifice.³⁹³

“What went wrong with Angel Studios? Myself, messing with things I did not know anything about... I don’t have regrets, but I’ve learned the great lesson: don’t ever speak about what you do not know, and don’t mess with things you don’t understand. Never again; it served me right...” (ibid).

Fortes would leave in 1989, after being invited to direct Valentim de Carvalho’s recording studios, “something I couldn’t possibly accept” (ibid). After a few difficult months, he started working in a TV production company - Edipim - where he stayed nine years (from 2000 until 2009). In the meantime, he would go on paying debts inherent to the part of the society that had been his for six years. Today, he teaches at a professional school – ETIC - and has a mobile studio in a truck, parked outside his house. It was, actually, there that I conducted our first interview. He seemed very proud of his working place, where, obviously, he took great care of the monitoring. As always, monitoring was in the center of his attention.

The memories I have of Angel studios are closely connected to the fine listening experiences that I had there. Many hours of studio sessions - always for records - but with the great pleasure of feeling involved by a perfectly balanced sound. Apart from José

³⁹² Fortes’ professional life has been recording music, either for records, or for TV live shows (during his time at Edipim from the year 2000 to 2009). Considering publicity and voiceovers as “minor work” does not stand, in my opinion, as an arrogant position, but rather as a consideration regarding a type of studio work that bears no interest to him.

³⁹³ I wasn’t able to find any photographic register of Angel 1. As for Angel 2, there is a copy of a CD with footage from the recording of the soundtrack of a very popular music theater play “Passa por Mim no Rossio”, from which I took some photos (see Appendix 4). This film was courtesy of José Manuel Fortes.

Manuel Fortes, sound engineer Rui Novais, tragically deceased at an early age, is a central part of my memories of Angel 1. A low profile personality, always polite and discreet, he had the extraordinary characteristic of always leaving studio sessions on schedule, something hard to accomplish particularly in those days, when studio work abounded. And he never did night sessions.³⁹⁴

There is a lot to be said about José Manuel Fortes, apart from the story of his recording studios. Good sound engineers - at least the ones I worked with and had the pleasure of interviewing for this thesis - have a very special, almost philosophical way of thinking about sound, which is fascinating. Fortes is no exception - quite the opposite. His well-known metaphors, some of which I have transcribed along the thesis, are of common knowledge in the recording milieu for anybody who worked with him. A collection of his most used sentences is available in this thesis (Appendix 1). During the seven years of my research for this thesis, I had the pleasure and privilege of interviewing José Manuel Fortes four times (let alone our email exchange and multiple text messages and telephone calls whenever there was a doubt I felt he could clarify). He was always available and enthusiastic about speaking of his work, even when it was clear he was tired. His words, as well as his attitude towards life in general and his work in particular, surpass largely the scope of this thesis and constitute a reference of an exceptional human being, in a cynical world where principles and values are vanishing.

9.8 Atlântico Blue: a dream come true?

In the year 2011, rumors began to spread in the recording milieu that a brand new state-of-the-art recording studio would open soon in Porto Salvo (very near Valentim de Carvalho). With Angolan capital, it was assumed that there would be no restrictions in terms of overall investment, particularly regarding the equipment. Non-consensual comments about the architecture, the space, the vintage instruments, the microphones, the piano, even about a supposed aquarium on the entrance of the studio began to circulate,

³⁹⁴ It seems a superficial fact, but it isn't. Whichever session it was, and whether the work was finished or not, Rui would always leave at six p.m, because he had to pick his children from school. Fortes would continue the session. I never saw that happen with any other sound engineer: it was considered a job without schedule.

and my curiosity would obviously grow accordingly. It took me some time before I managed to go to Atlântico Blue - the name of the space - and speak with some of the professionals working in this recording facility. Finally, in November 11, 2013, on a warm late afternoon, I finally went there.

As I would find out, it was not a good time to have gone there. At least, in ethnographic terms, which I will elaborate soon. Personally speaking, it was very pleasant: S. Martinho, a yearly festivity held precisely on that date (November 11), was being celebrated with the usual ingestion of roasted and boiled chestnuts, accompanied by “água-pé”, a Portuguese traditional alcoholic drink. Everyone was sitting outside, around a table, very relaxed (to say the least). I soon realized that it was not the best environment to write notes or record anything. While joining the party (which involved eating and drinking with them), I tried to keep my ethnographic “self” handy - after all, following ethnographic procedures (in this case, interviewing) was the reason for my presence there. I therefore asked some of the questions that I intended to ask - and probably even more. However, for lack of any written or recorded register, the facts remained somewhat blurred in my mind.

I mostly spoke with Rui Guerreiro, the main sound engineer of the facility. I had met him years ago at Rui Veloso’s recording studio, where he was working at the time. That was all I knew about him. During our conversation, however, I came to realize that he had studied in Switzerland, where he actually got to work in recording studios with some well-known artists, like Phill Collins. My biggest curiosity was trying to understand the sort of clients/musicians they were expecting to have, considering such an extraordinary investment. The question stemmed from the principle that there would be a relation between the investment and the fees charged by the studio. But as I would understand in the near future, such relation would become flexible. I will come back to this subject.

Guerreiro was extremely nice, stating that the studio’s policy aimed to be inclusive: they were happy to open its doors to anyone who wished to record there, provided the high-quality profile of the facility was maintained - which supposedly would define the recording projects to be held there. It was also their intention to attract foreign musicians to the facility, taking advantage of its high-end physical, architectural and technological qualities and the country’s touristic assets. I was taken to a tour around the different studios that the facility disposes of: Studio A, with an impressive 240 m² recording room and two other smaller ones where several vintage instruments are displayed; Studio B, a

smaller, cozier studio, where smaller bands usually record; a pre-production studio and finally a mastering room. I also passed by the big aquarium, a nice organic touch in the midst of so much technology.³⁹⁵ There is a very high number of different microphones, which I was also shown, and other instruments apart from the ones displayed on the recording rooms of the different studios. The outside space, where I sat down with part of the team, was also very pleasant.

I felt the need to have a further interview about the studio. I contacted Célia Costa, another member of the studio's team and a long-time road manager with whom I have worked several times. She was actually in the studio when I went there for the first time in that S. Martinho gathering, but I chose to speak to Guerreiro instead, as I knew the chances to meet him again would be less. Almost two years and a half had passed and Atlântico Blue's history had already suffered a twist: in 2015 Rui Guerreiro left, as well as Célia Costa and Zé Maria (one of the assistant engineers). It was now April 2016. Célia and I met for dinner, which always constituted an opportunity to catch up with the latest news from the artistic milieu (namely, the musicians we both know for many years). However, I managed to stay focused on my purpose, apart from indulging in the small talk that usually characterizes our meetings.

Apparently, lack of professionalism, "something that happens often in the music business" (Célia Costa, interview, Lisbon, April 2016), and a certain discomfort upon the studio's emerging new philosophy (what Costa named as "low cost") seem to be on the basis of these three members' abandonment. This last feature had already come to my knowledge through conversations I heard in the recording milieu, referring the fact that Atlântico Blue's rates were far below the expected for a studio of that technological level. This creates an atmosphere of dishonest competition amongst its competitors - what I heard often being called "dumping." Costa also underlined the fact that, in recording studios as well as in other music-related enterprises - like booking agencies and management, a field she also knows well - what matters the most is the people and the social and interpersonal relationships that emerge around a creative environment. In that respect, she believes that, after the 2015 rupture, Atlântico Blue remained at a loss both

³⁹⁵ For an overview of the facility, there is a documentary on Youtube . It has several interviews with people who worked there (some still do), musicians and an American producer. Although a certain lack of rhythm is noticeable, it is useful to have a perspective of the facility's main assets - "Atlântico Blue Studios - documentary"- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wt92-VYlUK8>- accessed on April 2018. Magazine *Sound on Sound* in its on-line edition has a very complete article regarding the technical specificities of this complex. - Biener, Hannes "Atlântico Blue, Lisbon", in *Sound on Sound* on-line magazine, November 2016 - <https://www.soundonsound.com/music-business/atlantico-blue-lisbon> accessed on April 2018.

technically (with the departure of Rui Guerreiro, the studio's main sound engineer and technical mentor) as well as regarding general management.

I further contacted Raquel Rosa, at present the person responsible for Atlântico Blue's booking, marketing, Public Relations and billing, to be able to get a larger perspective on this subject. Very available to speak about the studio, she stated her enormous pleasure in working close to musicians and producers, a situation which allows her to watch the creative process around a record. In Atlântico Blue she is happy to provide what she considers "a top service at very competitive prices". By offering service packs that include every stage involved in the creation of a record – from recording to mastering – Atlântico Blue's team tries to keep its customers satisfied associating the studio's technical added values to a personalized treatment. This is a way to help musicians, which are increasingly the ones paying for studio hours - to get the most out of the recording studio's facilities.

Regardless of an apparent deviation from the studio's initial philosophy, Atlântico Blue is nearly always booked, according to information I got from one of its sound engineers, with musicians both from Portugal and abroad.³⁹⁶

It is admissible to assume that a studio with such high technological sophistication would be very difficult to emerge in Portugal if there were not exceptional financial circumstances involved in its creation – Angolan capital - and the political and economic ties that Portugal and Angola, former Portuguese colony, maintain. But I believe that Atlântico Blue, like Namouche, contributes to a higher level of requirement, both from musicians (and eventually from audiences), by offering a more complete music experience. In the case of Atlântico, this experience involves not only the technological assets, but also a sophisticated architectural space with an appealing outdoor area – something most urban studios do not have - and a client-oriented policy carried out by a professional team.

³⁹⁶ There is a significant percentage of musicians from Angola who record in Atlântico. As I stated in the beginning of this section, the studio was built with Angolan capital – actually, a partnership of Angolan citizens, one of them being Matias Damásio, a very well-known Angolan singer-songwriter.



*Photo 18 - Atlântico Blue's entrance, Porto Salvo
(photo courtesy of Célia Costa)*



*Photo 19 - Atlântico Blue's entrance, Porto Salvo
(photo courtesy of Célia Costa)*

10. At the studio: ethnography of thirteen recording sessions

As stated before, in this chapter I used Gregory Barz's (2008) three voice approach to note taking: a voice in the field, "a voice of reflection after the note was written" and a third voice more distanced from experience (ibid: 207). For each of these voices, a specific type of lettering is used in order to better understand the different research moments.

Some methodological details about the ethnographic process are worth mentioning. Firstly, the contacts: most of my contacts with Joaquim Monte were done through email and/or phone message. My first attempt would be the telephone, but as I later realized when observing in the studio, he rarely answered his phone calls, which apparently came from two different phones.

Because of his busy schedule, he often took some time before answering emails or messages. These facts, together with my limited time to observe (often in the middle of professional demands), made it difficult to be able to observe a recording project continuously. I also missed many interesting sessions: as he often would tell me, whenever I made contact with him, this or that group, musician, singer, had been there "just yesterday" or "last week." "What a shame that you weren't here, you would have liked it", he would often comment. Such was his interest in my research.

Once communication was established, Joaquim Monte was a great mediator. Before my arrival at the studio, he would explain the artists who I was, introducing me in very respectful terms when I got there for the sessions. Referring to my research in highly credible and legitimating terms, he facilitated my work enormously.

All these contingencies of date unpredictability and consequent plurality of observed sessions ended up creating a very diversified panel of musicians, as well as a constellation of projects, sounds and musical atmospheres that enriched my observing experience in ways I would not have expected. This chapter is the result of field notes from thirteen observed sessions at Namouche recording studios, between April 2012 and May 2016. As stated before, my first observed session at Namouche triggered a number of important questions regarding distinctive ways of recording in the studio, originating a sub-chapter of its own (7.4). Consequently, it will be absent from this chapter.

15/4/2012, Sunday - session 2 - Vicente Palma.

The contact for this session was made through phone call, as I have no record of any email regarding this session.

I am sitting at a corridor next to the studio's control room and recording room. I hear a beautiful tune, which comes mostly from the control room, although the music source is coming from the recording room. Strings are being recorded, over a beautiful piano base.

After a brief explanation by Joaquim Monte regarding the purpose of my visit, I go into the control room, introduce myself to Vicente (whom I met as a little boy, but most probably does not remember me). As a very nice young man he proved himself to be, he doesn't object to my presence there. Therefore, I come in and sit in the usual place,³⁹⁷ trying, somehow, to keep myself distant from the recording process.

The conversation between Vicente and the musicians is in English. From what I have observed so far, I gather there are musicians both from Portugal and from other countries. Once more, English is the language of the session.³⁹⁸

I manage to speak to Vicente Palma for a few minutes. He explains that today's session has to do with his own record, and not his father's (Jorge Palma³⁹⁹) - a pertinent explanation, since I first had asked him if what I had been listening to were arrangements for his father's next record. The music is of an extreme beauty - it is the opening of the record - and the strings that I am listening to, of great quality, are being played by Lacerda Quartet (a reference in classical music, judging by the way Vicente mentioned them).

I continue to feel embraced by the music I am listening to, now in the presence of the players themselves, who came into the control room to evaluate their performance.

"In the Nordic countries you already tune higher", Joaquim says. What? Why? (I must find out).

At this point, the musicians have already returned to the recording room (two violins, one alto and a cello). The recording of a new tune is about to start.

In the control room, always that tobacco smell inherent to the fact that Joaquim smokes here and lets everybody else smoke as well.

At this moment, Vincent has gone to the recording room to give directions to the musicians.

(In fact, violins only sound well when they are in tune, as Telmo said in the first session. While the musicians joke around in the recording room, I confirm the veracity of Telmo's statement)

³⁹⁷ As mentioned before, "the usual place" was a half-hidden sofa, right on the left of the entrance to the control room, where musicians and other people present in the sessions (sometimes photographers, family and friends) laid their personal (and professional) belongings.

³⁹⁸ The expression "once more" used in my notes refers to the previous recording session I attended as observer - the first - in which English was used on account of the nationality of some of the intervenient in the session (see sub-chapter 7.4).

In this song, Vicente sings. There is a certain timbral resemblance to his father's voice...but softer. Vicente's fluency in English is considerable. Musicians rehearse more than once, before recording. Once more, I feel embraced by the music I keep listening.

"You could remove the dot and replace it by a minim...no, now you've just played a crotchet...Could the tremolo be less trrrrrrr?" This is the kind of language we do not hear in a pop-rock session...

(The cello player is Portuguese, the alto is from the East, the female violin player is Portuguese, the other male violin player is English...or so it seems...)

Two of Vicente's friends - a couple - who listen to the recordings, have arrived. I think the boy is a musician from Vicente's band - the drummer. I introduce myself as "an intruder" there, which makes them smile...it is, in fact, how I kind of feel myself. A moment for tuning instruments.

They are still recording different parts of the same song.

"The king is gone...", Vicente tells the musicians, commenting on the sudden disappearance of Joaquim from the control room. In fact, a recording studio can also be compared to a sound engineer's kingdom. He's got the power - without him, there is little you can do in this scenario.

Time for the musicians to listen to what they recorded. The viola (Paul) complains that they are out of tune and not following the singer. There is a difference of perception between the players, the sound engineer and the session producer - in this case, Vicente himself. They are trying to reach a consensus. "We keep sharp as we get louder" Paul comments.

The decision remains tough. The sound engineer says "It's done, by me". Paul doesn't seem very convinced. Now everybody seems to agree that there is a note that needs correction, although Vicente claims the note doesn't bother him. "I like it like this!"

Let us find out who the winner in this discussion will be. Auto-tuning is the big winner!

Paul mentions that, in the 70s, corrections like these would literally be cut with a razor blade and then glued with tape. There are clear differences of age and experience in the musicians present in the session. Hence, the level of demand regarding the performance.

To record again or not to record again? That is the question...

31/5/2012, Thursday, 15:55, session 3 - Orelha Negra (1)

Another session whose contact was done through phone call.

It's scorching hot outside (and inside too). It was very difficult to park and, even so, I had to park the car way too far.

I must admit that today I really didn't feel like being here, in this role - that of researcher. I feel almost always an intruder in a territory where I usually - and naturally - belong.

But not in this role. I simply don't belong here. I am "borrowed" here.

Today Orelha Negra are here, a band with a very interesting sound made of sonic collages over rhythmic patterns, with a lot of groove. Described like this, it could be many different things... (always, the complicated passage from sonic to verbal).

The first recorded song they are rehearsing (I think) is a new song which has been having reasonable airplay, only here in a more extended version, with a rap part in Brazilian. There is a lot of influence from African music. A lot of computer programming...

The singer is a Brazilian guy, and a lot of Brazilian rhythmic influence is also perceivable.

(at this moment, a giant young man full of tattoos with a plastic bag in his hand who looks at me and politely says "Good afternoon" has just arrived. I wish I knew what goes through their heads when they see me, before knowing who I am and what I am doing here...probably not much. It simply doesn't matter. One does music in here).

Sometimes it sounds like "disco", as this song I am listening to right now (always the sound collages). The guitar that I hear and that is being played sounds rather out of tune to me in the unison with the bass. You can hear giggles and laughter in the breaks between the songs that are being rehearsed, jokes being told by Brazilians (at least, you can't hear Portuguese talking this loud...)

There are more and more people arriving at the studio and I must say I feel a little uncomfortable. Now the recording room door has been shut, so I hear much worse. Unfortunately, I have a lot of people around me talking about diversified subjects like home videos with children, typical musician talk, etc. I think I will step aside for a while.

In the meantime, Joaquim asks me if I am enjoying the session. A lot, in fact (of the music, not of the confused atmosphere). He explains that Orelha Negra are rehearsing for Rock in Rio, both for a solo performance and for another with two Brazilian musicians. It's those different songs [i.e the ones they will play with the Brazilians] that are being heard here today.

I climb to the first floor to speak to my old friend João Pedro, this studio's sound engineer for many year's.⁴⁰⁰ He lets me know that some of the musicians of Orelha Negra were also a part of Cool Hipnoise (the bass and keyboard players).

Namouche's first floor was not part of Joaquim Monte's rental arrangement with the studio's owners. He only occupied the basement, where there were the large recording room, a control room and two bathrooms. The studio's hallway was/is common to people who either go to the first floor or to the basement (where Joaquim is). As for the first floor, João Pedro remained in its control room (where he had mostly his own recording material) for years practically inactive from 1998, but hoping the enterprise would somehow give signs of change. He ended up leaving Namouche's first floor studio in 2013, after being months without payment.

1/6/2012, Friday, 10:25, session 4 - Orelha Negra (2)

Yesterday's session turned out to be quite fruitful, as, during the musician's rehearsal break, I managed to speak to Fred, drummer and mentor (I think) of the project.

⁴⁰⁰ João Pedro Castro has been referred in this thesis associated to Rádio Triunfo and Namouche, as he worked for both enterprises which used the same recording studio - the actual Namouche recording studio.

He was very nice and, besides introducing me to Sam the Kid, hip-hop musician and rapper whom I much admire, left me completely at ease regarding going into the control room.

(I was already there, on the couch, but it was different knowing that the artist was comfortable with my presence there).

I ended up meeting an old friend from this line of work - Ana Moitinho - the band's promotor, who welcomed me to any of the band's live performances. Fred had already told me the same.

2/6/2012, Saturday, session 5 - Orelha Negra (3)

I ended up realizing that the Brazilian influence being heard was basically due to the rehearsal for Rock in Rio music festival, where Orelha Negra would be playing with Brazilian musicians Hyldon and Kassin. Fred, or Frederico Ferreira,⁴⁰¹ the band's drummer, assumed he had multiple influences, where the Brazilian could also be included. I was informed he was also associated to Buraka Som Sistema, Macacos do Chinês, Miúda...this guy won't stop.

It was a good day, after all.

I am not sure whether it was a good day...it would have been, had I had the opportunity to record the interview with Fred Ferreira. It was one of those moments when you realize that if you so much as mention the "I" word - Interview - something would definitely be gone (let alone stick the tape recorder in front of the person's mouth). He told me very interesting things, particularly the fact that his presence in Namouche recording studio was related to the feeling of friendship he had with Joaquim Monte.

18/2/2013, Monday, session 6 - Marco Von Orelli (1)

On my field notebook, I wrote "session 4" on top of these notes. I obviously lost track of my sessions. No wonder, after eight months absence.

The year 2012 was particularly difficult. My father got seriously ill, making it even harder to articulate professional, family and academic life.

The contact to this session, through email, is mentioned on my field notes.

"I am going to have a Swiss quintet the whole week, there shouldn't be a problem"
(email exchange with Joaquim Monte about today's session)

Marco von Orelli is the name of the musician who names the quintet.

The first feeling I got when going into Namouche's control room, once more, was that of a completely different sonic landscape from the previous ones. Something similar to free jazz, or what I recognize as being free jazz. Marco Von Orelli is a Swiss trumpet player whom Joaquim met through Luís Gomes, a Portuguese musician.

⁴⁰¹ Fred or Frederico Ferreira is the eldest son of a Portuguese rock legend: Kalú Ferreira, drummer of also legendary Portuguese rock band *Xutos e Pontapés*. He is a very dynamic musician and producer.

(the name of the Portuguese musician was added some time later when I got the chance to speak to Joaquim again, and he already remembered the name...Joaquim was always extremely busy in the sessions. He was completely alone doing all the work - from mic placement to recording).

I listen to the music and I try to find an "order" in the midst of a kind of sonic chaos. Sometimes it's almost pleasant. Will I be leaving today liking this type of music?

It's interesting, because you don't get to understand, just by listening to the music, which parts were written and which parts were improvised. Just now it was surely written, a unison between the piano and the double bass.

Some communication difficulties with the sound engineer, relating to the fact that he hadn't understood when the theme had ended. I sympathize with him fully! When asked about whether he understood when a theme begins and ends, Joaquim simply answered: "It's when they start playing...and then they stop."

Some of the musicians leave the recording room and come to the control room. Very nice people, in the Northern-European mode. I was introduced to Marc, Lucas (the trombone player), I believe the piano player as well (who came to ask if he could make tea somewhere).

Quim's mobile phone doesn't stop ringing. Quim's mobile phones...I hear two ringtones (although they may come from the same cellular).

This recording studio is truly a citizen of the world!

I had a big talk with Joaquim today, from new music instruments he had bought - a Rhodes and a pianoforte - to the set-backs Marc had to endure on account of a rented drum (apparently, rented to the wrong person, as all the musicians were in the studio at 16:00 and the drums only arrived at 19:00...musician's stories!)

I am enjoying the music...is something wrong with me?

The musicians have just arrived to the control room, to listen to the theme they have recorded.

(some time later) The musicians have just arrived to the control room again, they want to listen to "the three last sections", because one of them claims to have "f... up the end". They speak in German, I hope they don't say anything unpleasant that I am able to understand...

They have been playing the same theme since I arrived. In the end, they want to edit it with the best takes. After listening to the theme over and over again, I think I can understand what they mean.

"It doesn't work" or "it doesn't do any good to the music" is the frequent comment Joaquim hears from the musicians about the use of headphones during the recording process. Interesting, I always thought a good binaural monitoring was one of the interesting things about recording studios.

[the four musicians were recording all at the same time, without headphones - a different process than the one I am most used to see (and experience myself), which consists of each musician recording separately].

During a talk with Marco, a very nice guy, he told me the idea of recording at Namouche had been a combination of two situations: the fact that he already knew the studio from other recordings he had done there, (and from other Clean Feed productions as well), but also because they (his band members and himself) wanted to capitalize the

time spent in Lisbon associating several live gigs to the recording of an album. The pleasure of staying in Lisbon, a city Marc likes very much, was also part of the equation.

This young musician is an artist of a Swiss label,⁴⁰² known for its jazz, improvised and new classical (like, for instance, John Cage). He seems to know very well what he wants. He also told me he will mix the record in Switzerland, because it's more convenient for him in terms of proximity from his own house.

When I was checking my emails, I noticed that Hot Clube's⁴⁰³ agenda included Marco's quintet on Saturday.

19/2/2013, Tuesday, session 7 - Marco von Orelli (2)

When I arrive to the studio, the musicians are already in the recording room. In this session, the recording moments and the rehearsals get a bit mixed, as, according to what happened yesterday, Joaquim is always recording, and the musicians will choose the best takes.

Yesterday, while talking to Quim, he told me that this band needed to borrow some amplifiers, a situation that was solved by a friend of Quim's, an architect-musician from Lisbon City Council, who has already recorded at Namouche a project named "Prepared Guitar". From the explanation I heard, it must be something quite peculiar. Since I cannot recall every detail, I will ask Quim to explain again. This architect - musician has told Quim that he has a new project, similar to the one with the guitar, but with a snare drum. The name "Prepared Snare Drum"! What else? Just out of curiosity, the artistic name of this architect, as a musician, is Abdoul Moimême Mekhaanu (in real life, Rui Horta Santos).

What I find interesting is that, through this recording studio, I realize there are music practices that are non-existent in the usual media - radio, TV - but which, on the other hand, have a recording existence and play around specific live music performance circuits and venues, with transnational contact networks amongst musicians and a reasonable activity regarding live performances.

These studio sessions are very different from the ones I worked in - and still do, in a way - in the sense that, because of the music's characteristics, they spend a lot of time rehearsing certain parts. It is only after they've gone through these parts several times that they begin to record. They interrupt many times and then start again from some place in the music which I can't figure out exactly where (in auditory terms, references are not clear, but, of course, they play with music sheets, otherwise it would be impossible)

⁴⁰² Hat Hut Records is the name of the Swiss record company, Hatology is the label dedicated to jazz and improvised music, as the company has separate labels according to music genres.

⁴⁰³ Hot Club is Portugal's oldest jazz club, and since 1979 a jazz school as well (although not functioning in the same premises as the club). It is located in Lisbon, at Praça da Alegria (Alegria Square, in the centre of the city).

19/8/2013, Monday, 12:50, session 8 - Sara Serpa

Sara Serpa's recording session came to my knowledge through my middle daughter Margarida, who is a singer and a jazz pianist. She participated both in this recording session, and in the live performance which took place at Hot Club prior to the recording session.

To be able to attend the session, I sent an email to Sara, as I didn't have the opportunity to talk to her at Hot Club (the performance was on Saturday, the session would be on the following Monday). Sara's response was fast, short and concise, showing personality traits that the session would corroborate.

"Come whenever you want, but you might want to come around noon, as we will not be there the whole day and by that time we will be working in a good rhythm".

As the notes will immediately show, it didn't work out exactly as Sara had imagined, leaving her tense and displeased throughout the whole session.⁴⁰⁴

I arrive at 12:50 to the studio, right before they start to record. Sara had told me to be in the studio at 12:00, but with seven singers, drums, double-bass and a guitar to mick and prepare for a session that was supposed to start at 9:30...I'm glad I got late...

I go into the control room and it's, once more, that tobacco odor I am already familiarized with. I am also familiarized with the music being recorded. It is a project from young singer-songwriter Sara Serpa, a Portuguese citizen currently living in New York. I first heard this project at Hot Club on Saturday and there I was told that they would be recording at Namouche the following Monday (today).

They are recording a theme called "Space". "I had never recorded so many solo voices", Joaquim says, admitting it was difficult to get the session rolling, as some of the singers have to leave at 15:00, and Sara is stressed.

They are moving on to a theme called "If", as their perception is that the previous one was ok. Mine isn't.

From the very few words I was able to exchange with Joaquim so far, I could understand he was up to his neck with work and that he had only accepted this project because it seemed a very interesting one. Also, he already knew André Matos, Sara's companion, whose record he had previously recorded.

Sara complains about the tuning of the voices. She asks clearer chords to the guitar player. She seems to know pretty well what she wants.

⁴⁰⁴ As stated in previous chapters, in a recording session, time is money, as you are paying by the hour. When a session is booked for a specific time, the studio is supposed to be fully prepared - that means all the microphones placed in its right position, as well as the panels (if necessary) and other items (rugs on the floor, blankets in drums, if necessary). It is also expected that the sound of each participant will be set/prepared as soon as the musicians arrive, and not make musicians wait for the studio staff to end up preparing the session. In this particular case, there are two other factors that probably highlighted Sara's discontentment: she was paying for the session out of her own pocket. Also, Sara and her companion André have been living in New York since 2008, where they both teach. I would assume that the American mind-set that they are probably most familiar with does not comply with delays of this nature.

Doubts regarding the tuning of the voices go on, but this time Sara doubts her own tuning (and she has a certain point, in my opinion...)

“Tenho Tanto Sentiment” (“I have so much feeling”) - the first theme to be recorded in Portuguese.

The voice arrangement is dense, as all the others, but the way the Portuguese syllables are used in the music seems particularly interesting to me. At this moment, three out of the four guys that are part of the project are in the control room, listening to what has been recorded so far, the female singers and the male singer are in the corridor which leads to the recording room, eating, talking, relaxing. I can hear them talking about broccoli, greens, etc...food in general (they must be hungry, it's 14:35 and they are only eating snacks).

“Fragment” (“Fragmento”). This theme involves solos. Guitar and lead vocal. Will it work in the record?

They come back to the first theme so that one of the singers does a solo.

“Contemplate” (“Contemplar”)

The beginning of the theme with the voices singing a cappella sounded very strange.

A certain vocal fatigue is noticeable. To make matters worse, they chose this theme to be one of the last to be recorded...it's one of the most difficult themes (or at least it sounds like it...).

(in the meantime, I needed to grab something to eat and the session is reaching its end. They are going to record a fado that I already heard at Hot Club, whose arrangement I really liked):

“New Severa's Fado” (“Novo Fado da Severa”). This one brings several tuning problems. Tiredness? Most probably.

I actually ended up emailing Sara on March 2017, and she answered me back. Feeling that I had to adjust the questions to the time lapse between the actual session and my email, I asked the following:

- 1) Did the seven-voice project have any continuity (with other voices or in a reduced format?)
- 2) Why the choice of Namouche?
- 3) What were the biggest challenges that this recording brought?
- 4) Did this project seem more like one to be played live? Or to listen to the recording (in MP3, CD, or other forms of mediation)? Was it ever released? If so, in which format?

Sara's answers only confirmed what has already been stated on the first comment of this session. The choice of Namouche was due to previous experiences in the studio, as well as a “tempting” price/quality relation. Apart from referring that the project continued in a more reduced format, with three voices, cello, guitar and drums (all local collaborators), “to waste four hours of focus and energy” (due to what she discreetly described as “technical problems”) “jeopardized the performance and stamina of everybody”. Consequently, the recording was never released. As stated by Sara, “you never know what the result of a recording session will be”.

13/11/2013, Wednesday, session 9 - Fernando Tordo

The contact to this session must have been made through telephone call, as I have no written records of mail exchange.

I arrive at 10:15, convinced that the session had already started and that I would be missing a lot of interesting things. As it turned out, I was the first to arrive...after a number of attempts ringing the door bell, I phone Joaquim Monte, thinking that, as usual, he wouldn't answer my call. This time he did, letting me know he was ten minutes late. "Go grab a cup of coffee", he suggested. And so I did.

Coming back to the studio, the door was half open and a sleepy Quim was drinking a coffee sitting in the hallway. Time to have a chat about this and that, namely Atlântico Blue Records, the new "coqueluche" of the Portuguese recording industry, where I was last Monday visiting.

In the meantime, Fernando Tordo arrives.

Time for an informal chat, before another one - which I recorded - where Fernando spoke about Namouche and other subjects.

Inside the control room where the conversation with Fernando occurred, the music being heard - a Portuguese guitar player by Fernando - is beautiful.

At this moment, another guitar base is being recorded. Fernando plays, whistles a melody, sometimes sings with the sound "pó-pó-pó-póróró" instead of whistling, which leads me to believe that these will be the parts for the other instruments to play. Correct.

*"It's the mark for the other instruments to begin", is Fernando's answer to Quim's question whether the "pó-ró-rós" would remain in the take. The "pórórós" will be for the "cavalinho".*⁴⁰⁵

15/11/2013, Friday, session 10

Today the "pórórós" - the "cavalinho" band - will be recorded.

The boys and girl who are in the recording room are very young. It seems they belong to a philharmonic band.

Fernando is ill. "I am under antibiotics", he told me as soon as I arrived, confirming a cold that was already threatening him on Wednesday.

The music sounds really well, with a funny arrangement. At this moment, the artist is directing the session, sitting beside Quim, while having a look at his Facebook page.

At this point, I am recalling the visit that I did last Monday to Atlantico Blue Recording Studios.

Recently arrived in the Lisbon recording milieu, the studios are impressive at all levels. The physical space, the equipment, the vintage instruments - some custom-made for the studio, which is odd - , the brand-new look, everything about it sets up a recording

⁴⁰⁵ The "cavalinho" is a group of eight musicians from a philharmonic orchestra (*banda filarmónica*) which accompany the popular Lisbon marches, marching with them. The popular marches, a performing event involving music, singing and dancing, are a Portuguese tradition taking place in the cities of Lisbon and Setúbal.

space which, at many levels, seems to have no competition. The main responsible for the studio is a sound engineer called Rui Guerreiro.

I notice that my state of tiredness is such that my eyes close without my wanting it. I can't help it and it's shameful. Even in my usual half-hidden position between the sofa, the monitors, the Ampex console and other stuff, I am afraid of being spotted.

5/8/2015, 0:50, session 11 (remembering my passage through Namouche a week ago)

Although I had not gone to the studio to “observe”, I ended up trying to make the most of the circumstance of being present in the shooting of the video celebrating the “80 years of Radio”, turning it into field work.

It is, in fact, curious that the studio where the video was shot was not the same where the audio was recorded. Why? Because Namouche brings a symbolic capital as a recording studio that others don't (its history begins in the 60s). One may argue that it's the size of the recording room. But I think there is more to it than that. And I would like to confirm with Joaquim Monte if, in fact, videos from projects recorded elsewhere are frequently shot there.⁴⁰⁶

Some time has passed from my last session. My situated fieldwork in Namouche (because I believe my profession makes my life a continuous fieldwork, in some ways), was discontinuous and fragmented, on account of professional commitments. The year 2014 was particularly active professionally: apart from the usual studio sessions and classes, I worked as vocal coach of the show *The Voice Portugal* during the first six months of the year. In July that same year, *The Voice Kids* began its preparation. Although I already knew of this event, I was told there was no need for a vocal coach. Finally, they decided otherwise. That meant that the time I had kept to write part of the thesis was occupied working in the show.

The “80 Years of Radio” event I mention here was a celebration of the 80th anniversary of Portuguese radio, promoted by Antena 1, one of the main Portuguese radio stations. A hymn was composed, and many singers were invited to sing a couple of sentences. I was one of them. Subsequently, on July 28th 2015, a video was shot at Namouche, which was shown on national TV and social networks. Session 11 is an attempt to do a retrospect ethnography of this shooting, as it was impossible for me to write any notes or record anything on the spot.

⁴⁰⁶ I found, at least, one promoting video shot at Namouche whose music I know for a fact was not recorded at Namouche - “Tudo Pr’a Dar”, by Portuguese singer Mía Rose featuring Salvador Seixas.

6/8/2015, 2:04 (about session 11)

Yesterday, during another conversation around a great meal, I asked Fernando Martins⁴⁰⁷ why the choice of Namouche for the shooting of the radio anniversary video. I realized then that the choice was his and that the reason was lack of space of his own recording studio *Viagens a Marte* (Travels to Mars), where the audio was recorded. But why Namouche and not Atlântico Blue?

About the 28th of July:

Despite the fact that I took this notebook to help the “participant-observation” (this time, actually participant), it didn’t work. There were too many demands: returning to that studio to sing (although everything was previously recorded), meeting friends and colleagues I hadn’t seen for a long time and whom I had almost forgotten I knew, the company of the *Viagens a Marte* team - Fernando, Alex, Samuel, Kiko, Fernando Abrantes, David, Hélder...the complicities, the smiles, the joy and the celebration. And the Radio celebrating its 80 years.

In the midst of so much joyfulness of which I wanted to be a part of- and felt a part - I didn’t want to turn the “ethnographic button”- or as I usually call it in English, “the research button”.

Casa das Máquinas - Valentim de Carvalho, Namouche

When I mention “the research button” as an expression I use in English, the relevance (or not) of my mentioning it here is related to previous ideas I exchanged with Alan Williams about doing observation in a recording studio, which are dealt in chapter 2.

Casa das Máquinas is a Portuguese TV series about recording studios. I heard about it on the 28th of July through Joaquim Monte, in the very few words I was able to exchange with him.

8/4/2016, Friday, 15:50, session 12 - Samuel (with producer José Mário Branco)

I heard about these next sessions through email exchange with Joaquim. I was thrilled to find out that Samuel, a singer I met many years ago, and whom I hadn’t heard of for a long time, was recording an album. The other good news was it would be produced by José Mario Branco.

I have already spoken about José Mario Branco, singer-songwriter, one of the most talented and inspired voices associated to *canção de protesto* and producer of some of the most emblematic records by Zeca Afonso. Singer, composer, arranger, song-writer, producer, he is, still today, a musical reference for me. Samuel, himself a singer-songwriter, is associated to *canção de protesto* as well. I had heard that both he and his wife, former singer Maria do Amparo, lived outside Lisbon. I also thought his career

⁴⁰⁷ Fernando Martins is a Portuguese key-board player, composer, producer, with whom I work very often (nowadays, he is more associated to music production for TV shows). He was the music producer of the radio hymn celebrating the “80 Years of Radio”. He owns a production company with a recording studio called *Viagens a Marte* together with his wife Alexandra Valentim (singer). They also have a band named *Tambor*.

would be in a sort of stand-by. It turns out he still works a lot, particularly for municipalities.

This was the only session in which I was politely required to ask permission to the musicians involved, and not just to the producer, José Mario Branco. In fact, it was Branco's idea that I should address the musicians about my eventual presence in the sessions. This attitude reveals a deep respect for the musicians work in the recording studio. As stated by Branco, "it's about a situation of performance in intimacy which we should respect" (José Mário Branco, email, 29/3/2016).

I was more than happy to email every musician present in the sessions I would be observing. Permission was granted by all of them.

This was also the only recording session in which the recording schedule was handed to me, which facilitated greatly my choice of sessions (see Appendix 4).

"Canto sem Abrigo", ("Singing without Shelter")

Hugs, kisses, memories of music days gone by, Samuel's return to the house where he recorded his last record...the reunion with colleagues I hadn't met in decades - Samuel himself, José Mário Branco, Maria do Amparo... the musicians who are playing in this session are Carlos, Ivo (who I later acknowledged to have met years ago in a Paulo de Carvalho⁴⁰⁸ show) and Jorge. Joaquim Monte and Tó Pinheiro da Silva are also present. A lot of loose talk about children, family, recording studios, Atlântico Blue's control room and the fact that acoustic studies were made before the equipment was bought and introduced into the room (which modifies the acoustic conditions of the control room), the problems that emerge when mixing in a control room with those features, the studio's recording room (too long and not particularly high). "You can't have sound with a console that goes from here to there!" (somebody exemplifies the measures with both arms).

16:00

I arrived at 15:00, the time scheduled for the beginning of the session, according to information given by Joaquim in the morning. During the conversation with friends and work colleagues, preparations for today's session - the recording of an acoustic guitar by a young musician named Jorge - were taking place.

A beautiful fingerpicked harmonic base can be heard, and Samuel and Maria hum a melody on top of it. I ask Maria "Are you singing too?", and the answer was a firm "No!". We spoke a little about her reluctance regarding the stage, and her near blockade she developed towards singing.

⁴⁰⁸ Paulo de Carvalho (born in 1947) is considered by many Portuguese people "the voice". Singer-songwriter, composer, he started his early career as a drummer and singer of pop-rock group *The Sheiks*. He participated in many RTP Song Festivals (Festival RTP da Canção), having won two times, therefore representing Portugal in the 1974 and 1977 Eurovision Song Contest (this last time being part of the group *Os Amigos*). The song that won the 1974 RTP Festival became one of the 25th of April's passwords - "E Depois do Adeus" ("And After Goodbye"), together with "Grândola Vila Morena", a song by Zeca Afonso. I worked with Paulo de Carvalho on several projects as a backing-vocalist, namely *Música D'Alma*, in 1992.

Maria do Amparo was previously married to another musician - Carlos Alberto Moniz⁴⁰⁹ - with whom she performed in shows, singing. Apparently, and despite the radiant smile she always had (she was and still is a very beautiful woman), she didn't like the experience. She doesn't like the stage.

The people in the control room were Quim Monte (sound engineer), José Mário Branco (producer), Tó Pinheiro (sound engineers here acting as...I can't figure it out, but he is following the session with a lap-top), Maria do Amparo (Samuel's wife), Samuel and myself.

Some problems with the click-track which is on the track to serve as reference for the pianist. The guitar player, very cool and self-assured, sometimes complains about the "five-finger chords" he has to play... "nobody deserves this", he says, half-joking.

For the second song, José Mário suggests the guitar player to take a rest and the bass player to record his bass first.

Jorge's comment when he arrived to the control room, noticeably relieved for having finished his takes so far, was "To my recollection, I had only fingerpicked one theme in my life so far: The Beatles's "Júlia"..."

The bass is now being recorded, and Ivo is the name of the player. I believe Tó Pinheiro's function is being "an extra pair of ears", as so far he has asked for several bars to be repeated ("This isn't right yet", "Is this ending one? Have you reached ending two?")

Once more, problems with the click-track, which is out... (it really is). Or perhaps not..." the last two bars are at 110...the rest is at 95...", José Mario Branco comments.

The musicians are all playing with sheet music (they all have to be able to read a score).

"It's half tolerable", says the bass player after listening to what he has played.

The guitar player Jorge goes back to the recording room. He is nervous because he is not being able to play a riff. At some point, he screams from there "TAKE IT EASY!" (a passage from the song "Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except for Me and My Monkey", from The Beatles's White Album).

From the conversation I had with Ivo, the bass player, I realize that, apart from participating in this and other occasional recording sessions, he is currently working with La Féria.⁴¹⁰ The usual complaints of sleepless nights, constant demands over last minute changes, etc. But one has to survive...he will be performing at a club, later this evening.

The guitar player is still suffering inside the recording room. "Try not to utter any improprieties this time!", the bass player ironically replies to a reaction by the guitar player.

(Is the guitar player picked? Which microphone, if so? The bass player played with a DI box).

"Play minims in the bass line", José Mario Branco instructs the guitar player. The guitar has an amazing sound.

⁴⁰⁹ Carlos Alberto Moniz (born in 1948) is a singer-songwriter, orchestrator and composer. During the time he was married to Maria do Amparo, they formed a duo which lasted several years, making records and performing live.

⁴¹⁰ Filipe La Féria is a Portuguese theater director and producer, who has been mostly associated to musical theater in the last three decades.- <http://www.filipelaferia.pt/flf.html>- accessed on April 2018.

11/4/2016, Monday, 15:10 - session 13

“Vento no Rosto” (“Wind on the Face”)

Recording of the string session.

As I enter the control room, the quartet is already in the recording room rehearsing, making its sound, etc. They are already micked. Quim, Tó and Quim’s assistant are in the control room.

Finally, Quim has an assistant! A French boy who heard about the studio and contacted Quim, showing his interest in working there. An option he probably should have taken earlier.

While I chat with Maria do Amparo, I listen to the quartet making sounds. The session hasn’t started yet and I reckon I won’t be able to listen to the recording today.

“Getting-out”- a more detailed analysis of the sessions in retrospect

Namouche’s ethnography raised a number of relevant features associated to recording diversified music genres, with musicians of different generations, as well as aspects regarding today’s ontology of a large recording facility. Processes of recording, discourses, social and inter-personal behaviors varied according to the several contexts the sessions embraced. Also, questions related to the methodology used emerged.

Session 2 showed the impact technology has regarding behaviors in a classical music recording session. More specifically, how a relatively modern technical tool - auto-tune - can be used, raising different reactions on the part of the several actors involved in the session.⁴¹¹ For the sound engineer (Joaquim Monte), the use of auto-tune seemed an ordinary action for the correction of what seemed to be a minor error; for some of the musicians, performers of classical music, the most natural behavior would have been to repeat the take. For the producer, Vicente, a young musician with

⁴¹¹ Auto tune is an audio processor invented by Andy Hildebrand, an oil engineer (who was also a musician by heart) in 1997. In the music industry, it was originally designated to correct and/or disguise off-key inaccuracies (particularly in vocal recordings); however, it became, along the years, a vocal effect in itself. For more about the interesting story behind this recording technical tool, see Crockett, Zachary “The Mathematical Genius of Auto-Tune”, *Priceonomics*, 26 September, 2016 - <https://priceonomics.com/the-inventor-of-auto-tune/> - accessed on May 2017.

a classical music education background, but with performing experience in popular music, the note was good as it was (not perfectly tuned), assigning low priority to this fact. Regarding social behaviors, although there was a good atmosphere in the studio, a certain level of formality was noticeable - although very amicable - due perhaps to the difference of age between Vicente and the elements of Lacerda Quartet, and eventually associated to the formality that classical music environments and musicians usually involve. The different roles that the actors played in these sessions - producer, sound engineer, musicians - were well acknowledged.

A totally different atmosphere was found on sessions 3, 4 and 5. The overall atmosphere was very informal among the musicians, but also among the musicians, the sound engineer and other people present. There were too many people in the studio, turning the recognition of the different actors of the process (apart from the sound engineer and some of the musicians I seemed to recognize) quite difficult. It was, again, a confusing session for me, as an observer. The fact that the studio was being used as a rehearsing room - although Monte was recording everything - justifies, eventually, the less orderly overall behavior and the climate of excitement surrounding the coming event - a solo performance of the band Orelha Negra (who had released a new album early that year) and a one-time-only performance involving the band and two Brazilian musicians, Hyldon and Kassin - all this in the 2012 Lisbon Rock in Rio Music Festival. The presence of the Brazilian musicians, the “invited guest stars” established, somehow, the communicational “tone”, where Brazilian-Portuguese was heard (even spoken by the Portuguese musicians), mixed with ordinary Portuguese, a lot of laughter, and an unusual loud voice level (for a recording studio). Despite all these elements, there was a recognized leader (or organizer) - Fred Ferreira, the drummer - who seemed to be in control of the music part and was, therefore, in close communication with Joaquim Monte, the sound engineer. The presence of photographers in the studio covering the event, as well as friends and the band’s manager placed this session in evident contrast with the privacy recording sessions usually embrace. Rather than a music event, I would consider this session as a media event involving music, which might have occurred in any other place - except for the fact that it was being recorded. Also, regardless of the real importance of the recording act in this context, the symbolic capital of Namouche as a historical recording studio, together with its ample physical space eventually played an important part in the decision of choosing this space for the rehearsals and its media coverage.

Sessions 6 and 7 were more similar to session 2, except for the type of music being recorded - contemporary jazz. As with Lacerda Quartet, Marco von Orelli Quintet's musicians recorded at the same time, but with no headphones, apparently a process with which Joaquim has become familiar. It is a feature which, as an "old school" studio professional, strikes me as odd: as stated in sub-chapter 7.3, a good headphone mix turns music listening in the recording studio something very special. It is, however, understandable that, with bands who play live more often than in a recording studio, the acoustic natural sound of the instruments is what they are most familiar - and comfortable - with. In terms of social behavior, the atmosphere was informal, but respectful. The musicians were very disciplined and played long takes, with very few stops. Although there were two languages being spoken - Swiss-German (among the musicians) and English (with the sound engineer) - communication seemed to run fairly well, apart from specific situations easily solved. The recording process was developed through the repetition of several rehearsals of certain parts of the score, followed by the immediate recording of those parts. When there was a mistake (or the music was not sounding the way it should), they would ask Joaquim to stop recording, rehearse again, and then record. Because they were playing all at the same time, no punching in or out was possible to correct a specific mistake of an instrument (should that occur), just by repeating the performance of that instrument: everybody had to play. However, that didn't seem to constitute a problem, as, apart from the discipline and focus above mentioned, these musicians seemed to be familiar with this working procedure.

This was a surprisingly pleasant session for me, both as an observer and as music lover. When I first listened to the music, I found it unfamiliar, both melodically and harmonically, which caused a certain detachment between the sonic atmosphere of the studio and myself. That was not altogether bad, as it made me more aware of my observational role. But as time went by, I realized that the more I listened to the music, the more I began to understand it, recognize the parts and appreciate it. At the end of the second session, and after talking to Marco, he lent me a record of the quintet, which I heard many times in my car. And I liked it. I enjoyed the sobriety, the aesthetics, the unexpectedness, the instrumentation. It did not raise in me the sort of emotional state that other music does, but it was an altogether pleasant and interesting listening experience. This episode could lead me to develop questions related to music choice policy on the radio and on TV in this thesis. Arguing about the value of justifying

populist arguments that legitimize the broadcasting of poor quality music, this session only underlined the fact that people tend to like what they are most familiar with. I knew this was true. I did not know that a recording studio could be a privileged locus to embody this statement.

It was also the session where, talking to Joaquim, I realized the sort of unusual music practices (outside the mainstream) that the studio hosts. Because of its accessibility, turning musicians of different experience levels (both amateurs and professionals) into recording artists, without the need of a label, and because of the relationship that Joaquim establishes with his customers (more of a personal nature as opposed to a commercial one), diversified musical projects are recorded at Namouche. From “hit-of-the-moment” bands (like Orelha Negra), emerging singer-songwriters (like Vicente Palma), to inventive “out-of-the-box” projects (like “Prepared Snare Drum” and “Prepared Guitar”), Namouche, through Joaquim Monte, has a very inclusive policy.

Session 8, with Sara Serpa, is a good example of different professional expectations and behaviors and how those differences can jeopardize the result of a recording session. In this case, the relationship between the customer (Sara) and the service provider (the studio and Joaquim) was expected, from Sara’s part, to be of a commercial - or, better said, professional - nature. She expected everything to be ready to roll by 9:30, which was the time she had booked the studio from. Instead, Joaquim, who confided me he had accepted the session mostly for personal reasons, as he already knew Sara’s boyfriend from previous recordings, expected his delay to be undermined. The tension generated by this fact on both parts (musicians, singers and sound engineer), together with the different professional demands of the performers involved, which implied (for most of the singers, at least), very few hours available for that particular studio session, compromised the recording. From the field notes I wrote, tuning problems emerged in almost all of the themes I listened being recorded, and vocal fatigue was noticeable very early in the session (probably because of the repetitions that the tuning problems demanded). The result of this session, as stated by Sara herself, was never released.

The 9th and 10th sessions, with singer-songwriter Fernando Tordo, were very pleasant, both as an observer and as a music lover. A balanced example of old-time recording sessions, with a recognizable producer (Tordo himself) and an arranger (a

young maestro from a philharmonic orchestra), the sessions showed how musicians of different generations are joined today within the recording atmosphere. Tordo is an acclaimed musician, whose work I most admire and respect. He is also a very interesting personality, a cultured and educated citizen of the world, features that are not very often found within musicians, however talented in their line of work.⁴¹² The music was very nice, well played, the atmosphere was good. In my longest talk with him, Tordo spoke about his vast experience in recording studios, mainly at Namouche (from the time the studio was still named Rádio Triunfo, with José Manuel Fortes), and told some studio jokes that mostly musicians from this generation keep in their memories.⁴¹³ He spoke very fluently, as if being interviewed, but enjoying the situation, with a very articulated speech and a non-hesitant narrative.

The retrospect session of the 28th of July event (numbered 11) puts methodological questions at stake. The shooting of the video at Namouche, where I was an invited performer, seemed a good opportunity to be a participant-observer, and that was indeed my intention. However, the studio was filled with people (most of them, professional colleagues, some I knew well) and also a shooting team. Namouche's recording room was overcrowded and overheated. When the shooting was finished, I still tried to find some room to sit and write my notes, but there was a champaign toast for the radio's anniversary supposedly involving all the participants, which obviously would be rude to fail. There were many hindrances of a different nature, some physical, some emotional (everybody kissing and hugging, a lot of excitement) to my stoic endeavor to finally get involved, as a participant, into my observation. I am sure it would have been a difficult task to be able to "switch selves" (performer and ethnographer), but as the session developed, it became virtually impossible.

Sessions 12 and 13 were the most organized sessions I observed. From the beginning, after my first contact with producer José Mário Branco, I was given the recording schedule, something I believe the other recording sessions did not have. It

⁴¹² From observation of four decades of working with musicians, it is very rare to find a musician who speaks about anything but music. This is not a criticism, only an acknowledgement.

⁴¹³ Because of the value that recordings had from the 60s to the end of the 80s, musicians who were born in the 40s, 50s and 60s are more likely to have more stories to tell about the studio atmosphere in Portugal. The fact that recording technology was analogic during these decades also adds an extra "flavour" to the stories - analogic recording technology caused more anecdotes. Erased tracks on tape, tapes which finished before the end of a (sometimes great) take are some of the most frequent stories.

facilitated my work tremendously, as I could immediately make a preview of the sessions I could observe. It was also the only time I previously had to contact the musicians involved in the sessions, asking them permission to be present, observing. The idea of “performance in intimacy” the recording studio embraces stated by José Mário Branco, justifying the need for the permission request to the musicians, is in accordance with a certain recording session “mode” I am most familiar with (as the recording schedule is too). Similarly, the different roles in the studio were well defined, although there was a reasonable amount of people in the studio, from musicians, to producer (José Mário Branco), assistant-producer (Tó Pinheiro da Silva)⁴¹⁴, sound engineer (Joaquim Monte), the artist himself (Samuel), his wife (Maria do Amparo), some of their siblings, and myself. The relationship between musicians of different generations and the subsequent consequences in terms of studio behavior were present: I could feel, from some musicians, the responsibility of playing under José Mário Branco’s supervision, due, amongst other features, to the type of performative techniques demanded. The guitar player, for instance, was very nervous because he had to finger-pick, something he had only done once in his life. Still, there was a peaceful, balanced and familiar atmosphere in the sessions, although one could sense an underlying respect for the music authorities present – the composer and the producer - but particularly, for the producer, José Mário Branco.

On the whole, the recording sessions at Namouche were revealing as to the kind of diversified musicians and music projects that use this studio as their recording (and rehearsal) “home”. From classical to jazz, new contemporary, hip-hop, traditional/popular, fado, all these genres and their respective musicians seem to feel welcomed by these historical walls and its host, Joaquim Monte. As a consequence of this diversity, many different studio behaviors were observable, depending not only on the musical context of each session, but also on the age and recording experience of the musicians.

The aspects of music recording featured in the whole of chapter 7 of this thesis were recognizable in the sessions, some as active elements, some by negative evidence

⁴¹⁴ Although nobody designated him as such, I would consider his role, defined in the session as “an extra pair of ears” as that of an assistant producer. He was reading the score, while listening to what was being recorded through headphones, following the sound waves from a lap-top in front of him. During the sessions, he would intervene for different reasons, either corroborating the producer’s comments or adding a few of his own.

(the fact that they were not there).⁴¹⁵ An example of this later situation was the absence of session musicians. As developed extensively on sub-chapter 7.3, digital technology (and earlier the music industry's band culture) seems to have "killed" the session musician. What I observed at Namouche, when recording sessions were not with bands, was musicians who also recorded in the studio, apart from their usual work distributed among several music-related activities (with bands, in philharmonic orchestras, playing in the musical theater, teaching). There were no specialized session-musicians.

Although the subject has been extensively discussed and reflected upon in sub-chapter 7.4, I would definitely defend a presential role of the producer in recording sessions. Even in the ones where the decision power seemed to be more equally distributed, with each musician showing autonomy in the management of his instrumental performance, the validation of someone who is part of the process and is "there", on the spot, is important.⁴¹⁶

It was obvious by the sessions that recording in what has been designated high-end recording studios is less and less an expendable audio-recording practice - at least in Lisbon. The two recording studios closer to that definition in the Lisbon area - Namouche and Atlântico Blue - are always working. Experiencing music recording with the auditory conditions these facilities offer establishes new performative references, engaging musicians in a (for many of them) new recording experience. In the next section – conclusions – I will develop this main topic of my thesis more thoroughly.

⁴¹⁵ Adelaida Reyes (2010) defines "negative evidence [or defeated expectations]" in fieldwork as "things that did not happen which could reasonably have been expected to happen" (ibid:136).

⁴¹⁶ In 2011, in S. Francisco, at the 7th ARP Conference, Mike Howlett presented his paper "The Producer as Nexus". In the conversation that followed, there was someone (I believe Howlett himself) who spoke about a well-known producer whose role in a certain record production had been mostly to sleep on the couch, due to his normal high degree of intoxication. However, it was pointed out that, for the musicians, his presence there, even in those conditions, was important.

11. Conclusions

Production sound

“The multi-track studio is arguably the most important musical instrument of the last half-century, and its diffusion around the globe has transformed the nature of musical practice and experience for much of the world’s population” (Wallach 2005:138).

Jeremy Wallach’s words reflect the importance that the multi-track recording studio acquired on a trans-global scale for the last seven decades triggered by the technological advancements of World War II. However, if one should rewrite the sentence today, maybe the most appropriate term would be “the multi-track studios”. As I have shown, from the large record corporation studios owned by labels, to residential studios in exotic places - some of them reflecting the “back to nature” movement in popular culture” (Keally 82:110), smaller independent and home studios, recording facilities have suffered transformations inherent to social, economic and technological conditions, as well as aesthetic concerns, on both the global and the local perspectives. Adding to this sequence, I would mention the “back to big, high-end recording studios” tendency, embodied in Lisbon, by the preference shown towards both Namouche and Atlântico Blue. In short, back to the large, “black-boxes”.

However, throughout the years and accordingly different models, what seems to remain common to all studios is the secrecy of this “black box”, even when attempts are made to temporarily unveil it (like Esperanza Spalding’s case). Specifically, the sound that is produced there, that belongs to a recording studio or to a technological sound reproduction set-up, when being listened to. We thus need a conceptual tool that allows us - particularly those, academic or non-academic, who have interest in recording studios - to understand which sound is this which results from human manipulation inside this “black box”. I thus propose the designation of “production sound” for the theoretical tool that designates recorded sound which, after capture, is constructed, manipulated, developed and altered at different levels and according to a number of diversified processes: physical (the recording room’s acoustics), technological (the recording equipment), technical (the studio engineer’s expertise) aesthetic (the artist and/or

producer's taste) and social (the relationships built among all agents). Production sound results from a chain involving a dense and thick team work; from decisions that are taken in a contextual flow of processes that arise from creative endeavor.

Production sound is related to culture, not only in the way it is “constructed” but also in its uses, as Debra Wong states: “any technology is not only culturally constructed but [...] its uses are culturally defined as well” (Wong 2003 quoted in Greene 2005:271). All the factors mentioned - acoustic, technological, technical, aesthetic and social - are culture related, which turns production sound as idiosyncratic of a time, a place and its circumstances. Eliot Bates (2008) corroborates this idea, assuming the existence of a “Turkish sound” which the author easily recognized in Turkish-produced CDs (ibid:6-7). During this thesis, I also raised the question of a Portuguese recorded sound, as I believe, like Bates, that there are sonic elements, particularly during a specific time frame (1960s-early1980s) that make a Portuguese record easily recognizable. A subject that I would like to further research in the near future.

Additionally, production sound results from an understanding of the artist's tastes and intentions by the sound engineer, and a common language between both the technical and the artistic parts. Edward Keally (1979) refers the situation of North-American rock musicians earning a more influential presence in the recording studio in the United States in the mid-1960s, confronting themselves with unionized sound engineers who had difficulty in understanding their aesthetic recording options. My ethnographic interviews with both Portuguese sound engineers (José Manuel Fortes and Rui Remígio) and musicians (Rui Veloso, among others), particularly from an older generation, showed this to be a frequent issue, triggering, at times, discomfort and frustration on both sides, placing the technical and the aesthetic/artistic side of a recording process in different and conflicting directions, and leading to defensive discourses from the sound engineers who were confronted with a music genre and its recording demands with which they were not often familiarized. Lack of technical language from the part of musicians was not helpful either, creating situations where attempts to reach a common understanding in the studio were frustrating on both parts. As I have also shown, the situation changed profoundly in recent times on account of digital recording technology and the consequent democratization of audio recording tools - placing sound engineers and musicians in a more approximate level of knowledge and facilitating communication about production sound.

There seems to be a tacit understanding of what “sound” stands for within musicians. In a recording studio, meanings tend to be more circumscribed, including technical, artistic, aesthetic and cultural values. But on an academic level, I find it necessary to propose this operational tool - production sound - as to more easily identify a sound which is a team construct associated to an audio recording environment.⁴¹⁷

Ethnography revisited

From the ethnographic experience at Namouche, a number of important conclusions can be drawn, adding what I believe to be valuable suggestions regarding field work in a recording studio as a non-active observer.⁴¹⁸ Being an “insider”, although in the beginning perceived by myself as a set-back,⁴¹⁹ was extremely helpful in the sense of realizing that, in a recording studio, the musician should stand before the ethnographer in terms of overall behavior (physical posture, language, use of ethnographic tools like lap tops, recording devices, cameras, note-books, etc). Having a “fly-on-the-wall”, inconspicuous, almost invisible posture in the control room, choosing properly where to sit, when to stand and get out of the control room, as well as the right moments to photograph (or not), film (or not) or even “interview” the different actors in the recording studio (or not...) made me, primarily, earn the sound engineer’s trust: if my observation had become unpleasant to the actors involved in the first sessions, I would certainly not have been allowed to observe in any others. On the contrary, whenever I contacted Monte, he always showed interest in the course of the general research, as well as an understanding of my ethnographic work at Namouche, referring certain upcoming sessions as eventually “interesting for you to observe” rather than others. Secondly, the trust of both musicians and producers (most of them, whom I did not know) who paraded

⁴¹⁷ I distinguish this production sound as the general recorded sound resulting from a team work working in a studio. It is different from the individual sound musicians associate to their instrument (“my guitar sound”, “my bass sound”, for instance).

⁴¹⁸ I dislike the term “non-active observer”, as every ethnographic observation is active by definition. However, I distinguish my type of observation from others carried out by several colleagues (Bates 2008, Thompson and Lashua 2014, for instance), in which there were actions performed by the ethnographers that involved the recording process.

⁴¹⁹ This is what I mentioned before as “home deafness” or “initial subjective proximity”.

in the thirteen sessions, never making an unpleasant comment regarding my presence or asking me to leave the control room for any reason.⁴²⁰

Experiencing music and culture in a “black-box”

The study of music in culture and the nature of musical thought and behavior was, according to Patricia Shehan Campbell (2000), John Blacking’s “lifelong quest”. His claims regarding the fact that

“all normal human beings have the capacity for making music; that music is discovered as well as invented; that music is essentially a primary modeling system, and not an epiphenomenon of something else; that unwritten music can be as complex as written music” (Blacking 1987:131).

resonate with the content of this thesis, presenting the “black-box” as a privileged site to experience music generally speaking, but also to experience it “deeply embedded in the cultural social, economic and political life of a locale, a nation and the world” (Rice 2004:xi).

Throughout the history of the Lisbon recording studios focused on this thesis, I came to realize that these were a mirror of the cultural policies carried out both during the fascist dictatorship and later after the 25th of April political revolution. Recording studios served a purpose, but were not, as in England or in the USA, centers of technological research (as will be mentioned in the next section), or considered fundamental for the country’s economy. Even when there were financial conditions to improve the quality of the equipment, the small Portuguese market would not justify such investments, it was believed. In the country of the three Fs (Fado, Football and Fátima), there was no special concern for what Salazar would probably consider another “modernism” at the service of some unnecessary “efficiency”. Unfortunately, this mentality of the “small, but honored” people (the Portuguese) – a sentence attributed to Salazar – would last long after the 1974 political *coup*.

⁴²⁰ This posture, as stated by Bates (2008:17) requires constant attention.

The first significant disruption in the recording milieu came in 1979,⁴²¹ when two important events happened in Portugal: the first recording studio owned by a sound engineer – José Manuel Forte’s Angel 1- , and the recording of Rui Veloso’s *Ar de Rock*, triggering the cultural movement of the Portuguese rock. This was the beginning of a journey where increasingly recording studios and their agents became more legitimized as creative environments where the quality of the equipment – together with the human agency – was not to be undermined. From this point onwards, studios had to stand up to the new challenges that other musical practices apart from fado, traditional and light music presented.

“As phonographic technologies provided a means to mass-produce identical recordings of musical performances, people increasingly experienced music not by attending unique live performances or by producing music themselves in their homes but instead by purchasing recordings, carrying them home, and reproducing the music on machines in their parlors, whenever and as often as they desired” (Thompson 1995:132, quoted in Torino 2008:68).

Emily Thompson’s words resonate with Thomas Torino’s on p.51: experiencing music through recorded music⁴²² is central for consuming audiences. Before this music reaches its audience, to be repeated endlessly, another way of experiencing music takes place in the “black-box”. There, one is conscious that the outcome of a music performance – be it from a vocalist or an instrument player- is permanent. It remains as it is performed (despite the possibilities for repetition). Because these “black-boxes” are, using Andre Leyshon’s (2009) expression, “dedicated spaces” for recording (instead of adapted spaces), they supposedly gather a number of conditions to make performers experience music in special ways to help them leave their music “legacy”. Those conditions, both technical and human, when “aligned”, offer a magical listening experience that empowers your musicianship.

⁴²¹ I am not considering here Zeca Afonso’s 1971 record *Cantigas do Maio*, as it was not recorded in Portugal.

⁴²² I make this distinction (recorded music instead of recordings), because when Thompson or even Torino made these statements, other formats for music listening beside records (like MP3, for instance) were probably not so common amongst consuming audiences.

Experiencing music in a “black-box” also, in my own particular case, marked my expectations as a music listener, as my awareness regarding sound became a feature always present in my appreciation of music.

The specificity of Portuguese recording studios

My seven-year research, involving the reconstruction of what I named the Lisbon historical studios, interviewing some of the agents that inhabited those spaces while they were actively working - from musicians to producers, A&Rs, sound engineers - enlightened the fact that, despite the international models some of them were constructed from (Abbey Road and BBC), their functioning was adapted to a country where cultural and expressive practices were not a primary concern, even after the 25th of April political revolution. Recording studios were “there”, as stated by Fernando Albuquerque, usually owned by larger companies which had other investments (such as Valentim de Carvalho and Arnaldo Trindade). The case of Arnaldo Trindade, a culture man, who had a personal interest in his artists and labels, and had the audacity and intelligence to record Zeca Afonso, is emblematic: he often chose to record his artists in studios abroad (London, Paris, Madrid) even after having bought Campolide studios. There was no interest in the technical updating of recording studios, considered a bad investment in a small country like Portugal. The biggest investment was, as stated by Trindade, on his staff, his sound engineers. On this respect, and regardless of the technical qualities of the sound professionals hired, they were often not taken seriously by “the people from the office” - an expression José Manuel Fortes used in the interviews referring to the people who made the decisions - on issues related to technical improvements. The episode of the quadriphonic monitoring at Rádio Triunfo’s control room described before is a perfect example of this attitude.

Questions related to studio staff are also significant as to how the Portuguese case is different from the Anglo-American models, since the historical and cultural framework does not adjust to the model presented by Kealy (1979). There was not, to my knowledge, such a historically framed division between sound engineers into three distinctive modes of collaboration. Rather, these modes - the craft-union mode, the entrepreneurial mode

and the art mode - were probably “mixed” into the personalities of the different sound engineers that I have met, the older generation being more craft-union oriented (in the sense of protecting their work from the intervention of unexperienced musicians), the next generation more relaxed in that sense. Regarding education, most of the older sound professionals I worked with (Moreno Pinto at Arnaldo Trindade, Rui Remígio and Alberto Nunes at Musicorde, and José Manuel Fortes, at Angel Studios) came from the radio. Hugo Ribeiro from Valentim de Carvalho, “the man of the ear” who recorded Amália Rodrigues and Carlos Paredes, leaving an unquestionable national cultural recorded legacy, learned through experience, with occasional internships abroad which, according to his own words, enlarged the feeling of frustration of knowing how things could be done, but not being able to do them for lack of equipment. It seems that the larger the corporate groups (Valentim de Carvalho, Arnaldo Trindade, Rádio Triunfo) the less interest they had in their recording studios. According to one of the sound engineers I interviewed, recording studios and its association to music, musicians and the artistic world as a whole, were not legitimized as a serious business like any other “normal” business, and from the administrative staff of these corporate groups (particularly the ones in charge of staff payments) a mixed attitude of spite, arrogance and envy (because studio staff had better wages) could be felt.⁴²³ The next generation of sound engineers with whom I worked - Tó Pinheiro da Silva, Jorge Barata, João Pedro Castro, Fernando Abrantes - would learn from the “veteran” generation (Hugo Ribeiro, José Manuel Fortes), and with the exception of Fernando Abrantes, who studied sound engineering in Germany, the others learned through experience, together with occasional professional internships abroad (sometimes financed by themselves, as was the case of Tó Pinheiro da Silva at Abbey Road).

The fact that, during the dictatorship (1928-1974) the state did not effectively control the media, as evidenced by a multi-linguistic, multi-genre radio soundscape (where Anglophone pop-rock could be heard, as well as French *chanson*, and Italian and Spanish light music) in parallel with Portuguese music, opened a window of musical recorded sounds that would make both musicians and sound engineers wish for something

⁴²³ It is important to bear in mind that Portuguese sound engineers in the 80s could work as much as three shifts in a row (twelve hours), as stated by João Pedro Castro (2012) referring to Rádio Triunfo/Namouche studios, and Jorge Barata (2012), referring to the work schedules of Arnaldo Trindade, Rádio Triunfo and Angel studios. Regardless of the salary difference associated to the functions at stake (sound engineer vs. administrative functions), it comes as no surprise that the number of hours worked by a sound engineer would lead to a salary much higher than that of, for instance, a secretary.

different, something that ultimately would make them try to overcome the technical and cultural ghetto into which most of them felt trapped. Another “window” - using again this term, which metaphorically seems adequate for the reality I am describing - was the fact that censorship was exercised by very uneducated people, who often did not understand the texts they had to censor. As stated by Arnaldo Trindade (2015), who, as editor of Zeca Afonso, soon had to learn to deal with this reality, the secret lay in presenting the most politically-engaged text (and therefore, the most metaphorical) to the censors. When referring the fact that “A Morte Saiu à Rua” (“Death Came to The Street” – a.t) - a song by Zeca Afonso about the assassination of painter José Dias Coelho⁴²⁴ by the political police P.I.D.E.⁴²⁵ in 1961 - had passed the “blue-pencil” (as the censorship was also designated), his comments were: “they did not understand it, they were very stupid...so you can see the quality of our censors...”⁴²⁶ (ibid).

Research on sound was, according to statements from several sound professionals, absent from our historical recording studios as a systematic, organized and funded activity. The scenario described by Leyshon (2009), where there was “a close relationship between the process of recording and technological development”, which “ensured that a laboratory-like regime persisted for decades within the recording studio sector” both in England and the USA (ibid: loc. 1319 of 1331) is by no means comparable to what happened in Portugal in the decades covered by this thesis. Jorge Barata, sound engineer at Arnaldo Trindade recording studios for nine years, remembers seeing some “gentlemen in white coats” (Barata 2015) occasionally in the studio, which resonates with Leyshon’s statement:

“The laboratory-like status of studios of the early 20th century was extended to the dress code expected of its employees, who were required to wear white coats at all times” (ibid.).⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ José Dias Coelho was a militant and leader of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP).

⁴²⁵ P.I.D.E - *Polícia de Intervenção e Defesa do Estado* (State Defense and Intervention Police) was the name of the Portuguese political police during the years of the fascist dictatorship.

⁴²⁶ Trindade also mentioned in the same interview that the radio professionals operated more as censors than the state censors themselves, for fear of the political police.

⁴²⁷ Although Leyshon is referring to the early 20th century, later in the referred article he states that “A recording engineer who was recruited by EMI in the early 1970s confirmed the strong links between the research and development arm of the companies’ manufacturing and technical division and the recording process in the studio” (ibid. loc.1320 of 1331). This engineer would further comment: “in those days there was a laboratory so we tested every bit of gear before it went into use” (ibid).

However, at some point they stopped coming.⁴²⁸ There were, as I have mentioned previously, particular cases of sound engineers going on internships abroad, as a result of their own personal initiatives. The idea that “it was very much the technical department [who] controlled what went on in studios” described by Leyshon (ibid: loc. 1320 of 1331) would be something most Portuguese sound engineers from an older generation wished they had seen. Instead, “the office people”, using again José Manuel Fortes’s expression, were in charge, which is in accordance with the relative importance recording studios had to its proprietors.

Historicity and myth

“[...] ethnomusicological fieldwork may also be at its best when it brings us closer to the fluidity and experiences on the boundaries between the past and present” (Bohlman, Philip in Barz 2008: 250).

My research at Namouche proved this recording studio to be a very particular and special case. Using, once more, Théberge’s classification of recording studios (2012:loc 2184 of 7567), Namouche is a large, high-end recording studio, not because of the number of tracks which, due to the rise of recording software ceased to be a differentiating criterium (ibid: loc. 2197 of 7567), but on a technical level for its acoustic properties and vintage equipment (namely, as stated by Monte himself, the pre-amps and the microphones). On a diachronic level, its historicity adds to its distinctiveness - it is the only surviving recording studio from the 70s.⁴²⁹ As mentioned by Joaquim Albergaria (p.16), the moving panels - in fact, the walls, the piano, the microphones - bear an auditory memory that would be extremely interesting to listen to, if only possible. Decades of musicians, producers, A&Rs, singers, as well as filming crews have experienced this

⁴²⁸ Apparently, their presence was associated to the maintenance of the older cinema equipment of Polysom, the studio’s previous name.

⁴²⁹ As previously mentioned, Valentim de Carvalho audio recording studios is still working, but in a different space (Studio 2, also known as SSL Studio) than the studio’s original recording and control room (Studio 1, nowadays designated as Studio Amália), which was similar to Namouche in terms of dimension.

recording studio. Session 11 particularly resonates this historicity – where else should one celebrate the 80th anniversary of Portuguese radio other than within the walls where many Portuguese records (and jingles) which colored the Portuguese radio soundscape were actually recorded? Historical records were produced there, including several musical projects that constituted a mark in the Portuguese popular music history,⁴³⁰ embodying the space with a credibility similar to a historic institution. It is, in my view, the closest version to a Portuguese Abbey Road. These traits, together with the physical space, are presumably what makes some artists decide to film their promoting videos there, even when the audio is recorded elsewhere.⁴³¹ Therefore, when arguing for Namouche’s symbolic capital as defined by Bourdieu, I would definitely place it as the only surviving Portuguese recording studio with such value. Recording studios are, thus, an unequivocal part of the history of music, as Namouche is for Portugal.

I have, however, a different perspective regarding the subject of considering - or not - Namouche as a mythologized recording studio. I would not consider Namouche a mythologized recording studio - at least not yet. If what contributes the most for this distinction are primarily the recording artists, some of Portugal’s most popular and iconic artists - Amália Rodrigues, Zeca Afonso, Rui Veloso, - have not recorded there. As was evident in chapter 10, the heterogeneity of recording artists and musical projects that constitute Namouche’s clients makes it difficult to associate the studio to an artist, a style, a producer. The passing of time will most probably add to Namouche’s mystification, if it should ever occur.

Sound engineering as emotional labour

When referring “the assets that recording studios possess that enable them to generate business within the music industry” (2009:1315) Andrew Leyshon mentions a very important feature: emotional labour - “interactive service work heavily loaded with

⁴³⁰ For instance, UHF’s 1983 album *Ares e Bares de Fronteira*, Sérgio Godinho’s 1986 album *Na Vida Real*, Dulce Pontes’s 1993 *Lágrimas* and many others.

⁴³¹ For instance, Susana Félix’s video of the song “Meia Palavra” - <https://youtu.be/jAxNwBK5DFI>; the 80th anniversary of radio in Portugal “Um Não Sei Quê de Alegria” - <https://youtu.be/r3KVkplvUCA>. All videos accessed on November 2017.

feeling and affect that is part of the service being provided” (ibid:1316). Compared to the other assets mentioned - space, time, technology and expertise - whose demand is, according to this author, “increasingly substitutable”, “emotional labour is one whose significance is not being eroded by broader forces of competition and technological change within the musical economy” (ibid). Therefore, “emotional support and encouragement for the creative process is an asset that studios can actively cultivate and promote” (ibid). This means, according to my observation process as well as many years of studio activity, having recording staff – namely the sound engineer- who, regardless of the recording situation – be it a record, a jingle, a voice over – manages to balance his/hers⁴³² technical skills with the capacity to respond to the needs of every particular musician, which in itself can be a difficult enough task, and contributing to the overall creative process and outcome. Patience and resilience (involving often long hours’ work), but also empathy and a careful choice of words and silences - a very subtle and thin-layered mixture of assets which, naturally, every sound engineer does not possess in equal share. Monte is very low-profile, not speaking much, and keeps a low voice register which in itself inspires tranquility; he also has a trustworthy look – someone who looks like he is a good person, before you even spoke to him. Calm and extremely focused on his work, which he claims to love, I never saw him impatient, anxious, ill-tempered or visibly tired (although I know for a fact that he was frequently very tired). During most of the years that the research took place, Monte had nobody to help him (he would hire an assistant in 2015). As will become clear from the last part of this section (“Epilogue”), his relations with the owners of the studio were not easy and demanded his best diplomatic skills, to say the least. Therefore, Monte’s capacity to surpass all the hindrances and establish the right atmosphere in a setting where the human factor is determinant for creativity to emerge was – still is - as important as all the technical qualities Namouche possesses. Establishing close bonds with the musicians that record in the studio (most of them he calls friends, and who call him friend as well), who have felt his dedication to the Namouche “cause” along the years, Joaquim Monte, a consensually appreciated personality for both his technical and human qualities, is, I argue, the main reason for the commercial success of the studio, keeping it alive and turning it into many musician’s favorite recording “home”.

⁴³² Unfortunately, the inclusion of the feminine possessive in this context is practically rhetorical, as throughout my professional life I have only worked with two women sound engineers.

The big absents: session musicians (and externally appointed producers)

Although not a specific trait of Namouche, during the observed sessions there were not what we have defined previously in this thesis as session musicians. As most of the sessions involved bands – who actually financed the recording project – there were no “hired musicians” (except in the cases of Fernando Tordo and Samuel sessions). There is not much to be added to this fact, apart from what I have stated on sub-chapter 7.3. This is definitely a professional category bound to disappear, according to the present economic framework that characterizes the music industry. Unless a turnover should take place, demanding – again – specialized recording studio professionals. Even if, as I believe this thesis shows, the big “black boxes” seem to be coming back, I am not sure that this fact will involve the emergence of newly trained session musicians in the near future: the money involved in studio hours is the major investment musicians do for their records, and labels (the few in the market) often don’t pay for the recordings of their artists (let alone additional musicians).

To a lesser degree, the role of the music producer, once an external agent to the recording artist, often hired by labels or being an active employee of the label, is a function which is increasingly performed by members of the bands themselves (like Fred Ferreira in the case of Orelha Negra, or Marco Orelli) or by the artists (the cases of Vicente Palma and Fernando Tordo). As with session musicians, this absence can be attributed to the same economic framework described above, adding to this fact the technical knowledge that most musicians nowadays tend to have on account of the “digital democracy”: most of them own a DAW⁴³³ and some seem to be familiarized with technical features of the recording process that not very long ago were the work of a music producer. Still, there were some sessions (the last ones, with singer-songwriter Samuel) with a hired, recognizable music producer – José Mário Branco – whose only focus in the studio was that very purpose: to produce the record. There was even an “extra pair of ears”, as mentioned, to assist in the session – Tó Pinheiro da Silva. Not coincidentally, these were the most organized sessions and the ones where the presence of the producer was obvious; also not coincidentally, and due to the generation he belongs to, Samuel is

⁴³³ DAW are the initials that stand for Digital Audio Workstation.

used to working with music producers. It was his idea (and investment) to hire José Mário Branco to produce his record, a “long-time dream”, in his own words.

Creativity, music listening and music creation

Creativity in a recording studio “occurs through a convergence of multiple factors within a dynamic system of interactions” (Thompson and Lashua 2016:74). As my observation showed, musicians, sound engineer, producer, machines and tools, even sometimes “outsiders” of the recording process - friends of the artists involved, for instance, or even family - do influence the outcome product of a music recording session, making it a highly collaborative process. It is plausible that a new *doxa* related to recording studios is emerging, presenting them as a more humanized working environment of shared knowledge rather than the romanticized idea usually disseminated by the media of a lonely suffering artist waiting for inspiration to arise, assisted by a sound engineer in awe. Creativity is undoubtedly present, but shared by different actors in the scenario, who all contribute in diversified ways for the making of a recording. The role of the person behind the console - the sound engineer - is, as mentioned in the previous section, important in many ways other than just the technical.

The opportunity of experiencing music in a studio such as Namouche also brings the importance of listening as a central referential pattern for the creation of music with better recorded sound quality. As I referred on chapter 7.5, it is my conviction that a number of factors - professional context, music references, sound formats, different forms of mediation - condition the way we listen to music – what Kevin Devine (2013) defines as listening formation. In this sense, recording studios such as Namouche, with the acoustic and technical features available to musicians, may indeed contribute to bring back “the fundamental ethic governing recorded music” – to “capture everything” instead of “just enough” (Millner 2009:357). As stated by Nicholas Granville-Fall (2015),

“This DIY approach has benefits like cost savings and maintaining full artistic control but it also runs the risk of a reduction in professional audio quality” (ibid:26).

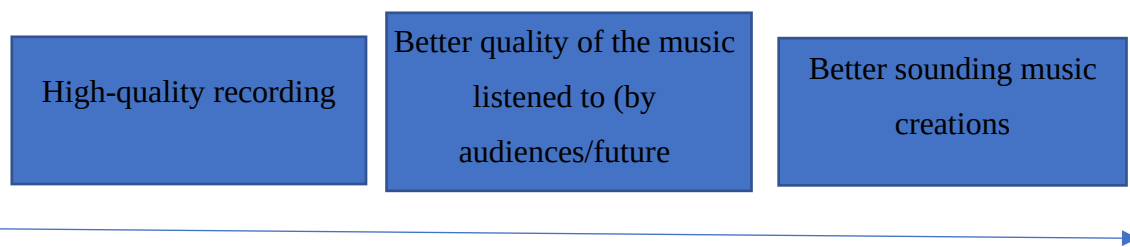


Figure 10 - A new cycle of music creation

The search for more well-equipped recording facilities like Namouche has been fundamental to make musicians realize that, having the possibility to invest more seriously in their records⁴³⁴ transforms the whole experience of recording - both the process and the outcome – into something different, establishing a quality recording pattern that most of them (particularly the younger generation) were not familiar with. Therefore, a new cycle of music creation can emerge, from the possibility of recording with good acoustic conditions and high quality equipment. In the words of José Manuel Fortes,

“the trivialization of things doesn’t take us anywhere...if a Rolls-Royce was an accessible car to everybody, it would have lost its value by now” (José Manuel Fortes, interview, Lisbon 2014)

The recording studio as *nexus*, a place of convergence

As the examples mentioned in chapter 7.2 showed, studio owners in the city of New York had to re-evaluate their facilities according to a new socio-economic context with implications in the recording industry. In Portugal, many smaller, independent studios emerged from the 90s onwards, some of them owned by musicians,⁴³⁵ while in parallel

⁴³⁴ Namouche’s fees are 40 Euros per hour. When compared to other (even smaller) studios, it is a very reasonable price, considering, as Monte stated, that “time is a relative issue” in a recording studio as well. As an example, he mentioned the latest record of Cais do Sodré Funk Connection, a funk band of nine elements, which he was able to record all playing at the same time, separated by panels. Had it been recorded in a smaller studio, it would definitely have taken much longer, becoming more expensive (Joaquim Monte, interview, November 2017).

⁴³⁵ Some of these are Tcha-Tcha-Tcha, Ponto Zurca, Viagens a Marte and Mister Master.

the bigger ones, for different reasons, ended up closing doors.⁴³⁶ All shut down, except Namouche, which came very close to this scenario. But, like the examples above-mentioned, Namouche had to adapt to new times. There is a multi-functional space underneath the studio's main purpose of music recording. In this sense, Namouche could embody Mike Howlett's concept of *nexus* (2011). Although Howlett uses this concept referring to the role of the producer in the recording studio,⁴³⁷ I argue that the meaning of *nexus* in its broader sense – “a means of connection; tie; link; a core or center as of a matter or situation”⁴³⁸ ; “a connection or series of connections within a particular situation or system”⁴³⁹ – adjusts to the role played by Namouche in the Lisbon recording milieu⁴⁴⁰ as an interface of diversified music practices and musicians.

This case study can be considered a thick description not merely “of how something inevitably got to be the way it is” (Becker 1992: 210), but of its continuous production and reconfiguration, making it something of an extending case (Tolstadt 2016: 28).

Howlett's and Tolstadt's words fit into the studio's new “profile”, especially when compared to its past stages described on chapter 9. A studio owned by record labels (first Rádio Triunfo, then Arnaldo Trindade, and afterwards Rádio Triunfo again), associated mainly to “música ligeira”, folklore groups and modern traditional; a publicity studio (already under the name of Namouche); and what I would name “the desert years” (with occasional customers, no current activity and an almost total lack of interest from the legal owners). Instead, at present different music genres and musicians (both professional

⁴³⁶ It is not my intention to generalize the reasons for the closure of the bigger, historic Lisbon studios. As I hope to have shown, each and one of them has a different story behind its closure, from bankruptcy due to mismanagement, to lack of interest from its owners. Musicorde is, probably, the only studio whose closure can be associated to the new technological framework of the emergence of smaller studios.

⁴³⁷ “I propose the concept of the record producer as a “nexus” between the creative inspiration of the artist, the technology of the recording studio, and the commercial aspirations of the record company.” The definition bears more importance when confronted with much of the published discussion on the subject, Howlett states, where the term “mediator” is preferably used. “However, the roles a producer performs are many [...], but the essential role I argue is creative and involves choices – from the choice of microphone and “mediation” techniques to performance evaluation, mix balance and time and resource allocation. This is not simply ‘mediation’ but an act of creative interaction with all the factors affecting the resulting production” (Howlett 2011).

⁴³⁸ <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/nexus> - accessed on January 2018.

⁴³⁹ Collins English Dictionary - <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/nexus> - accessed on January 2018.

⁴⁴⁰ Due to the frequent presence of international artists, I would enlarge this scope from the city of Lisbon to the whole country.

and amateur) of diversified nationalities and generations gather at Namouche, contributing in many ways to the perpetuation of high quality music recording.

A recording studio ecology

Film scores, jazz (including free jazz), fado, traditional, pop, rock, hip-hop, improvised, contemporary, alternative, classical music, all these socially recognized genres (and others, of a more personal and experimental nature) are recorded at Namouche, on a (nearly) daily basis. In parallel, several activities related to music recording are embraced by the studio's inclusive policy: a rehearsal space, a video shooting setting, a room where an amateur piano player (a lawyer by profession) has his music moments at the end of the day. Musicians, both professional and amateur, are equally welcome and cherished. As referred previously, Joaquim Monte refers to his clients, most of the times, as "friends". "If there is one thing I have in life is friends. I have a lot of friends!"⁴⁴¹ Within a logic of reciprocity, it was one of these client/friends (the lawyer/piano player) who was central to the final outcome of the studio's ownership (see Epilogue in this section). The openness that characterized Monte's attitude towards possible clients (at first, a necessity to bring the studio "back on track") ended up becoming a marker of the studio's spirit and its very essence. A truly democratic spirit in a space where, not long ago, accessibility was not facilitated and hierarchical conventions were followed among its inhabitants - as with most recording studios of the 70s. "Quim [colloquial abbreviation of the name Joaquim] has the right personality to deal with bands", a common friend would tell me. I agree, while judging from what I witnessed during fieldwork that this is definitely an understatement. Joaquim Monte has the right personality to be behind a recording console, both technically and personally. The acoustics of the room, the pre-amps, the vintage micros would not be enough to make Namouche what it is today - or any other recording studio, for that matter. The human factor is essential - this was an information many interviewed professionals insisted I wrote on the thesis - and in the case of Namouche's survival in the Lisbon recording scenario, the human factor's name is Joaquim Monte.

⁴⁴¹ Joaquim Monte, interview, 10th October 2017, Namouche recording studios, Lisbon.

From everything stated so far, and considering the term ecology in its broadest sense – “how organisms interact with one another and with their physical environment”⁴⁴², - I argue that Namouche has a very particular studio ecology. Having known many recording studios along my professional life, and admitting that each studio has its own ecology, I would consider Namouche to have a special one.

Between “the order of words and the order of things” ⁴⁴³

I left some unanswered questions for this final part: was there a common message from all the participants in this particular terrain that a recording studio is? Was there a corporate attitude on the part of the informants? How much, being “non-exotic” and close to the field, did I actually observe? How close (or far) from the truth was I, in the process?

I am not sure how the fact of being “non-exotic” and close to the field influenced the “quantity” of my observation. Could I have observed “more”? Perhaps. What I believe to have been different was the quality of the observation - eventually more empathic, more accomplice, more neutral at the same time. In this sense, whenever I felt a corporate attitude emerging from my informants (usually, when my tape recorder was used), I tried other approaches. It happened, but not often.

How close (or far) from reality was I, in the process? I think I was close to the possible truth an ethnography allows. As John Borneman and Abdellah Amoudi state (2009),

“By any standard, contemporary anthropological work is uneven and, despite the multiplicity of approaches and sites studied, makes repetitive theoretical claims. Things are constructed; things are plural; things are unstable; things have histories; most things are in-between” (ibid:5).

While agreeing with the statement, it is, nevertheless, important to record “the textures of other lives” (ibid), particularly in a setting so secluded from ethnographic research as the recording studio has been so far. Because

⁴⁴² <https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/intro-to-ecology/a/what-is-ecology> - accessed on January 2018.

⁴⁴³ Bourneman 2009:14

“It is certainly true that an encounter and an exchange, verbal and nonverbal [...] guarantee nothing. [...] It is also true, however, that the more one shares time and speaks with people, the better acquainted one becomes with the texture of other life, making it more probable there will be a closer fit between the order of words and the order of things” (ibid:14).

As such, this thesis is my contribution to the process of unveiling the incredible black-box that a recording studio still is, despite recent changes in the recording history. Because, as Paul Théberge (2012) questions,

“we need to discover whether the recording studio is in fact threatened with extinction or whether we are perhaps witnessing another stage in its evolution, a reconfiguration of the studio as a technology, a means of production and a form of musical practice” (ibid: loc 2055 of 7567).

In the case of Namouche, there is no doubt that the latter scenario mentioned in this quotation applies.

Epilogue - “Love is in the air, every sight and every sound” ⁴⁴⁴

October 10th, 2017 11:00

After contacting Joaquim Monte through email, I was very surprised to get an answer in only two days’ time. “Come by the studio anytime you want. Or call me. Thank you very much.”

The scheduled time was 11:00 a.m. Somebody who was not Joaquim (already a novelty) opened the door and stated he would be arriving “any minute now”. Before his arrival, Simon Wadsworth, an English musician living in Portugal since 1982, came in, opening the door with a key. It was an opportunity to catch up with him, since we had come across each other in the last few months due to diversified reasons. He was the first to tell me about Namouche’s new phase - with Joaquim Monte as its owner. “A lot has changed, but Joaquim will tell you all about it.” After talking about music, work, sons and daughters, composing, the weather, Joaquim opens the door and apologizes the minute he sees me. “Sorry, but I overslept” (it was 11:30 by that time). His tired eyes confirmed the statement.

We had a cup of coffee and began talking. I know Joaquim is always busy (he would only record in the afternoon, but had other issues related to the studio to account for).

As usual, with Joaquim (as with most informants), I preferred not to use recording devices. With him, particularly, I noticed a restraining behavior whenever I recorded our talks. Our conversation, therefore, was very fluid and also (I sensed) more informal than usual.

Because of the studio’s (now previous) owners’ tax debts, there was an attempt, by the Ministry of Finance, of seizure of property to some of the studio’s main assets - its piano and the mixing console. Monte was able to negotiate with the Portuguese state and purchase, himself, these two items. He was informed about this seizure on the first day of his 2016 holidays. But there was more to come. The next target would be the microphones, pre-amps and other equipment not exclusively from the studio (some of it was the result of Monte’s personal investment along the years). Those had already been

⁴⁴⁴ Song written by George Young and Harry Vanda in 1977, performed by John Paul Young.- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Is_in_the_Air_\(song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Is_in_the_Air_(song)) - accessed on October 2017.

promised to a famous Portuguese singer-songwriter for a very low price by the studio's previous owners. After negotiations, Monte was able to keep the equipment, purchasing it in two payments. He defined this period as a very hard time to endure, which lasted throughout the summer of 2016 until January 2017. But now the studio is his, which explains the photos I had been seeing posted on Namouche's Facebook and Instagram pages in the last few months: the control room with brand new acoustic panels on the walls and ceiling, the upcoming restoration of the mixing console and also plans for the facility's rooms on the first floor. According to Simon Wadsworth, whose presence in the studio was associated to this new moment,

"The mastering room (as it was designated originally), where I am located at the moment, will suffer an acoustic treatment, but not in the immediate future. There are also plans for a small vocal recording room, which may serve the mastering room". (Simon Wadsworth, conversation, October 2017, Namouche, Lisbon)

This mastering room will also function for pre-production and editing. With these two rooms working, the bigger control room on the ground floor will be assigned to more technically demanding projects and the smaller one for voice-overs and similar works.

"At this moment, we are still capturing ideas in relation to the best use of these rooms that became available now, but nothing has been decided yet" (ibid).

"All's well that ends well", one should say.

I sensed a certain relief from Joaquim Monte, and also a subtle pride and enthusiasm (shared by Simon) for this new stage of the studio. "But all this has to go slowly, step by step, because Isabel..." The sentence was finished by a look and a hand gesture meaning money. Monte is also making a documentary about the studio, financed by himself. "Are you selling it to any TV station?" I asked. "We'll see. The important thing is to make it." Dedication to Namouche since he started working there was noticeable along my years of observation: although he was a "tenant", so to speak, it was, after all, his working place. But at this point of the studio's story, with Monte's new ownership responsibility, "love is in the air". As the song goes, in "every sight", but mostly and accordingly, in "every sound". Commenting the previous owners' lack of interest and abandonment towards

Namouche along the years, Monte would say: “a studio is nothing without the love of its owner”.

The history of recorded music in Portugal is unquestionably linked to a group of men who, with their expertise, sensitivity, sensibility and other personal traits forever captured some of the soundscapes of our lives. To my generation, and to me personally, those men are primarily Hugo Ribeiro, Moreno Pinto and José Manuel Fortes. The soundscapes of my childhood and adolescence were filled with music recorded by these three extraordinary professionals. I was fortunate to have met them all, and to have often worked with Moreno Pinto and José Manuel Fortes. From the following generation, Rui Remígio, Tó Pinheiro da Silva, Jorge Barata, Fernando Abrantes and Amândio Bastos have become recording references as well. But at this stage, I would add the name of Joaquim Monte as the man who made a nearly dead recording facility resurrect, keeping the memory of a country’s music heritage represented in its walls alive and establishing new quality patterns in the Portuguese recording industry. As a musician, researcher, but particularly as a music lover, I am grateful.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1

A selection of José Manuel Forte's metaphors about sounds

Nobody is forced to like my sound...but I have to have my sound...so that people know "this gentleman's sound is like this" (Fortes 2015)

"Some sound technicians [...] tried to dignify, one way or another, my job; some others don't live the emotion of sound...but rather the mathematics of sound" (ibid)

"Some confuse the emotion of sound with the emotion of music...which is different... and some [of these sound technicians] are even musicians..." (ibid)

"There are people who accomplish an excellent mathematical work and others who accomplish an excellent human work" (ibid).

"This guy doesn't know the Ohm Law"...who cares about the Ohm Law! What he knows is the sonic emotion law!" (ibid)

"I know that I cannot reach the top...but that is always my goal! It is this will that I don't see very often these days..." (ibid).

“The objectivity of the subjectivity of sound is a fact...(Fortes 2014)

[when people want to interfere in his work in the studio] “I’ll make mistakes on my own, don’t worry” (ibid).

The studio does not have a sound...the sound technician has a sound. The studio may have acoustic features that enable a certain type of sound...the technical issue is separated from the artistic issue” (ibid)

“I have a deal with the Holy Mary: she does not make sound - and I do not make miracles” (Fortes 2011).

“I don’t care if I record an orchestra playing or a donkey braying. Sound is sound” (Fortes 2011).

Appendix 2 – photos of Musicorde recording studios (courtesy of Rui Remígio)



Control room as seen from the entrance door. Although a large space, it looks smaller on account of the dimensions of the console as well as the way the room is organized.



Control room, from the perspective of the sound engineer, facing the recording room (in this photo, Paulo Feijão, who worked in Musicorde for twenty-eight years).



Recording room, with an acoustic piano (a German Bochum) at the back and several acoustic panels on the walls. In this photo (as well as on the first one of the control room) it is noticeable the natural light that this studio had, with windows leading to the outside on both rooms.



Recording room. From here, we can see the control room, with the window curtains on the back shut. Also, more acoustic panels on the walls, a larger red acoustic panel on the floor, and on the right, a flight of stairs.

Appendix 3 – photos of Angel 2 recording studios in 1991 (captured from a private film of the recording sessions of the soundtrack of the Portuguese musical “Passa por Mim no Rossio” – courtesy of José Manuel Fortes).

Although the photos do not have much quality, they are at least a visual document of one of the best Portuguese studios between the 80s and 90s. They also show some of the studio's added values, namely its physical space, with a recording room which allowed musicians to play at the same time, high-quality microphones (Shoeps, Beyer, Neumann) a very large control room with top Jensen monitors from the actual designer of the control room Wolfgang Jensen (unfortunately, not visible in the control room photo) and three smaller recording rooms (of which we can see one, where the drummer is playing).



The corridor after the entrance, which led to the recording room. From left to right: Maria João Cunha, José Manuel Fortes (at the back, on the left), Alberto Roque, Gil Alves (at the back, on the right) and José Calheiros.



Two instrument players (Gil Alves on the left, Paulo Valentim on the right) prepare their instruments before recording (the instrument on the right is a Portuguese guitar, the one on the left an acoustic guitar).



The recording room, where a Yamaha acoustic piano is seen, played by João Paulo Santos, music director of the play (in those days, recording studios had their own pianos and drum kits). On the back, the control room.



Music director João Paulo Santos gives instructions to soprano Elizete Bayan and actress Henriqueta Maia. On the right, the recording room. Here, we can see one of Fortes' voice capturing techniques, particularly when the voices had a lot of volume (notice the distance from the microphones of the singers).

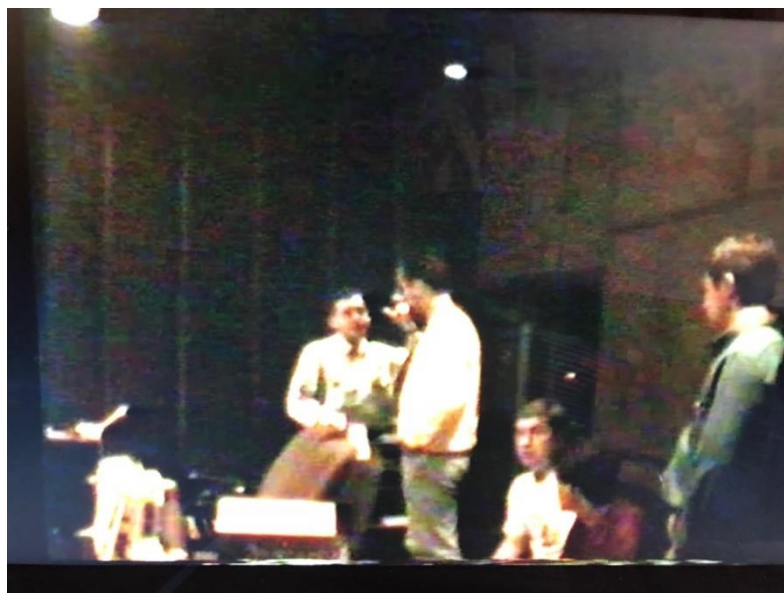


Recording room, another perspective, where the door leading to the corridor is seen on the right. On the left, the control room. Standing, João Paulo Soares and Herbert Miranda. Between the two musicians, on the wall, one of a pair of speakers.



Recording room. On the left, standing between two of the musicians, José Manuel Fortes and further on the right Paulo Valentim.

From the left, sitting: Herbert Miranda (bass), Alberto Roque (sax) and José Calheiros (bassoon).



Control room. Standing from left to right Luís Madureira (singer), João Paulo Soares, José Calheiros, Mário Marques and Alberto Roque.



Drummer Jorge Cardoso in the drum cabin.

Appendix 4

Studio Calendar (Namouche session with Samuel and producer José Mário Branco)

SAMUEL

CALENDÁRIO DE GRAVAÇÕES Abril 2016

1/3

Dia → Prd ↓	05 ter	06 qua	07 qui	08 sex
Tarde	injeção - midifiles - metrónomos	Jorge Anacleto Ivo Nogueira Nuno Tavares (>17h) 05 - GT fk 1 05 - GT 12c 2 05 - BX base 05 - BX dobra 05 - PNO base 05 - PNO dobra (se der tempo, adiantar 13 do dia 8)	André M. Santos Ivo Nogueira 06 - GT ny / CBX pizz 06 - CBX arco 08 - GT ny intro 08 - GT ny / CBX pizz 08 - CBX arco 08 - GT fk	Jorge Anacleto Ivo Nogueira Carlos Mil-Homens 13 - GT ny pick / BX 13 - GT fk pick 13 - Perc 1 13 - Perc 2 13 - Perc 3 03 - Perc 1 03 - Perc 2 03 - Perc 3 05 - Perc 1 05 - Perc 2 05 - Perc 3
Noite	Nuno Tavares Ivo Nogueira 02 - PNO / BX 04 - PNO / CBX 07 - PNO 02 - KB (glock)	Nuno Tavares Ivo Nogueira Jorge Anacleto 12 - PNO /CBX 03 - PNO prep / GT prep / BX 03 - GT dobra 03 - PNO coda	André M. Santos Ivo Nogueira 09 - GT ny / BX 09 - BX ad lib 10 - GT ny intro 10 - GT ny / BX tempo 10 - GT fk 02 - GT ny base 02 - GT ny frase 04 - GT ny (ou Samuel?)	Carlos Mil-Homens 01 - Adufe 1 01 - Adufe 2 se necessário: 01 - Perc. grave 09 - Perc 1 09 - Perc 2 se necessário: 04 - GT ny (Samuel)

Dia → Prd ↓	11 seg	12 ter	16 sab	17 dom
Tarde	Quarteto	José Manuel David Amélia Muge	Lúcia Moniz	Lúcia Moniz Sara Corte-Real Ana Rita Inácio Joana Almeida
	11 - Quarteto	08 - Trompa 1	03 - LÚCIA scat	
	06 - Quarteto	08 - Trompa 2	10 - LÚCIA 1 intro	Canção 01 - Módulos:
	06 - Quarteto dobra	08 - Trompa 3	10 - LÚCIA 2 intro	M.1 - Comp 01-09 x 4 M.1a - Comp 33-40 x 4 M.1b - Comp 87-90 x 4
	07 - Quarteto	07 - AMÉLIA scat	10 - LÚCIA 3 intro	
	02 - Cello base	07 - AMÉLIA letra	10 - LÚCIA 4 intro	M.2 - Comp 10-12 x 4 (=41-43, =68-70) M.2a - Comp 84-86 x 4 (=91-93) M.2b - Comp 26-29 x 4 (=57-60, =107-110)
	02 - Cello frase	07 - SAMUEL scat 07 - SAMUEL letra 1 07 - SAMUEL letra 2		
Noite	Pedro Santos João Capinha		Lúcia Moniz	Lúcia Moniz Sara Corte-Real Ana Rita Inácio Joana Almeida
	12 - Bandoneon		10 - LÚCIA 1 seps	
	13 - Sax soprano 1		10 - LÚCIA 2 seps	
	13 - Sax soprano 2	SAMUEL VOX	10 - LÚCIA 3 seps	M.4a - Comp 17-25 x 4 M.4b - Comp 48-56 x 4 M.4c - Comp 75-83 x 4 M.4d - Comp 98-106 x 4
	03 - SAMUEL scat		10 - LÚCIA 4 seps	
	07 - SAMUEL vox	(ou recuperação de atrasos dos músicos)	10 - LÚCIA 5 seps	M.3 - letra 1 (13-16) x 4 (3x = 111-126)
			10 - LÚCIA 6 seps	M.3 - letra 2 (44-47) x 4 M.3 - letra 3 (71-74) x 4 M.3 - letra 4 (94-97) x 4
			10 - LÚCIA 7 seps	

Dia → Prd ↓	23 sab	26 ter	27 qua recurso acabamentos	28 qui recurso acabamentos
Tarde	Tatiana Rosa 02 - FL 02 - FL dobra 04 - FL 1 04 - FL 2 04 - FL 3 04 - FL G 09 - FL 1 09 - FL 2	MULHERES (sonoplastia c. 01) > risos peq. 1 > risos peq. 2 > garg. solo 1 > garg. solo 2 > garg. grupo 1 > garg. grupo 2 > murm. grupo bx 1 > murm. grupo bx 2 > conversa prox 1 > conversa prox 2 > gritaria 1 > gritaria 2 > gritos solo 1 > gritos solo 2	SAMUEL VOX (ou recuperação de atrasos dos músicos)	SAMUEL VOX (ou recuperação de atrasos dos músicos)
Noite	Tomás Pimentel 06 - TPT surdina SAMUEL VOX (ou recuperação de atrasos dos músicos)	MULHERES (sonoplastia c. 01) > canto solo frase 1 > canto grupo fr. 1 > canto grupo fr. 2 > palmas sobre cantos > palmas fora	SAMUEL VOX (ou recuperação de atrasos dos músicos)	SAMUEL VOX (ou recuperação de atrasos dos músicos)