

# Curating Popular Music Heritage: Reasoning on Making Museum Studies and Music Studies Know Each Other

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Popular music is deeply embedded in the dynamics of the contemporary world by means of its capacity to engender modes of privacy and publicness, to communicate emotion, and to enable us to create connections and so to work as a whole. Museums have traditionally addressed art music through the exhibition of musical instruments but now that the exhibition of popular music has presented new challenges and opportunities worldwide, the examination of popular music discourses in museums is of the utmost importance for it to be meaningfully celebrated as heritage.

This paper expands on the representation of Popular Music in museums in Portugal at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by discussing a case study, that of the exhibition *No Tempo do Gira-Discos: um percurso pela produção fonográfica portuguesa*. Two domains are at stake here: observation of the curators' mental configuration by both ethnographic interviewing and analysis of the exhibition, mostly by means of discourse analysis instruments, and specifically *genre* and *register*. Although the curators had themselves previously developed insightful and innovative concepts with regard to popular music, discourse analysis reveals how in this instance museum practices mainly inherited from past traditions had thus failed to convey the meanings previously envisioned by the curators. The discussion lead us to the assumption that music is deeply embedded in the dynamics of the contemporary world and so to engage people in music museum exhibitions requires both music studies and museum studies professionals to assure its dynamics to be present and meaningful.