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Protest Song and Recording in the Final Stages of the Estado Novo in Portugal (1960–1974)

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This chapter focuses on the Portuguese protest song movement in the 1960s and 1970s, which emerged in the academic, cultural, and political milieus of Lisbon, Coimbra, and Porto, as well as in France, where several exiled musicians were active. The movement was embedded in the political and social contexts of opposition against the authoritarian regime dubbed the Estado Novo (New State). The commitment of protest singers to social and political intervention, and their defiance towards the policies of the dictator António de Oliveira Salazar (ruled 1933–1968) and his successor Marcello Caetano (ruled 1968–1974), led to them being labelled by the media as *cantores de intervenção* (intervention singers).¹ Today, the main figures and repertoires of the Portuguese protest song movement are powerfully embedded in Portugal’s collective memory as central to the struggle against the dictatorship.

I argue that the Portuguese protest song movement was a crucial vehicle for resistance to the totalitarian regime and played a central role in raising political and social awareness. In addition, members of the movement proposed to reconfigure socially and artistically Portuguese “*música popular*.”² This reconfiguration involved the development of new music practices, styles, and methods of phonographic production that had a significant impact on the recording industry, arousing the interest of the media in protest singers and their repertoires. These

changes were fundamental to the establishment of protest song as a means of cultural and political expression against the regime. Such opposition is poignantly exemplified by the use of the song “Grândola, Vila Morena” (“Grândola, Brown/Tanned Town”), composed and performed by José Afonso (1929–1987), as a signal broadcast on the radio for the Portuguese armed forces to launch the military coup of April 25, 1974, that ended the Estado Novo regime. Since then, this song has continued to be performed in official celebrations of the 1974 revolution and at moments of crisis, for the vindication of social and economic rights, and to seek political change.

Protest song has become an important focal point for musicological scholarship, which considers the relationship between musical practice and political activity. As discussed by James Garratt (2018), the intersection between music and politics often implies multiple interactions and functions that change over time and across cultures. In the 1960s, Portuguese protest song followed the developments of several protest song movements around the globe, which shaped the perception of music as a medium for political expression. According to Eyerman and Jamison (1998), the social and political awareness inherent in protest song enabled protest singers to play a central role in the cognitive practices of the activist movements in which they were involved. These movements capitalized on the intersections between the aesthetic and ideological dimensions (Nooshin 2009, 6), reinscribing the style and thematic content of popular song with consequences that went beyond their original contexts (Garratt 2018, xii–xiii). Protest song movements in Europe and the Americas were effective in using song to affirm a political cultural identity. Notable examples include: the North American folk revival of the 1950s and early 1960s; the Nueva Canción of Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay; Cuba’s Nueva Trova; Brazil’s Tropicalismo; Galicia’s Voces Ceibes; and Catalonia’s Nova Cançó, as well as the repertoire of French singer-songwriters, most notably Georges Brassens, Jean Ferrat, and Collette Magny (Tumas-Serna 1992; Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Lebrun 2009; Ayats and Salicrú-Maltas 2013). The parallels between the protest song movement in Portugal and in other countries are notable, especially the protest song movements in Spain, particularly in the way they galvanized collective performances of resistance against Franco’s dictatorship (Pérez-Villalba 2007). In this sense, as David McDonald (2013) argues, “resistance music” and “protest song” should be seen not only as categories based on stylistic attributes but should also be read in conjunction with the musical-political processes that characterize projects of extensive social change.

In Portugal, there is a growing body of ethnomusicological research on the country’s protest song movement. Maria de São José Côrte-Real (2010) offers

a systematic analysis of the practices and musical production of several key figures, contextualizing their trajectories within the authoritarian regime and the revolutionary period that followed. The *Enciclopédia da música em Portugal no século XX* (Castelo-Branco 2010) includes over seventy entries on protest song, its main figures (singer-songwriters and poets), and its genres. My master's thesis (Castro 2012) focuses on the phonographic production of Portuguese protest song, and my doctoral dissertation provides an in-depth analysis of the reconfiguration of its practices and styles in the post-revolutionary period (Castro 2022). Other scholars deal with musicians' biographies (Pimentel and Vieira 2009; Raposo 2005; Silva 2000) and compare the censorship practices of politically engaged song during the dictatorships of Brazil and Portugal (Fiúza 2006). Several publications by journalists and promoters provide firsthand testimonies and biographies of musicians (Correia 1984; Salvador 2014; Teles 2009). This chapter draws primarily on research I conducted over eight years, involving an in-depth analysis of written documentation, sound recordings, and interviews with musicians, publishers, and other agents.

The Emergence of Portuguese Protest Song

Fernando Lopes-Graça

Following World War II, Lopes-Graça composed a set of songs which became known as *canções heróicas* (Heroic Songs), that were regularly performed by the Coro da Academia de Amadores da Música, which he conducted. Set to politically engaged poetry, they were intended to nurture an aesthetic and ideological movement that was aimed at “stimulating action by linking poetry and song” and to raise awareness of the importance of music in the transformation of Portuguese society (Lopes-Graça 1946, 5). Forbidden to be sung live, the *canções heróicas* would be replaced by a new set of songs, which Lopes-Graça called *canções regionais portuguesas* (Portuguese Regional Songs). Many of these songs were arrangements of rural songs from different regions of Portugal, or melodies inspired therein. Lopes-Graça's efforts in the documentation and renewal of traditional music were intended to counteract the then-hegemonic conception of Portuguese “popular” music and culture as promoted and instrumentalized by the institutions of the Estado Novo.³ By reflecting “a collective reality” recognized by the “people” or the “folk,” these songs represented the “authentic” roots of Portuguese music, corresponding to the “transformation and deepening” of the “meaning, aesthetics, and social essence” of traditional Portuguese music (Côrte-Real 2010, 224–26).

Lopes-Graça used the terms “folk song” and “regional or rustic song” to emphasize the criteria of “orality” and “authenticity” as opposed to what he called “counterfeit folklore,” a reference to the folkloric representations of rural musics promoted by the Estado Novo, which he considered to be both “musically and poetically poor” (Castelo-Branco and Cidra 2010, 876). The recordings made by Michel Giacometti (a Corsican collector based in Portugal) in several rural areas and transcribed by Lopes-Graça are examples of the renewed interest in exploring traditional music, which Lopes-Graça considered to be the “basis for the creation of a Portuguese musical idiom and a means of artistic education and ideological combat” (877). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, these recordings inspired other composers and poets to create a politically engaged urban popular music repertoire, which instrumentalized rural musics for political action and cultural transformation (Castelo-Branco 2013; Côrte-Real 2010; Correia 1984).

José Afonso and Adriano Correia de Oliveira

In the early 1960s, a profound economic crisis contributed to worsening living conditions for most of the population, inciting general discontent and the politicization of various working-class sectors who joined opposition groups to the dictatorship (Rosas 2015). Consequently, the government intensified its repressive measures and the persecution of political organizations and its members, in particular those connected to the Portuguese Communist Party. In addition, the outbreak of the Colonial War in Africa in 1961, which lasted for thirteen years, had a negative economic and social impact. Thousands of young men were recruited to military service. This resulted in general dissatisfaction, massive emigration, and the exile of musicians, intellectuals, and politicians who opposed the regime (2015).

Politically engaged students at the Universities of Porto, Lisbon, and Coimbra represented one of the most combative sectors of resistance during the years that followed (Bebiano 2006). In 1962 and 1969, the “academic crisis”⁴ led to various initiatives of Coimbra’s left-leaning academic organizations involving students in political decisions, demanding freedom of expression, and the improvement of conditions in universities (Rosas 2015). In this context, as I will discuss below, expressive culture, especially music, was mobilized in the opposition to the totalitarian regime.

Adriano Correia de Oliveira (1942–1982) and José Afonso, both members of the University of Coimbra’s student opposition movements, were prominent singers within the Coimbra Song Tradition (*Canção de Coimbra*) and played a central role in its stylistic revitalization.⁵ In the early 1950s and throughout the 1960s, these singers were committed to breaking with the musical style and thematic content that characterized the *Canção de Coimbra*. For José Afonso,

the social environment surrounding this genre at the time constituted what he called an “artificial scenario of an elite folklore,” distant from the social relevance that he aimed for in his songs (Afonso 1970).

José Afonso and Adriano Correia de Oliveira configured a new and politically engaged repertoire that broke with the “romanticism” and “lyricism” associated with Coimbra’s songs and which incorporated elements from different musical traditions. This repertoire, which they designated *trovas* and *baladas*, was characterized by the centrality of the text, simple melodies adapted from or inspired by traditional songs, and a simple harmonic accompaniment by an acoustic guitar (e.g., alternating I-V-I). This new style is exemplified by songs such as “Charamba” (a traditional dance song from the Azores) and “Canção da Beira-Baixa” (“Song from Beira-Baixa”), performed by Adriano Correia de Oliveira, and “Ronda dos Paisanos” (“Round of Countrymen”) or “Os Bravos” (“The Brave Ones”), performed by José Afonso.

During the first half of the 1960s, most of the repertoire performed by José Afonso and Adriano Correia de Oliveira was published on EP, containing songs freed from the “rashes of Coimbra’s sounds” (Pimentel and Vieira 2009, 64) and that transmitted messages of discontent. In 1963 and 1964, both singers recorded socially and politically engaged songs, namely “Os Vampiros” (“The Vampires”) and “Menino do Bairro Negro” (“Boy from the Black Neighborhood”) by José Afonso and “Trova do Vento que Passa” (“Song of the Passing Wind”), a poem by Manuel Alegre, a former student at the University of Coimbra and a well-known poet and political activist against the regime, performed by Adriano Correia de Oliveira. In a letter addressed to his brother, José Afonso designates these songs as *canções de replica*, that is “songs of response,” which he defined as a new type of song that could “resonate in the public’s spirit, raising their conscience instead of distracting them” (Pimentel and Vieira 2009, 64). These songs were sung recurrently in public, especially in student meetings, social gatherings, and political assemblies, which were often clandestine or the target of police intervention. Their significance lies in the fact that they represented the stylistic rupture of the *Canção de Coimbra*, as well as the use of music and poetry to articulate social protest inscribed in metaphorical lyrics that alluded to the country’s social and political situation. The reference to the “vampires that eat everything and leave nothing” in José Afonso’s song, or the ambivalence between repression and resistance inscribed in Alegre’s verses in the song “Trova do Vento que Passa,”⁶ led to the use of these songs as icons of the student movement and of resistance to the authoritarian regime.

The above-mentioned songs of José Afonso were recorded in an old convent on the outskirts of Coimbra with scarce technical resources (a simple mono-recorder). Due to the lyrics’ open opposition to the regime, the circulation and

distribution of the EPs containing these songs was prohibited in 1965 by the State General Security Directorate.⁷ Following the prohibition of the lyrics, the record publisher Discos Rapsódia published new instrumental versions of José Afonso's songs "Os Vampiros" and "Menino do Bairro Negro," which were authorized for commercial distribution, reinforcing the impact of the meaning of the original song lyrics. These songs by José Afonso and Adriano Correia de Oliveira had very little media projection and were not broadcast on radio, thus their social impact was limited to small opposition groups of intellectuals and students.

Portuguese Protest Singers in Paris

In Paris, exiled musicians Luís Cília (b. 1943) and José Mário Branco (1942–2019) consolidated their musical activity through contact with the cultural and political milieus of various left-wing organizations. At the time, such organizations proliferated in France as a consequence of the Sino-Soviet conflict. Moreover, they stimulated stylistic changes in the protest song repertoire that some organizations produced, enabling the publication of exiled singers' debut albums. Freed from the regime's persecution and inspired by the new styles of the *trovas* and *baladas*, as well as musicians residing in Paris, Cília and Branco created a politically engaged repertoire that denounced the regime and the Colonial War that it waged in the former African colonies.

Luís Cília, exiled in Paris in 1963, developed personal and artistic relationships with Collete Magny, George Brassens, and Paco Ibañez, among other politically engaged musicians, which facilitated his contacts with French record publishers such as Le Chant du Monde (associated with the French Communist Party) and Moshe Naim, labels that were interested in recording political repertoire from different countries (Luís Cília, personal communication, 2018). Cília published the LPs *Portugal-Angola: Chants de Lutte (Portugal-Angola: Songs of Struggle)* in 1964; the EP *Portugal Resiste (Portugal Resists)* in 1965; and the trilogy *La Poésie Portugaise de nos jours et des toujours (Portuguese Poetry Today and Forever)* in 1967, 1969, and 1971. The songs recorded on these albums were set to the poetry of prominent Portuguese poets (Luís de Camões and Fernando Pessoa) and the politically engaged poetry of some of the major figures of Portuguese neorealist literature, such as Manuel Alegre, José Saramago, Carlos Oliveira, and José Gomes Ferreira.⁸ These songs were characterized by simple melodic contours and harmonic accompaniment on the acoustic guitar, highlighting the poems, usually sung in a low register, emphasizing the melancholy and gloom expressed in the lyrics. Being a member of the Portuguese Communist Party and having published his albums on French labels known for politically engaged

songs, Cília's recordings were subject to censorship in Portugal. Nonetheless, he became one of the most prominent representatives of Portuguese politically engaged song, particularly in the international context, participating in several events, such as the Encuentro Internacional de la Canción Protesta de Casa de las Américas (International Meeting of the Protest Song) in Cuba, in 1967.

José Mário Branco, a former member of the Portuguese Communist Party, was exiled in Paris from 1963 until the 1974 revolution for refusing to comply with compulsory military service. He was involved in cultural and political organizations with a Maoist orientation and consolidated his musical activities in Paris during the political turmoil of May 1968. Alongside Luís Cília, Sérgio Godinho, and other prominent musicians at the time, Branco performed his own songs (in Portuguese and French) as well as protest songs from Italy, France, and Spain in factories occupied by striking workers and associations of Portuguese immigrants (José Mário Branco, personal communication, 2017). His proximity to the ideas of Lopes-Graça had an impact on both his conception of music as “an idiom of its own” (2017) and his appreciation for Portuguese traditional music, which became central in his compositions (Castro and Andrade 2020). These aspects were reflected in the first EP he published, which includes musical settings of the lyrics of Iberian medieval songs in the Galician-Portuguese language (thirteenth century “*Cantigas de Amigo*” from the *Cancioneiro da Vaticana*), published in 1969 by the label *Arquivos Sonoros Portugueses*. These songs were promoted in the liner notes as a “new current and a catalytic force in Portuguese popular song” (*Arquivos Sonoros Portugueses*). José Mário Branco's political posture was clear in the author's edition of a single, published in 1970 with the intention of clandestine distribution in Portugal, including the political songs “*Ronda do Soldadinho*” (“*Soldier's Round*”) and “*Mãos ao Ar!*” (“*Hands Up!*”), which explicitly denounced the political situation in Portugal and the illegitimacy of colonial occupation (José Mário Branco, personal communication, 2012).

The Mediatization of Protest Song at the End of the 1960s

The repertoire that mixed traditional music and politically engaged poetry published by José Afonso and Adriano Correia de Oliveira in Portugal, and Luís Cília and José Mário Branco in Paris, constituted a highly influential aesthetic formulation and political expression of resistance to the dictatorship. José Afonso's and Adriano Correia de Oliveira's *trovas* and *baladas* expressed marked social discontent in ways that inspired a new generation of musicians and poets who became politically engaged during the second half of the 1960s, including

Francisco Fanhais, Manuel Freire, Vieira da Silva, and José Jorge Letria, among others. For Fanhais, a priest who belonged to a faction of progressive Catholic critics of the regime, these songs represented “something new, inaudible until then, in terms of music and poetry” (Francisco Fanhais, personal communication, 2018). These musicians adopted a musical style similar to that introduced by José Afonso and Adriano Correia de Oliveira and shared their social and political engagement. Political expression was notoriously channeled through the joint participation of these musicians in multiple live performances, many of which were protest events against the regime that were carried out clandestinely or under police surveillance.

As was the case with protest song movements in Spain (Ayats and Salicrú-Maltas 2013), the movement in Portugal was restricted to a small group of young people from petty-bourgeois origins, coming from the intellectual and student sectors of urban centers and universities. Without formal musical training, the vast majority of the musicians who promoted the protest song movement in Portugal were inspired by the international protest song movements mentioned above. These songs were characterized by the performance model of a singer accompanied by an acoustic guitar, performing poems that alluded to the social and political problems of the country and that were set to simple and easy-to-memorize melodies. As stated by singer-songwriter José Jorge Letria, who was also a student and journalist at the time, it was the context in which these songs emerged that made them a source of inspiration for the development of a movement of cultural resistance, which influenced other forms of artistic expression such as literature, the visual arts, theater, and amateur cinema (José Jorge Letria, personal communication, 2012). New performers and repertoires increasingly gained recognition through different media (Raposo 2005), recognition that was directly related to changes in the regime that occurred towards the end of the decade.

Music Periodicals, Radio, and Television

In 1968, Marcello Caetano replaced the weakened prime minister Salazar. He initiated the revision of the constitution and introduced liberal measures and reforms in the political, economic, and social spheres. This period (1968–1970), known as “Marcelista Spring,” created, for a brief period, an expectation regarding the “openness” of the regime. However, there were no major changes in the repressive and authoritarian policies, neither was the course of the Colonial War altered. The political prisons and the persecution of oppositionists were maintained, which in turn strengthened resistance to the government (Rosas

2015, 11). However, there was a slight slowdown in censorship, renamed Prior Examination.⁹ Nevertheless, periodicals, radio, and television broadcasts were monitored, which implied that, in some cases, media agents had to negotiate with the authorities or use metaphorical language and other means to ensure publication (Fiúza 2006). As for the recording industry, until 1972 there was no law that mandated preliminary “prior examination” of the materials to be published. In any case, as censorship was applied to all other media, if the records of protest singers were not being seized by the police, most of the time they were not allowed to be broadcast on radio or television (2006).

The role of some journalists, radio, and television programmers, as well as record publishers, was to introduce new performers and repertoires representing new values and musical styles that appealed to younger audiences. *Mundo da Canção* (*World of Song*), launched in 1969, was a periodical entirely dedicated to popular music. As repeatedly mentioned in the editorials, the objectives were to promote music with content that was considered significant for Portuguese youth, the periodical’s target audience (Anon. 1969). Until 1974, it was one of the few periodicals that repeatedly disseminated musical styles that were considered by some journalists, critics, and musicians to represent an alternative to the musical genres and styles that dominated most of the media, such as *canção ligeira* (light song) and fado, whose recordings represented a substantial portion of record sales in Portugal (Castro 2012). Although the periodical included articles on diverse musical genres including folk, jazz, and pop-rock, it also highlighted national and international protest music. Through opinion articles, interviews, biographies, song lyrics, and record advertisements, the periodical promoted reflection on the renewal of Portuguese popular music, with particular emphasis on musicians associated with the protest song movement such as José Afonso, Adriano Correia de Oliveira, José Mário Branco, Sérgio Godinho, José Jorge Letria, Manuel Freire, and Francisco Fanhais, among others (Castro 2017).

Some radio programs, such as *Página Um* (broadcast on Rádio Renascença, a Catholic radio station) became known for broadcasting songs by new protest singers, especially *trovas* and *baladas*. The participation of some of these musicians on live television shows such as *Zip-Zip* (a popular talk-show broadcast on Portuguese State Television—RTP—for nine months in 1969) is noteworthy. Although there was no particular connection between the producers of this talk show and opposition movements, it brought attention to the young performers associated with the innovative *baladas* (Lopes 2012, 165–66). Even if *Zip-Zip* did not express a clear political stance against the regime, and despite the prohibition of some performers such as José Afonso, the participation in the program of several prominent protest singers such as Francisco Fanhais, Manuel Freire,

and José Barata Moura helped to disseminate protest song to a wider public, eventually leading to the program's suspension.

The participation of protest singers on radio and TV shows created opportunities for some artists to publish their first records on labels launched following the success of individual shows. For example, after the suspension of the television show, *Zip-Zip* created its own label and radio program, publishing and broadcasting several records (Lopes 2012) such as the first album of Francisco Fanhais, *Canções da Cidade Nova (Songs from the New City)* and Manuel Freire's EP that included a song set to the poem "Pedra Filosofal" ("Philosopher's Stone"), a song that became very popular following its broadcast on television.

Record Publishers

The beginning of the 1960s marked a turning point in the establishment of new methods of phonographic production that favored the emergence of small record publishers, such as Orfeu and Sassetti. These publishers looked for a diversity of genres, repertoires, and performers that had not been recorded but that could offer an alternative to the musical genres and aesthetics that were hitherto dominant in the media (Losa 2010, 639). In particular, Orfeu and Sassetti took an interest in the repertoire of the then-emerging protest singers and published records featuring most of them.

The record company Orfeu was founded in 1953 in Porto by Arnaldo Trindade, a businessman and an enthusiast for new trends in music and poetry. He published records based on his personal taste and preference for selected musical genres, especially Coimbra's songs, as well as a wide diversity of performers and genres, ranging from regional ensembles and folklore groups (mostly from the north of Portugal, especially areas that are close to Porto), recited poetry, and pop-rock groups. Starting in the early 1960s, Orfeu published recordings of several singers of Coimbra's songs, among them Adriano Correia de Oliveira, who had an exclusive contract with Orfeu between 1960 and 1982. Similarly, in 1968, José Afonso sought to publish his new album with several record labels, and his friendship with Adriano Correia de Oliveira facilitated his introduction to Arnaldo Trindade, who was an admirer of José Afonso's music. Afonso was under police surveillance and had several of his records seized. Although this made it difficult for him to publish new albums, Arnaldo Trindade offered him a contract, more or less under the same terms of the preexisting contract with Oliveira. The contract made it possible for Afonso to dedicate himself professionally to musical activity, guaranteeing a monthly salary in return for publishing an album each year and for recommending new performers to the publisher.

Thanks to the mediation of the two artists, Orfeu was able to record several protest singers throughout the 1970s, including Francisco Fanhais, Samuel Quedas, Fausto Bordalo Dias, Luís Cília, and José Jorge Letria. The repertoire recorded by these artists was categorized by Arnaldo Trindade as “text song” or “theme song” (Arnaldo Trindade, personal communication, 2016). The integration of these musicians in the label’s catalog established Orfeu as a pivotal publisher of politically engaged popular music (Castro 2012).

Following Orfeu’s lead (Losa 2010, 640), at the beginning of the 1970s, the newly founded label Sassetti started a comprehensive record-publishing project exploring different musical genres and investing in new trends of Portuguese popular song. This investment eventually resulted in their merging with the record label Zip-Zip in 1972, which considerably enriched their catalog with protest song repertoire. José Afonso advised Sassetti to publish some of the exiled musicians in France, thus enabling the recording of the first albums of José Mário Branco and Sérgio Godinho (José Mário Branco, personal communication, 2017). Most significantly, the network of politically engaged musicians residing in Portugal and France enabled José Mário Branco, who had working experience in Parisian recording studios, to produce the albums of politically engaged musicians, including himself, and to introduce myriad innovations in the instrumental arrangements and technical quality of the recordings (Castro and Andrade 2020).

Record Production and the Renewal of Portuguese Protest Song

Until 1970, José Afonso’s and Adriano Correia de Oliveira’s albums, published by Orfeu, resulted from a simple recording procedure of capturing a solo voice accompanied by an acoustic guitar. A pivotal moment occurred in Paris when José Mário Branco was enlisted as a composer, singer, producer, and arranger. Branco was influenced by the trends and approaches used in the phonographic recording of emerging Anglo-American pop-rock styles at the time. The exploitation of resources such as multitrack recording and new forms of sound processing allowed for the configuration of new musical sounds that went beyond the mere recording of a musician or an ensemble (Castro and Andrade 2020). These conditions grounded the production of Branco’s first LPs: *Mudam-se os Tempos*, *Mudam-se as Vontades*, and *Margem de Certa Maneira*, both recorded in the Château d’Hérouville studios outside Paris in 1971 and 1972 respectively. Branco was chosen by José Afonso to produce and author the arrangements of his landmark albums *Cantigas do Maio* (1971) and *Venham Mais Cinco* (1973). Branco was also

responsible for the production of the debut albums of Sérgio Godinho and José Jorge Letria, *Os Sobreviventes* (*The Survivors*) and *Até ao Pescoço* (*Up to the Neck*) respectively, both published by Sasseti in 1972.

These new albums marked a change toward a more “modern” phonographic conception. They were based on the construction of a musical sound that could only result from the technical capabilities of a recording studio equipped with a multitrack recorder (2020). As stated by Branco, they were conceived not as mere representations of a live musical performance but as phonographic works, or what he designated as “sound stagings” (José Mário Branco, personal communication, 2017). These records are characterized by stylistic diversity in the arrangements of each track. The album *Cantigas do Maio* ranges from songs for five or six instruments and choirs, as in the song “Maio Maduro Maio” (“May Mature May”), to arrangements without any instrumental support such as the remarkable “Grândola, Vila Morena,” whose accompaniment consists exclusively of a four-voice choir and sound effects produced by rhythmically walking on gravel. Thus, Branco’s “sound staging,” drawing on Portuguese traditional music, urban popular music styles such as the *chanson française*,¹⁰ and rock, amplified the meaning of the sung text and in the process articulated aesthetics and political ideologies (2020). These landmark albums also stimulated discussions about the communicative effectiveness of the repertoire of other singers identified with the protest song movement. For José Mário Branco, the poor aesthetic quality of some repertoire configured by the usual singing of “subversive” poetry accompanied by the acoustic guitar had the opposite effect of the one intended. As Branco wrote, these albums represented a stance on “surpassing the characteristic sound of the *baladeiros*”¹¹ (2008, 150). The use of a diversity of sounds and instruments, original and engaged lyrics, no longer “clinging” to opposition poets (2008), distinguished Branco’s production from the previous model in which singers were accompanied by an acoustic guitar. For José Afonso, this was a welcome move away from being connoted as a *baladeiro* (Afonso 1971).

As suggested by McDonald (2013), the dynamic relationship between the role of music and the social and political awareness of audiences is, in part, developed by the musicians who seek experimentation and innovation in their practices. The new set of songs featured on these albums marked a significant transition in the ways that protest song was understood by some media outlets, publishers, and musicians. Several periodicals regarded these songs as milestones of musical change, thus consolidating protest song as a representative model for the renewal of Portuguese popular music more broadly. In 1972, the magazine *Flama* referred to José Mário Branco as “the voice of change,” (Branco 1972) while *Mundo da Canção* published an editorial entitled “Renovation,” dedicated

entirely to these albums and singers, characterizing them as a “breath of fresh air” and stating that 1971 “was crucial for the New Portuguese Music, to which one really should listen and spread” (Anon. 1972).

The reception of these records in the public domain illustrated the disruptive dimension that was often attributed to these repertoires, where they were often viewed as alternatives to the mainstream aesthetic conventions that characterized the industry and carried innocuous social and political meaning. The publication of these protest songs across several records highlights the ability these musicians had to represent simultaneously the artistic and the political potential of popular music inspired by traditional Portuguese elements as well as the innovative approaches used by these musicians in the recording process and in the introduction of sounds and lyrics with significant social and political content.

On the other hand, the impact of this renewal process on Portuguese popular music led to an unusual reaction by the government, which sought to contain the disruptive potential of protest singers. According to journalist João Paulo Guerra, Marcello Caetano referred to the need to suppress these singers and songwriters and to ban them from the media, who in his opinion “brazenly [made] a frontal attack against the social order” (Raposo 2005, 9). In 1972, the General Director of Information, Geraldês Cardoso, issued a letter determining the type of songs that should be banned, sending this instruction to the publishers (Moutinho 1975). The enactment of the Prior Examination Act targeted songs that included ridicule, threatened the established power, referred to the Colonial War, expressed shock, or exalted public contestation. It also prohibited the “publication or broadcasting of songs or other musical forms which, through their content and purpose, or because of the circumstances in which they are composed, jeopardize legally protected interests” (Prior Examination Act 1972).

According to Arnaldo Trindade, despite the prohibition of some songs, the publishers adopted strategies to circumvent the law and were willing to put these albums in circulation, combining commercial interests with ideological and aesthetic values. The composer and poet José Niza, who was also a producer and media agent working for Orfeu, played an important role in managing the relationship with the censorship agency and in negotiating the recording of politically engaged lyrics. He stated:

I realized that there was some room for maneuver and that we had to take advantage of it. I give you an example: in 1972, when Zeca [José] Afonso and I were preparing the recording of the album *Eu Vou Ser Como a Toupeira* (*I Will be Like the Mole*), I asked him to give me not only the poems he intended to sing, but also more vio-

lent and explicit ones. These surplus poems would serve as a provocative bait for the wrath of the censors' blue pencil,¹² and were to be cut. I knew—or thought I knew—that the regime didn't want to totally silence Zeca, but just to control him, as with [the television program] *Zip-Zip*. Silencing Zeca, Adriano, Manuel Freire, Fanhais, and others would provoke a boomerang effect that would turn against the regime and reverse the cost-benefit logic. The trick worked: when the lyrics were returned [by the censors], from the songs we wanted to record, only "A morte saiu à rua" ("Death Went Out on the Street") was prohibited. Even so, I didn't conform. I called Dr. Pedro Feytor Pinto, then Director General of Information, whom I had known since the days of Coimbra and the Academic Tuna [a string ensemble or *rondalla* composed of students at the University of Coimbra], where he had been a contemporary of Zeca. We had lunch. He knew that the song described the murder by PIDE of the Communist painter Dias Coelho, although the name was not mentioned in Zeca's poem. And I told him: "But who knows who Dias Coelho was? Where is the problem?" When we got out of the cafe, "A morte saiu à rua" was authorized! (Niza 2007, 11–12)

On March 29, 1974, protest singers were the central feature of the First Portuguese Song Meeting, held at the Coliseu dos Recreios, one of the largest performance venues in Lisbon, with the aim of distributing the 1972 Press Awards. For the first time, several musicians such as José Afonso, José Jorge Letria, Adriano Correia de Oliveira, Manuel Freire, Fausto, José Barata Moura, Carlos Paredes, Vitorino, Fernando Tordo, and Ary dos Santos, among others, performed on the same stage. Although surrounded by police and censors who wanted to postpone the beginning of the show and ban some songs, the event took place and was described as unprecedented by several newspapers. The prizes awarded revealed the role of the show in affirming the "new Portuguese song," with awards given to musicians Sérgio Godinho, the production team of the record *Os Sobreviventes* (including José Mário Branco), and José Afonso, but also to radio shows featuring protest singers such as *Tempo Zip* and *Página Um*.

The end of the show was the high point of the evening: "Grândola, Vila Morena," by José Afonso, was sung in chorus by almost everyone present, foreseeing the coup d'état that would take place just three weeks later, ending the totalitarian regime and starting a new process that marked the transition to Portuguese democracy. By then, the Portuguese protest song was consolidated as a movement that had played an essential role in the social and cultural transformation of Portuguese popular music. The popularization and media impact of politically engaged musicians and repertoires, as well as the reconfiguration of practices and meanings attributed to protest song, were essential in raising social awareness against the regime. As in Spain, where political singers played

a central role before and during the political transition from the dictatorship to democracy (Pérez-Villalba 2007), throughout the revolutionary period in Portugal, the protest song movement served as a public expression in support of democracy and freedom.

Notes

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1. In Portugal the term “protest song,” although quite widespread, was used in alternation with the designation “intervention song,” which became connected with the revolutionary period (from 1974 onward) and is still used today to refer to the protest singers of the 1960s and 1970s. During these decades, the terms were discussed by both musicians and the media and more recently by academics (Côrte-Real 2010; Castro 2012).

2. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the notion of *música popular* acquired several meanings that are distinct from its literal translation as “popular music.” During the 1960s and 1970s, *música popular* was used in academic and journalistic discourse to refer both to music in rural areas as well as to urban popular musics that were partly inspired by rural musical styles (Castelo-Branco 2013, 665).

3. During the Estado Novo, the concept of “popular” (referring to music and culture, as in *música popular* and *cultura popular*) was re-signified and used as a symbol of Portuguese nationalism, embodying the ideological strategy known as “politics of the spirit,” the regime’s cultural policy. In this context, *cultura popular* was a broad notion that designated the most widespread modes of rural and urban expressive culture anchored in the notion of *povo* (folk). The term was especially associated with supposedly traditional and conservative expressive culture from rural regions, which was considered a foundational element of national identity to be protected from the threats of modernity (Castelo-Branco 2013, 667).

4. “Academic crisis” is an expression used by the media and students in relation to the conflicts of 1962 and 1969 between Portuguese university students and the Estado Novo regime, during which the government responded violently to the various forms of student protest.

5. *Canção de Coimbra* is a generic term that designates “a diverse set of musical genres and practices associated mainly with the academic sociability traditions of the University of Coimbra,” (Equipa redatorial EMPXX 2010, 216–17) including the so-called *Fado de Coimbra* (Coimbra’s Fado), a musical tradition that emerged from Lisbon’s fado, between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. *Canção de Coimbra* was reconfigured in the 1920s and 1930s, introducing stylized versions of regional musical traditions and popular songs, then in the 1940s and 1950s it became characterized by sentimental and nostalgic lyrics and vocal style and a simple harmonic accompaniment by the Portuguese guitar.

6. Here is an excerpt of part of the lyrics: “Mesmo na noite mais triste / Em tempo de servidão / Há sempre alguém que resiste / Há sempre alguém que diz não” (“Even in

the saddest night / in a time of servitude / there is always someone who resists / there is always someone who says no”).

7. Apprehension warrant by the Portuguese State Police, January 12, 1966, Torre do Tombo Archives, Lisbon.

8. In 1967, Luis Cília was invited by the Portuguese Communist Party to compose the music and lyrics of a song to be broadcast on clandestine radio stations. He composed “Avante Camarada!” which has been used as the unofficial hymn of the Communist Party up to the present.

9. The practice of censorship existed since the constitution of the Estado Novo in 1933. In 1972, the Directorate of Censorship Services was transformed into a General Directorate of Information and “censorship” received the designation of “prior examination.”

10. *Chanson Française* is a generic term that denotes a song repertoire and style, highlighting French language and poetry. It was popularized in the 1950s and 1960s by singer-songwriters such as Georges Brassens, Jacques Brel, and Léo Ferré, among others.

11. *Baladeiros* is a term that was used by the media and musicians to denote the singers of *trovas* and *baladas*. In particular, it was used during a *Zip-Zip* show in an ironic plot, presented by the comedian Raúl Solnado, about the profile of the new performers who appeared on the program solely accompanied by the acoustic guitar, hence a certain pejorative connotation that is associated with the term.

12. “Blue pencil” is a reference to the act of censorship, since a blue pencil was frequently used to mark censored items.

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