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Cantos da Floresta (Forest Songs) : exchanging and sharing indigenous music in Brazil

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1. Throughout the history of Brazil there is sparse musical production that includes indigenous elements, largely due to the stereotyped perception of indigenous peoples amongst most Brazilians and aggravated by little contact with and parsimonious knowledge of the 252 diverse indigenous communities in Brazil.
2. Analysis of various musical productions from the past century, both in classical and popular genres, helps comprehend the different contexts and motivations behind different gazes onto indigenous peoples and their musical repertoires, and their transformations through time.
3. Indigenous music(s) are an excellent subject for re-creations (or trans-creations) as a form of bringing them closer to an audience that is unaccustomed to these sonorities and which are often experienced as unpleasant, strange, and uninteresting. For this purpose, they undergo fusions with non-indigenous musical elements, and therefore are re-signified both for a non-indigenous as well as an indigenous audience.
4. It is possible and desirable for non-indigenous musicians to interpret indigenous songs, including those that are part of rites and rituals on stage, as long as appropriate permission from the community from where they come from is granted to the artists, which includes paying copyright royalties.
5. My approach towards the indigenous repertoires is based on an aesthetic-affective interdisciplinary dialogue, which takes on a decolonizing posture through participative (ethno)musicological research.
6. Viveiros de Castro's mode of thinking which takes the perspective of indigenous peoples can help to frame them as partners in a joint effort to reinvent music through a delicate and respectful process of appropriation, which has guided Mawaca's re-creation process.
7. Respect towards native communities is directly linked to a form of research that seeks to understand indigenous concepts within their own terms, deconstructing an Europeanized worldview. Having direct contact with these groups aids greatly in a more holistic comprehension and creates important affects as it builds interculturality between indigenous and mainstream Brazilian cultures.
8. Oswald de Andrade's concept of "swallowing" (or cannibalizing) from the Anthropophagic Movement of 1928, reverberates as a strong metaphor for Mawaca's artistic research and creative output, as it recreates themes from diverse groups from across the world. Verbs such as eat and regurgitate, reinvent, reconstruct, experiment, fuse, hybridize and connect are employed in order to understand the suppression of cultural borders and binarism – the age-old dichotomy between "us and them". These are poetic forms of approaching external elements, that in turn are transformed into our own musical elements.
9. To transform research done on indigenous musicology into a didactic project (through the creation of music education books and workshops that address traditional indigenous elements) is a form an inter-musicology, and new category to be possibly incorporated into Wim van der Meer's typology.
10. Artistic collaborations following Mawaca's initial excursion to the Amazon enriched and deepened the process of research and recreation.
11. The history of contact with Brazil's indigenous peoples has been marked by brutality, violence, disease and genocide. This situation forced the necessity to promote actions to defend the 252 indigenous populations, combating ignorance still maintained as a way to violate their rights defined in the Brazilian Constitution of 1988. President Jair Bolsonaro compared indigenous communities living in protected lands to animals in zoos, and states that "the recognition of indigenous land is an obstacle to agribusiness". He undermines the rights of indigenous peoples, transferring responsibility for certifying indigenous territories as protected lands to the ministry of agriculture, known for championing the interests of industries that want greater access to protected lands. Their future is in danger.