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Music as Discourse.

Gypsy Pentecostal Music in Portugal and Spain¹

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Introduction



Paul's letter to the Corinthians: «In truth I tell you, brethren...»

¹ This paper is an outcome of a PhD investigation begun in 2002, called “Music, Identity and Religion among Portuguese and Spanish Gypsies”, developed at the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon and tutored by Dr. João de Pina Cabral. Fieldwork has been developed in Lisbon and, since October 2004, in Madrid. Therefore, this presentation draws on ethnographical data collected in both contexts, through the audio recording of religious cults, the collection and analysis of CD and DVD editions, and notes from my fieldwork diary. I would like to thank the institutions that made it possible for me to present this paper at the XIXth World Congress of the IAHR: *Fundação Gulbenkian* (Gulbenkian Foundation), *Instituto Camões* (Camões Institute) and *Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia* (Foundation for Science and Technology of the Portuguese Ministry of Science and Education). I would also like to thank my colleagues and teachers who helped me build this reflection: Zé Mapril, Ramón Sarró, João Pina Cabral.

This sketch, from the famous Spanish cartoonist Forges, appeared in a Spanish newspaper, *El País* ("The Country") a few years ago. It is a humorous depiction of what is described today as Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), a musical industry developed at a global scale over the last 40 years or so, as a result of the introduction of popular musical styles and instrumentations in the religious musical practices of charismatic movements, both protestant and catholic (see Kavanaugh 1999; Howard & Streck 1999). A lot has been discussed throughout the last years, concerning the effects of this movement in local doctrines and practices, essentially through two main arguments: on the one hand, this music is a product of the Devil's work in the churches, progressively succeeding in their corruption (through vanity and delusional senses of power); on the other hand, it is nothing but the response of Christian doctrine to contemporary languages and needs (see, for this debate, Blanchard 1983; Dianteill 2004; Mitchell 1978; Witt 1995). Whatever the outcome of this debate, one thing is certain: the dramatic change occurred, since the 1960's, in musical practices throughout Christian churches worldwide.

Yet this debate reflects nothing but a major concern on the role of music in religious practice, and therefore it is helpful in terms of understanding the place of musical practice in Pentecostal religious worship, and, in general terms, the power of music in ritual and social practice. As a way of connecting people with each other and setting meanings in motion, music is understood, in this sense, as a form of discourse within that social practice.

In the following pages, I will take on some ethnographic data collected in one such movement that participates, in its own specific terms, in this process: the *Igreja Evangélica Filadélfia* or Philadelphia Evangelical Church, a Pentecostal charismatic movement developed among gypsy communities in Portugal and Spain, also since the 1960's. I will do this by trying to analyse the

role of musical scores and lyrics in the transmission of religious ideology² and development of socio-religious practices. In order to do so, I will first outline the main themes concerning this religious movement, and then elaborate a theoretical approach that will allow me to understand this specific musical practice as a powerful discursive element.

The Philadelphia Church: a gypsy transnational movement

The Philadelphia Evangelical Church (IF) is a part of a wider transnational movement of evangelisation of gypsy communities worldwide. This movement began in the 1950's, when Clément Le Cossec, a non-gypsy pastor from the French Assembly of God began to preach within gypsy families in the northern region of the Bretagne (Williams 1984, 1987, 1993; Le Cossec 2003). This preaching quickly transformed into collective association (through the Mission Évangélique Tsigane Mondiale) and biblical formation of gypsy pastors, and the years that followed witnessed a spectacular expansion of this movement, not only throughout France but also in the neighbouring countries (Baubérot 1993). The movement arrives in Spain in the 1960's, about ten years before its arrival in Portugal (Cantón Delgado 2001, 2003; Llera Blanes 2003; Rodrigues 2004). It is in these two countries where the IF denomination is created. Today, we are talking about a worldwide movement, a product of massive conversions that cannot be fully understood if we don't take in account the social and familial networks that supported the process of proselytism and evangelisation³.

² I am using a broadened and non-political sense of the word "ideology", meaning the set of doctrines, interpretations and ideas concerning the message of the Bible and its meanings in a situated, negotiated perspective.

³ Just to build a general idea, in Portugal and Spain it is suggested that around half of the gypsies attend or are converted to the IF. The few statistical elements available point to around 5 % of the gypsies converted to the Pentecostal faith. In Spain, evangelical sources outline the fact that, out of a universe of over 80 thousand Pentecostal believers, half of them are gypsies (estimated to be around 800 thousand). In Portugal, the ratio is similar (from approximately 40 thousand gypsies, it is said that 3 to 4 thousand are believers), although we have no reliable empirical data that validates it. Altogether, I am talking about a movement with approximately 80 churches in Portugal and over 600 in Spain.

A lot of theories have been suggested in order to explain the success of this movement within gypsy communities. I will outline just two of them, all of them contributing to a global view of the phenomena: from the social praxis inherent in the associative process of the movement, where collective reunion and problem solving (alcoholism, drug addiction, etc.) is promoted, to the emic invocation of a divine plan for a traditionally persecuted and marginalized people.

From a historical point of view, this process is also connected to local (Portuguese and Spanish) developments of religious pluralisation and protestant and Pentecostal growth over the last three, four decades - a growth supported largely by the latest migration trends observed in these countries; the IF, in this sense, is an active participant in local religious activities and transnational networking with non-gypsy Portuguese, Spanish and Latin-American protestant movements (see Llera Blanes 2004). Therefore, as we see, the IF, as a specific religious movement, connects with a wider contemporary trend of globalisation and diversification of Christian renewal, incorporating a transnational "imagined community", as Benedict Anderson puts it (Anderson 1991).

As a Pentecostal charismatic movement, the IF has as main beliefs the second coming of Christ, charismatic gifts (glossolalia, etc.) and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Together with a conservative morality, it ensues a "Christian worldview" through the combination of salvation theories, church/world dichotomies and universalistic approaches. However, these religious based approaches will not undermine or conflict with the situated character of the church as an ethnically biased development. The negotiated and situated character of Pentecostal ideology allows locally significant cultural practices to be incorporated in universalistic approaches such as the Christian faith, and, as we will see in the context here presented, music can play an active role in that incorporation.

The Discursive Power of Music

Before getting into an ethnographic approach of the musical practices in the IF, and the discursive elements within, let me first outline the theoretical framework built to understand them.

I draw here on John Austin's notion of the "social uses of words" and also Bourdieu's theories of social practice and symbolic power (Bourdieu 1989; Austin 1962), theories that are concerned with the practical dimensions of speech and language, and that will influence more or less explicitly in diverse anthropological approaches to religious and ritual phenomena (see Bloch 1989; Cohen 1993; Rappaport 1999; Stromberg 1993; Tambiah 1985). In this sense, I understand the concept of "discourse" as a complex engagement of processes: through the transformation of speech into social practice, discourse can be seen as communication through the sharing and interconnectedness of worldviews, memory and senses; also, it can be seen as a juncture of verbal and non verbal significant elements that is set in motion through contexts and agencies. In other words, it is a mechanism through which people and things are put in connection with each other. Taking these theories into consideration, I build a sense of music as experience and practice, understood as a complex production of significations through content (lyrics, texts), form (rhythm, harmonics) and context (time, space, agency).

In order to understand the specificity and historical background of the facts considered here, I take on Birgit Meyer's notion of "style", meaning a development of a distinctive form of expression in a particular worldview and notion of identity (Meyer 2004), intended for a collective communicational act within social practice. As we will see, musical practice can be understood as a participant in a certain sense of style: a "pentecostalite style" (Meyer 2004) shared and processed in a situated manner by different gypsy communities throughout the IF movement.

But, as a discursive element, music can also be understood as an object of discrepancy and multiple configurations (see Keil 1987), since it engages political, culturally relevant statements with social practices, therefore engaging in a form of knowledge and power (in a Foucaultian sense). As we will see, given the fact that we are talking about an ethnic group (or at least a group that describes itself as one) often collaged with an ethnicised musical style (“gypsy music”) and a certain idea of (unique) musical capacity (Manuel 1989; Sarósi 1978; Spinelli & Suárez 2001; Williams 2002), a whole set of interpretations are set in motion through a dissonant (at least in a commercial, mediatic point of view) practice context such as the gypsy Pentecostal movement. This, as I will try to demonstrate, will promote not only a different understanding of collective identity, but also a new sense of music as an element of discourse.

Music in the Philadelphia Church: a case study

The case study I am about to present starts with Juan Ramón Jiménez, perhaps the most important “gypsy Pentecostal musician” in Spain, whose work is admired not only in this country but also in Portugal and Latin America, where he often presents his musical scores. This makes him a reference for the Portuguese and Spanish IF believers, as a role in terms of a gypsy musician «living in Christ». I take on data gathered in four different levels: the short but profited personal interactions that I have managed to establish with him; the reception of his work among the different IF churches; the information (personal bio, interviews, discography, lyrics) posted on his personal website⁴, available to all who are interested; and finally, the information and experiences gathered throughout my own fieldwork in Lisbon and Madrid.

⁴ <http://juanramonjr.iespana.es> or <http://www.jrjimenez.es.vg>



Juan Ramón y Rocío's year 2000 release: *¡Y Tú Sabes Cuánto!* («And You Know How Much!»)

As Juan Ramón states in his personal bio, he is the son of flamenco musicians, so the guitar was a «part of the house's decoration», and at the age of seven was already taking his first musical steps. He began composing “spiritual songs” at the age of ten, the moment when «the Bible entered his home», thus changing his beliefs and lifestyle. This fact, although seemingly odd at first hand because of his tender age, reflects a frequent pattern among gypsy musicians and believers, both in Portugal and Spain: the important role of familial and social networks in musical transmission (teaching and learning) and in religious transmission and conversion processes (see Llera Blanes 2003). In fact, most of the church *coros* (choirs or praise groups, in charge of the musical execution in the religious cults) are composed by teenagers, most of the times related (among themselves, and with other church members) by kin (see Llera Blanes 2003, 2004). It is from these praise groups that individual artists or groups emerge and develop musical careers in a Christian context, integrating what the church calls the *Ministerio de Alabanza* or “Praise Ministry”: the sharing of biblical principles and faith

through musical practice⁵. It is the case of Juan Ramón, who took on a musical career along with his wife, Rocío.

Also, it hints us on the importance of family relationships in musical learning, not only at a religious level, but also concerning “secular” gypsy music⁶. Ignoring conventional musical education and western transcription and interpretation modes, most gypsies acquire musical knowledge through observation, imitation and practice, thus progressively incorporating specific musical techniques and routines. These techniques and routines, as we will see, are incorporated into a specific musical practice that I label “gypsy Pentecostal music”.

Also, from a social praxis approach, we must not forget that we are talking about a musical practice that depends upon the interconnection between that social life based highly on family networks, professional and religious activity. In this context, excepting cases of professional gypsy musicians later converted to Pentecostalism (but still maintaining their former activities)⁷, most of the musicians are amateurs, and thus are obliged to subalternise their musical practice to their bread-earning activity, and also circumscribe their musical production to a local level (in a both geographical and religious sense).

But let us first return to Juan Ramón’s personal bio. The moment he became a believer⁸, he claims, his musical style also changed from a purely flamenco and *cante jondo* pattern into what he calls a «melodic-flamenco inspired by the *Palabra de Dios* (“the Word of God”)». This is actually a good description of the process of musical change involved in this practice, where

⁵ In this context, the concept of “praise” has a double meaning: a more general sense of “worship” and a more specific sense of “worship through music”.

⁶ This fact, often ignored or understated in different analysis of “gypsy music” (see, for example Spinelli & Suárez 2001; Williams 2002), alerts us on the processes that configure a specificity and uniqueness within gypsy musical practice.

⁷ This is more the case of Spain than Portugal, where there hardly professional musical activity among the gypsies (see Llera Blanes 2005).

⁸ This moment does not necessarily correspond with the age of ten, when he first composed a spiritual song. It is frequent that children and adolescents attend and participate in the religious activities of the church without having formally converted or considering themselves as a believer. Thus, in this context, “sacred” and “profane” musical activities are frequently overlapped and not mutually exclusive.

two main processes occur: a change of content, from the traditional flamenco motifs (see Manuel 1989; Pasqualino 1998; Rios Ruiz 1997; Washabaugh 1996) to a praise-oriented message, dedicated to the extrapolation of biblical passages and sharing of personal narratives; second, a change of style, motivated by the ritual context where it is executed, and by a specific ideology concerning music and its place in the church. Let us take a look into both issues.

Music, text and context: reading between the lyrics

One of the approaches we can establish in order to understand the discursive element of the musical practice is, of course, by its lyrics. As a communicational mode built on the intertwining of verbal (text) and non-verbal (sound) elements, lyrics constitute a relevant path through which we can understand the notions of discourse and style discussed in this presentation. So I take on, once again, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and reproduce one of the lyrics from his latest release, called *Desde el Calvario* or «From the Calvary» (my translation):

Desde el Calvario

*Tú conoces mi entrada y mi salida y me guías en todos mis caminos
He confiado en Ti y grande puerta me ha sido abierta para caminar seguro y confiado
Y lo que para muchos ha sido religión para mí se ha convertido en relación
Con el Dios del universo que me ama, con el Dios del universo que me ama.*

(CORO)

*Si me amas, Tú me amas, le has demostrado que me amas, siendo torpe, malo y débil
Has puesto en mí tu mente, yo sé que me amas
Si me amas, Tú me amas, lo has demostrado que me amas en la Cruz del Calvario
Perdonando mis pecados Yo sé, Yo sé que me amas.*

Cuando estoy caído y derrotado es por mi causa y es porque me miro y veo y veo mil defectos
Me hundo en la miseria y desde el pozo cenagoso yo miro al cielo.
Y aunque me he mirado yo y he visto maldad he visto pecado.
Pero mirando hacia el Calvario yo he visto al Cordero Inmolado que ha quitado el pecado del mundo y en mí se ha reflejado,
Lo he visto allí clavado lo he visto sonriendo, diciéndome "te amo" con sonrisa y ternura
Diciendo Padre amado, todo está ya consumado,
Si te amo, que te amo, desde el Calvario te digo a ti que te amo, y que he resucitado
He tomado a la muerte y la he derrotado.
Si me amas, Tú me amas, lo has demotrado que me amas, desde el Calvario me has mirado
y mencionando mi nombre me has dicho: Yo te amo.

From the Calvary

You know my entrance and exit, and You guide me through all my paths
I trusted You and a great door was opened for me to walk safe and trustful
And what for many was a religion, to me became a relationship
With the God of the Universe that loves me, the God of the Universe that loves me.
(CHORUS)
If You love me, You love me, You showed me that You love me, being I careless, bad and feeble
You put your mind in me, I know that You love me
If You love me, You love me, You showed me that You love me in the Cross of the Calvary
Forgiving my sins, I know, I know that you love me.
When I am fallen and beat it is because of me, and because I look at myself and see a thousand flaws.
I drown in misery, and from the muddy well I look at the sky
And although I looked at myself I saw evil, I saw sin.
But looking at the Calvary I saw the immolated lamb that took sin from the world and is reflected in me,
I saw him nailed there, I saw him smiling, telling me "I love you" with smiling tenderness,
Saying Beloved Father, everything is consummated,
If I love, I love you, from the Calvary I tell you that I love you, and I am reborn.

I took death and defeated it.

If You love me, You love me, You showed me that You love me, from the Cross of the Calvary You looked at me, and mentioning my name You told me: I love you.

This song, as Juan Ramón tells in the booklet of his latest CD, was written in a spontaneous manner, during a daily cult delivered in a IF church in the northern Spanish city of Burgos, where he was visiting. As he states, without any previous preparation, the song came out from him through “divine inspiration”⁹. The contents of these lyrics illustrate a number of elements that are central in the spiritual and philosophical worldview promoted within the IF: first, the “passion of Christ” theme, inspired by his crucifixion in the Calvary, interpreted as Christ’s sacrifice for the love of his people (see, for example Fp 2: 8 or Mat 27). This theme, often remembered in the IF sermons, exemplifies the kind of understandings promoted concerning the relationship between believer and the divine. In this sense, the use of a first hand account of the direct relationship stated above, exemplifies the dialectical, non-mediated, accessible and simultaneously transformative experience of the divine (The Holy Spirit) according to Pentecostal theology. Participating in what Peter Stromberg calls a “canonical language” (1993: 3), the set of meanings and symbols associated with a certain worldview (Evangelical Christianity), these themes offer codifications for interpretations and explanations managed by the believers according to their own life histories. In this sense, the song represents a way of labeling and giving coherence to the author’s experiences, in a manner that is meant to be understood and shared within the community.

⁹ I translate his comments on this song, taken from the liner notes of the CD: « I was in the city of Burgos, in the Philadelphia Church, with its pastor, José. Delivering a special cult, it was about midnight, and taking my guitar, I began singing by inspiration, and the verses that came out of me were a message of love towards my life and the brothers that listened to me. The congregation thought it was one of my latest releases, and when I finished singing it, I said to myself: “what a pity, I lost this song because I wasn’t able to record it”. But, to my surprise, I noticed far back a red light from what could be a video camera. I quickly ran from the pulpit towards the brother, telling him that what I had just sang was an inspired song, and asked him if he could please make me a copy, so I could include it in this CD that we are now listening. I give thanks to that brother from Burgos for recording the song that night. The song talks about the love that Christ has for us, even when we see ourselves as foolish, frail and weak. He loves us just the way we are; he loves us: From the Calvary»

These personal and identitary configurations of doctrine are based on two specific discourses concerning musical practice: first, its self-justification through “The Book”, that is, the importance of “praise” or “musical praise” is measured by the fact that, for example, the largest book of the Bible is precisely the Book of Psalms. In other words, it is understood in the context of the Pentecostal interpretation of the Bible as a grounding of a worldview. The second discourse is supported by the distinction between “music for God” and “music for the world”, based on the salvation theory where only he who is converted and “living in Christ” will be anointed with God’s grace and therefore be able to “sing for God”. In this sense, sacred music is an expression of grace.

But these lyrics, when put in context, can actually tell us more than what is explicit in its text. By “putting in context” I mean precisely the process of considering the space, time and persons involved in their transmission (Austin’s *illocutionary acts* – Austin 1962, Tambiah 1985), thus affecting their understanding. I am thinking of two main contexts where lyrics such as these are transmitted and shared: first, the actual record (be it cassette or compact disc) where they are crystallized; second, the ritual cults and events where these songs are interpreted.

If in the discographic media the lyrics are mainly inspired in biblical exegesis, metaphor and analogy, as well as the transmission of personal religious experiences, in ritual cults they are used not only to ascertain certain ideological principals managed by the pastor in his preaching (see Llera Blanes 2004b), but also as a vehicle of religious experience and practice. As I mentioned, the lyrics reproduced above were a result of what its author called “inspiration”, meaning an unruly, unexpected inspiration motivated by divine action in a collective, emotionally intense faith-based moment. Inscribed in a ritual practice based on spirituality and intense emotion, it is in itself a creative outcome from within, thus producing a “musical testimony” for collective understanding. One can perceive this by observing the somewhat improvised character of musical practice within the IF’s ritual

cults: there are no pre-determined set-lists, but an *in situ* negotiation of what is to be played and in which terms. Also, throughout my fieldwork, I have witnessed more than one description of what I call “musical visions” or narratives of charismatic experiences (vision, prophecy) concerning musical praise. Juan Ramón Jiménez’s “From the Calvary” is but one example.

On the other hand, the musical recording, through which lyrics are transmitted and shared, can be understood as “constitutive behavior” (see Stromberg 1993) or the result of communication as “action”: a diffusion of meaning in a musical media, a stylized promotion of worldviews through the production of musical objects. It is, as we have seen, in constant dialogue with religious ritual practice: altogether, these lyrics compose a universe of narratives, conceptualizations and general meanings that are shared with the believers both in the churches and in their homes. In this context, it is important to remember that these general meanings are religious-based, and therefore not ethnic-based: “gypsy themes” are left out from the lyrics.

I have not yet mentioned the mechanisms through which gypsy Pentecostal artists record and distribute their own editions: far from establishing commercial presentation and distribution channels through stores, showcases and such, most artists record with their own personal means or with the aid of their churches and supporters¹⁰; once recorded, their album is promoted and sold among the different churches that they visit, in an informal and non intermediated matter. In this sense, believers and other musicians have an opportunity to appreciate in first hand the new musical scores, to join them to their personal discographic collections and to eventually incorporate them in their local musical repertoires. These repertoires are a product of a situated negotiation of the personal tastes of local choir musicians and believers into the praxis of the local religious cults,

¹⁰ Juan Ramón and Rocío are, in this sense, an exception, being virtually the only ones that have a commercial registration and distribution of their records, given their international success in this field.

where they are interpreted according to the different moments of preaching, praying, and celebrating that compose the daily cult (see Llera Blanes 2004b)¹¹. In this context, some lyrics develop, so to say, a history of their own, traveling from church to church and suffering constant adaptation and “versioning” according to the musicians involved. The songs are, in this sense, submitted to a process of adaptation and contextualisation into live, religious action. So, besides the textual processes and modes of consumption observed, other consequences are developed through this musical practice: the change of style that occurs in a song that is transported from the discographic media to the ritual context.



Church choir. Madrid, February 2005

¹¹ Taking this into consideration, the musical repertoires are flexible and dynamic, since they are continuously changing according to various factors: local musical composition, new discographic editions, etc., and also musical taste, capacity and technical conditions, thus conforming a variable group of songs from which the choirs build the musical element in a daily basis.

Musical style and meaning

The other dimension involved in the understanding of musical practice as discourse has to do with musical style and composition. At the beginning of this presentation, I mentioned the (sometimes bitter) debate concerning the development of CCM in contemporary charismatic Christianity. Well, being the IF a relatively new religious movement (40 years of existence), when understood in comparison with other protestant and Pentecostal movements in Portugal and Spain¹², and also sourcing from a wider transnational Pentecostal gypsy movement rooted in the 1950's, it subscribes "modern" practices and modes of expression in terms of musical practice¹³. In this sense, the musical references involved are those that derive from the intertwining of the musical *habitus* or set of tastes, techniques and styles acquired through learning and sharing, and also musical choice, drawn from their ideological options. So, if the existence and "essence" of CCM is not discussed within the IF as a problematic issue (on the contrary, it is a positive reference), this does not mean that a certain ideology of music is not managed.

Juan Ramón states in an interview posted on his website, concerning his musical talent: *«I believe the precious gift of musical "ear" and rhythmical sense was given, among others, to us gypsies. Somehow, I also know at the feet of the Lord, that natural talent is transformed into a spiritual gift and a weapon to proclaim His Majesty to all nations»* (my translation). This statement, which reflects the understanding of music as an object of power (in a foucaultian sense), exemplifies the manner through which an ethnicized discourse concerning musical practice is transformed into a simultaneously religious and ethnic

¹² The earliest records of a local protestant activity in Spain and Portugal go back to the 19th century for both countries, mainly due to an active proselytism developed by British and American Baptist and Methodist missions. The Pentecostal and evangelical surge knows a relevant growth in the beginning of the 20th century, but, as I mentioned earlier, it is starting in the 60s when the contemporary Pentecostal develops at a wider scale (Peixoto 1999; Santos 2001).

¹³ We must not forget, though, that the musical practice within the IF has its own history, deriving from acoustic modes (guitar, clapping, percussion, voice) to electronic and digital processes, through amplification and new instrumentation (synthesizer, drum kits, etc.). Also, as I will note later on, neither can we ignore the idea of variability and dynamics that characterizes this musical practice, that is highly dependent on heterogeneous human, financial and technical resources available on each church.

discourse. Incorporating an empowered and dignifying discourse on musical capacity (the concept of “gypsy music”), it asserts a doctrinal explanation and simultaneously a moral justification of an historic process (the development of a gypsy Pentecostal movement).

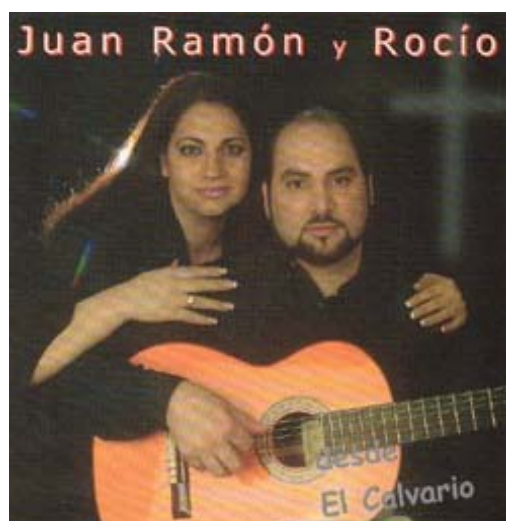
The practical outcome of such discourse is, as a Portuguese pastor put it to me, the concern of «making music for God, but also music that can be understood by the gypsies». This notion of understanding includes communicating (sharing of meaning), but also enjoying, physically and mentally accepting the musical project. In this sense, we cannot ignore that this musical practice is also object of critical appreciation, thus offering discrepant possibilities. As a means of discourse, musical practice is also subject to musical taste and ideological configurations, thus able to promote polemics and debate such as the one described earlier, concerning the development of CCM. This can be understood through two perspectives. The first perspective is that in this context (as in general), listening to music implies critical examination and choice through personal preferences and taste, and therefore promotes critical differentiations between artists, projects and scores. In this sense, one can point out five critical distinctions concerning musical style that arise from the gypsies’ own discourses:

- 1) *Flamenco vs. Pop-Rock*: a distinction between scores than conserve mainstream flamenco and rumba patterns and songs that are inscribed in “western” pop-rock genres.
- 2) *Traditional vs. Modern*: a differentiation between older musical scores of the IF (formerly performed *a capella*, with *palmeo* or clapping) and newer songs, with electric and digital instrumentation.
- 3) *Local vs. Global*: a discernment between the musical production of the local churches and other scores taken from other artists, churches or elsewhere.

4) *Rejoicing vs. Prayer*: a distinction between moods pretended for songs, from a ballad-like motif, intended for prayer and introspection, to happier frames of mind.

5) *Soloist songs vs. Choir songs*: a differentiation concerning musical style and singing technique composition.

The second perspective has to do with the creative options of the artists in the context of producing musical projects. Earlier on I mentioned the differences in style concerning musical editions, on the one hand, and live, ritual interpretation of musical scores on the other. This stylistic difference has to do not only with context and media, but also with the ideological background pertaining its production. As a cultural object destined for a specific publicisation, it implies a critical conscience on behalf of their producers. The musical CD is, in this sense, perceived as a representation of a certain sense of musical practice as a ministry of faith, and must therefore respond to a certain understanding of a “Christian way of making music”. This is obvious, not only in the textual dimension described above, but also in other elements such as musical composition, engineering and production and even artwork (see figures in these pages).



Juan Ramón y Rocío's latest release (2004): *Desde el Calvario* («From the Calvary»).

An attentive audition of the latest CDs recorded by gypsy Pentecostal musicians in Madrid and Lisbon, for example, will show us how the artists involved are, in an experimental manner, looking for new sonorities that are not necessarily connected to a “gypsy way of making music”: I am talking about Latin rhythms, Funk, Pop, etc., musical styles that are progressively popularized within gypsy Pentecostal communities through the consumption of international CCM artists such as Marcos Witt, Marcos Vidal, Cassiane, Jaci Velázquez, etc. I have argued elsewhere that, besides accounting personal creativity and musical progression, this process is partly due to specific technological issues (for example, the use of the synthesizer as a performing and composing instrument) and also to the participation of the IF, as a religious organization, in specific cultural and mediatic contexts, thus accessing a transnational Christian cultural worldview (see Llera Blanes 2004). This participation, although still, to some extent, marginal in terms of general cultural production and circulation, is growing and dynamic, largely due to the intensive musical production and performance established by the IF musicians and groups.

In this sense, this process illustrates us on the increasing “political consciousness” of musical practice within the IF, as a public, “diffusionable” item rooted in locally significant practices. Consequently, as a representative (through his public visibility) of a specific group and identity configuration, the gypsy Pentecostal musician is progressively seen as a hypothetical role model for its own community, thus engaging in discursive mode of music-making.

To exemplify this, we take our final turn to Juan Ramón Jiménez. If his career success is unquestionable, his condition as an artist is not so. In a late conversation I maintained with him, he pointed out some episodes of misunderstandings with some organization directors concerning his activity within non-gypsy media. These episodes cost him some years of distancing with the movement, but lately his position has been recognized and he is back

into the church. This does not mean that he is a consensual figure within the believers. Some question if his success has not made him vain and turned him away from the Christian essence...

Conclusion: discourse, ideology and practice

In this presentation I have tried to discuss elements that exemplify the way through which musical practice and consumption can incorporate ideology and practice in a context of discourse production where certain meanings are set in motion towards a collective identity understanding.

As I have tried to demonstrate, the notion of music as a complex cultural practice that incorporates textual, contextual and resonant elements helps us understand how: first, a specific and dynamic community of practices such as the gypsy Pentecostal believers builds a sense of music that, although dissonant from wider perceptions concerning their own musical practices, is coherent within their own worldviews; second, how that sense is promoted towards an understanding of the power of that music in public identity negotiation; third, how in religious contexts music is more than a decorative or performative element, but is incorporated in its ritual praxis and doctrinal configurations; and finally, how this understanding perhaps unwillingly promotes discrepant views and debates concerning the essence of music.

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Internet Resources

- Juan Ramón Jiménez Official Website (<http://juanramonjr.iespana.es> or <http://www.jrjimenez.es.vg>)