Examensarbete
Kandidat
2009

Lena Swanberg

The Mystical Music

A minor field study in Recife and Olinda

Handledare: Ragnhild Sjögren

Musikerprogram, konstnärlig kandidat examen, profil Jazz

Institutionen för jazz

Kungl. Musikhögskolan i Stockholm

Abstract

This essay aims to describe a minor field study carried out by me in Recife and Olinda, two cities located in the state Pernambuco, in North-Eastern Brazil, during October to December 2008, and the process I came to experience through it. It also seeks to tell about the people I met and the impressions they made on me. I went to look for new perspectives on music, and to increase my feeling on what it can be considered as.

In the **Introduction** the reader is introduced to aspects on music and its different functions.

In the **Background** I describe my history and background as a musician and student and what led me towards doing this study.

In **Aim** and **Strategies** I explain the purpose of the study and what actions I took in preparing it.

The episodes **Sítio Novo** and **Recife and Olinda** tell about the environment in which the field study took place.

In the episodes **Candomblé** and **Meeting with Candomblé** I explain the basic elements of the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé and my experiences when first getting involved in it.

The parts **The Lessons** and **Letters and Meetings** highlight my process when learning rhythms and dance in Afro-Brazilian tradition, and tell of my meting with persons with different connections to Candomblé, our conversations, and my own reflections from these meetings.

The episodes **Coming back**, **Preparing the Show**, **The Songs** and **The Concert** tell about how I got back to my own culture and carried through the practical part of this final exam, a concert with Brazilian music and my own compositions.

In the **Conclusion** I discuss some perspectives regarding contradictions in the Candomblé society and what a life inside Candomblé might contain, and also what I have learned from this study.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements……3

Introduction……4

Background……5

Aim……9

Strategies……9

Sítio Novo……10

Recife and Olinda……12

Candomblé……...……....13

Meeting with Candomblé……15

The Lessons……..17

Letters and Meetings……20

Coming Back……25

Preparing the Show……..25

The Songs……26

The Concert……..29

Conclusion……30

References……31

Dictionary……32

Tracks on the attached CDs……..34

Acknowledgements

I want to thank my friend and teacher Ana Paula Guedes de Oliveira and her family. Ana Paula is the major single reason for all that I got to experience and learn during this field study. She has been a fantastic friend, guide and teacher.

I also want to thank Iraquitan Gomes da Silva for teaching me about the Candomblé rhythms and inviting me into his home, and Fábio Gomes for sharing his aspects, and knowledge in our conversations. Further I send my greatest thankfulness to all other people in Recife and Olinda who hosted me and opened their homes and hospitality to me.

Thank you Mhano da Silva, I am so thankful that you helped me with contacts in Recife.

I want to thank SIDA and the Minor Filed Studies scholarship. Without this scholarship I would not have done this journey.

I want to thank the musicians Karin Hammar, Hanna Ekström, Martin Östholm, Andreas Ekstedt, Mattias Fjellström and Björn Sima for contributing on my final exam show, and giving from themselves and their creativity at all times.

I want to thank Povel Ohlsson for the help with recording the concert. I want to thank the Glenn Miller Café for hosting it.

I want to thank all teachers on The Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, and especially the Jazz (former Afro-American) institution. Thank you Ragnhild Sjögren, Gun-Britt Gustafsson and Irene Sjögren and my mentor Sven Berggren, for support and guidance. Special thanks to Marie Bergman, who's support have been of great value and inspiration to me throughout my process as a composer and artist. Thank you Johan Falk at the international office at the Royal Academy of Music for administrating the Minor Field Studies project.

I also want to thank everybody who has supported me during preparation for, carrying through, and coming home from this journey. My family and friends!!

I want to thank my mother for support at all times.

Introduction

"The mystery existing here, it smoulders from the ground, I carry it inside me and it comes out in the music." Says percussionist Nana Vasconcelos, interviewed by Åsa da Silva Veghed in her book "Brazilian Music" (2007). He talks about his residence Pernambuco in North-Eastern Brazil and its music derived from the religion Candomblé, originating from Africa. So maybe music and mystery can be considered as an alliance? We find music at all times: at the mall, in church, at school, in the nightclub, on the street, on the radio, on television, at the gym ... It takes place in ritual, formal, traditional and ceremonial contexts. It breaks barriers, encourages and eases despairing grief. The music continues whereas physic facts come to ends and the mystery begins when the physics reach their complex perfection and it is no longer for a human to see the connection.

Throughout a major part of my life, I have trained myself in music. I have learned vocal technique, harmony, arrangement, and a variety of texts and melodies. I have developed my composing and my hearing and I have worked with improvisation and interpretation. By all means my approach to music has been strongly featured by my intellect. Coming out of this, it became interesting for me to explore other parts. Parts where the music takes place without being in the matter for criticism and assessment. During this bachelor exam work project I wanted to search music that occurred far from my home culture, to discover it in a foreign environment and perhaps find a connection with my own musical background in yet unknown aspects. In this essay I hope to describe the process I went through and the environment I experienced.

Our relationship with music is coloured by its historical function. The institution where I have studied at the Royal College of Music is previously known as the "Afro-American Institution." A discussion took place during some time indicating that the name was misleading. Misleading perhaps in the sense that the word "Afro" today is related to forms of the genre which are closer to the origin than what is heard from the practice rooms at the school, but right in sense of this actual origin. And so the institution's name was changed to "Jazz". *Afro-American, Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian* are broad concepts that refer to the origin from Africa. The slave trade spread African music to the western continents, North and South America, for centuries. By cultural meetings and mixtures, today's established music emerged. I have somewhat taken an education in the musical genre derived from Africa, and somewhere in past history we find the context that I came to experience in Brazil. Music and culture walks on paths of detours and shortcuts. I have chosen to study a part of for me previously unknown culture to gain new perspectives on my own music and the meaning of music. Its natural fundament remains, and seems not to be disturbed. The explanation for this perhaps lies in what was quoted initially. Music or "the language of emotions", which according to the British archaeologist and paleontologist Steven Mithen was developed by Neanderthals as a way of communication already before speech, connects us with mystery and gives us opportunity to let it out. ("The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind and Body") (Ambjörnsson, 2009)

Background

I grew up following my two elder sisters in almost everything they did. If they danced folk dance, I did too. If they went scouting, I did too. If they played the violin, I did too. And so it was that my relation with music started early in ways of listening to violin practice and classical music tapes in the car every hour spent in it on the way to grandma's. I myself started playing at the age of six. The Suzuki method was the pedagogic frame and that meant learning the tunes by ear and imitating the teacher playing. It was in my opinion a good way of developing your sense for music by focusing on what you actually hear to obtain a wider range of perception. I continued learning music and theories, playing in orchestras and folk music groups.

Reaching the age of twelve I began to wonder what I really liked and disliked. I joined the children's local theatre group and a choir. I was longing for a place on stage. I had an urge to sing and perform. For just the same I felt a little stain of shame – going for the limelight at all times. But on the stage it is ok to claim attention so this was my way of legalising that urge. All chances given to me, I took. I started singing and acting and eventually was accepted at the esthetical programme in the Swedish senior high school. It was at this time I found my mothers jazz records with Billie Holliday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Lena Horne among others. My mother introduced me to all the tunes that she'd listened to as a young student and I found music I came to love. I fell for the harmonies beautifully following the lyrics, giving nuance to the expressions, and the rhythm keeping a balance and creating a room to move freely in. This music offered me ways to use my creativity, and to express myself through it. Of course I didn't see all this at the time being. I just got into it because it was fun. I listened to all kind of singers such as Frank Sinatra, Cassandra Wilson and Dianne Reeves. Swedish jazz vocalists were also a great inspiration to me. Rigmor Gustafsson, Marie Bergman, Louise Hoffsten and Jeanette Lindström among others.

Swedish singer Monica Zetterlund presented a lot of songs for me on her recordings with Bill Evans. On "The Lost Tapes 1958" recorded in New York there was one called "There'll Be Another Spring" and forty years from that recording, there I was, playing it over and over again during a whole spring, having my first crush. I think it served as a cure for all questions I had as a teenager as well as a cure for lost love. "Don't cry, there'll be another spring" gave me hope when I felt sad and lonely.

When learning how to sing, imitating remained my main strategy. I joined the big band in my music school and a latin music group where I sang samba and salsa in Portuguese and Spanish. Still not knowing exactly what I sang, I sounded fairly aware just imitating the sound of the lyrics. I liked the music's character and put as much interpretation to it as I could. People told me that I was good. I remember receiving this praise thankfully but I don't think I ever gave it to myself.

As I graduated from senior high school I didn't have a good idea of what to study next, in order to get a "real" job. I was drawn to singing so I applied to a folk high-school with singing as my main object. Still I was very shy and aware of that the other students came from the whole country and that there would be a higher level than I had experienced before. I was accepted to a school in Lunnevad and spent two years

there figuring out if I was good or bad. Was I worthy the place given to me or not? Today I see that analysing this was a huge waste of energy, but it seems that in my process I could not escape it. I had a lot of doubts and was not sure if I was in the right place. I was focusing on what I needed to accomplish for the school instead of looking on what this education could offer me.

As the second year began I gathered my self-confidence and prepared myself for applying to college. I said to myself to forget about my doubts and for a few months just do one thing: try to get as good as you can at singing jazz. So I went to the auditions and did my thing. I had made myself a lot of routines to keep focused. Before the actual auditions I used to listen to Miles Davis version on Stella By Starlight in my Walkman to escape the stress and competition and just get a feeling for music. Hearing this reminded me that making music was the main purpose and if I forgot that for just one second I would most likely loose my chances. Coming out from the dentist one afternoon during Easter holiday I received a call from a friend informing me that I had been accepted out of sixty singers applying, to start studying at the jazz musician programme at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. I was so surprised!

What was I doing learning a lot of jazz theory and comparing myself to other? Stockholm was not that new to me, I had visited my sisters and my father there several times. But now I was living there, trying to make friends and find a role where I could fit in. I found myself ok, but I was still scared of not being good enough. I remembered my sister, who had just finished four years at the same college playing the violin, told me “Don’t think about what you have to attain on this school, think about what you want to get out of it!” Maybe it was years of self-demands and insecurity that made me depressed. Maybe it was just how the physical substances wander sometimes. I saw that I was rather destroying my love for music than making it grow. I used medication on my depression and that made it even harder to get a grip on what was wrong. My first lesson for teacher and artist Marie Bergman became my final call. After listening to me singing she asked me “What is it that you want, really?” So I had to figure this one out before I could move on. I decided to take a year off from my studies. This was after I had completed two years at the RCM, and before that, had 14 years of education in elementary school, high school and folk high-school. I was 22 years old and it struck me that I had spent a major part of my life studying, but not daring to look through my aims. I was reaching to change my perspectives.

During my study-free year I worked in a store, selling construction material, and sang in hotel bars, just to earn a living. I left my demands on becoming anything greater than I already was, as to say I cooled down and stopped worrying. This did not mean that I got less good at singing. Quite the opposite I think it made me stronger and more relaxed. I did what I liked and I started to write music. I continued working with Marie Bergman reading a book by Julia Cameron called The Artist’s Way. This book gave me concrete practises on how to increase my creativity and letting the bad ghosts of right and wrong disappear. I found it very useful and it helped me through my depression along with therapy and eventually giving up on medication.

When focusing on what to find if you step into your artistic room, you gain the true joy of creating. When stepping into it, you become wider in all senses. I formed a

band and called it Across Late, two words pointing at what happens after the condition too late. In some ways it shares the essence of the phrase “there’ll be another spring”. I wrote music and sang it. I started to be proud of my voice and let it find its character without editing too much. If it was sore I let it be sore, if it was weak I let it be weak, if it was eager I let it be eager. There is no other way than making friends with your obstacles and your lacks and being proud of all that you are if you want to own your voice. It is very physically and mentally connected and I enjoyed feeling more comfortable after my progress focusing on creativity.

Another thing that I wanted to dig into was how my body interacted rhythmically with the music I was performing. I had often found myself a little uncomfortable clapping and stamping and I wished that I could feel more relaxed. It was almost like my body was disconnected to my head when I sang. The year that I returned to college, the autumn 2006, I took a course that included a three weeks field study in The Gambia. We learned about or rather experienced the Gambian music tradition and above all about the Gambian culture. This was a door opened for me to strengthen the rhythmic perception in my body. I was struck by the close to earth society that existed in Africa, so far from my life of e-mail, instant communication and thorough scheduling of weekdays. I saw so much that I missed in my everyday life. Things I had lost running around trying to be great. The women’s voices were so powerful and had quite another sound than all the singing I had heard in my own culture. I wondered what made it different and if existing, what it had in common with my voice. The ways of expression and attitude to music of the Gambian people gave me a lot to think about and reconsider. My return to Stockholm was a cultural chock that lasted for months. The whole western commercial system and the society’s focus on time keeping in general made me disillusioned. I was determined to return to The Gambia at any arrangement. I found the Minor Field Studies program at SIDA, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and handed in my application to the international office at my college. The plan was to spend eight weeks in The Gambia studying singing and interviewing singers about their situation, a study that I still hope to carry through in the future. However, before receiving the decision from SIDA and the Swedish State International Program Office I went on another journey that would change many things for me.

It was the spring of 2007. With summer approaching, I once again felt lost in my aims. I tried to continue working with my music and the band Across Late, and had a few gigs coming up, but besides this I remember still feeling strongly affected by the journey to The Gambia. It was hard for me to get back to the mental condition of concrete creating and practical exercise on creativity that I had been working with before the travel. One day I had lunch with a friend and guitarist who had just finished his studies at the music college in Gothenburg. I said “congratulations to your graduation” and we talked about his after-educational plans. I was sitting there in my long grown dirty rastas going on about how much food there is on a Chinese buffet compared to what you get to eat if you by chance are born in The Gambia. He saw my face in despair. “I still feel that I live a life that lack so much”, I continued. “There’s no room for humanity and our true nature here!” He laughed with me on the fact that I was so unhappy and looked so displeased with everything. “You are miserable!” he said, “Come with me to Brazil.” “Yes” became my simple answer on this request.

Travelling to Brazil and Rio de Janeiro meant throwing myself out in a place I didn't know much about except that I was terrified of going there. I was almost certain that it would kill me, considering the high crime rates. My blond hair would make me an easy target, that much I could imagine. Still like many others I had a good feeling about the country - great beaches, sunny weather, sweet fruits and happy people, and above all great music. I travelled with my friend David and another friend, Matilda, who came to join us as it turned out that she had planned an identical journey. We stayed in a small apartment on the corner of Avenida Atlantica, the street following Copacabana beach from Ipanema to Leme. We went to samba schools and good concerts and most of all we experienced the music having a blast on the beach, going to clubs in the night and staying out on the streets during preparations for the yearly Carnival in February, which literally meant partying. We stayed a couple of weeks in Salvador during the actual Carnival and there I came to see a strong connection with the West African music culture. During the hundreds of years of slave trade, a lot of cultural features came along with the African people brought to Americas continent. Traces from this epoch remain today as in terms of both racial discrimination and cultural richness.

Returning from Brazil I was a new person. I had seen so many people that had so little money but still lived life enjoying every minute. I had also seen a lot of people that suffered a lot but never stopped struggling. It seemed to me that the melancholic melodies combined with the eager energy of the rhythms I heard in the Brazilian music originally had been, and still was, a help to make it through hard times and suffering. Music has a function of giving people strength and I saw this in the Gambia and in Brazil as much as I have experienced it myself many times. I think it struck me as interesting because it is so universal. The power of music shows in so many ways as you spend time in its different fields of application. I felt that this was enriching my perspectives on music and that I could gain a lot artistically by investigating it further.

During my stay in Brazil I started learning Portuguese as a result of a love. This opened up a new territory for my field study, so when I finally got my application granted from SIDA and received the scholarship, I was looking to change the studies' object and location. I wanted to explore the rhythm maracatú in Recife. As I now managed to communicate in Portuguese I was permitted to implement the swap. During my stay in Rio and Salvador I had met with several people telling me about Pernambuco, a state located on the coast of North-Eastern Brazil. They talked about its rich music culture with genres as *coco, maracatu, afoxé, samba and forró*. Some were familiar to me and some totally unknown. The marvellous carnival that takes place in the cities Recife and Olinda was also a frequent subject. How ever my first time in Brazil had been too short to go there. So now I started to plan for a two months field study in Recife.

Aim

The aim of this study was to gain new perspectives on music and to search a wider base for what I want to express through it. By staying in a foreign culture environment and increasing my views on what music can be considered as, I wanted to work on my profile as an artist within these new frameworks in order to take it further. My hope was also to develop my sense for rhythm both physically and in my composing. Along with this somewhat abstract purpose I wanted to put together a concert when I returned, as a final part of the process, where I presented material that I had collected on my journey along with my own compositions. I wanted to discover if and how my own music could come to develop when performing it after these two months of filed study. What would happen with my music after a journey like this? What would happen with me?

Strategies

I prepared my journey by contacting persons that I knew had connections to the field in any way. Some Brazilian people I knew of in Stockholm and some musicians that had been there before. I also took part of SIDAs three-day course preparing students for Minor Field Studies. They talked about what to expect when visiting development countries and we learned about SIDAs work and organisation and practical methods when carrying out a study. The scholarship aims to promote students' engagement in development countries that are still suffering from poverty and unsafe conditions, and to make connections and increase the knowledge about the situation for the people living in those countries. My hope is that I can contribute to this in the future and pass forward what I have learned in any given opportunity. Though as a musician it is not granted that you will come to work actively with political motives in development processes, I think that through music as much as in anything you can create meetings providing a greater sense of understanding and strengthen relations. I look on it as positively contributing in political processes as well as in people's every day struggle towards a better life.

My outlook was to focus specifically on the rhythm called maracatú and the people attending the percussion school Corpos Percussivos in Recife. Maracatú is rhythms played on agogô (two or three cow-bells in different sizes, connected to each other) alfaia (big base-drum) and xequerê or abé (calabash fruit with a net of pearls around it, sounding unbelievable loud when shaken). As expected things turned out unexpected… Yes, I did play maracatú at the percussion school, but furthermore I came to experience music in contexts I never experienced before. All this has become very valuable in my search for new musical breeding ground. The meetings with people and environment in Recife and Olinda has for me been an inner travel as well as a journey in the world.

Sítio Novo

In order to investigate part of the expression *The Rhythmic Body*, I wanted to include some dance classes in my study. Through a Brazilian friend in Stockholm I came in contact with Ana Paula Guedes de Oliveira, singer and dancer in Recife. I called her to ask if she would consider me as a student during October to December and she accepted. Then she asked me where I was planning to stay during my time visiting. As I didn't know quite yet, she continued by offering me to stay in her home. It was the most of hospitality that I have ever experienced I think. We had talked on the phone for about three minutes, but never met. And just like that I was invited.

It wasn't until I arrived a couple of months later at the airport in Recife that I came to think that I didn't know anything about what she looked like, how we would actually find each other on the airport, get along, and so forth. So I called her from the airport and she said that her sister was picking me up. After some investigating we found each other and took a taxi to Sítio Novo, the neighbourhood where they lived.

Ana Paula's mother, grandmother, and two sisters and one brother all lived in the neighbourhood with their families. Ana Paula's apartment was one out of four in a house on the backyard of another, Landlord Betty's house. Next to Betty's house there was a farm. The roads in the block were only soil, no asphalt, with big gaps and cracks in them. The taxi driver, who was a friend of Ana, told me later that not even all taxis agree on driving in this part of Recife, due to the high crime rates and also the bad condition of the roads especially during rain season. Ana Paula's apartment was on the ground floor and had three rooms. One living room witch you stepped into right from the backyard, it was connected to the kitchen, one bigger bedroom were Ana slept and one smaller were her two children slept. I was offered the kids room for myself as Ana's little daughter 6 years old, went to sleep in Ana's room, and her son, 13 years old slept on a mattress on the living room floor during my stay. I said that I could take the mattress, but with out approval, so I gratefully accommodated in the small bedroom. There was a little lock on the out door on the house but no key. Later we picked up the key at Ana's grandmother's place and started to lock the door as we went out. Ana Paulas mother said: "People are very expert here", referring to the risk of thieves now that I, with my big suitcase and blond hair, was drawing attention to the house. Out onto the street there was a metal gate. It was always locked during night. Behind the kitchen there was a toilet and a shower. Sometimes the water finished and it was always cold water only. Or un-heated that's to say. It tasted of chemicals and by the students at the maracatú school I was given the advice not to drink it. When I told them I was drinking the water, as Ana Paula and all her family did, they said, "No, it is very dangerous!" So I started to buy water on bottle when I could. This dangerous water must be as bad for any one as me but for Ana Paula and many others the economic situation did not admit on illuminating that risk. There were no glass windows in the house, only open windows. The heat was kept out with the help of electric fans. A bit of plastic were put over the windows to prevent most of the water from getting in when raining, and the flying ants that usually accompanied that kind of weather.

Sítio Novo was a village with all kinds of facilities you may need for an every day living. There was a pharmacy, a super-market and some other stores, a kinder garden and a gym, a pet shop and some bakeries. Also a place to use internet and a market-place where you could by all kinds of fruits and herbs and technical articles. The neighbourhood was just on the border between the cities Recife and Olinda, you walked over the main road passing the centre and in the same you were in another township. The at times immense traffic, crowding the road, consisted of busses, cars, motorcycles, trucks, horses, taxis, bicycles and dogs. It took me a while to figure out a strategy for crossing the street. You had to simply believe in yourself and be very "ligada" – tuned on, to succeed. "When you finally make the decision to cross, you go!" I learned from the best, the local citizens.

Recife and Olinda

The state Pernambuco is located on the eastern tip of north Brazil. Of its population of about 8,5 million habitants, about 1,5 million people live in the city of Recife, and 400 000 in Olinda. (The census 2007 carried out by IBGE, Intituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatica) The cities were built during Portuguese and Dutch colonization. Year 1534 the Portuguese arrived and took control over the area until year1630 when the Dutch occupied Olinda and after that started to develop Recife into a major trade industry. Dutch architects, artists and engineers modernized the city and the harbour continued growing. The major commodities were sugar canes, slaves and cotton. Until today the industry is important for Recife with its export of chemicals, fabrics and food. The tourist and medical industry is also important to the city. Where there earlier were harbours for incoming slave ships there are now huge hotels with luxury and welfare along the white beaches. The climate is warm and humid. The sun shines most of the time, as the rains tend to pass quickly though sometimes they can be more intense during April to September. Side by side with this luxury, there are people living on the streets. Children walking bare feet on the hot asphalt, taking a free ride hanging on to the back of the bus in alarming rush hour traffic. In between these contradictions there are a bunch of people living their lives as in any big city. Traces from the colonization are found ethnically, in the architecture of churches, buildings and infra structure and also in that the official language is Portuguese. The cultural mix in the area is massive. The carnival differs from the one in Rio de Janeiro with its major focus on samba. In Recife and Olinda the music is *frevo, maracatú, afoxé pagode, brega, coco and forró*. Though the intense days of the carnival pass quickly the cities are characterized through out the entire year by lots of free concerts and cultural arrangements. There are manifestations for afro-religious rights and open repetitions and preparations for the next coming carnival. Dance, music and feast are part of the everyday life with big impact on the society.

Candomblé

Also religiosity has a prominent role in the everyday life for a majority of the people in Recife, and in Brazil. The majority of the population are Roman Catholics. The census from year 2000 carried out by IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística) presents the following result regarding religious belonging of the people in Brazil (in %):

Roman-catholic	73,6
Evangelists	15,4
Spiritualists	1,3
Umbanda and Candomblé	0,3
Other religions	1,8
Without religious belonging	7,4

Although it is only a minority of the people who are initiated in Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé, Macumba and Umbanda the mystical essence around these religions makes a big impression on the society. Candomblé is considered to be the general name for them. The religion has its roots in Togo, Benin and Nigeria and the Yórubà people. The language used in ceremonies and songs is also called Yórubà. It is spoken by about 22 million people in the south west of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Great Britain, Brazil and the USA today. (Ager, 1998)

What came to be a major part of my field for observation is the Candomblé rituals and feast that I visited and took part in with Ana Paula. She introduced me to her Casa de Candomblé (House of Candomblé), and the people there, witch she considered to be as close to her as her own family. These occasions made a great impression on me with the significant consistence of rhythm and singing in the ceremonies. I met and spoke with people there, who shared their thoughts about their religion and the music connected to it.

Anyone who starts further investigations on Brazilian rhythms soon discovers that its origins goes back to the rhythms of Candomblé that came to Brazil as a result of the many African people that were brought to the continent during the long and painful theft that the slave trade was. During the colonization, the Afro-Brazilian religions were prohibited and because of this, many of the saints from the Catholic Church were used as a cover for the Gods worshipped in Candomblé. The links were also made by missioners trying to Christianize the Brazilian people. (Voeks, 2007) Still today the Candomblé-Gods have equivalents in Catholic Saints.

Songs and other texts in Candomblé are in Yórubà language. The Gods are called *Orixás* (pronounced Orishás). The highest of these Orixás is Olórum. In the African origin of the religion there was only one Orixá in each religious assembly. During slave trade different tribes and Yórubá religious cultures were mixed and the religion formed itself to what exists today in Brazil. Afro-Brazilian Candomblé has similarities and differences with the Yórubá religion and the *Santeria* on Cuba and Haiti and can also vary between different territories in Brazil. The specific order of Candomblé that I observed in Recife and Olinda is called *Nação Nagô*. During the ceremonies the participants' body is taken in by their Orixás under trance and are filled with their *Axé* - the vital energy from nature. Candomblé is based on a strong

hierarchical system and a host of ritual rules. The leaders in Nagô tradition are called *Ialorixás or Babalorixás* or *Mãe* or *Pai de Santo* (mother or father of the spirit) and have the ultimate responsibility and authority in their house of Candomblé, administrative, financial and spiritual. They are the link between the human world and the spiritual world through their ability and right to carry out so-called *jogo de búzios* – a reading with shells, the sacred ritual in which they ask their Orixás for advice. Practitioners of the religion are called *filhos* or *filhas de santo* (sons or daughters of the spirit), they have been members of a house for seven years and then been initiated in a special ritual. Those who have not yet done this are called *Iaôs*. There are those who never are taken in by an Orixá during ceremonies. They are called *Ogãs* (male) and *Ekédis* (female), they can be seen as assistants or chamber maids to the Orixás. Ogãns play the drums (called Ilús) during ritual feasts and ceremonies, and are also responsible for the slaughter of animals at sacrificing rituals. They often have a representative role in their house of Candomblé. Ekédis are the female equivalent that also has a respected role, but they are not entitled to carry out animal sacrifices or to play drums. The drums played in their ceremonies are made out of skin from goat put on a cylindrical body standing on three legs. They come in three different sizes. The darkest sounding and biggest one is called *rum*, the middle size *rumpí* and the smallest *lé*. Further on the instruments played are *agogô* (double cow-bell) and the *abé* or *xequerê* (calabash fruit with net of pearls around it). The drums are considered important for the invocation of the Gods. In the Nagô nation tradition they are played with hands only. Without the *atabaque* (the drumming) the homage to the Orixás loose 90% of its value as it is considered as the way for humans to communicate with the Gods (Carneiro, 1961). Rhythms makes the fundament for calling and communicating with the Gods, along with sacred dances and songs, and sacrifices.

According to Candomblé all individuals are made out of natural power and therefore everyone has got an Orixá. This Orixá offers protection and guidance for those who initiate themselves and sacrifices to their Orixás. You also need to follow certain prescriptions given from your specific Orixá and obey messages coming to you in dreams or during rituals. If you don't do this you may be punished. The world of Candomblé is full of Gods that need to be honoured and given attention with gifts and sacrifices in order to placate evil powers and gain protection (Appelby, 1983). One among the most powerful Gods is Exú (pronounced Eshú). Exú means sphere in yórubà language. He is the messenger between man and God and the God of contradiction and communication and therefore all the ceremonies start with a song and rhythm worshipping and calling for him. There are sixteen Orixás that are considered most important: Exú, Ogum, Odé, Obaluayé, Nanã, Ewa, Oba, Ossain, Ijexá, Oxum, Iemanjá, Xangô, Iansã, Oxalufã, Oxaguiã, and Orumilá. Each one has its own properties and personality. Ossain is the God of hunting and path finding while Oxum is the Goddess of love and spring water. There are many mythological histories and tales about the Gods and their adventures and relations.

Meeting with Candomblé

It was only one of my first nights in Recife when I joined Ana Paula to her Casa de Candomblé, *Sítio do Pai Adao*, in the neighbourhood Água Fria. It is the eldest center for African religions in Pernambuco formed in 1875. We arrived in the night to see a show of Afro-Brazilian music performances with Afoxé and Samba-Reggae. In the middle of the yard there was a big tree, it was a holy African tree with holy leaves I was told. (Yet that didn't stop the driver from driving right over its roots when we later were leaving.) There was a small chapel connected to the other buildings. In the chapel there were pictures and statues of Catholic Saints. It used to serve as a cover-up for the Christians not to know that behind this room there was a bigger one where *the toques* (public celebrations to worship the Orixás) took place.

A few days later we went to a toque, a public feast for Orixá Iyánsàn, at another house of Candomblé in the neighbourhood Caixa D'Água. During these rituals the Orixás are called by drumming, singing and dancing. Every Orixá has its specific rhythms and songs. Everybody wears white or light-coloured clothes. The religiously initiated (Filho or Filha de santo) wear details such as necklaces and fabrics in the colours of their principal Orixá, and its specific symbols. They receive the spirit of the Orixá in their bodies during sacred dancing and singing. These rituals have kept a lot of African songs, instruments, scales and rhythms alive until today (Mc Growan & Pessanha, 1998. s. 16).

As I was thrown into the world of Candomblé without preparation I found it all very confusing and hard to understand. What was the system for the ceremonies? Who was the leader? Why did they suddenly throw them selves down on the floor, putting first one ear to the ground and then the other? The fact that I didn't know anything made me observe very carefully but the only thing I could relate to was what I felt during the observation and how it affected me. This loud drumming with intense rhythm, was there anyone conducting? There were always three drummers playing at the same time. As the dancing went on for five hours or more, they took turns in drumming. Along came some guys playing *cow-bell* and *xuequerês*. Only men played the instruments. There was a couple of men leading the singing and calling out witch rhythm to be played next. As it was a small room with about hundred people in, it was very humid and hot. Everybody danced individual, only assisted when incorporated by a spirit. I found the mystical energy in the music so strong. All the sudden someone gave out short screams while shaking or just stopped still with his or her eyes shut, moving slowly back and forth, beginning to dance more intensively as the drumming continued. The people around the one's who were taken in possession by spirits of their Orixá, took care of these persons' valuables during their time being possessed.

For me, a girl from Sweden with a whole other cultural background this was for sure a new experience. I have been on stage many times feeling how the music moves me with energies, but seeing it like this, - whatever it was it was strong for those who took part of it. When the spirit left the body of a participant he or she would be more or less exhausted.

The Lessons

I went to join a maracatú group at the percussion school Corpos Percussivos. It was interesting and fun playing the rhythms and also doing exercises just playing the rhythms with out instrument by hand clapping and foot stamping. The founder and pedagogic leader of this school is Jorge Martins, and he has also introduced his organisation in New York, Denmark and Sweden.

My dancing lessons with Ana Paula were held only occasionally at first. It was always I and Ana Paula dancing and sometimes her sister and some kids joined us. The first one was held in the small hallway of a friends' house. I kept dancing into the wall all the time so after this first lesson we rented a classroom where we had more space, just on the other side of the street for the coming ones. One night when just finished, we all heard the sound of two gunshots and got scared. It turned out that some one was shooting on the street outside. Children started crying and I myself came to wonder if a bullet is likely to go through a wall of cement or not. I had no idea what so ever, this was so far from my reality. But this insecure environment that affects the everyday life for people living in it, is a hard but existing reality. It's perhaps the price you pay to stay tuned to the present, perhaps just a bad outcome of poorness. I never got to know what really happened in this case. When things had calmed down a bit, we returned to Ana Paulas' house without stopping to ask anyone. It was one time out of thousands, for the people in Sítio Novo.

The dance classes were accompanied by music played on a small portable CD-player. Ana Paula had some records with African rhythms. We danced typical African dance with a lot of low body weight and bent knees. It was a very expressive yet relaxed dance, but for me, especially in the beginning, it resulted in aching muscles and feet. One night while attending a touque in the Candomblé house of Pai Adao in Água Fria, Ana Paula presented me to Ogã Iraquitan Gomes da Silva. He offered to give me some lessons in Candomblé rhythms and we also discussed the idea of dancing to live drumming and decided a day for us to meet at Iraquitans place.

Iraquitan is Ogãn of the Ilé Omo Axé Orixá Nanã Burucu, a house of Candomblé in the Nagô tradition. We started out with an introduction to the rhythms in Candomblé on the Ilú-drum. I asked him if it would be a problem for me to play because I am a girl, but he said that it would be ok since we were only practicing outside ceremonial matters. I was happy to find a teacher who could show me a bit of the system for the music. I recorded his playing in order to memorize it back home and I wrote down some of the rhythms played. I have taken the decision not to include these recordings

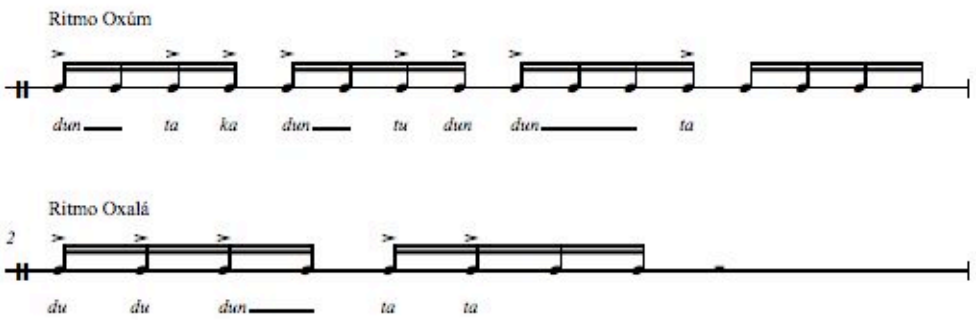
in the appendix of this essay, as they where executed under unofficial circumstances, and given to me in confidence. For the reader to listen to some Candomblé songs and rhythms, there are examples on YouTube, such as the links following:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_QupGs1EeGU

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrCFtojoy7Q

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orXfpBd5wOs&feature=related

The house where Iraquitan lived was founded in 1982. It is lead by Ialorixá Mãe Zefinha de Nanã. Iraquitan told me he had lived there from the start twenty-six years ago. The lessons with Iraquitan carried out playing different rhythms connected to different Orixás. It was hard getting the drum to sound as loud as when he played, but I improved fairly fast from nothing to at least something reminding of a singing drum. I enjoyed hearing Iraquitan play, each beat more complex than the other. My hands were not used hitting on goat-leather for hours and became a bit sore. I was warned not to hit too near the metal-ring keeping the skin in place, as it is very easy to hurt yourself if you strike the edge of it. Fair enough, I was careful. The first rhythm I learned was the Ijexá rhythm for Orixá Oxum. Iraquitan told me to say it out loud in order to easier remember it. “Dun ta ka dun, tu dun dun ta.” Then we went on with Orixá Oxalá. “Du du dun, ta ta”.



These were two of the easier rhythms and rather soon I knew how they sounded and how to write them down. But my physical understanding took a while. To make the drum sound loud, to slap it in a timing that made it swing was not easy. I had to remind my self that I was sitting beside a man who had done this for his entire life, and it was not strange that I couldn't match his groove. Still as the stubborn fast-learner I am, I felt a stain of disappointment. I have always wanted to learn things fast. "If I can think it, I can do it" seems to be my logical attitude when learning new things. My patience is not great but it is stubborn, when I finally get a grip of it. So yet I improved and enjoyed the few strikes that I managed to make right concerning sound and time. I would love going back to Recife and play more of the Candomblé rhythms. I found it mentally and physically stimulating to concentrate like I did during these lessons. Yet, out of respect for the religion and these strong rhythms, witch are considered capable of calling Orixás, I also feel a resistance in going to far into this world of Candomblé. I can't fully explain it, but I remember it made a great impression on me when I was in these coherencies. This is to say it may be easy for me to talk about it now when returned to my home environment in Sweden, - I find my self telling friends about the things I've seen, trying to describe the feeling and essence of religious energy in the music; but the mystical atmosphere affected me strongly during my time in these surroundings and I somewhat feel I could never totally understand neither take part of this inherited culture from Yórubà people, nor give a fair description.

Ana Paula came by some afternoons for us to have our dance lessons accompanied by live drumming of her son Aduni and Iraquitan. As we danced bare feet on the hard tile floor I got my self a couple of sore feet to. After the lessons there would be supper consisting of coffee, bread with butter, corn cake and fried egg with vegetables and sometimes sugar cake. All prepared by Rosa, Ekédi of the house.

I enjoyed very much getting to know all the people in the Ilé Omo Axé Orixá Nanã Burucu in Águazinha. Their hospitality was great and I am most thankful for such a receiving.

Letters and Meetings

After staying in Brazil in 2007-2008 and not even for a moment longing for Sweden, I didn't expect to feel homesick at all having this journey ahead of me. But this time, as I was a stranger to everybody and couldn't talk my language to anyone, I felt different. I travelled alone for two months. A need occurred, to share my experiences and to remind me of whom I was back home, under normal circumstances. Where I have my everyday life, and people know who I am and respond to me out of this knowledge, people treat me as I am used to. I am a singer, mid-class girl, a fairly nice but expressive one, and so forth. But in some ways you are only the things that people around you se and give consonance to. While travelling alone I was somewhat just what my surroundings considered me to be and that struck me as an interesting phenomenon. It was auditioned as a philosophical experience along with the musical ones. One of my strategies to reduce the feeling of loneliness and lack of familiar company was writing long describing letters to my friends at home. When I red these letters at the time of writing this I thought they gave a good picture of my instant impressions, and so I chose to translate and include parts of them here.

Friday, January the 16th 2009

After all this contact with Candomblé here in Recife and Olinda, I was curious to have a so-called "game with shells" carried out by a Padrinho or Madrinha in one of the Candomblé houses that I have visited, to find out what Orixá I have as my protector. Somewhat like when you read your horoscope in the back of newspaper "Expressen" although you don't really believe in it, I just wanted to check. It is always tempting to find out truths about yourself that you did not know before, especially if the truth comes from the natural Gods... But what if we would start drivelling about Oden and Thor again, and all the rest of our northern mythological Gods, I can see an interesting link there. Our old-fashioned Gods of Valhall were also individuals with mood and relationships, according to mythology, just as you can read about the legends of Orixá's. I do not know what to think, except that faith is a strong power. I have in all cases left the plans on carrying out a so-called jogo de búzios for the following reason:

One day when I had just jumped on the bus to Águazinha, it broke down after one stop. Everybody got out and waited for the next one. Compared to the immense planning system for local traffic in Stockholm, in Recife, it is not even sure there'll be a next one. As I was already late for my lesson, I took a taxi. I suddenly occurred to me as a priority to be on time instead of experiencing how you squeeze in the people of two busses into one. The taxi driver turned out to be called Mr José and not only that, when I said I was going to the house of Mãe Zefinha de Naña in Águazinha he said that he grew up on the actual same street, so he found the place without problems. José asked what on earth I was going to do in Águazinha and I replied that I was doing a cultural study of music in Pernambuco, and at the moment particularly rhythms in the Candomblé tradition. He seemed slightly concerned, and I recognized it as that he was one of those who do not know so much about the religion but just is prejudiced and sceptical. Well arrived I discovered I had too little cash to pay for the ride but no problem, José could pass my hostel the next day and retrieve it. He knew

where it was located. (At the time I stayed at a hostel in Olinda, as I was having a friend visiting.)

My second lesson for Iraquitan began just to stop for a break after ten minutes. Iraquitan excused himself, for he had to execute an obligation, a sacrifice ceremony to an Orixá, for a young woman who had been commanded this during her last jogo de buzios. (Roughly put: "buy a bunch of chickens to sacrifice, otherwise your wishes won't come true") Some young women came along, all dressed in white, and also the Madrinha of the house. They went into a small room next to our classroom. I sat nicely and waited until it was over. Cackle cackle, snipp snapping. Some songs and spells were heard. Well, just another Friday night in Águazinha, nothing strange for anyone but me. Then we continued the lesson and it was very instructive. Iraquitan recorded all the rhythms so that I can practice at home, and I thought to myself oh yes it will surely require some practice for me to remember all these rhythms and tell them apart. The lesson ended with the usual supper consisting of corn cake, eggs, coffee and Friday stew on sacrificed chickens.

The morning after, this taxi driver José passed my hostel to get his money. This resulted in a long conversation about his experiences of Candomblé. He told me that he had been a member of the house above mentioned for eight years, but for twenty years time now, no more was practising Candomblé, due to a number of circumstances. "Do not go into something where they take control over you." He told me. If you take a jogo de búzios, they can ask you for anything. Many people lose large amounts of money because they have to buy sheep, chickens, goats and other gifts to sacrifice to their Órixa. His own bill had ended on 6000 Reais, that is around 24,000 Swedish crowns, and it is a lot if you consider that a normal monthly salary here is about 800 Reais and yet that this was twenty years ago.

In addition, he peaked by telling that there is much that can happen with one if to become affected by evil spirits. Someone could, for example, conjure evil spirits on you by writing your name on a note and putting it under a candle inside the chamber in which the saints are kept. It doesn't sound that tempting, I thought to myself, especially as jealousy is an as common interest as football in this country. Then he told about a few friends who, unfortunately, had failed to get out of this "sect-" scenario, but are constantly unhappy because they can't pay for gifts to their Orixás and thus don't achieve their goals in life, and about someone who managed to get out but which is always persecuted by pain that can not be anything other than an evil spirit, no doctor can find any explanation…

Well, after this conversation my curiosity was therefore a bit shadowed. No matter how conscious and rational I consider myself to be, I do not want anyone to tell me that I must buy a goat in order to achieve my aspirations in life. Have thus closed the plans on executing a shell game, although it would be interesting. I suddenly got the feeling that this is not a game just as any, at least not for those who engage themselves in it.

According to José two cases of human victims in sacrifice ceremonies were revealed just the other year, in the State of Pernambuco, a sad example of when religion become driven by fundamentalists and hierarchy beyond all sense of sanity.

This conversation was held as an interesting contrast to all the intimate contact I had with the people engaged in the Candomblé. I realized that it is after all a religious minority, and there are a lot of different attitudes to it.

Another conversation I had was with Fábio Gomes, initiated in Candomblé as an Ogã and member of the Afoxé Oyá Alaxé. It was a very good meeting where we discussed his situation as a musician and Candomblé member, and a great deal of history. I took some notes on what he had to tell, and after our meeting I also wrote down my instant impressions:

Friday, December the 20th, 2008.

I meet Fábio in Recife Antigo at ten thirty. We had agreed to meet ten o'clock at Marco Zero, and after I arrived ten minutes late with the bus from Amparo, and he then took a turn to the nearest fast food institution, we finally meet. We walk to Recife's oldest Maltado-bar, where you can drink Maltado, a kind of milkshake. Inside the bar is a picture of the building, from 1937, with an airship hovering above. Together with several other framed photos of Recife from early 20th century, it does the artwork of the room. Our conversation comes to be very much about black history. It is inevitable not seeing the fact: just like women still are the repressed of the two sexes, after several thousand years of history, the black people still are discriminated and poor while the 10-20 percent of the population in Brazil that are well paid, are a white minority.

Fabio tells about when The Netherlands occupied Recife for a short time during the 17th century and created a more open and permitting society for a short time. "There were even plans on freeing the slaves", says Fábio. "All these beautiful houses in Recife Antigo (Old Recife), they are built by black slaves. But then came the Portuguese and drove the Dutch away, and the misery continued. President Lula (current President of Brazil at the time of writing) *is the first president of Brazil who comes from poor conditions and has succeeded in his work for the people to be more part of the country's production and supplies, without the rich elite complaining too much." He continues: "It has worked well so far because he doesn't interfere with their interests. The rich minority may continue their good life. In mean time President Lula takes money from the lower class people and pay them back in a better distribution."*

Fábio is a musician in Recife. He is initiated in the Candomblé as an Ogã and leader of the Afoxé band Afoxé Oyá Alaxé. His father played cuíca (the samba instrument that sounds like a monkey) and later also bass drum in a forró trio. "He has always played, and built instruments, but studied and took a job at the bank, to support his family" says Fábio. His mother has always sung. I ask if he himself now is able to support himself as a musician, and he says yes, but he also has a responsibility to the rest of his family, his son, his mother and sisters and brothers and cousins. "And it is not only biological siblings, also my siblings in my Candomblé family." He studies journalism at nights to be able to secure an income from out of different possible sources. He has carried out many projects with support from the government and state municipality of Pernambuco and by his work with music he wants to blow the borders between different ethnic groups and illuminate the fears for strangers. He

tells about places where he played, where he met people with so much money that you can't imagine. It's all about prejudice says Fábio. "And if a person has known the good axé in life, the vital energy of life, he won't go back to the bad. Ação Afirmatíva do Povo do Axé (People's affirmative action of axé) is such a project, where we try to reform the society that exists, and encourage young people to choose education instead of drugs and crime." "There is only two ends of the criminal road, you can either die or end up in prison, while the other gives you the opportunity to travel, meet people, love, - simply live."

My impression is ... my impressions are many. I think that I can never know what it means to be black and discriminated. But I am a woman and know how it is to be oppressed. Something in me says: "Everyone must understand and learn about each other", but then I come to think that maybe people doesn't even want that? During my meetings with people here, especially those who are farther from my world, like the people in the Candomblé houses, I have experienced a difficulty to be myself. There is a shame in being poor, and I do not know who established it, but I think that maybe the combination of the people's pride and unwillingness to acknowledge their inferiority, and my fear to tread on someone's toes, makes it hard to approach each other. Not many would admit loudly that they don't have food for the day.

They lack a system that allows them to be well supplied. It is simply difficult to rise when the wages are low, and there are many unemployed with low education. Sometimes I feel a kind of isolation. I meet a justified distrust, even from myself. Am I yet a European or American face to come and shake hands and be nice just to forget everything when I go back home? In some ways probably yes. It's so easy to mix up the concepts. Everyone has the right to be free, and everyone has the right to choose. Working with the suitable and available. I still don't understand how many of the people here make a living. In the Candomblé houses they don't work with anything in particular. The people there work in their homes, cleaning, cooking etc.

"What I still not understand," says Fabio, "is that in Brazil there are so much supplies; food, fruit, beans, coffee, oil, - and yet people go hungry. We should at least be able to feed our own people before we sell the finest raw materials to China." But it seems complex with the capitalist system developing faster for each day.

As a woman I know I can never be the man. I have my side to stand on. What remains now is only to try to have respect for each other. Respect for the men who goes to war, fights and drives themselves to death, and corrupts. Respect for the woman, who prostitutes, whines, denies, and takes after the man's habits of alcohol and tobacco. We are not so tough after all. But it is easy to become irritated when others whine and you feel unfairly treated. I as a white girl from Sweden sometimes feel I am far ahead here, because I have received a formidable education during my childhood. But that in its turn has wiped out some things, such as thoughtless joy in the moment, and unawareness that allows one to rejoice without judgement. But it has given me things and perspective that gives me more opportunity to choose. I would really like to spend lots of money here on projects to increase the understanding and equality between men and women. The girls do not have to be so sugar-sweet and guys not so amazingly macho. But it would drain the whole social behaving system here, but maybe it is worth the price. Girls have to know it doesn't have to be like this. And they

must understand that still today the men are the norm in major parts of the society. Why?!

Coming back

I left Recife around Christmas, with the commercial holiday shopping on its peak and the carnival 2009 coming up. Everybody was devastated when they heard I was going to miss carnival. I will hopefully get the opportunity to see it another year, I replied. So I took farewell of Ana Paula and Sítio Novo and all other friends I had made in the recent two months, and returned to Stockholm.

It was good to be home, but also, returning from Brazil was not easy. I had been away for three months and was now broke. I thought to myself it was like I had turn in all of my money for exchange to a currency that wasn't worth anything back home in Sweden. Who would understand me when I told about my journey? It was a cold day in late January. I knew it would take a while to land. After spending time in a different environment with new people and new language, I once again thought about what aspects that makes me being me. I was somebody else during my stay in Recife, only because people surrounding me saw me different than people in Sweden in general, and specifically the ones that know me in person. Being the foreigner and travelling alone girl meant being well taken care of and canvassed, but it was also lonely. It took me one month only to get back my regular sleep after this journey. I was affected by a lot of post stress.

Preparing the Show

It has to be said that I had great expectations on the show coming out of this final project. I thought I would write lots of new music and perform it on a big occasion, on a big stage. But somewhere along, all these expectations became more of an obstacle than an inducement, and I began to reschedule the whole thing to be in September instead. I tried to write new music but nothing came out like I wanted it. I was so far from my own creativity, looking around me and searching the results I felt must come out of this final exam. As time ran out I realised I wouldn't make it. I was doing the gig on Glenn Miller any way, so I thought I just might benefit from that opportunity and look up some good music and include it in the program along with my own music, just for fun. All the sudden I had transcribed a bunch of Brazilian songs and sent out some mp3:s on email to for the musicians to listen to. I called my singing teacher at the Royal Academy and told her that I was sorry, but I wouldn't make it in time to the 22 of April, so the gig at Glenn Miller was just going to be a small rehearsal in preparation for my big final exam show, which would be likely to take place in September. Irene, my teacher, said ok, no problem and that she looked forward to hearing the results in September.

I felt a relief and started to plan the small informal concert coming up in a few weeks. It was a long time since I last played my own material, almost a year. Between this I had been travelling, working, studying and teaching. I felt like the songs were old and unlikely to make me feel proud of them at this state. I said to myself to just do it. I called my usual musicians who played in my former project Across Late. Trombonist Karin Hammar, violinist Hanna Ekström and bass player Martin Östholm all were

free to play the 22 of April. I contacted two of the pianists that have played with us before. Neither of them could make it for the concert date. So I asked the guitarist Mattias Fjellström if he would consider, and he accepted. The original drummer of the band was not available, so I engaged drummer Björn Sima. He had played with this band on the Glenn Miller Café one year ago. When I decided to play a mix of my own material together with music from Brazil I also involved drummer and percussionist Andreas Ekstedt, as I knew he had experience on playing Brazilian music. My aim was to find at least two times when the band could rehearse all together. That just didn't happen. I sent out an email for everybody to answer what times they could rehearse, and we all had different preferences. Finally we managed to agree on one occasion where all except Björn could attend. Further one where all except Björn and Andreas (the drummers) could be there. Last but not least I found a time for me to meet with Björn and Andreas the actual morning of the concert day. Then we could talk through the songs, and rehearse on voice and drums what was necessary. In fact I came to think afterwards that in a way it was good to split the rehearsals. Perhaps you listen for the instruments that don't exist on the actual rehearsal and make greater effort in playing pronouncedly.

The Songs

With the first rehearsal approaching, I transcribed the Brazilian material. Two songs of Paulinho Da Viola: **Para um Amor no Recife** (for a love in Recife) and **Dança da Solidão** (the dance of loneliness). I chose them because of their beautiful melodies and poetic lyrics. I recognized how I missed Recife and the people I met there, and also how I had felt lonely when travelling. Further I chose the song **Beatriz** composed by Chico Buarque and Edu Lobo. The lyrics describe an actress with a personality that nobody knows if it's true or just a role acted by her. I think it appeals to me by its way of expressing that people sometimes reaches out for contact though they're not showing or admitting it. And happiness is not just a smiling face. I heard it first with Brazilian singer Mônica Salamaso and thought it was one of the most beautiful melodies I had ever heard. Because of its wide tone range, it was also a challenge to sing it. Then I included two of my favourite songs from a record with the artist Simone, simply because I like them: **Charada** (charade) by Dalto and **Chegou a Hora** (it's time) by Ivan Lins and Ronaldo Monteiro de Souza. It was interesting to realize that the arrangements followed the device less is more, and small details in the horn lines had such significant effect.

One night when I was in Brazil I went to see a show with Elza Soares. On that show she sang **Lata D'Água** with a brusque interpretation. The song describes a women walking up along the hill to where she lives, carrying water on her head. She takes her child by the hand and walks every day to make money to get some food. She dreams of a life down on the asphalt but that dream ends where the hill begins. It is a song from the traditional Samba themes telling about the people in the favelas (slum). I also wanted to sing some traditional songs from Recife connected to Candomblé. These songs include percussion and voice, no chord instruments. I learned a song called **Exú Lónà**, It is a hymn to Orixá Exú, on Yórubà language. As Orixá Exú is the first Orixá to be called and honoured during ceremonies and toques in Candomblé tradition in Brazil, I thought it would be appropriate to begin the concert with this

song. Exú is the God of communication and the actual word means sphere. He is the symbol for infinity and presence and the active substances in life. He has no beginning and no end. He is the Orixá of contradiction, truth and lie. Then I learned an Afoxé song that is called **Ode Sábio Babá Alayé**. Afoxé is the musical part of Candomblé that is performed not during ceremonies but in public events on the streets (Candomblé na rua). The lyrics are in Portuguese and the music is based on the rhythm afoxé. This song is written by Fábio Gomes who I met in Recife. He plays in an afoxé society that is called Afoxé Oyá Alaxé. The song tells a story about Orixá Oxóssi, the fearless god of hunting and freedom of speech, who falls in love with Oxúm, the temperamental goddess of love and spring water. Finally one more song by Paulinho da Viola was added, because I heard it accidentally when listening to the others and couldn't resist including it as a last song on the program. **Guardei Minha Viola** (I put my guitar/girl named Viola aside) is a comic samba about how you after playing a million love serenades without progress, finally decide to put it all aside and go out partying on the carnival instead. This song refers to how I felt when I decided to give up writing music for this concert. It was just too much energy in the wrong engine. And the moment I stopped worrying and trying, I started creating something.

After our first rehearsal I discussed with the musicians about this not being my final exam concert, as I had failed in my aim to write music. Karin said to me "but this program we are preparing here, why can't it be your final exam concert?" Then I realized. I was doing what I had to, without noticing. I already had material and preparation to implement the project. Only it wasn't as magnificent as I had planned it in my head from the start. I called Irene, my teacher, and asked if she could come after all, to be my examiner. Luckily she was still available. This was decided five days before the show to take place. Then I made some adjustments in the arrangements, and picked out witch of my own songs that could fit in with the new Brazilian material. I enjoyed playing them again. They sounded different with the guitar instead of piano, and the swap turned out to be a positive variation. **Forever**, **Star**, **I Believed**, **Pilgrim Season**, **Same Spot**, **To Be Free/Never My Face**, **Stay On Your Feet** and **Twinkle Twinkle** are songs I have written in the recent years that highlight different stages of me as a composer. Martin expressed during a rehearsal that he actually thought that my compositions had harmonic similarities with the cover songs we played. That seems logic if you adopt that I, even if unconsciously, selected the Brazilian songs out from what gave resonance in me.

And so finally, I realized that after all I had written one new song since my return from Brazil, - **I Don't Want It To Happen**. In some cases regarding my lyrics I just write them on the fly to see what comes out, and afterwards they are a clear pointer towards what state I was actually in during the time of composing. This was not an exception.

I Don’t Want It To Happen

Sit out all the storms and the false clues
Sit out every single lie
Wait for every new day coming
To bring us closer to good bye
It is coming but I’m staying
But you are leaving ‘cause we’re grown up now

We are winning but we’re loosing
Guess we are leaving ‘cause we’re grown up now
I am staying but it’s coming
But you are leaving guess we’re grown up now

I don’t want it to happen
I don’t want it to change
‘Cause when I finally remember
Every word has lost its truth
There goes my youth

Found again and lost again
Drifting from reality to fantasy
Hear the call from humanity
Moving on makes you strong
But life is always shifting in its harmonies
And I could love you even if you’ll never know
It doesn’t matter if its dream or reality

I don’t want it to happen
I don’t want it to change
There goes my youth

This can be seen as an attempt to express the condition I was in after returning from my time in Recife and Olinda. I went through a minor crisis and dealt with my existence and mortality. As the future suddenly occurred less ahead of me, but more gathering behind me, I mourned my childhood and my youth. I mourned times that pass never to come back again. I mourned the persons that I have left behind and persons that I have grown apart from. I had no idea it would come out just like that. Reading my lyrics I got to know what took place and reflected inside me. Maybe in my creative process this is as important as that I reach others. I reach my self.

The Concert

I put together a band with persons I like to play with. The epithet “person” is preferable rather than “musician” or “people”, given that personality is just as important as musicality when it comes to creating music together. Of course it is all a combination. How ever, by this far I have learned that I like, and always look for, musicians with the ability to lay them selves aside in favour for the music. This is not to say you have to give up all your ideals or sacrifice your personal belongings, just your ego… Doing this you can stop worrying about being good enough, and start to listen. At best, it brings you to communication.

The musicians deserve all credits for making this show come alive. We had little time to rehearse and besides my own songs, we also played lots of new material from a different tradition than most of them are used to playing. I think the fact that we never judged anything too early, was important. I felt a big confidence in these people that I choose to play with and never doubted that they would give a true chance for everything to come out in its best way. Mattias even got out and bought himself a new nylon guitar, as he was inspired by the sound in the Brazilian songs. We discussed the solos and other structure of the songs during our rehearsals, and also tried some different grooves. It was important to me that the musicians contributed with their own ideas. I wanted them to be honest and creative, not only playing what I wanted to hear. Still I was the one taking the final decisions, which most of the time meant saying “yes”.

It seems that it was a couple of co-incidents that formed this whole project, synchronizations in the world that brings one thing to another. The outcome was that we played a three set show in a little place called Glenn Miller Café located in the centre of Stockholm. I enjoyed it very much. The first set I came to think “Just two more songs and than a short break, it’ll soon be over”, and then “Wait a minute, I want to enjoy this, not just have it done.” So I started to relax and I think it came out as a good thing for the music and the people listening to it. Nobody can know for sure!

The show was recorded and when I listen to it I think it was good music, we managed to get it together even though the time for rehearsal was short. We could have played better, I could have pronounced the Portuguese lyrics better, sung better etc. But in a way I could not. It was as good as just that moment could be.

Conclusion

I feel that I have strengthened my rhythmic perception and its physical anchorage. I have increased my spectra of nuances in interpretation and rhythm. I have also become more straight-out when I sing. The people involved in Candomblé have much knowledge on submitting to musical energies. Through them I have gained a more open perspective on music. Yet they are exposed to religious discrimination and prejudice in the society. They are at risk of being abused in hierarchical structures. They want to find protection and fortune in their Gods but also, they fear for bad demons and evoked evil spirits. Please note that this is a subjective opinion just as this essay highlights my experiences and personal impressions. I respect every woman' and mans' right to join religious societies. As for this case, it may also serve as a way of admitting to your African heritage and stand up for your identity, though you are in minority among the groups represented in political concerns, and by doing that you may fight against racism and discrimination in the society.

Yet I feel the importance of education available for all in order to establish an opportunity to choose, in cases possible. There is always an aspect of influence but by gaining perspectives on different realities we become less vulnerable for the bad. On the other hand we are more likely to get lost in a big picture than in a small. If there are further universal facts on what human beings longs to succeed in life, the outcome of these longings is what remains to find in the hindsight, afterwards.

Oliver Sacks, professor in neurology and psychiatry at the Columbia University Medical Center in New York says in an interview with Jan Falk for newspaper Dagens Nyheter (2009) "Music can overwhelm you in a way that is beyond experiences, beyond language – I don't believe it's supernatural, I don't believe that anything is supernatural." He refers to the question if there is a difference between a worldly and a spiritual experience of music. He also says about his cases and researches on patients with Tourette syndrome or aphasia, after using music in the treatment: "I saw what liberating power music can have, and was very impressed by it."

Reading this, I once again realize that music is a power to count on, and we shall not neglect it. Although today its role has gone from ceremonial and communicational to sometimes manipulative or just commercial the essence of it as a moving energy still exists. This is shown in the above quoted example.

Exploring your artistic and creative motives and process, in all its senses, is a never-ending work to be done. I don't expect ever finding all the answers. However, writing this essay has been good for understanding where I stand artistically at the time being, in the beginning of my future.

References

Ager, Simon, Copyright 1998-2009. http://www.omniglot.com/writing/yoruba.htm, downloaded 2009-02-25

Ambjörnsson, Ronny, 2009. ”Känslans språk”, Essä Dagens Nyheter, Stockholm 090102.

Appelby, David P, 1983. “The Music of Brazil” s. 106-107. The University of Texas Press.

BBC Religion & Ethics 2007-02-02
http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/candomble/history/history.shtml

Carneiro, Edison, 1961. “Candomblés da Bahia” s. 103-104, 3:d edition. Conquista, Rio de Janeiro

IBGE, Intituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatica

Mc Gowan, Chris & Pessanha, Ricardo, 1998. “The Brazilian Sound”. Philadelphia. Temple University Press.

Mithen, Stephen J, 2005. ” The singing neanderthals: the origins of music, language, mind and body ” . London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Sacks, Oliver, Dagens Nyheter, 20 mars 2009. “Musik påverkar mer än vi kan förklara” intervjuad av Jan Falk.

Silva, Vagner Gonçalves da, 1994. ”Candomblé e Umbanda Caminhos da devocacao brasileira”. São Paulo, Ediora Ática.

Veghed, Åsa da Silva, 2007. ” Brasiliansk Musik ”. Sundbyberg, Vmb förlag.

Voeks. R, 1997. ”Sacred Leaves of Candomble: African Magic, Medicine, and Religion in Brazil.” Austin: University of Texas Press.

2004 - 2008 : Recifeguide.com

Dictionary

Abé	Percussion instrument made of calabash fruit, with a net of pearls around it
Afoxé	Rhythm from Brazil, music genre with religious lyrics often concerning Candomblé religion and African heritage
Agogô	Double cow-bell percussion instrument
Alfaia	Big bass drum played in maracatú
Atabaque	Term for the rhythm played, Brazilian drum
Axé	Word in Yórubà language that means the vital energy of nature, music genre from Bahia, North East of Brazil
Babalorixá	Male priest in Candomblé
Brega	Commercial music genre from North-Eastern Brazil
Coco	Rhythm, dance and music genre from North-Eastern Brazil. Performed with feet stamping, hand clapping, percussion instruments and singing
Cuíca	Instrument used in Samba. A drum with a stick trough the skin, witch makes a wheezy sound from the friction when pulling it back and forth
Ekédi	Female initiated in Candomblé that doesn't receive the spirit in her body. Has a prominent and respected role in the Candomblé hierarchy
Favela	Slum
Filha de Santo	Female initiated in Candomblé (in a ceremony carried out after seven years of membership)
Filho de Santo	Male initiated in Candomblé (in a ceremony carried out after seven years of membership)

Forró	Music genre and dance from North-Eastern Brazil. Played on accordion, triangle and bass drum
Frevo	Music genre and dance from North-Eastern Brazil, Carnival music with brass features
Ialorixá	Female priest in Candomblé
Iaô	Member of Candomblé that has not yet completed seven years of membership, not yet fully initiated
Ilú	Drum in the Candomblé Nagô nation
Jogo de búzios	Shell-game-reading in witch the Candomblé priests communicate with the Orixás
Maracatú	Rhythm from North Eastern Brazil played with agogô, alfaia, xequerê snare drum
Nação Nagô	Candomblé nation
Ogã	Male initiated in Candomblé that doesn't receive the spirit in his body. Has a prominent and respected role in the Candomblé hierarchy, entitled to play the drums and responsible for the slaughtering of animals sacrificed
Orixá	Word for God in Yórubà language
Pagode	Lighter form of samba
Samba-Reggae	Music genre and rhythm from Bahia, North-Eastern Brazil, mix of samba and reggae
Santería	Religion on Haiti and Cuba, derived from Yórubà religion
Toque	Public feast for the Orixás in the Candomblé house where the initiated dance and sing and incorporate their Orixás
Xequerê	Percussion instrument made of calabash fruit, with a net of pearls around it

Tracks on the attached CDs:

CD 1

1 Exú Lónà (Traditional Nação Nagô)
2 Same Spot (Lena Swanberg)
3 Stay On Your Feet (Lena Swanberg)
4 I Believed (Lena Swanberg)
5 Para Um Amor No Recife (Paulinho da Viola)
6 Charada (Dalto)
7 Odé Sábio Babá Alayé (Fábio Gomes)
8 Dança da Solidão (Paulinho da Viola)
9 Lata D'Água (Traditional Samba)

CD 2

1 Beatriz (Edu Lobo/Chico Buarque)
2 Pilgrim Season (Lena Swanberg)
3 Chegou a Hora (Ivan Lins/Ronaldo Monteiro)
4 Twinkle Twinkle (Lena Swanberg)
5 To Be Free/Never My Face (Lena Swanberg)
6 Forever (Lena Swanberg)
7 Star (Lena Swanberg)
8 I Don't Want It To Happen (Lena Swanberg)
9 Guardei Minha Viola (Paulinho da Voila)