

Sodade

Musical notation for the first staff, showing a treble clef, a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and a common time signature (C). The staff contains a whole note chord (E-flat) followed by a repeat sign and a whole rest.

Musical notation for the second staff, labeled "TAB" on both sides. It shows guitar tablature with fret numbers (8) and bar lines.

Musical notation for the third and fourth staves. The third staff is a treble clef with a key signature of three flats and a common time signature, showing a Cm chord symbol and a whole note chord. The fourth staff is a bass clef with a key signature of three flats and a common time signature, showing a melodic line.

Musical notation for the fifth and sixth staves, showing a treble clef with a key signature of three flats and a common time signature, containing whole rests.

Musical notation for the seventh and eighth staves, showing guitar tablature with fret numbers (8) and bar lines.

SODADE

PLASTIC FANTASTIC

BATUKO

TEXTS FROM THE BATUKO GROUP FLOR DI RABENTA

Sodade

by Melody LaVerne Bettencourt
Hamburg/Germany, 2008
Translation: Kathryn Walker

SODADE



Sodade, two-canal work, video,
sound ,colour, loop,
Cabo Verde/Hamburg, 2008

SODADE

I sing with my mother a "morna", a Cape Verdean lament entitled "Sodade"*. The "sodade" (yearning) is the central theme of the "morna".

My mother stands in a solitary corner of the harbour of Mindelo on São Vicente and begins the song with the sentence:

Quem mostra'b ess caminho longe? Ess caminho pa Hamburgo. (Who has shown you this long way? The long way to Hamburg.)

I, standing on the Hamburg harbour, answer with the refrain:

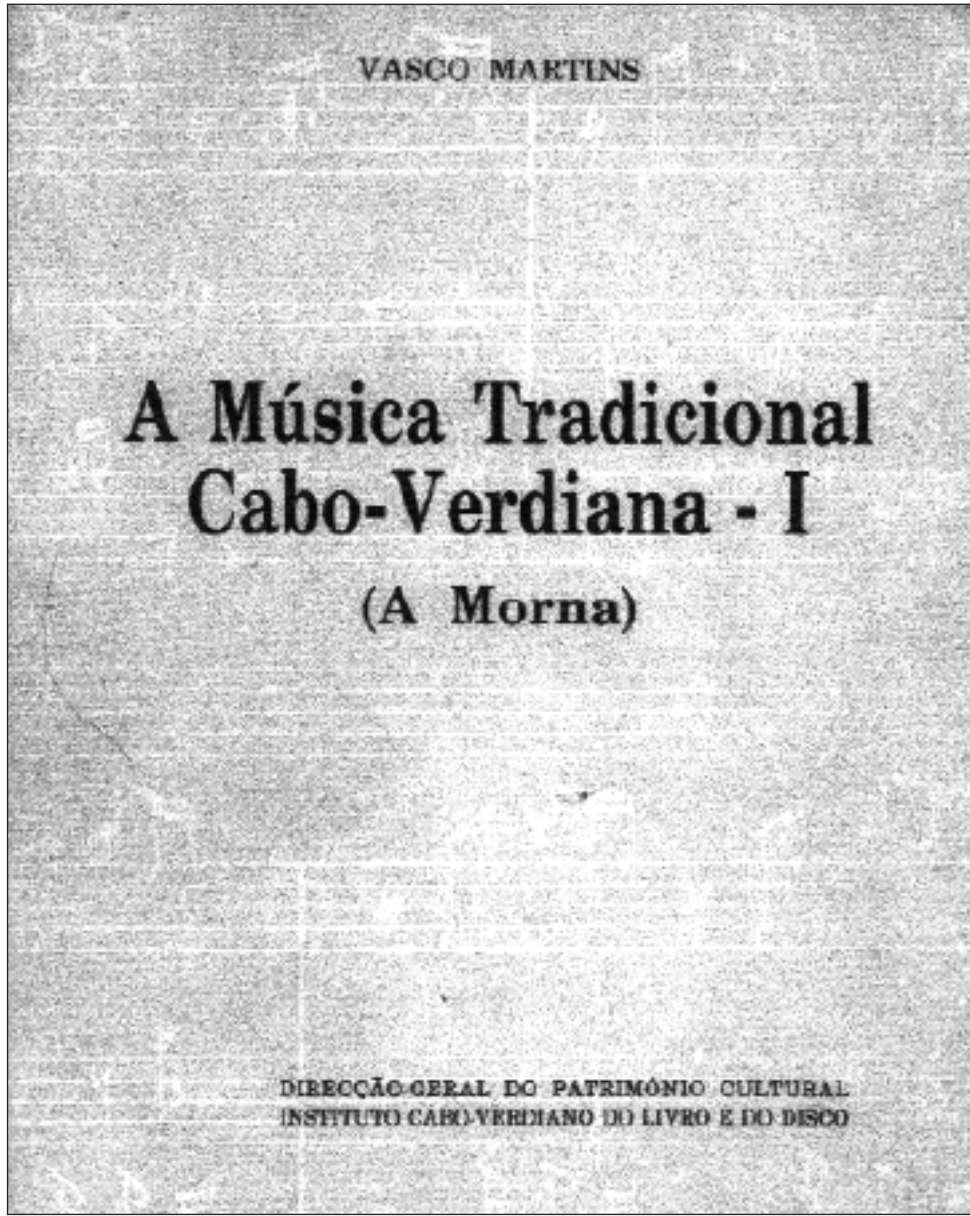
Sodade Sodade Sodade dess nha terra Cabo Verde (Yearning for my homeland Cape Verde).

A dialogue develops across the sea. The sea stands for separation and is at the same time a beacon of hope.

This song, as interpreted by Cesaria Evora, was of great importance to my mother's generation. (with her extraordinary voice Cesaria Evora managed to become known beyond the country's borders and today is the most popular singer of Cape Verdean descent.) To the immigrant Cape Verdeans it gave comfort and space to reminisce. At the same time the song was like a promise not to forget the homeland and to return one day.

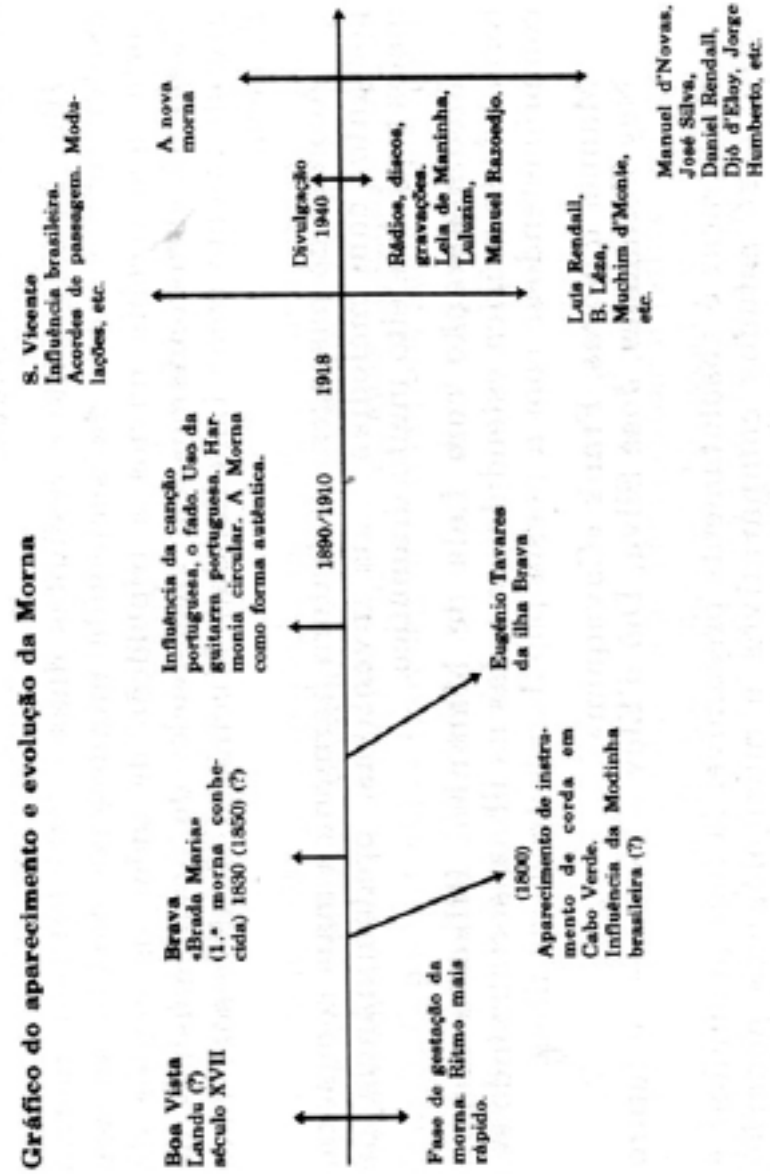
My mother kept her promise. She returned and now she sings with me to remind me of my roots.

* The spelling marks the difference to the Portuguese "Saudade" that forms the leitmotiv in fado. This way the claim to a specifically Cape Verdean feeling manifests itself in the language.



Cover of the hitherto only essay to deal with the music theory of the Cape Verdean song genre "Morna" by musician and theoretician Vasco Martins, published in 1989 in Portuguese.

Gráfico do aparecimento e evolução da Morna



**PLASTIC
FANTASTIC**



Plastic Fantastic – video, colour, loop,
Cape Verde 2008

PLASTIC FANTASTIC

A woman folds a plastic bag.

She folds the plastic bag so that it can be reused and to be able to save it so that it takes up as little space as possible.

The folding creates a form.

Here there is a connection between the everyday contact with "poor" materials and the forming into an object.

I have selected one folding from each of three households and show this now as an "objet trouvé".



Plastic Fantastic 1,2, 3 plastic, each approx. 7 cm x 10 cm
Cape Verde 2007

BATUKO



Batuko, three-canal-work, video, sound, colour, loop,
Cabo Verde 2008

Batuko

Like the "morna", the "batuko" is a Cape Verdean music genre associated with a dance.

The "batuko" is one of my earliest childhood memories of Cape Verde. I lived in Praia (the capital of Cape Verde) from age 5 to 6 and saw there how women gathered, made music together and danced. Once I was invited to step into the middle of the circle and dance. The driving rhythm of the drums and the shouts from the women: "Bote baja sabi!" (literally: You dance beautifully!) transported me into a frenzy-like state. Many years later, this experience led to a study of the meaning of this dance and its history and so to my video work.

The form that I have selected for this video work is the triptych.

In the centre is the dance, the cultural togetherness of the women, at the sides two scenes from the working life of the dancers: to the left, eggs for sale, to the right, maize being pounded.

I have selected these two activities as they stand in contrast to one another: on the left, lightness, floating, balancing, on the right pounding, brutishness. These are graceful movements and ones that bear witness to strength and energy. The dance stands in the middle: connecting and balancing



Batuko, the forbidden dance from Santiago

The missionaries of the colonial rulers forbade the slaves to dance the batuko on the grounds of its erotic expression and to hinder any continued existence of African tradition.

However, the batuko is much more than just erotic hip movements. It stands for rebellion, is defiant and powerful. Without trace of passive femininity. It has stood up to oppression and survived.

Women of different age form a circle together and develop texts that reflect every day life in society. The texts deal with the life experiences of the women present. With each song a woman steps into the middle of the circle. As she dances she rhythmically moves her hips, around which she is wearing a belt made of cloth. The cloth-belt symbolises the chains of slavery that are shaken off time and again.



The queen of the batuko

Inasia Gomi is the most well known batukader. It is unusual in the batuko for an individual person to wander into the limelight as the batuko is always practised as a collective creation. Inasia Gomi occupies this prominent position as she commands the art of free improvisation of texts, the "finason", like no other. She has no fixed repertoire, as is customary with other groups. The text develops only during the performance and the content always has specific topics that refer to the situation. During the independence struggles in the '70s she was one of the voices that encapsulated what was happening and the events in texts, thereby contributing to the independence thinking. Today, Inasia Gomi is some 80 years old and is still active.

**TEXTS FROM THE
BATUKO GROUPO
FLOR DI RABENTA**

The group Flor di Rabenta

I have chosen the group "Flor di Rabenta" for my video work because it is the closest to the archetypal batuko group. It is thus representative of all batuko groups and exhibits the characteristic features: The group members all come from the same district. (This is important so that they can meet regularly. Usually the gatherings take place after work and after evening meal.) These are ordinary women who work as street traders or domestic workers.

The "Batuko" consists of three elements:

- 1.Vocals: There is a lead singer who performs the verse, and a choir consisting of the remainder of the women who answer with the refrain.
- 2.Drums: One half of the group beats in 2/4 time and the other in 3/4 time. This is what makes up the pulsating rhythm.
- 3.Dancer with the pano round her hips: The pano is a scarf with a traditionally black/white woven pattern that the Santiago women wear on the body as jewellery and as a sign of their belonging to Cape Verde and their African identity. She is also driven on and guided by solitary shouts from the participating women. Thus, there also develops a dialogue between the dancer and the musicians whose eyes follow her movements during the entire piece.

Texts from the Batuko group Flor di Rabenta

Título 1 : MARIA

la ia ia Maria
u ranja desdi pikinoti mi ku bo
ja bu largam na mundo mi só
ja bu odja alguém ki bu cré, m dexou ku el oh

Título 2: FLOR DI RABENTA

Nos é grupo di flor di rabenta
a nos morada é tchom di S. Pedro
el ó ki nu ta bai é cima sol ta brilha
a nu ta pidi nho S. Pedro
é danu forca e ku coragi
e pe libranu di tudo mal di mundo

Título 3: JOSÉ

Ami José desdi pikinoti
pidi nhor Deus pa dam vida ku saúde
am sombra la na solera di nha porta
uel forca di nha brasso, soris di nha testa
na passar di ano 51, di 15 ano mim perdi nha pai
ha mãe mandam pam bai Administrador
é ba santam na lista di ba pa Angola
fla nha mãe, djam ba Administrador
dministrador flam dja ka tem lugar
sai ta bem sucuro dja panham
tchiga casa dento tchuba ku bento
mim labanta dentu nepunepu
chuba dja pára cabo sta suncuro
fonha mãe mandam ku 25\$
cela nha burro n poi rosto pa pilurinho
dixi forno n subi ribon di kal
passa pa costa capela pam lancia padja carga

ha burro cansa ki num passa ka ta dá
ai ka ta fila, cuidado volta pa casa
tchiga casa disanimado di nha vida
fla nha mãe kusé ki nu ta fazi
fla nha fidjo nu ba xinta nu conforta
conforto sem nada ka ta da pa kria fidjo

Título 4: DOR DI MUNDO

Mi n ta fla nhor Deus forti nu passa mal tamanhu
igranti di nos terra dento tchom di Portugal
em trabadjo sem nada pega nel
idjo parida corri riba corri baxo
i tudo ki ta duem é kel negócio sujo
el movimento tene tcheu mãe sem si fidjo
el movimento tene tcheu mudjer sem si marido
el mãe ki fica só ta tchora disispero

Título 5: NHA BACA

Hos flam kusé nta fazi
ha burro ka sta surra
ha baca kai na corda
ha carnero dja maluca
tchora dia, ai m tchora noti
adrugada dja panham na caminhu
ta lembra tempo stória grandi nha avó
i n djobi riba, ai n djobi baxo
djobi tempo, n odja tchuba lá ta bem
ha casa Ramu n conta strela noti manxi
ha canto casa cria lera dortolon

Título 6: BRANBAM DI MUNDO

Mi na mundo djam podi sta
jes screbi carta ês manda flam
é nha cunhado ki é nha marido
ka liga nada pamodi ami é campion
ranbam di mundo ka ta mariam cabeça
a sociedade djam sabi vive
im ba cutelo bento ta panha
dixi ladera nta da pancada
im n ka dixi nta vira nha caminho
ta pega nos cultura n ta poi riba la na altura

Título 7: MISÁ BRANCA

laiai oiaiai oiaiai dja nu tem po di pega nel
iaiai oiaiai oiaiai Silva Semedo dja nu tem po di pega nel
iaiai oiaiai oiaiai Titino Varela dja nu tem po di pega nel
iaiai oiaiai oiaiai mocinhos dja nu tem po di pega nel
iaiaia a Baita Preta ai mundo e duedo dja
nu tem po di pega nel
iaiaia ai Flor di Rabenta, la tchon di Alemanha
dja nu tem po di ega nel
iaiaia a Misá Branca ai nu tem po di pega nel
iaiaia a Melody Branca la tchon di alemanha dja nu tem po di pega nel

Título 8: PIMPIM

liaiaia ... oiaiaiai fla Pimpim iaiaiaia flor di rabenta
iaiaiaiaia
ia m ka bem cumê m ka bem bebe
ia m bem sabi di saúde nhos
iaiaia ai Pimpim
iaiaia, Oiaiaiaia flor di rabenta, Oiaiaiaia
iai ami e bonitu ta papia sabi
iai ami e rascon n ta bisti limpo
iaiaiaiaia Misa Branca, iaiaiaiaia não não, Pimpim bo e manso

Título 9: CRÍTICA?C

ntra ku mi bu xinta bu raganham denti
pa bu beijam pa bu mostram ma bo é nha amiga
canto n da costa bu xinta bu papia na nha vida
pa mo m ka flou bu pensa ma dja bu inganam
Ami n ka flou so pa modi mi n ka bo sabi man ka ta liga
bu ta flam so pa bu botam nha pom
ma barro seco ka ta pega na paredi
sol ka kentanu ki fari friessa
Ka bu confirma kel ki bu ka odja
Ka bu papia kel ki bu ka sabi
po rosto riba bu pidi perdom
ma bu ta lembra ma alebi me pecadu

Título 10 : NUNO

Nha mai oras ki ta bai traz di nha cultura
ami m ta pidi nha pai di ceu
pe kumpanhanu ke pe botanu abencão
que pe libranu di boca pecador
ma la di riba nu tem nhor Deus na ceu
ma li di baxo nu tem Edna ku Binho
ma na nos lado nu tem Misá ku Nuno
ma dento meio nu tem Benvindo João Varela
nos coração sta cheio di alegria
amor e amizade nu ta dal pa tudo mundo

Flor di Rebanta – The unfurling blossome

Original translation from Cape Verdean creole by
Vanessa Bettencourt

Title 1: Maria

Oia ia ia Maria

We have been together since our childhood

Now you leave me behind in this world.

You have seen someone whom you like better than me,

I'll let you roam with that person, oh

Title 2: Flor di Rabenta (The unfurling blossom)

We are the group Flor di Rabenta

Our home is the soil of Saint Peter

Whither we go there is beaming sun,

We ask our Saint Peter

To give us strength and courage,

To protect us from all things evil in the world

Title 3: José

I, José,

Since my childhood, I have asked God

For a happy life and health

For refreshing shadow in front of my door

In return I give the strength of my arm and the sweat on my brow

At the end of 1951.

I was 15 when I lost my father

My mother sent me to the administrator

So that he could enter my name in the travel list to Angola

I told my mother I was at the administrator's
The administrator said there was no more room
On the way back the darkness overtook me
I reached my home, it rained and the storm raged

I got up at dawn
It had stopped raining, but it was still dark
My mother sent me with 25 escudos
to the fish market
I saddled my donkey and set out on my way

I put out the fire in the hearth and rode to Ribon di Cal
Past Costa Capela, then to Padja Carg.
My donkey was so exhausted that he didn't want
to take one more step
We couldn't go on, I turned around

I came home in despair.
I asked my mother what we should do
She said my child let us sit down
And get used to it.
Used to it? When one has nothing
one cannot raise children

Title 4: Dor di Mundo (Pains of the world)
I say to God how bad it is for us
Emigrants from our country,
in Portugal without work, without support
Pregnant daughter, runs back and forth in despair
What hurt me the most was the dirty job
The result was women
left behind by their children
The result was women
left behind from their men
The waiting mother cries in despair!

Title 5: Nha Baca (My cow)
Tell me what I should do
My donkey no longer cries
My cow has fallen over a rope
My sheep has gone mad
I cry day and night
At the break of dawn I am already on my way
I remember way back to the time
of the great stories of my grandma
I looked to the sky, I looked to the earth
I looked into the future and saw the rain coming
At home I counted the stars until into the morning
At one corner of the house I could see the grass growing

Title 6: Brambam di mundo (Rumours of the world)
I can survive in this society
I have received a letter which says
I had an affair with my brother-in-law
I ignored it because I am good

The rumours of this world
don't bother me
I can survive in this society
When I go to the mountain and the storm rages
Then the storm also roars in me
Then I would be ready to beat those who bitch

Yet when it is calm on the mountaintop
Then calm comes to me
I take our cultural legacy
And hold it high above all else

Title 7: Misá branca (White Misá)

Oiaiai oiaiai oiaiai Silva Semedo we have
a helping hand

Oiaiai oiaiai oiaiai Titino Varela we have
a helping hand

Oiaiai oiaiai oiaiai Boys we have a helping hand

Oiaiaia a Baita Preta also when the world is sad
We have a helping hand

Oiaiaia a Flor di Rabenta, there in Germany we have a helping hand

Oiaiaia a white Misá, ai we have a helping hand

Oiaiaia a Melody there in Germany we have a helping hand

Title 8: Pimpim

Oiaiaia... oiaiaiai say Pimpim

Oiaiaiai Flor di Rabenta

Oiaiaiaiaia

Oia I did not coming to eat,

I did not come to drink

Oia I came to ask about
your health

Oiaiaia ai Pimpim

Oiaiaia, Oiaiaia Flor di Rabenta, Oiaiaia

Oiai I am beautiful and my speech is eloquent.

Oiai I am cool and my clothes shine with cleanliness

Oiaiaiaiaia Misá Branca

Oiaiaiaiaia no, no, Pimpim you are calm.

Title 9: Critica (Criticism)

We met, you laughed with me
You have kissed me to show me
that you are my girlfriend.

As I turned round you mocked my life

Because I stayed silent you thought you had deceived me

I did not speak to you about it because I am not like you

I don't take such things seriously

You speak in this way about me to damage my reputation,

but dried cement does not stick to the wall

The sun cannot warm us when there is cold around us.

Don't confirm what you have not seen.

Do not speak about that of which you know nothing

Look up and ask for forgiveness

Remember, lying is a sin

Title 10: Nuno

My mother Oras already followed our cultural customs

I ask my father in heaven

To accompany us and to bless us

To protect us

Up there we have our Lord God in heaven

Here below we have Edna and Binho

At our side we have Misá and Nuno

In our midst we have Benvindo João Varela

Our heart is filled with joy

We give love and friendship to the whole world

CD with audio sample of the group Flor di Rabenta can be found on the last page..