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Toques do Caramulo

“RETOQUES”

(d'Eurídice, 2011)



When we talk about traditional songs we usually speak, and quite fairly, of musical roots. But one can also say that every ancient song is a fruit that you can pick directly from the tree. An orange can be eaten this way; you just need to peel it and that's all. It's the same with blackberries, you don't even have to peel them, but if we boil them and add some sugar, they become jam. Lemon turns into tea and so does peppermint, but this can also add flavour to chewing gum or cigarettes. Apples give us cider, arbutus the brandy... And grapes, those can pour a thousand different wines.

Imagine, now, a vine growing in Caramulo Mountain hills. The varieties of their grapes may be Castelão or Touriga, Alfrocheiro or Bical, Baga or Arinto, Fernão Pires or Tinto Cão, but it is known that the genes of the varieties of Bairrada are even better and give new and exciting flavours - if mixed with foreign genes: Cabernet Sauvignon, or Pinot Noir, Chardonnay or Merlot. Thus, we have at the same time, traditional wines, yet somehow new, regional but with a new different flavour, doing justice to the old vines, with the exuberance of revolutionary and inventive graft

The music of Toques do Caramulo has this spirit. On "Retoques", their first studio album - which follows "Toques do Caramulo... é ao vivo!" (2007) - the band from Águeda goes back to the old mountain songs they learned long ago - in local traditional music associations like "Orquestra Típica" and "Cancioneiro de Águeda", from parents and grandparents - and interlinks them, deep within tradition, with everything they have learned from other music. Not by chance, does the album begin with a tribute to Américo Fernandes (who was the conductor of the "Orquestra Típica de Águeda") and ends with a remix of "Trigueirinha", in which the voice of David Fernandes arises through the electronics, linked, let us say by lineage, to the roots of this music. But there, you can also detect some scents of African music, jazz, flamenco, galician folk, the klezmer and the Balkan countries, as well as the assumed guardian shadow of great national songwriters, such as Fausto or José Afonso, showing that many songs, like good grape varieties, can blend together freely and contribute to a new kind of music. And as Luís Fernandes - who is responsible for most of the arrangements - and his companions imagine them and give us to taste.

In the new album, recorded in the studio that belongs to d'Orfeu - called gravad'Or - Toques do Caramulo had some precious aid: the Children's Choir EMtrad' participate in "Olha para a Água"; Sara Vidal, a magnificent Portuguese singer in the Galician group Luar na Lubre, plays Galician tambourine and gives voice to "O brio das raparigas", "Pedrinhas da Fonte" and "Trigueirinha"; João André Lourenço plays cajón in "O Brio das Raparigas"; Abílio Liberal plays tuba in "Laranjinha" and the association "Cancioneiro de Águeda" provided the samples that we hear in "Já Vou Chegando à Serra", "Pedrinhas da Fonte" and "Trigueirinha Remix." And, last but not least, Rui Oliveira was the tireless sommelier that - with time, wisdom and a lot of love - brought together all the flavours of this new wine.

"Retoques" - with d'Eurídice's edition, the new d'Orfeu's label - released on April 18th.

António Pires



Toques do Caramulo are:

Luís Fernandes **voice**, braguesa guitar, accordion
Aníbal Almeida **traditional violin**
Lara Figueiredo **flute, voice**
Francisco Almeida **acoustic guitar**
Carlos Peninha **electric guitar**
Miguel Cardoso **double bass**
Ricardo Coutinho **drum kit**

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