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Interview / Entrevista / Entrevista

Tiago de Oliveira Pinto. *What Color is the Chameleon?*

by Matthias Lewy (Freie Universität Berlin, Deutschland)*

Tiago de Oliveira Pinto is Brazilian and grew up in São Paulo. In 1982 he moved to Berlin where he studied musicology, anthropology and Latin American studies. He earned his PhD in 1989 at the Free University, Berlin. From 1989 to 1995 Tiago worked at the International Institute for Traditional Music (IITM) in Berlin and between 1995 and 2002 he headed the Brazilian Cultural Institute in Germany (ICBRA) for the Brazilian Foreign Ministry. He was appointed Full Professor of Anthropology at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of São Paulo (USP) in 2001. In 2007 Albrecht Schneider invited him to be a visiting professor at the University of Hamburg. Since 2009 Tiago de Oliveira Pinto has held the Chair of transcultural music studies at the Joint Institute of Musicology in the Franz Liszt School of Music, Weimar, and the Friedrich Schiller University, Jena. Tiago carried out field research in Brazil, Portugal, Turkey, Berlin, as well as in Southeast Asia and Africa. He published and edited over one hundred titles, among them books and articles in peer-reviewed journals, anthologies and catalogues, as well as numerous records and CDs. His work includes music production, festival organization and sound installations, and as a curator he was responsible for ethnographic and art exhibitions in various museums. He was the president of the Berlin Society for Traditional Music (2000-2002) as well as the president of the Brazilian Association for Ethnomusicology (2004-2006). Earlier this year he was appointed member of the Expert Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage of the German UNESCO Commission; he has also recently been nominated as a member of the Academia Europaea/ The Academy of Europe. Until April 2014 he will be on leave from Weimar to work as an invited visiting scholar at Harvard University, Music Department, USA. Last summer I met Tiago in a cafe in Berlin for this conversation.

*matthiaslewy@gmail.com

Matthias Lewy: Why did you move from São Paulo to Berlin as a student? Did the comparative musicology of the so-called "Berlin School" draw you over to Germany?

Tiago de Oliveira Pinto: Certainly not, because that didn't mean anything to me. In 1982 I went to West Berlin because it was an excellent place to study music, musicology and anthropology. At the same time it was a fascinating and dynamic city to live in. Later I was offered the possibility to study in Belfast, but I would have never traded West Berlin for Belfast. Besides all the intense cultural life in Berlin, there was the possibility of practicing and studying music on my own. The Free University had an independent Institute of Ethnomusicology, and this was also unique to Berlin.

ML: What can you tell us about your teachers there, Josef Kuckertz, for example, who was the head of the Institute of Ethnomusicology at the Free University Berlin, and how was your experience in ethnomusicology in general in Berlin those days?

TOP: Well, it is interesting that you asked about Josef Kuckertz. He was one of my former teachers, but by far not the only, or even the most important, one. In terms of musicology I'm much indebted to scholars like Carl Dahlhaus, Rudolf Stephan and especially Tibor Kneif. Besides Kuckertz, several other prominent scholars, such as Max Peter Baumann, Rudolf Brandl, Habib Hassan Touma, Susanne Ziegler and Rüdiger Schumacher, represented the Institute of Ethnomusicology.

I took a course on the theory of Javanese Gamelan with Schumacher and remember the excellent organology course given by Susanne Ziegler. Max Peter Bauman opened up the real possibility for me to work on the music of Latin America and Habib Hassan Touma took me from his seminar to the International Institute of Traditional Music (IITM) where I started my professional career immediately after concluding my PhD in January 1990, and after four years as a research freelancer there.

In those days Berlin was the perfect place to study musicology. You had the Free University with Rudolf Stephan and Tibor Kneif as well as the other Institute of Musicology at the Technical University with Carl Dahlhaus and Helga de la Motte-Haber. There was also East Berlin. I was in touch with Christian Kaden, Jürgen Elstner and Axel Hesse, who worked about Latin America. So, it was an excellent place to study musicology in a broad sense. Tibor Kneif was my second formal advisor in my PhD studies. He is a historical musicologist who wrote the first scholarly dictionary on rock music. He was very inspiring for me, especially also in regard to his strong commitment to social issues and music. Artur Simon, another important ethnomusicologist in Berlin, the head of the Phonogrammarchiv, supported my research with equipment and by depositing my first fieldwork tapes in his archive. He published my dissertation in his book series of the Museum of Ethnology in Berlin. But my main intellectual mentor in those days, Gerhard Kubik (Vienna/Chileka), was not based in Berlin. He was the most influential on my thinking on the transatlantic

transfer of music and culture between Central Africa and Brazil. You see, the scope of scholars in Berlin was very broad in those days. My thesis itself (de Oliveira Pinto 1991) is very much committed to Gerhard Kubik's concepts and approaches. Josef Kuckertz, my formal advisor, gave me the freedom to work with Kubik on an informal basis. In this sense he was very generous, because those who wanted to end up with a PhD under Kuckertz had to deal quite much with analytical issues based on musical transcriptions. My book presents a much stronger anthropological focus.

ML: But your thesis includes transcriptions as well.

TOP: Sure, a few, but please compare my work to other dissertations published during that time. You know how dissertations in ethnomusicology were published in those days? Always in two volumes, one volume with the transcriptions and the other one with the "written text", and this "text volume" was often thinner than the one with the musical transcriptions.

You can have a look at the D. Wagner series *Beiträgezur Ethnomusikologie*, which published almost all ethnomusicology dissertations from Berlin (except mine).

Most of the transcriptions in my book are very different from those in Western notation, since I included movement transcriptions according to scholars like Koetting, Kubik and others. Additionally, I developed my own systematic approach to representation of sound and movement, or in other words, to the performance sequences in specific ritual contexts. In this sense, I'm not a typical pupil of Kuckertz. I remember when Kuckertz and I discussed the so-called Angola pattern (*toque*) of the Berimbau, this one: (sings) *tshiki tum taa – tshiki tum - takum ta kumtakumtshiki tum ta --- tshikitukatuka ta...*

Kuckertz was convinced that the "tum ta" is an upbeat. He wanted me to transcribe it as "4-1-2-3". But it has to be written as "1-2-3-4", due to its formal insertion in the overall sound and movement sequences. I finally settled on my interpretation and he accepted it, certainly without fully agreeing with me. So you see, he was a generous teacher.

ML: You did your PhD studies during the Cold War in Berlin, but were allowed to travel between both East and West in those days. How was that possible?

TOP: Yes, it was possible for me. I had a good connection to the Brazilian Embassy in East Berlin (for the GDR), which was headed by Vasco Mariz, a musicologist and important Villa-Lobos researcher. We frequently met at the Embassy to talk; he gave me a Diplomatic Visa to cross Checkpoint Charlie whenever I wanted or needed to. I could even stay in East Berlin. The cultural attaché of the Embassy, Francisco Chagas, became my friend and I stayed in his house without any problem, even though his place was watched closely by secret police: his daughter's boyfriend was a close relative of Erich Honecker (Head of State

of the GDR). We took it rather easy. I would bring books to my colleagues. Steven Feld's Kaluli book, something they would not have been able to find or to buy in the GDR, was a welcome treat. I also met Axel Hesse. He was an expert in Latin America, having been many times to Cuba to do field research. It was Hesse who brought the concept of transculturation into musicology in the 1960s. Can you imagine that? This remains quite unknown, as his dissertation has never been published. I like to remember that because now I'm the holder of a musicological Chair in transcultural music studies. I still maintain friendly relations with several of those scholars whom I met on the other side of the wall at the end of the 1980s. Did you know that the Institute of Musicology in East Berlin, at Humboldt University, had been the academic home of colleagues from ethnomusicology, such as Margaret Kartomi from Australia, Mário Vieira de Carvalho from Portugal, as well as Olavo Alén Rodríguez and Danilo Orozco from Cuba? I also met these people there.

If musicology had a great time in those days, on both sides of the wall, imagine the music life! I did a full second study, namely music in the HdK (School of Arts, later at the UdK, University of Arts Berlin). My teacher was the viola principal of the Berlin Philharmonic. I never missed any of their concerts. In Brazil the Berlin Philharmonic and Herbert von Karajan had always been a sort of myth for me. And now being in Berlin and even closer to the orchestra itself was extremely exciting.

ML: Was there maybe something like an initial spark that got you interested in Germany?

TOP: Well, in São Paulo, during my childhood and youth, my father, who was a television, art and music producer responsible for the Popular Music TV Festivals in São Paulo at the end of the 1960s, was fond of new releases of "Deutsche Grammophon do Brasil", especially recordings with Herbert von Karajan conducting the Berlin Philharmonic. So, when I first played with the Berlin Philharmonic, and later also under Karajan, a myth became real.

ML: Which instrument did you play in the Berlin Philharmonic?

TOP: I studied viola at the University of Arts in Berlin. My teacher was Wolfram Christ and I was engaged several times as a substitute for the Berlin Philharmonic. Besides that, I played in a chamber orchestra composed of professionals and music students, and we went on tour on behalf of the German Foreign Ministry throughout the world. I went on tours of South East Asia, East Africa and South America with the orchestra. Also, France, Italy and other countries in Europe. During the South East Asia tour I took my few days off to go to Bali, where I documented the *Ketchak* dance. This might have been the definite spark in regards to my commitment to make ethnomusicology my major and anthropology/Latin American studies and musicology my minor fields of study.

ML: What can you tell us about your work at the Institute of Traditional Music (IITM)?

TOP: I started to work there in 1985 as a student on an invitation from Habib Hassan Touma. He was a very dynamic organizer of music festivals and one of the extraordinary experts on Arabian music. Did you know him?

ML: Yes, I had classes with him. He worked very closely with the Venezuelan Rafael Salazar.

TOP: Yes with Salazar, and with organizers in the entire world. He brought the festival character into the Institute, but his efforts were based on research and quality, something that still inspires me in my work in Weimar today. Among many internationally renowned musicians, Touma had a close relationship with Kudsi Erguner, the Turkish *ney* player and Sufi master. Imagine that Kudsi Erguner, whom I met as a student almost 25 years ago, was my guest this year in our Turkish music program that I organized for Weimar, as well as in four other venues, including the music schools of Cologne and Detmold! You can see the exceptional quality of these concerts on our Liszt School of Music's YouTube channel. Last year we had an exceptional exchange project with Afghan traditional music masters, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bP3juRZYkl8&feature=c4-verview&list=UUwMm1XM8OTDbmRdZfo8ykAQ>.

Last month we organized a concert with these musicians in Kabul, Afghanistan. There was a worldwide live stream of the event through the European Broadcasting Union (Geneva). It was just amazing.

The idea to transform so-called stage presentations of folklore or "world music" artists into serious concerts with programs written by scholars, and linked to workshops and lectures, was the engagement of Habib Hassan Touma in the IITM. And I feel very much indebted to this model: you see I have adopted it every year since 2010 at our School of Music.

ML: Back to the IITM, what else can you tell us about this remarkable and unique institution?

TOP: The IITM was founded under its original name "International Institute for Comparative Music Studies and Documentation" in 1963, and Alain Daniélou was its first director. I never experienced Daniélou as director: all I know is that he was not a friend of Josef Kuckertz and Kurt Reinhard, his predecessor as head of the Institute of Ethnomusicology at the Free University. You should read the book of Daniélou on music in Asia, where he calls Kurt Reinhard to account, as well as all these "boring"

ethnomusicologists (Danielou 1972). By the way, for years I worked with Reinhard's widow, Ursula, on Turkish music in Berlin. This also was a very intense and inspiring experience for me.

Daniélou was a well-rounded scholar regarding India, a brilliant researcher, Indologist, musician, Vina player and dancer. His partner, Jacques Cloarec, a photographer, is, as far as I know, the head of the Daniélou Foundation, Italy (http://www.find.org.in/). One of the most important publication endeavors of the IITM under Daniélou was the UNESCO collection. He edited recordings of many of the great Indian masters of his time. He started the first concert series with these Indian musicians in Europe. Finally, the idea of direct contact to musicians from all over the world was Daniélou's. Touma has pursued and intensified those activities. Thanks to this I was able to listen to the whole world through live performances during my years in Berlin. But for this to become true, it had to be preceded by a decades-long process of activities and productions.

There is that story from the very beginning of the Institute in the early 1960s, when Daniélou phoned friends and colleagues, urging them insistently to attend a concert at the Institute that he organized, because the invited Indian musician was exceptional and quite famous in his home country. Finally some 20 people came to the concert. 10 years later the big audience hall of the Philharmonie building was sold out for the same musician: Ravi Shankar.

What had happened? A great deal of this success points back to Shankar's cooperation with George Harrison and the Beatles a few years later. But keep in mind that the UNESCO recordings were the first commercially- and worldwide-distributed recordings of a great number of master musicians from Asia and Africa.

Alain Daniélou contracted Habib Hassan Touma for the IITM, who came from Israel and did his PhD on the *maqambayati* in the Arabian *taqsim* at the Free University in 1968 under Reinhard. Habib always said to me that we have similar biographies, as we both came to Europe to study and do research on the music of our home countries. So we had another, or maybe even, a broader musical horizon than the whole musicological mainstream. Unfortunately Touma, who was working on North African *nuba* music in his final years, passed away much too early in 1998.

In the 1990s there were four scholars at the IITM: Max Peter Baumann, Habib Hassan Touma, Ulrich Wegner and myself, besides a staff of another eight colleagues in the administration, the archive, etc. I took care of the production of the recording editions and CDs of the IITM, a few of them in cooperation with the Smithsonian, like on Yoruba music, or the excellent production of Portuguese music in 1994, among others.

ML: Could you continue your research on music in Brazil while working at the IITM?

TOP: Of course. Another one of my projects at the IITM was done in cooperation with Brazil and it was wonderful to be financially independent from cultural institutions there. I

was researching music in Pernambuco at that time and looking for groups for presentations in Germany and in other European countries. The local head of culture in Recife wanted me to invite the "Balé Folclórico do Recife", a professional folklore show group. But, of course, I wanted to do something on the traditional music scene. Well, I choose a *frevo* and a *maracatu* group. Nothing of these types of performances had ever been seen in Europe before. Recently *frevo* was added to the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO and *maracatu*has itself become known throughout the world. I claim to have strongly contributed to the kickoff of this development. And it was the support of the IITM that allowed me to do research on *maracatu*, *frevo* or *caboclinhos*, another Pernambucan performing arts tradition, and to apply this research within the context of events, workshops and publications.

So "ethnomusicology" in Berlin in the 1980s and 1990s for me was naturally "applied", at least to a great extent. I couldn't even imagine doing work in the field that was not "applied". For instance, I invited the musicians I worked with for my PhD thesis to perform in Germany, as well as in São Paulo and Rio (they were from Bahia). I regarded this type of reciprocity as necessary. I asked myself, what should I give back to them? I organized concerts. Two days ago I just phoned the singer and dancer who was one of the main informants in the Reconcavo region of Bahia (or Reconcavo Baiano), where I spend two years doing fieldwork, and she reminded me that the house she is living in today was financed by one of the concert tours I organized for her group!

Finally, the documentation for my PhD thesis contributed basic data to the dossier that supported the nomination of *samba de roda*, from the Reconcavo Baiano, as a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO in 2005.

ML: Let's go a step back in time. There seems to have been some kind of competition between German comparative musicology and American ethnomusicology. I need to quote Kuckertz again, who complained that many of the colleagues from the US didn't read the Germans, which finally leads me to a question about transcultural music studies: What is new and what is maybe different to comparative musicology or/and ethnomusicology, or is it only "a reinventing of the wheel"?

TOP: Indeed, we always reinvent the wheel, or let's say, we "rethink" it, at least, like in all other disciplines, I believe. An English colleague once mentioned that the best definition of ethnomusicology stems from Jeff Todd Titon (1992): "Ethnomusicology is the study of people making music". Well, this is almost precisely the title of Wolfgang Suppan's book: "Der musizierende Mensch" (The music making human being), an anthropological study of music, published in 1984. I think even Hornbostel has given a similar definition to comparative musicology. So, it seems not a matter of who is saying it first, but the fact that it is said often enough that makes the difference. We can believe that Titon formulated a good definition. But let's always at the same time be aware that good definitions are

reinvented and revisited. This is completely normal.

Another example can be found in performance, which has been so important in my research, productions and projects. Also here, some people are recognized and others not. Hornbostel, for instance, wrote that brilliant article about the unity of the senses ("Die Einheit der Sinne", Hornbostel, 1927), referring to the fact that hearing, seeing and touching are all linked to each other in very special ways through performance. For me, this is the first scholarly account on the concept of performance in the way we perceive it today. Of course, Hornbostel used another language and maybe even another perspective than we would today, but he was already very close to basic ideas of modern performance studies. And even regarding comparison, it is a method not only stressed within the former musicology field, but also in use in many disciplines in the humanities, and also in the biological sciences. Nettl (2008) published an article on the comparative method in ethnomusicology, showing that a lot of injustice and mistakes happened in the past, when this comparative method was rejected as old fashioned. But if we see musicology, as well as sound studies in a vast sense, we cannot exclude comparison as a possible methodological approach. We will always jump from one culture to another and from one epoch to another to reflect and discuss several aspects. Of course, we need to be careful in how we make comparisons and I see that some categories were constructed that should not be taken seriously anymore. But completely rejecting some comparative methods would also be an over-reaction.

ML: There are voices in musicology that see ethnomusicology and Hornbostel as a huge problem, due to the fact that his "musical map" merges geographical areas with sounds and ethnic or cultural groupings.

TOP: Indeed, I see this point very critical as well. But before criticizing, let us mention another fact, which I consider fundamental when we try to understand the main representative of comparative musicology in the beginning of the 20th century: Erich Moritz von Hornbostel (1877-1935). He was far ahead of his time, or let's say, he was in perfect tune with a progressive *Zeitgeist* of his epoch. Comparative musicology as an academic discipline, for me, starts in 1905. Hornborstel began his work as an employee of the Berlin Phonogrammarchiv and published his article "*Probleme der Vergleichenden Musikwissenschaft*" ("Problems of Comparative Musicology") which was something like a birth certificate for ethnomusicology as an academic discipline: it defined what ethnomusicology was all about, tracing its future main tasks. And now, let's just have a look into the scientific mainstream, the *Zeitgeist*, of that time, in 1905: Albert Einstein published the first version of his theory of relativity, in the same year Sigmund Freud's first edition of his "Interpretation of Dreams" appeared. Two years later Picasso almost started a revolution in the arts with his "Demoiselle D'Avignon", which incorporated the iconography of African and Oceanian traditional masks in his paintings. I see Hornbostel in tune with these

efforts to essentially reshape intellectual and artistic thought and aesthetics at the beginning of the 20th century. And this was neither natural nor easy. Hornbostel had to justify his research to critics, who included highly renowned music theorists like Hugo Riemann (1849-1919). Riemann and others heavily criticized comparative musicology not only for its subject matter, so-called "primitive music", but also for its exacting methods, like the measuring of pitches and "exotic" musical scales. Riemann believed that the foremost goal of musicology was to identify and appreciate the aesthetic principles in musical master works, the so-called *Tonkunst*. "Real art" –this was his conviction– is not measurable. That was the main problem, compounded by the "questionable whimpering of African women" (Riemann), which was no music for many scholars in the field of art and music one century ago. You see, Hornbostel was much further into intellectual currents than those who criticized him within music theory, and was, in fact, not that old fashioned, as todays' musicologists would like to perceive him as. He was always in touch with important scientists like Thomas A. Edison and the anthropologist Franz Boas. Both visited him here in Berlin.

ML: Back to Tiago de Oliveira Pinto. After your time in Berlin you went to Brazil. Could you tell us something more about the reasoning behind the move?

TOP: I went back to Brazil, because I had a very enticing offer from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry. I worked for eight years for this ministry and my main responsibility was to build up the Brazilian Cultural Institute in Germany (ICBRA). Here I had the possibility to bring a lot of international projects into fruition. We took more than 200 artists of all disciplines from Brazil to Europe. And we made projects in Brazil possible as well. My last important art production was the exhibition of the collection of the Pergamon Museum (Berlin) in São Paulo and Rio, for which I was responsible for the shipping of 22 tons of antique marble over the Atlantic for the reconstruction of the famous altar of the old Greek city of Pergamon in São Paulo. I learned a lot by cooperating with the archaeologists, from their meticulousness in describing objects to their systematic view on artifacts and their meaning. My focus was on anthropology, in particular in regard to the relation between art and ritual, the aesthetic use of the human body in religious believe, and showing to the Brazilian public the affinities of the pantheon of the classical Greek gods and the world of the African derived gods, the *orixas*, with the local *candomblé* religion. Greek gods and goddesses and the *orixas* show a great deal of parallels in so far as they are connected to elements of nature (wind, fire, earth, etc.), or are recognizable by defined insignias. The local art critique considered this the most important and spectacular art event in São Paulo in 2006. Besides São Paulo we also did the exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Niteroi, at the other side of the bay of Rio de Janeiro, the Guanabara Bay. The museum building itself was designed by Oscar Niemeyer and it looks very much like a futuristic space object, or UFO. We transformed the circular modern space of the building into a

pantheon temple and displayed the main 12 Greek gods, almost 2000-year-old marble sculptures, in a circle. From there they looked out upon the splendid bay of Guanabara, with its blue sea surrounded by those huge tropical mountains. This was simply spectacular. Outside the main exhibition hall I displayed many large posters in order to explain to the public how tight the parallels between the Greek and the Afro-Brazilian pantheons are, making clear, however, that there is no direct relation between them. We can observe here very similar ways to understand the natural and transcendent worlds, constructed by different people in different periods of time.

ML: And what about São Paulo University, where you was a professor at the School for Social Sciences?

TOP: In 2001 I took over the position of a full Anthropology Professor at the University of São Paulo (USP). My main field was what we called "Anthropologia das Formas Expressivas". We were 20 professors in social anthropology, each one covering a different area within the discipline.

At the Free University, anthropology in the 1980s was dominated by issues of Marxist theory, whereas in São Paulo many of my colleagues were devoted to structuralism. Well, you will understand this if I tell you that Claude Lévi-Strauss founded my anthropological Institute at USP. So, I became familiar with many of Lévi-Strauss' writings. Today I still like to use the first chapter of *MythologicaI*, the "Overture", in my Weimar classes. The idea of reading a myth like a musical score fascinates me again and again. The curious thing about this text by Lévi-Strauss, is that hardly any anthropologist understands this connection to myth, because of a lack of knowledge about music theory. And, even discussing indigenous myths, Levi-Strauss only uses Western concepts of music to illustrate his analysis. One of my recent seminars for graduates was a reading course on Adorno and Lévi-Strauss.

Whereas Adorno (1952) tried to work out the myth in music in his writing about Richard Wagner, Lévi-Strauss did the same, but vice versa, searching for the music in the myth. And he often quotes Wagner, especially the *Leitmotiv* technique, to understand indigenous mythical structures. Both scholars were of the same age, completed PhDs in Philosophy, and are among the most influential thinkers of the 20th century, but I couldn't find any quotation from one on the other. I always wondered why there had been no direct interaction between the two. There are even similarities in their biographies, because as Jews, both went into exile in the United States during the Nazi regime, and both returned back to their countries, because they couldn't become acquainted to life in America.

I would not define my approach as devoted to structuralism, but sometimes I like to search for specific structured systems when analyzing music in relation to speech, or to social and especially to religious facts. So, my thinking has indirectly also been a little influenced by Lévi-Strauss at USP. At the moment I'm working on Maria Bethania's song

"Carta de Amor", applying Lévi-Strauss' method, as outlined in his *Structural Anthropology I* (1964). Bethania's text is about, one can say, the "Brazilian myth", and the main point of departure is the Reconcavo Baiano, its music and religious beliefs. So I really feel at home on many levels while making this analysis.

ML: What is the difference between São Paulo University and the work at German universities?

TOP: In São Paulo I had an extremely large number of students. Sometimes you needed a microphone for the lectures. At the Department of Social Sciences I unfortunately was not able to do those projects I would like to, because of the large number of students, but also because of bureaucracy. From Germany I carry out student excursions to Brazil every year; this was not possible from inside the country, for instance from São Paulo to Bahia, as I was willing to do. It may sound paradoxical, but I can do much more on Brazil with European students, than I could in São Paulo. Of course we did a lot of research in the city itself. São Paulo is a very fascinating place, since you find the whole of Brazil in it, together with communities from Japan, Lebanon and Syria, Italians, Hungarians, Germans, and, more recently, from Korea and from neighboring countries, like Bolivia and Peru. It is international in a very peculiar way, because while being so mixed in terms of national and cultural backgrounds, it is much farther from the world than Central Europe or the United States.

All the international cooperation I am doing now with Afghanistan or Turkey and even with Brazil –next year we will start establishing an exchange with Myanmar– would hardly be possible from São Paulo. In the Reconcavo of Bahia my Weimar students and I will organize an archive with all of my field material, we will cooperate in a museum exhibition about *samba de roda* as Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in the Casa do Samba in Santo Amaro, Bahia, and so forth. It is much easier to initiate a cooperative effort from Germany with the Reconcavo than from inside Brazil. And it is not a question of money: Brazil is a rich country, and USP is a rich university, but it might be due to the difference of logistics, infrastructure and politics. In a way it is also a matter of mentality.

ML: This is very interesting, as place and research are not so easy to define. I remember reading your thesis as a student. You were one of the first researchers who did not fit into the frame I had learnt. I mean, topics like the in/outsider debate, the "self and the other" or even the "stranger" (there is nothing better than the German term of "das Fremde"). Are these topics still interesting in transcultural musicology?

TOP: You have a note in my book (de Oliveira Pinto 1991).

ML: Yes, it is quite interesting what you wrote those days. Shall I read it loud?

TOP: I was still in my twenties, but please...

ML: "As a Brazilian, Bahia is not a foreign country for me, something that distinguishes me from other ethnologists. Therefore, there are some points of contact between the community and myself, particularly in terms of language, although I was never part of the Reconcavo culture. In my case the typical reversal effect in field research, transforming the ethnographer into an exotic foreigner, was relatively limited, an advantage in interviews and observations of everyday life situations".

TOP: This is true. Although in the beginning the Reconcavo area represented another cultural setting for me as well. I do not read my old publications, but it seems I should do so (laughing), because I can read it today like a text written by another author...

ML: Is there a difference between German and Brazilian ethnomusicology?

TOP: In recent years Brazilian ethnomusicology is constantly growing and spreading countrywide. I served as president of the Brazilian Association of Ethnomusicology between 2004 and 2006 and I remember the huge conference we held in São Paulo in 2006, with 500 applications, not only from musicology but also from music education and the social sciences. There are a lot of Brazilian music educators interested in their own country. Like composer Heitor Villa-Lobos in the first half of the 20th century, who brought that idea into the field, making musical anthropology very much indebted to music education and to musical life and traditions within the country. I think almost 95 percent of all studies in ethnomusicology in Brazil deal with Brazilian music. A Brazilian researcher does not travel to Pacific islands to study music or seldom enters into the field of Javanese Gamelan orchestra etc. Well, I had some very few colleagues who worked in Africa, but the large majority stays in Brazil. On the other hand this is understandable, since Brazilian music is so varied and simply overwhelming. This might be the main phenomenon that best reflects the differences with Germany you asked about. Here (in Germany) it was always the opposite: in my years as a university student, no German student did field research at home. I was one of the very few of my generation who for several years did field research in Berlin with the Turkish community, together with Ursula Reinhard, who was a linguist. My German fellow students, however, were everywhere else in the world.

But in recent years this has changed. I see that the interest in focusing on research in the European home country is increasing. As a member of the German UNESCO Expert Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage, I'm taking part in meetings around the country

to get in touch with cultural bearers of different kinds. I recently spoke to craftsmen and shepherds, as well as to members of folk dance and carnival groups, to charcoal burners, finch breeders (for finch singing contests), or organ builders, among many others. Regarding the European Herdsmen Association, I learned that there are over 200 different types of wind instruments still in use. A herdsman told me that in a recent meeting in Spain, this issue was discussed among a group of herdsmen from all over Europe, along with several different specific music gatherings. What a pity that no musicologist was present! But this will change. I have a student from Bavaria, for instance, who after attending my class on music as intangible cultural heritage decided to do her master thesis about the musical traditions in her home village. And she is only one out of a constantly growing group of students who want to learn more about this subject. The new generation is at less of a disadvantage than the two generations before. German traditional music (*Volksmusik*) finally seems no longer to be regarded as a problem in the academy, especially in music research. By the way, it might seem strange to you, but I experienced my first real emotional experience with German popular culture in Brazil, not in Germany.

ML: Let me guess: you did field research in Brazil among descendants of German immigrants.

TOP: Exactly. I went several times to do field work in Espírito Santo –the province just north of Rio de Janeiro. It was an emotional journey to a kind of Germany I had never experienced before. Imagine that on a Sunday you listened to farmers who had come to a small church, after a walk of at least an hour from their farm houses across hills and valleys, barefoot, in order to meet and to sing a three-part Contrapunctus –like in the time of Bach, somewhere deep in Saxony! This was simply impressing. I did some beautiful recordings of their chant.

Walking across the wonderful countryside of the mountain region of Espírito Santo, I once arrived at a small farmhouse and was invited to dinner with the family. When everybody was sitting around the table the grandfather said his prayer: "*Komm Herr Jesus, seiunser Gast und segne, was du unsbescheret hast*". ("Come Lord, be our guest, let this food to us be blessed"; literary translation, M.L.) All that happened in the most exuberant tropical environment. It was amazing, since I never saw such a natural way to behave within German oral traditions. The important thing I want to say here is that these people lived within their tradition without any worries or constraint. This was touching to me, especially after so many years living in Germany. Suddenly I learned something about German culture, because I was far away, and, at the same time, back to my own country. You see how fieldwork often comprises emotional moments. Certainly also because it always has to do with human experience, and this is what fascinates me the most in doing fieldwork. I'm glad we can start a new phase of reflecting on oral traditions in Germany. You asked about the debate on "self and the other". My experience in Espírito Santo shows how meaningless this

debate can be. For me definitely discussing "*das Eigene und das Fremde*" ("the self and the other") in our field is more than outdated. It is one of the issues on my black list of terms or concepts in the cultural sciences.

ML: A black lists of terms in the cultural sciences? What is that about?

TOP: Yes, there is such a list, and I will give you some examples, since you like to discuss theory. One of the terms on the list is "applied ethnomusicology", not because I'm against it, but because of the hype it is receiving in recent years. As I mentioned already, ethnomusicology has always to be applied in one way or another. My work with musicians and cultural studies wouldn't make any sense to me without any real application. Even my students are obliged to think about applying their research. I believe that if one is really interested in getting deep into the field, this will always be a natural result. Let's discuss applied research, I agree. But not because it is a new or more progressive approach. Alan Lomax did applied research, Gerhard Kubik and many others also, many decades ago.

Another term I avoid completely is "hybridity". This is not a useful term regarding any kind of cultural outcome. I find it completely useless in music research because it doesn't explain anything. To me it seems even wrong if hybridity is used as a synonym to "transculturation". Instead, Fernando Ortiz concept (1940) makes sense. We can discuss it, whether we agree or not.

I give you a further example from my list: "post-colonial world". Do you really think that we are finally living in a fully "post-colonial world", especially when we take a look at Latin America? Of course, most countries fought for their freedom or were given their independence in the 19th century. But colonialist structures are still present today. Let's take Brazil. In this country we face strong authoritarianism and paternalism guided by governmental cultural and political bureaucracy and technocracy. Interaction in the domains of culture and education are almost determined by top-down relations as I experienced them in the process of making an inventory of intangible heritage in the country. It is interesting to observe that the actual dialogues in Germany are almost done at a same level discussion or even in the bottom up direction. Here the shepherds or craftsmen come personally to discuss their points of view.

But in Brazil, even outside the governmental domain, some voices sound rather authoritarian and truly colonialist: Have a look how Brazilian TV station Rede Globo shapes television programs in luso-phone African countries. For me this is clear cultural colonialism, or neo-colonialism, if you prefer. We are still far away from a true and broad post-colonialism, strange enough also because the former colonized has become a colonialist himself. What we need is to learn to deal with colonial structures in all domains of society and to make a critical analysis of the discourse they represent, also in and as music.

Especially in our field we are not free from colonized viewpoints. I once had an

interesting experience at the Berlin *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*/The House of World Cultures. As the head of the ICBRA I organized an event in 2000 on behalf of the 500-year celebration of Brazil. The Brazilian government supported a lot of cultural events during that time, such as exhibitions in London, concerts with a Brazilian symphony orchestra on an international tour, etc. But nothing, absolutely nothing was planned abroad representing the indigenous people! Well, I did something, and in a way I was representing the Brazilian government as well, although behaving more like an NGO (ICBRA was a locally registered organization funded by the government, similar to the German Goethe Institutes). I organized a performance with 25 Xavante Indians from Mato Grosso (I remember, that among my colleagues, I could invite Tony Seeger and Rafael de Menezes Bastos, who joined the event). The presentation itself was in the scope of a festival of contemporary performance art. During the previous negotiation the festival leaders did not want to bring Amerindians "from the Brazilian jungle to the European stage", fearing stereotypes of exoticism and colonialism. Indeed, they were right thinking back on the Paris World Exhibition or the "human exhibitions" at Hagenbeck's Zoo in Hamburg, almost one century ago.

So, in Berlin they could only agree upon a sort of workshop by the Xavante. When I talked to the Xavante leaders, this suggestion was completely dismissed: "Why should we not enter the stage like any other artistic group?" they wondered. You see how things change, depending on the viewpoint. So I kept firm and finally, we had the group of Xavante men on stage, just dancing, painting their bodies, and singing to the sound of 25 rattles for over one and a half hour. This was one of the most impressive "contemporary" performances the audience had ever seen. And the reaction to it was enthusiastic. But looking back, it was very complicated to take the group of Indians from Brazil to Germany, especially due to the paternalistic behavior of Brazilian officials. Amerindians are under the custody of the National Indian Foundation, the FUNAI. I invited the Xavantes without asking FUNAI for permission, knowing that the government would make trouble regarding the journey. We accompanied those who would travel to leave their village to go to the next town to apply for the passports. This was a one-day-long tour down the river by boat and then with trucks to the final destination. As soon as they got their passports, the Xavante went to the next airport to fly to Cuiaba, from there with another plane to Rio, and from Rio finally over the Atlantic to Europe: almost a one week trip from the home village to Berlin! But this was not all: meanwhile, the FUNAI presidency phoned the Brazilian ambassador in Berlin and complained strongly about the "madman" (this was me) who was taking a group of Indians on an international tour without any official permission. The government was seriously scared to be publically discredited abroad by the Indians. I was aware about this in advance and had already talked to the Indians. The tour was not a political one, this was not their aim. They just wanted to be considered like any other artistic group of the festival: "We don't represent Brazil, we represent ourselves". The Brazilian ambassador called informing me of the reaction of FUNAI to end up saying: "Tiago, I trust you. Go ahead".

(He was one of those exceptional high-ranking functionaries whom you find from time to time, very rarely). And he was not disappointed. Of course I mediated a critical discussion after the show, which, by the way, was very informative and helpful for the audience to learn more about the people whose songs and dances had just been performed. You see, the parties involved here feared "colonialist approaches": the Brazilian government for obvious reasons, and the head of the festival, by evincing colonialist behavior the other way round. My final statement is quite simple: why should a Xavantes' performance be treated differently than a concert of the Philharmonic orchestra?

ML: In 2006 you finished your work in Brazil, returned to Germany and became, a few years later, the Chair of the transcultural music studies program in Weimar.

TOP: I had a very interesting time in Brazil, but, as always in life, there are two sides of a coin, and I took the invitation as visiting professor in Hamburg, resigning from USP, where I'm keeping an affiliation with the post-graduate program in social anthropology. In 2009 I applied for the vacancy in transcultural music studies, a new chair that had been established in Weimar. The Chair's name is not my invention, as many colleagues assume. The description of the Chair harmonized very well with my ideas. I was thinking what "transcultural music studies" is about and put that in my presentation on my way on the train to Weimar. A few hours later I explained it to the Chair's search committee. The term "transculturality" itself was brought into discussion in Germany by the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch in the early 1990s, but as I told you, it was Axel Hesse who used the term in musicology already in the 1960s, of course under the influence of Cuban Fernando Ortiz.
In fact, all cultures in a way are transcultural. On the other hand this new designation for ethnomusicology is an attempt to display both the method we use, disregarding a main research focus on "ethnicity", and also the general perspective on music, which is completely open. You could even see it close to comparative musicology, of course not in the old sense of the early 20th century, but in the implicit emphasis on processes of music making and of musical transfer, anywhere and produced by anyone in the world.

Transcultural music studies is recently serving as a label, since new chairs are appearing in Germany under this name. In the next conference of the *GesellschaftfürMusikforschung*/"German Society of Music Research" (GfM) in Dresden this year, Julio Mendivil will chair a panel to discuss different designations in use right now in German-speaking countries: ethnomusicology, music-ethnology, music in cultural anthropology, European ethnomusicology, and so on.
Maybe transcultural music studies is not that close to music anthropology in the strict sense, since we are much indebted to cultural studies, cooperating with popular music studies, and even with historical musicology.

In Weimar you will find the largest Institute of Musicology in Germany right now. Besides transcultural music studies, there is a professorship of jazz and popular music

History as well as a chair for Jewish music studies, and other five for the different periods of historical musicology. There is also an emphasis on arts administration, represented by another professorship. It is a good combination of subjects and a very comfortable context for musicological studies. And often we are in dialogue in our courses. My colleague Christiane Wiesenfeldt gave a lecture about techno as a Professor in historical musicology. This semester she will lecture about "Music and Man in History". Albrecht von Massow, who represents music in the 20th century, as well as contemporary music, will give a lecture on the "Anthropological Basis of Music in the Context of the Humanities and Education" and Jascha Nemtsov will lecture on "Music in the Old Testament". You see, this is just a sample of a huge spectrum in music, music education and musicology –a pure luxury these days.

ML: Who studies musicology in Weimar?

TOP: That is always the question to whom studies in Weimar are addressed. First of all I do not educate ethnomusicologists in a narrow sense. The final degrees, the Masters and PhD earned at our institute, are clearly in musicology with a specific profile that can be in transcultural music studies. The other two profiles offered are in historical musicology and jazz/popular music. Soon there will also be the possibility of getting a PhD in Cultural Sciences with a musicological track, in Weimar as well. In general, 50 percent of studies are dedicated to that kind of specification, including the Masters thesis. The other half can be done in the neighboring musicological profiles. The historians are joining my classes for instance, which leads to very fruitful discussions. So, the idea is to teach musicology within a wide spectrum. During the basic course of study our students can choose anything from the large spectrum that is offered. While the Bachelor of Arts is a degree in "pure" musicology, it is possible to do a specification in the BA thesis as well, to attend the specific courses and to write on a transcultural or jazz subject.

Another important aspect of the course of study in Weimar is that I conceive transcultural music studies as a "project-oriented" study in music research. At least at the PhD level some of the candidates are fully financed in different projects. The involvement in projects implicates further skills as well, for instance in administration, project management, international relations, etc. This is part of the qualifications such a course of study can offer. We have the "Safar-Afghanistan", a project coordinated by one of my PhD candidates (Philip Küppers) but where another PhD candidate is also involved, or the recent cooperation with the Fraunhofer Institute, Ilmenau and Bach Technologies, Norway, for which two MA students developed a system for content-based recognition of musical rhythms and genres mainly from Latin America. Or the partnership with Casa do Samba in the Reconcavo, Bahia, where people I worked with in the past are now cooperating with our students. We did twice a field research seminar there, involving interested local musicians and teachers themselves, to do research. So, Weimar musicology students are always

encouraged to participate in practical work; they can go into the field, in Turkey, Brazil, Afghanistan, where we are contributing to a local music archive as well.

Having joined the academy rather late in my career and starting as an anthropologist, I was only able to educate a few people interested specifically in ethnomusicology. Well, some of my former students in São Paulo are working in the cultural sector or as anthropologists today, and some of them are connected with music. At the USP I brought the focus on art and music into anthropology and in Weimar it goes the other way around: I introduce cultural and anthropological theories to musicology students. Our institute is part of the School of Music in Weimar as well as part of the University of Jena, an old classical university with Departments of cultural studies, sociology, philosophy, etc. This means that our students join the courses there and we have students from the social sciences, History etc., in our courses, taken as a minor.

And, honestly, I enjoy having my office in a school of music. I always hear some sounds coming out of the windows or neighboring rooms. There is always a good vibe...

ML: Finally, the question about theorizing in ethnomusicology, you think that is still a topic?

TOP: During the program, theory is a topic, of course. But the problem in theorizing ethnomusicology is that we deal with a chameleon. We use inputs from so many and so different disciplines. For me it is very difficult to say what ethnomusicology is –which can also be seen as a great opportunity.

Another problem is that ethnomusicologists are caught between the chairs, often being perceived as less qualified in musicology, and rather weak in social and cultural theory. You can frequently observe, that when ethnomusicologists recycle theoretical ideas "revealed" by anthropologist, to apply them to music, it is almost "old stuff". On the other hand, how often do anthropologists, who realize you are talking about music, say: "oh, I cannot read scores" –and that's it. In São Paulo I taught a course in issues of Brazilian musical anthropology for social scientists without using any musical transcriptions or scores. It is not so easy to cover all areas and this is the main difficulty to define our field, our everyday question: what color is the chameleon today? Yellow, red, or blue?

Finally, I would summarize that related to the question about the color of the chameleon, it might be more important to consider the chameleon itself. I mean, music and musical studies, including people making music, and the social environment of music, in general.

Students who decide to study in Weimar come because of the learning opportunities that we offer. I have very interested students and I hope I can develop the PhD program up to 10 candidates.

ML: Do you have a final vision for the future of ethnomusicology or transcultural music studies?

TOP: All studies and interactions need to be on a par with our partners, this is very important for me. My own research at the moment focuses on music as intangible cultural heritage in the definition of the UNESCO Convention. I give you an example of the importance of the Convention, recently signed by Germany: The state of Thuringia, where Weimar and Jena are located, has 10 state and city orchestras, some of them existing for almost 300 years. And there is a high percentage of oral tradition in the way these orchestras cultivate their own sound. This will be an issue very soon, since the awareness of being part of a unique intangible heritage is growing. But there is something now in Germany that is very exciting to discover: the "deep sound" of the country, through this intangible heritage. In many meetings with cultural bearers I had immense pleasure to discuss and to know more about the musical life of shepherds, of carnival associations, of traditional musical instruments builders, etc. Remembering the project of Krister Malm and Roger Wallis from the 1980s, "Big Sounds from Small Peoples", (on the music's of Jamaica, Trinidad and other small countries) I recently made the joke, asking in Germany if what we are doing in the UNESCO's Expert Committee is searching for "small sounds of a big people"? In the country of Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven this belief could easily come up when dealing with the flute tunes for the sheep herding. But, of course, we don't think that way. On the contrary, every sound produced in a lively performance is "big" and worth being listened to and appreciated, anywhere in the world!

ML: Thank you very much for this pleasant conversation.

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Biography / Biografía / Biografia

Matthias Lewy holds a PhD in comparative musicology and anthropology from the Free University of Berlin and a post-graduate Diploma in Cultural Management from the Academy of Music Hanns Eisler Berlin. His research focus is on world music, sound and ritual, as well as in music and language. At the moment he is working on concepts of auditory anthropology. He is a lecturer in social and cultural anthropology at the Free University of Berlin, the University of Marburg (Germany) and in ethnomusicology at the University of Halle (Germany).

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