

SBS interview 18/09/2021

BY MARIANA GOTARDO *"That BrazilianMusicWoman"*

SBS Radio Interview Podcast Link (in Portuguese)

<https://www.sbs.com.au/language/portuguese/audio/paixao-pela-musica-brasileira-imprensa-na-obra-da-cantora-e-compositora-australiana-diana-clark-que-inclui-versao-de-cancao-do-chico-cesar>

English translation:

Passion for Brazilian music imprinted in the work of Australian singer-songwriter Diana Clark, which includes a version of a song by Chico César



There are more than 20 years of interest, studies and research on Brazilian music, as well as some visits to Brazil and contact with local musicians. From this long relationship, Diana May Clark produces a composition with lyrics in Portuguese, melodies and arrangements inspired by Brazilian music, as well as the English version of the hit "Mama África", by singer and composer Chico César

BY MARIANA GOTARDO

AUSTRALIAN SINGER-SONGWRITER DIANA MAY CLARK IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE SONG "MAMA ÁFRICA", BY BRAZILIAN MUSICIAN, SINGER AND COMPOSER CHICO CÉSAR.

DIANA GOT TO KNOW BRAZILIAN MUSIC THROUGH HER WORK AND LIFE PARTNER, DOUG DE VRIES, AND DURING A FEW VISITS TO BRAZIL AND CLOSER CONTACT WITH OUR CULTURE, SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH BRAZILIAN MUSIC.

DIANA HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PERSONALLY MEET THE ARTIST FROM PARÁIBA AND OBSERVE HIS WORK, AND THUS WAS BORN THE VERSION OF ONE OF CHICO CESAR'S MOST FAMOUS SONGS.

IF WE THINK THAT ART IS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE AND AWAKENS OUR DEEPEST FEELINGS, MAYBE IT IS POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MAKES A PERSON FALL IN LOVE WITH THE CULTURE OF ANOTHER COUNTRY, COMPLETELY DIFFERENT AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DISTANT FROM THE ONE IN WHICH THEY WERE BORN.

DIANA SAYS THAT SHE WAS RECENTLY INTRODUCED TO A PERSON WHO RECOGNIZED HER AND SAID: "AH...YOU'RE THAT BRAZILIAN MUSIC WOMAN!", ALTHOUGH SHE HAS TRACKED MORE THAN 25 YEARS IN A CAREER SPANNING JAZZ AND FOLK/POP SINGER, COMPOSER, SINGING TEACHER, CHOIR CONDUCTOR, ARRANGER, AND MANY MUSIC TOURS WITH DIFFERENT BANDS.

ASKED WHAT SHE ATTRIBUTES TO THE FACT THAT PEOPLE RELATE HER MORE TO HER WORK TO BRAZILIAN MUSIC THAN TO HER OTHER MUSICAL WORKS, DIANA SAYS: "THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA WHO HAVE SUCH A DEEP RELATIONSHIP WITH BRAZILIAN MUSIC. ME AND DOUG DE VRIES, WHO FIRST WAS MY MUSICAL PARTNER AND LATER BECAME MY LIFE PARTNER, HAVE A LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH BRAZIL. I'VE BEEN THERE FOUR TIMES AND DOUG SEVEN; DOUG'S DAUGHTER MARRIED A BRAZILIAN. SO, WE HAVE SOME BRAZILIAN BLOOD RUNNING THROUGH OUR FAMILY LINE. THAT IS GETTING DEEPER AND OUR WORLD BLENDS BEYOND CULTURAL BORDERS."

DIANA ALSO POINTS OUT THAT WHEN SHE SHARES CHORAL MUSIC WITH SINGERS ACROSS AUSTRALIA, HER SPECIALTY IS BRAZILIAN MUSIC, AND THIS ENDS UP REACHING FAR MORE PEOPLE THAN HER POP, JAZZ AND FOLK COMPOSITIONS, AS SHE HAS NOT HAD A RECORD LABEL OR DISTRIBUTION THAT PROMOTED IT. "I'M AN INDEPENDENT ARTIST, WHICH IS GOOD IN MANY WAYS. IN THE PAST THE SALES OF AN ALBUM WOULD ENABLE THE CREATION OF THE NEXT PROJECT... WE SOLD ABOUT 15 THOUSAND ALBUMS TOURING TOGETHER, WHICH WAS GREAT. RECENT YEARS HAVE BROUGHT NEW CHALLENGES AS WE ALL KNOW SELLING MUSIC DIGITALLY, THOUGH CONVENIENT, NO LONGER GENERATES THE KIND OF INCOME THAT ALLOWS FOR RECORDING ARTISTS TO CREATE NEW WORK (EXCEPT FOR VERY FEW)", HIGHLIGHTS DIANA.



Diana Clark (front) has participated in various groups and recorded & released different musical styles, but is mostly known as (something along the lines of) "that Brazilian Music Woman".
Supplied

ON THE LAST CD SHE RECORDED, 'THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GIRL' DIANA INCLUDED HER ENGLISH VERSION OF ['MAMA ÁFRICA \(PEOPLE GOT TO HEAR\)'](#). "I CONTACTED CHICO CÉSAR TO ASK FOR PERMISSION AND HE REALLY LIKED THE VERSION. THE NEW LYRIC IS NOT A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF HIS BRAZILIAN

PORTUGUESE LYRIC, BUT I WORKED TO KEEP THE ESSENCE AND PASSION OF THE ORIGINAL IN THIS TRIBUTE TO AFRO CULTURE...MAMA ÁFRICA REPRESENTING BOTH THE SOURCE OF LIFE (MOTHER) AND MANY (RHYTHMIC) STYLES OF THE WORLD'S POPULAR MUSIC", EXPLAINS DIANA, WHO SAYS SHE HAS A GOOD FRIENDSHIP WITH THE BRAZILIAN MUSICIAN.

CONTACT WITH CHICO CÉSAR

DIANA SAYS SHE MET CHICO CÉSAR IN PERSON ON HIS VISIT TO AUSTRALIA, AT HER FAVORITE MUSIC FESTIVAL IN THE COUNTRY, WOMADELAIDE, WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL, ACCORDING TO HER A DELICIOUS COMBINATION OF MUSIC, ART AND NATURE, BECAUSE IT IS STAGED AROUND THE BOTANICAL GARDEN OF CAPITAL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, SA.

"I OFTEN WENT TO ADELAIDE AT FESTIVAL TIME. THAT YEAR, CHICO PLAYED AT THE EVENT TOGETHER WITH SIMONE SOUL, AN INCREDIBLE DRUMMER. THEIR DUO CONCERT BLEW US AWAY. LUCKILY, BEFORE THE FESTIVAL STARTED, WE WERE AT THE RIVERSIDE AT AN INFORMAL EVENT AND I SPOTTED CHICO CESAR. I APPROACHED HIM WITH NOT VERY GOOD PORTUGUESE, HE KNEW ALMOST NO ENGLISH, BUT THAT WAS WHERE A FRIENDSHIP WAS BORN", REMEMBERS DIANA.

YEARS LATER, HER HUSBAND, DOUG DE VRIES, VISITED CHICO IN SÃO PAULO, THE BIRTHPLACE OF DOUG'S SON-IN-LAW. "AND THEN, IN 2013, WHEN I WAS PRODUCING MY ALBUM 'OTHER SIDE OF THE GIRL', WHICH CONTAINS MY VERSION OF 'MAMA AFRICA', I WENT ALONE TO JOÃO PESSOA, IN PARAÍBA, TO VISIT CHICO. IT WAS THE LONGEST PERIOD I SPENT COMMUNICATING IN PORTUGUESE", SHE HIGHLIGHTS.

DIANA SAYS THAT WHEN SHE WAS IN JOÃO PESSOA, SHE GOT TO KNOW A LOT ABOUT THE CITY, AND DESCRIBES: "CHICO ARRANGED TO HAVE ME PICKED UP AT THE AIRPORT DELIVERING ME TO MEET HIM AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS OF GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE AT THE TIME HE WAS SECRETARY OF CULTURE IN PARAÍBA. I ACCOMPANIED HIM TO SOME MEETINGS WHILE I WAS STILL JETLAGED. I HAD LUNCH WITH HIM AND HIS GIRLFRIEND BARBARA, WHO LATER BECAME HIS WIFE. WE ENJOYED THE 'DISH OF THE DAY'. HE TOOK ME TO RADIO STATIONS FOR INTERVIEWS, TOLD PEOPLE ABOUT MY VERSION OF 'MAMA AFRICA', AND TOOK ME TO THE STUDIO, WHERE HE RECORDED A GUEST APPEARANCE ON MY SONG ['HANG ON'](#)."

TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RECORDING OF THIS SONG, DIANA SAYS CESAR LISTENED TO THE SONG A FEW TIMES AND DID A GREAT IMPROVISATION AT THE END. DIANA'S LYRICS WERE INSPIRED BY IMPORTANT PEOPLE WHO PASSED THROUGH HER LIFE AND WHO WERE REMARKABLE, SUCH AS AN ENGLISH SINGING TEACHER SHE HAD AT SCHOOL, WHEN SHE WAS ABOUT 10 YEARS OLD AND LIVING WITH HER FAMILY IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA, IN A SMALL TOWN CALLED TENNANT CREEK, IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY; WHERE, ACCORDING TO DIANA, THE CLIMATE IS SIMILAR TO BRASILIA, WITH RED EARTH, FEW TREES, LITTLE SHADE AND ENDLESS HORIZONS. THE SINGING TEACHER DIANA REFERED TO IN 'HANG ON' WAS THE ONE WHO MADE HER BELIEVE IN HER OWN POTENTIAL TO BECOME A SINGER.



Despite not knowing when she will be able to return to Brazil, Diana maintains contact with Brazilian music through a virtual choir lab she hosts coordinated with Mila Schiavo, founder of Mi La Música, Rio de Janeiro. Supplied

PANDEMIC X WORK

WHEN TALKING ABOUT HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED HER WORK AND THAT OF MANY MUSICIANS AROUND THE WORLD, DUE TO THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF CONCERTS AND TRAVEL, DIANA SAID THAT MANY PEOPLE WERE ANXIOUS AND CONFUSED AS THEY HAD TO SLOW DOWN, STOP AND REFLECT. SHE HERSELF WAS TEACHING SINGING LESSONS TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHEN THE PANDEMIC STARTED, AND SHE GAVE UP THAT JOB BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T FEEL IT SAFE TO BE INSIDE A CLOSED ROOM TEACHING SINGING. BUT SHE HAD OTHER JOBS THAT SHE HELD REMOTELY, AND CAME ACROSS WHAT SHE CONSIDERED A GOOD COINCIDENCE.

DIANA SAYS THAT A PERSON SHE HAD MET ONCE OR TWICE SAID THERE WAS AN ONLINE BRAZILIAN MUSIC CHOIR AIMED AT PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES. SHE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE FOR A WHILE, TO SEE WHAT IT WAS LIKE. THE INITIATIVE BY MI LA MÚSICA, LED ONLINE FROM RIO DE JANEIRO, WORKING WITH STUDENTS FROM THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE. SHE SAID SHE LOVED IT BECAUSE IT'S A SLICK, IMPRESSIVE & BEAUTIFUL PRODUCTION WITH VERY EXPERIENCED MUSICIANS.

FOR DIANA, "IT'S GREAT TO HAVE THIS ONLINE CONNECTION EXPERIENCE SINCE WE CAN'T TOUR. I MADE A DEEP CONNECTION WITH MILA SCHIAVO AND VICENTE COSTA NUCCI. THEY ARE WONDERFUL PEOPLE. I PARTNERED WITH THEM TO BRING THE FIRST BRAZILIAN VIRTUAL CHOIR TO AUSTRALIA. WE HAVE MEMBERS FROM MELBOURNE, FROM COUNTRY VICTORIA, FROM SYDNEY, ADELAIDE & PERTH. IT'S NOURISHING TO FIND THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO SING & EXPLORE THE MUSIC I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT."

SHE SAYS THAT IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE SHE HAS FELT AS CONTENT WITH HER WORK AS SHE IS NOW, THAT SHE FEELS LIKE A MUSICAL BRIDGE BETWEEN BRAZILIAN AND AUSTRALIAN CULTURES, AND ADDS: "I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL BE ABLE TO GO TO BRAZIL AGAIN BUT I HAVE BEEN VERY LUCKY BECAUSE I MADE THESE NEW FRIENDSHIPS, WE'VE HAD PROFOUND EXPERIENCES. IT'S SPECIAL TO BE ABLE TO SHARE THIS WITH PEOPLE WITHOUT THEM HAVING TO GO TO BRAZIL. I ALSO ENJOY TEACHING MILA, VICENTE AND THEIR FRIENDS ABOUT AUSTRALIA. IT'S A GOOD WAY TO MENTALLY AND

ENERGETICALLY TRAVEL, EXPLORE AND IMMERSE YOURSELF IN CULTURE EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE STUCK AT HOME."

PASSION FOR BRAZILIAN MUSIC

ABOUT HER PASSION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH MUSIC, DIANA SAYS SHE COMES FROM A MUSICAL FAMILY. HER GRANDMOTHER AND MOTHER SANG ALTO, AND SHE CLAIMS TO BE TRUE **CONTRALTO** BY INHERITANCE THROUGH TWO GENERATIONS OF LOW FEMALE VOICES. HER FATHER PLAYS THE PIANO.

SHE GREW UP IN A MUSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND THEREFORE NEVER HAD TOO MUCH DIFFICULTY AUDITIONING AND SINGING IN PUBLIC. ON THE CONTRARY, SHE LIKED TO SING VERY LOUDLY AND HAD TO LEARN TO SING SOFTER IN ORDER NOT TO LOSE HER VOICE.

ABOUT THE PASSION FOR BRAZILIAN MUSIC, SHE SAYS THAT THE FIRST CONTACT WAS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF HER MUSICAL AND LIFE PARTNER, DOUG DE VRIES, WHO HAD BEEN FLIRTING WITH BRAZILIAN MUSIC FOR MANY YEARS AND JOURNEYED WITH HER TO BRAZIL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2000, WHEN THEY SPENT SIX MONTHS MAINLY IN RIO DE JANEIRO; WHERE THEY WERE IMMERSSED IN THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE. THEY MET MANY MUSICIANS, PARTICIPATED IN SHOWS AND SURROUNDED THEMSELVES IN BRAZILIAN MUSIC AND ATMOSPHERE. DIANA REPORTS THAT "THE RICHNESS OF THE HARMONIES, THE POETRY OF THE LYRICS AND THE GROOVES WERE VERY STIMULATING FOR ME. THEY FUELED MY IMAGINATION AND HELPED ME AS A SONGWRITER".

ONE OF THE COMPOSITIONS OF DIANA CLARK'S MOST RECENT ALBUM, 'THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GIRL', CALLED '[COM CORAÇÃO \(WITH HEART\)](#)' HAS A MIXTURE OF ENGLISH AND PORTUGUESE IN THE LYRICS. DIANA'S INSPIRATION CAME WHEN THE ALBUM WAS ALMOST DONE, SHE WAS RELAXING & LISTENING TO A MARISSA MONTE SONG WITH RHYTHM OF THE MUSIC THAT WAS PLAYFUL LIKE IN A 'CIRANDA', A CHILDREN'S CIRCLE SONG, AND SHE EXPLAINS – IT WAS THE LAST SUNSET OF THE YEAR AND THE SONG'S ESSENCE ENTERED MY MIND: "THIS MOMENT OF COMPLETION, RELEASE AND CONTEMPLATION GAVE ME CONFIDENCE TO MIX THE TWO LANGUAGES, ENGLISH AND PORTUGUESE, IN A FUN WAY. AND I'M VERY PROUD OF THIS SONG. DOUG CONTRIBUTED A RICH FLUTE ARRANGEMENT THAT HAS A JOBINIAN STYLE. WE HAD A LOT OF FUN PLAYING THIS SONG LIVE WHEN WE TOURED THE ALBUM'S RELEASE. I HOPE AUSTRALIAN AND BRASILIAN PEOPLE GET TO HEAR THIS SONG AND ENJOY IT."

TO LISTEN TO DIANA MAY CLARK'S SONGS AND LEARN MORE ABOUT HER MUSICAL WORK, JUST VISIT THIS [SITE](#).

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