

THE NEW GROVE
Dictionary of
MUSIC & MUSICIANS

MANDÓ

Joseph J. Palackal

2nd EDITION
LONDON: MACMILLAN, 2001

The New Grove dictionary of Music & Musicians: Entry by Joseph J. Palackal

Mandó

A composite genre of poetry, music, and dance, popular among the Catholics of Goa and the neighboring regions on the west coast of India. The origin of the word is obscure. The lyrics in Konkani, the language of Goa, include words borrowed or derived from Portuguese (Goa was a Portuguese colony from 1510 until 1961). The refrain from a mandó, written by Torquato de Figueiredo (1876-1948) is presented below:

Voso vos re rorhum' naka

Deu-u feliz kortol' tuka

Go, go dear, and do not cry

God will make you happy

In its most popular form, the lyric consists of three stanzas with four lines each, and a chorus section that may have two to four lines. Love-themes, mostly from the point of view of women, dominate the lyrics, and the prevailing mood is melancholic. The musical style is predominantly Western. As a rule, the melody begins in a minor key and later modulates to its relative major. Parallel singing in two voices is a distinctive feature of mandó; the voices move in thirds and sixths. The manner of ornamenting notes, called kongre (Konkani for "curved" or "curled"), and the vocal inflections are indigenous in character.

Most of the melodies are set in 6/4 meter, with the primary accent on the fifth beat and the secondary accent on the first beat. The fifth beat appears to be the preferred starting point for the melody. The instrumental accompaniment includes violin and ghumott, a two-sided clay pot, the right side of which is covered with lizard-skin.

Both men and women dance the mandó. Men carry a hat in one hand and a brightly colored kerchief in the other; women hold fans of sandalwood, with which they cover part of their faces. An equal number of men and women move in parallel rows, facing each other and making flirtatious gestures without physical contact. Very often, mandó concludes with a stylistically similar dance, called dulpod, which is faster in tempo and merrier in mood. Mandó is usually performed during wedding celebrations and social gatherings. In a traditional wedding reception of Goan Catholics, it is the bride who initiates the singing. Since the 1970s, the Goa Cultural and Social Center has organized mandó festival every year at Panjim, the capital of Goa.

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