

15th April 2009

Dear LUTSF,

Please find enclosed a copy of my completed report following my research trip in Brazil December 25th 2008 to February 18th 2009. My project aim was to further develop my knowledge of Afro-Brazilian dance, building on my two previous trips to Brazil, with the intention of using this knowledge to further my work as a teacher and performer of these styles. My training in Salvador da Bahia began on 29th Dec and finished on 9th February. I flew back to the UK on the 11th Feb, and then spent a week in London as the final part of my project, teaching in depth the new information I had gathered to members of my dance company.

I achieved more than I could have imagined, and made an extremely important contact in Salvador with Carlos Ujhama, as well as maintaining my links with Vania Oliveira. The highlights of the trip for me were firstly attending the many performances, and cultural events – furthering my understanding of the culture. Also a highlight was attending the course with Ile Aiye, which was an amazing and unique opportunity.

I am already working with the new styles I learnt, both in my regular classes and workshops, and with my performance company. I would like to thank you for giving me this fantastic opportunity that has helped me so much with my work.

Yours sincerely,

Claudia Aurora

REPORT - CLAUDIA AURORA SALVADOR 2009

Description

My project aim was to further develop my knowledge of Afro-Brazilian dance, building on my two previous trips to Brazil, with the intention of using this knowledge to further my work as a teacher and performer of these styles. I arrived in Salvador on December 25th. I had been in email contact with teachers – Carlos Ujhama and Vania Oliveira – who were expecting me. When I arrived in Salvador I contacted them by phone and we arranged to meet.



The first teacher I met was Carlos Ujhama, who I had been in contact with since May 2008 when I organised a workshop with him in Bristol. Carlos is a teacher of Afro-Brazilian dance at O.P.A. (Organizacao de Permacultura e Arte). He specializes in Samba de roda, Samba duro, Ijexa, Samba Rio and Samba Reggae. We arranged to start classes on December 29th – we worked in his studio at O.P.A. from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. nearly every day. I had a total of 37 hours tuition. We worked on all the styles he specializes in – he is an excellent teacher, who broke down all the movements extremely precisely, and is a perfectionist, which helped me to understand the foundation and technique of each style and movement. In addition he explained fully the history and cultural background of each style. As well as these private classes, Carlos also was very helpful in taking me to many cultural musical and dance events, for example the New Years eve in Barra, where there was an explosion of music and dance pouring from each corner. He took me to see the new highlights of Salvador's music scene – “Orquesta Rumpilez” (who combine the Afro-Brazilian

religious music of Candomble with Big Band jazz arrangements, as well as the street bands of Samba Reggae “Swing Do Pelo” “Timbalada” and “Filhos De Ghandi”. I also attended the Concurso Beleza Negra Ile Aiye 2009 – which was extremely extravagant and powerful evening featuring top dancers competing to become the Dance queen 2009 for the Bloco Ile Aiye Carnival Parade. This was very revealing and inspiring to really experience the cultural context of these dance forms.

Whilst continuing my lessons with Carlos Ujhama, I contacted Vania Oliveira, who had been my original contact in Salvador and with whom I had trained on my previous trips. I had planned to attend her course at Escola de Danca Fundacao Cultural do Estado da Bahia. She was no longer working at the school, however, so instead I hired a studio at O.P.A. for private lessons. We began on the 19th January and for 2 weeks I studied for 2 hours a day in the afternoons, after my lessons with Ujhama. We worked on Dancas do Bloco Afro, which is a dance derived from the Afro-Brazilian religious dance of the “Orixas” and performed in the streets especially by the famous Bloco “Ile Aiye”. We worked on the expressive aspects of this dance, emphasising the very feminine movements, and all its grace and uniqueness.

I was also extremely fortunate to come across a flyer advertising a course called “O.D.P.T. (Oficina de Dancas Populares e Tradicionais do Bloco Afro Ile Aiye)”. Ile Aiye is one of the most famous Blocos from Salvador, and this was an amazing opportunity to study with their teachers and choreographers Ze Carloos, Amilton Lino and Dude Conceicao. It was 2 hours a day from 6.30 to 8.30. This course was attended by the finest local dancers, which meant the level was very high. It covered different Samba dance styles, as well as the African dance and Orixá dance which is the foundation of the Bloco Ile Aiye dance style. I achieved a certificate which I include in the CD.

The final part of the project took place in London, where I met up with three



of my students, who are now dancers in my company "Samba Sereia". I spent a week with them, working on new material and choreographies based on the new information and going through all the photos and videos explaining what I experienced.



Outcomes

This experience was extremely rewarding in many ways. I blended with the culture and the fact Portuguese is my first language, I felt much at home and the interaction in all this activities was very complete. My dance level and awareness has definitely increased in knowledge and new techniques.

This trip was the most intense in questions of training and experiencing the culture. I did more hours of dancing than ever before, It was exhausting but I was very lucky to received tuition from top dance teachers who made great effort for my dance development because they think its very important the students that teach abroad are serious about their understanding of dance and spread the right information.

The main feature of the project was working with Carlos Ujhama, which was something I had not originally planned, and came about from meeting him when he was teaching in Europe in 2008. He became my mentor and my training with him took place almost daily for 5 weeks. With him I was exposed to some completely new styles of Afro-Brazilian dance that I had not experienced before – especially Ijexa, which is the street style of Candomble, performed by Filhos de Ghandi and Samba de Roda, which is the original Samba style.

Since returning to the UK I have been incorporating all this new information in my classes, and the students are very enthusiastic. I am continuing to work with Carlos Ujhama, bringing him to Bristol in May for an all day workshop for the community. I feel now very inspired by all this new dance material and my classes are very well attended. I am also running a specialised course in the new styles I have learned, as well as working with my performance company on incorporating new styles and movements in our shows.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

Included on CD:

1. O.P.A. certificate of attendance from Carlos Ujhama
2. Ile Aiye certificate
3. Photos and videos of my classes with Carlos Ujhama.
4. Photos and videos of the Ile Aiye 2009 –Beleza Negra Competition

Claudia Aurora da Silva