

Lisa Ullmann Report Issie Lloyd-My Experience in Brazil

Rosangela Silvestre Technique Training

Participating in a weeks intensive with Rosangela Silvestre and Vera Passos was by far the most valuable experience for me. Training in dances of the Orixàs, symbology and Silvestre technique was simply mind blowing. These are the styles in which I have less experience and being part of this intensive training week opened a whole new perception of dance. Throughout the process I felt spiritually connected to everything and everyone around me and was able to discover a fresh approach to movement. Every morning we would arrive bright and early to start the day with Silvestre technique, combining contemporary foundations with movements related to the elements. The sequences involved exercising every part of the body using extension, breath, release and contraction. After a few days of practice I was a step closer to understanding these movement patterns and performing them with confidence.

Seeing as i am least familiar with these movement styles in comparison with capoeira and the variety of street dance styles I train in regularly, this was a big step for me to take! Taking time to focus on the 'feeling' of the symbology of movements and throwing this idea of 'technical precision' and 'the dancer's ego' out of the window was a beautifully organic approach to the training. This enabled me to gain a clearer understanding of Rosangela's ideology and to recreate my perception of 'what' dance really is.

I shared my experience with dancers from other cultures and backgrounds, all of whom had a different story to tell through the movement. On our last day of the week intensive we started the day with an open discussion. This was delivered in Portuguese and so at times I was a little lost in translation but generally my understanding and communication of the language had improved vastly over these 5 weeks in Brazil. Everyone was given the opportunity to share their personal journey and interpretations from the week. Rosangela then created further discussions from the views that were shared and stimulated new conversations to then influence our practice. I felt so overwhelmed from this week intensive, yet so grounded and true to myself. Rosangela took us on a trip one afternoon to

visit her mother who delivered rituals of the Orixàs within a local Terreiro. This building was viewed as a temple, a place of worship for the Orixàs. We participated in a ceremony, ate some beautiful home cooked food and performed the dance of Oxun in a circle following Rosangela's mother. She then performed a beautiful ritual and danced on her own around the centre of the temple, we all sat on the floor in a circle watching this 90 year old woman glide across the floor with the most contagious and calm energy. I've never experienced anything like it! This was one of the most special moments for me, seeing a ritual of the Orixás in its truest form and truly understanding the meaning of these gestures and their relation to the Brazilian Gods and Goddesses.

Afro-Primitivo and Maracatu in Olinda

I trained with Vira Dança in Olinda, focusing on Maracatu and Afro-Primitivo. We trained set foundations every week followed by a variety of sequences that were then used for carnival and celebratory events. Training with this group was hugely inspirational as I learnt a variety of techniques and approaches to movement that were completely new to me. The classes were always interactive and the sequences involved a lot of social dancing in groups and partners. The energy levels of the group were high which encouraged participants to give 100% in every lesson and absorb all elements of what was being taught. The lady who I learnt Maracatu with has a link with another dancer I know in Bristol and we even discussed the possibility of bringing her over to the UK in the near future to deliver Maracatu workshops.

Capoeira in Recife

I trained capoeira with two different groups in Recife, both with very different energies and styles. My friend and I went to a women's event which was organised specifically for women to teach and participate. We were very excited about the event and to meet other women who were representing within the Capoeira scene. Although I have to say I was slightly disappointed with the training and level of capoeira at the event. I was hungry for training and prepared for a 10 hour long day filled with capoeira workshops and Rodas (as was advertised), however, as the day unravelled the focus was more on talking, discussing and sharing ideas than actual physical training. I noticed that their approach to training was very relaxed and their focus was definitely more of a social approach. I think the social element is very important in Capoeira, this is one of the reasons why I adore the art form,.

However I had hoped for a little more clear structure and physical training throughout the day. One of the workshops was an Angola session with Mestra Gabriela. I loved her approach to capoeira and her style of movement. Her game was clever and her movement was clean. I took many valuable concepts from this workshop and have since used some of her approaches and techniques as a base for my individual training. We all sat in a roda and shared our previous experiences and philosophies of capoeira. This was certainly a good way to test my Portuguese! My overall experience of capoeira in Brazil was an interesting one. Now that I am more experienced and at a higher level in capoeira, I expect a certain amount from training sessions and masterclasses. I found that the groups I visited had a much more relaxed approach to training than what I am used to. Again it was a hugely valuable experience, but I had hoped to train with more advanced students and be challenged a little more in my game and technique.

I feel incredibly lucky to have made so many networks throughout this trip and experienced training in so many styles. I was able to share and exchange ideas with people from all walks of life. I continue to feel so connected to Brazil, the place where the roots of these styles were first founded. I would like to say a huge thank you to The Lisa Ullman fund for giving me this incredibly rich and valuable experience! You have allowed me to explore new avenues within dance and capoeira and discover a new approach to my training. I am now training more than ever and am inspired to develop my skills and create new fusions between the styles in which I specialise. Again.....a huge thank you to the Lisa Ullman Fund for giving me this opportunity and enabling me to take my training and understanding of these movement styles to the next level!





Capoeira and dance collage

