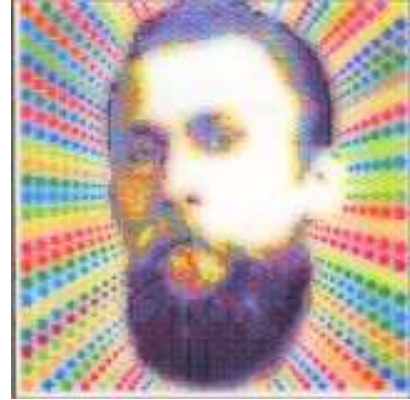
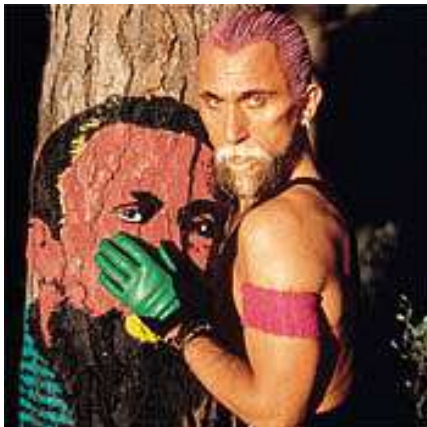


Biography of António Variações

António Joaquim Rodrigues Ribeiro, (December 3, 1944 – June 13, 1984) was a Portuguese singer and songwriter. Despite his short-lived career, due to his premature death at the age of thirty-nine, he would, under the stage name of António Variações, become one of the most culturally significant performing artists of recent Portuguese history. His recorded works blended contemporary music genres with traditional Portuguese rhythms and melodies, creating music, which for many is symbolic of the liberalization that occurred in Portuguese society after the Carnation Revolution of 1974. The original and provocative nature of his recorded works has led to him being widely recognized as one of the most innovative artists in the recent history of Portuguese popular music.



António Variações was born in Braga, the fifth of the ten offsprings of Deolinda de Jesus and Jaime Ribeiro. As a child, his love of music often took him away from his farm chores and towards the local folklore celebrations. He completed his basic education at the age of eleven and soon after took up his first job making small trinkets in the neighbouring village of Caldelas.



At the age of twelve he left the interior to the capital, Lisbon, to work at an office. From 1964 to 1967, he served the compulsory army duty in Angola during the Portuguese Colonial War, returning home safe and sound, but almost immediately departing to London, to work as a dishwasher at a school, for the duration of a year. Returning once again to Portugal for a brief time in 1976, António Variações moved to Amsterdam where he took up hairdressing, profession which he would continue to exert when returning to Lisbon in the following year, opening the first unisex salon in the country and afterwards a barber shop downtown (among his clients there would be several people from the music industry, who would help launch his career).

Parallel to this day job, he started working the local club scene at night, along with a group of musicians dubbed "Variações" (translated, "Variations", a word which suggested the diversity of the singer's influences, sound and style). His garish visuals and camp fashion accessories, uncommon for a man at the time in Portugal, soon started to become noticed.

In July 1982, his first single was released, this time under the name António Variações. This recording featured a cover of the seminal *fado* "Povo Que Lavas No Rio", immortalized by the diva of the genre, Amália Rodrigues, and an original song of his own authorship, "Estou



Além". The cover song of the untouchable *fado* caused controversy among many, but over time became accepted as a heartfelt tribute of Variações to Amália Rodrigues, to whom he dedicated his first LP, "Anjo da Guarda", released in 1983, to great critical and popular acclaim. Two of the songs from this record, "O Corpo É Que Paga" and "É P'ra Amanhã" experienced frequent radio airplay, the latter being released as a Summer single.

António Variações had no formal music training. His first musical influence was his father, who played accordion and *cavaquinho*, but never had the chance to become a serious musician. From his travels abroad, Variações was able to get in touch with artists and genres which were not widely known back home and began fusing genres such as pop, rock, jazz, blues and new wave with his Portuguese folk and *fado* roots.



A few months after the album's release, Variações fell ill with bronchitis-like symptoms and was admitted to the hospital. At this time, the health of the artist was severely debilitated and rumors about his condition being brought on by AIDS started to circulate, which, given the prejudice towards the disease at the time, made

him a target of some discrimination. Save for his family and closest friends, he received few visitors during his stay at the hospital.

At the dawn of the 13th of June, António Variações, aged 39, died due to a bilateral bronchial pneumonia. His funeral was held on the 15th at the Estrela Basilica, where family, friends, fellow musicians, barbers and fans paid their last respects. The funeral stirred some controversy, because the authorities ordered that his coffin be sealed for public health concerns, which further fueled the rumors that he had died as a result of AIDS-related

complications. The family of António Variações doesn't acknowledge that this was the actual cause of death (or that he was a homosexual), but it's assumed by most that he was one of the first public victims of the disease in Portugal. His former manager, Teresa Couto Pinto, has claimed that, prior to his death, Variações had received clinical test results performed in the United States confirming that he was indeed HIV positive. His remains were buried in the cemetery of Amares, where they still rest today.

To pay homage to his uncommon, eccentric and with an alternative life style, the musical group "Humanos" recreated in different versions many of his songs.

Lifetime releases

- Singles
 - 1982 - *Povo Que Lavas No Rio/Estou Além*
 - 1983 - *É P'ra Amanhã.../Quando Fala Um Português...*
- LPs
 - 1983 - *Anjo da Guarda*
 - 1984 - *Dar & Receber*

Posthumous releases and remasterings

- Singles
 - 1997 - *Canção de Engate*
 - 1997 - *O Corpo É Que Paga/É P'ra Amanhã...* (remixed by Nuno Miguel)
 - 1998 - *Minha cara sem fronteiras - entre Braga e Nova Iorque*
- Albums
 - 1997 - *O Melhor de António Variações* (best-of)
 - 1998 - *Anjo da Guarda* (third studio album, includes the bonus track *Povo que lavas no rio*)
 - 2000 - *Dar & Receber* (fourth studio album, includes three versions (two of which are remixes) of *Minha cara sem fronteiras*)
 - 2006 - *A História de António Variações - entre Braga e Nova Iorque* (best-of which includes previously unreleased demos)

Tributes

- Cover songs
 - 1987 - Delfins - *Canção de Engate*
 - 1995 - Amarguinhas - *Estou Além*

- 1996 - MDA - *Dar & Receber*
- 1996 - MDA - *Estou Além*
- 2004 - Donna Maria - *Estou Além*
- 2005 - RAMP - *Anjinho da Guarda*
- Albums
 - 1989 - Lena D'Água - *Tu Aqui*
 - 1994 - Variações - *As Canções de António*
 - 2004 - Humanos – *Humanos*

<http://en.wikipedia.org/>