What do you get when you combine Amália Rodrigues with Portishead? Iberian indie musicians experiment with flamenco and fado roots.

My dissertation analyzes how a handful of twenty-first-century Spanish and Portuguese musicians are fighting to keep their respective national cultural traditions alive in the face of iTunes, mp3s, and P2P filesharing that have universalized a certain form of pop music which cuts across languages and cultures. The hybrid musicians I interviewed for this project combine flamenco or fado with a variety of indie sounds: rock, pop, power pop, hip hop, trip hop, post punk, spaghetti western, shoegaze, or experimental electronic.

Fig. 1 Members of indie trip hop neofado band, A Naifa: Luís Varatojo, João Aguardela, and Mitó.

A Naifa, “Rapaz a arder” (3:48)-- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGpK0Si1Uug

Fig. 2 Julián Demoraga of the avant-garde experimental electronic neoflamenco band El Último Grito.

El Último Grito, “Zorongo” (3:23)--http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dKtI8NZgKo
The end result is a musical production which simultaneously voices their nationality as well as their generation. They are the torchbearers of tradition for an Iberian generation raised on The Velvet Underground, David Bowie, The Clash, The Replacements, Nirvana, and The Strokes. Their music references these and other global indie bands alongside those of twentieth century Iberian urban folk icons—Bambino, Camarón de la Isla, Enrique Morente, Amália Rodrigues, Alfredo Marceneiro, and Carlos do Carmo.

**Fado and Flamenco, a Sonic Introduction:**
Amália Rodrigues, “Tudo isto é fado” (4:29)-- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-RPSLNoAsE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-RPSLNoAsE)
This song is a fado classic, sung by the most celebrated fado singer of all time, and all of the lyrics deal with the mythology of fado. It is an ideal song to start off since it is emblematic of the sound and history of fado.

The flamenco/flamencologist Antonio Mairena performing “Canción por bulerías” (6:45)-- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5OCL-ovh5A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5OCL-ovh5A)

My research highlights the creative hybrid artistry of the heirs to both musical traditions: Twenty-first century indie neoflamenco and neofado visionaries.

Through interviews, participant-observation, archival research, lyrical, and musical analysis/interpretation in Spain and Portugal, I have developed a framework with which to contextualize and conceptualize the various issues addressed by these bands: authenticity, globalization, nostalgia, cultural capital, national-gender identity, and the economic crisis plaguing contemporary Europe.
Proto-neofado and Proto-neoflamenco, a Sonic Introduction:
My dissertation begins with a chapter devoted to the evolution of neofado and neoflamenco. These innovators represent not only the first experiments in fado or flamenco fusion music, but also the first steps toward what would become indie neofado and neoflamenco. My research diverges from analysis of such fusions by focusing on a hybridity with a very specific sound, ethos, and pathos—that of indie as it blends with Iberian urban folk musics. The following proto-neofado song will hint towards what I am getting at. It is performed by the musician who Talking Heads icon, David Byrne, has referred to as “The Portuguese punk fadista”. Paulo Bragança, “Fado mudado” (5:28)–http://www.myspace.com/paulobraganca. It is a cover of the rapid-fire spoken word “Fado falado” (4:40) by João Villaret– http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgsIrKPqLmk. Bragança changes the lyrics to address the prevalence of heroin use in Portugal. Bragança himself was heavily-addicted to heroin at the time of writing this version.

The following song dates back to the same time period (mid-1990s) and is the flamenco flipside of this coin: Enrique Morente and Largatija Nick’s proto-neoflamenco album, Omega (in which Morente sings poems/songs by Federico García Lorca and Leonard Cohen), “Pequeño vals vienés”(5:33)-- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TYnzUvR6Js. “Take this Waltz” is Leonard Cohen’s loose translation of the Lorca poem performed here (“Pequeño vals vienés”). Lorca was a fan of flamenco for most of his life. Cohen was a fan of Lorca for most of his life. This collaboration between the flamenco icon, Enrique Morente, and the Spanish indie darksider band, Largatija Nick, is the product of a mutual interest in the shared aesthetics of Lorca and Cohen.

Indie neoflamenco and neofado musicians serve as a metonym for a cross-section of Iberian youth who remain eager to belong to a European and global community yet are increasingly uneasy with the disintegration of national identity/sovereignty that has been caused in part by Anglophone cultural hegemony and European economic austerity measures.

Fig. 4 Indie post punk neoflamenco band Pony Bravo from left to right: Daniel Alonso, Pablo Peña, Javier Rivera, and Darío del Moral.

Pony Bravo, “Ninja de Fuego” (4:26)– http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcFjCnfeBgM&feature=related
These neofado and neoflamenco bands help to give a voice to the many overeducated, yet unemployed, Portuguese and Spanish youth who have not found adequate representation within Iberian governments and their institutions. Songs such as neofado indie pop band Deolinda’s “Parva que sou” became an anthem for youth revolt in Lisbon during monthly anti-austerity protest marches in 2011 which helped to inspire an occupy movement beginning May 15th, 2011 in Madrid, Spain. This sit-in style protest, held by Spain’s indignant youth (Los indignados), in turn would help to instigate the fall 2011 Occupy Wall Street protest movement in Zuccotti Park, New York City.

Fig. 5. Deolinda from left to right: Luís José Martins, Ana Bacalhau, José Pedro Leitão, Pedro da Silva Martins.

Deolinda, “Parva que sou” (3:57)-- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGS7vAliljI&feature=related

Behind this cultural production is also a desire to preserve traditional Iberian urban folk culture while ridding flamenco and fado of the entrenched conservative codes and practices which resulted from their decades-long appropriation by the respective right-wing authoritarian dictatorships.

**Indie Neofado and Neoflamenco, a Sonic Introduction:**
The following is a clickable playlist which provides a snippet sample of the kind of indie neofado and neoflamenco bands I focus on throughout my dissertation:

**Indie Neofado:**
Ovelha Negra, “Eu menti à saudade” (3:20)-- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtwsUa-cS6M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtwsUa-cS6M)

**Indie Neoflamenco:**
La Shica, “Supercoplera”(4:10)-- [http://www.lashica.net/home.html](http://www.lashica.net/home.html)
Los Planetas con Enrique Morente, “La pastora divina” (5:29)-- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rop5xLpGd94](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rop5xLpGd94)