

Grupo de teatro de emigrantes "Alem Fronteiras"
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APPLICATION TO THE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION FOR GRANT FUNDING.

A- Organisation.

1- Aims and history

The Portuguese Theatre Group "Alem Fronteiras" has been in existence for approximately five years. It is an amateur theatre group with five members including 2 hotel workers, 2 factory workers and a teacher. The aims of our group are to keep alive our culture and language using the theatre as a means of communication not only with Portuguese people, but also with British people and other immigrant communities with whom we have so much to share.

The 1st play, the group performed, was a translation from a play written by Broadside Theatre Group on the events in Portugal in April 1974, and its aftermath. This play was shown with much success to a variety of audiences. Besides the performances for Portuguese people, amongst which we include one for the commemoration of the 10th June "Day of the Communities", we presented the play in Theatro Technis as part of an "Ethnic Minorities Week" in the African Centre part of the "Festival of London" and to a number of other immigrant organisations. Two representatives of the group were invited to go to West Berlin to a Festival of amateur theatre, where groups from all over Europe were represented. A video tape of the play was shown and an important contribution to the discussion made.

After these encouraging beginnings, the group felt they wanted to write a play about the question of emigration and about their own experiences as Portuguese immigrants in this country. Many difficulties had to be overcome mainly due to the different working times of the various members, but eventually the play was written and rehearsals and performances started. The play which analyses the question of emigration, its causes and consequences, follows a group of emigrants from their point of departure in Portugal to their arrival in Britain and afterwards their experiences as hotel workers which is where the majority of Portuguese immigrants work. Although the play is mainly in Portuguese, it can be easily understood by non-Portuguese speaking audiences, due to the fact that it is very visual, and introductions in other languages can be made. We have therefore performed it both for Portuguese and non-Portuguese speaking audiences. We consider this



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communication with other communities as a very important part of our work, not only as an interchange of our cultures, but also as a means of breaking down so many barriers and lack of understanding which tends to exist in our society.

2- Income.

Up to now, the group has been self-financing. We have received much help from other groups, both in terms of facilities and materials, and the collections we ^{make} ~~make~~ at performances have enabled us to carry on with our work, but not left us with any spare funds.

B- Project.

Since the content of the play is as relevant in Portugal as in Britain, the group has always aimed to present the play in both countries. In doing so, we have in mind two main aims:

1. To take to Portugal our experiences as immigrants in Britain. We want to show the play in areas of Portugal where emigration is very high and the issues raised by the play are important. Here we can confront the popular ideas of emigration as an "easy life in the rich countries" with our own experiences and analysis as presented in the play, as well as exchange and compare experiences with emigrants who have emigrated to other countries and who will be in Portugal on holiday in August.
2. To bring back to Britain a variety of experiences which will be invaluable in our future work. These experiences will be derived both from our direct contact with the people in the areas where we will perform and from the various theatre groups we will meet. As all members of the group have been living in Britain for a number of years, we feel the need to confront our ideas with the present day situation in Portugal, mainly in the areas where emigration is high. Also as the only Portuguese theatre group in this country we are isolated from developments in modern Portuguese theatre. Performing in Portugal is the best possible way for us to enter into contact with other groups and to learn from their experiences.

As a group we aim to be a bridge between two parts of what should be one community. Other organisations are trying to do this by bringing performers and films (though so far not plays) from Portugal for single performances; our way has been to try to create something new, containing our experiences of life in Britain with our origins as Portuguese. To do this needs a constant influx from both Britain and Portugal. This trip will therefore be a valuable and rare opportunity for cultural contact between two sections of the Portuguese community.

I In order to put this project into practice we contacted the Portuguese Association of Amateur Theatre in Lisbon who showed great interest and agreed to organize the performances. We also managed to coordinate our holidays to give us all a two week break in August in spite of great difficulties as some members have compulsory holiday periods and family commitments. We are now faced with the remaining problem of how to finance the project. As we mentioned before the theatre group does not have any spare funds and will have to rely on outside grants in order to organize the tour.

We are therefore seeking financial assistance from the Gulbenkian Foundation for the following:

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Air tickets for 6 people (group++ director) (at £180/person)	11080
Van hire in Portugal for 2 weeks + petrol	600
Accomodation for 2 weeks at £5/person	450
Materials	100
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Total	£ 2,230

