

# Deaf Translations in Music

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In the western world, Deaf communities are vibrant minority cultures, whose languages and self-perceptions have been oppressed for more than a century (Bauman & Murray, 2014; Ladd, 2003; Lane, 1992). The Deaf Performing Arts are a vehicle for empowering signed languages, and a form of conveying Deaf heritage and resistance (Bahan, 2006; Holcomb, 2013). Amid a wide variety of Deaf literary and artistic expressions (e.g. theatre, signed poetry, humour), Signed Song – the aesthetic adaptation of lyrics and rhythm into signed languages – constitutes a particularly sharp form of defiance in translation, challenging the widespread notion that the Deaf cannot, via redefining music in a Deaf lens (Cruz, 1997; Jones, 2015; Loeffler, 2014; Maler, 2015).

Song translation often produces creative versions where the priority is for music and lyrics to become intertwined with each other, and produce an emotional response from spectators (Chanan, 2012; Minors, 2012). This international study looks into songs Translated into Portuguese Sign Language (Língua Gestual Portuguesa - LGP) and British Sign Language (BSL). The goal is understanding how this art form, created and performed by Deaf adult artists, is perceived by audience members. What do d/Deaf and hearing spectators learn about the languages and cultures of Deaf people in these two countries? What kind of insights and questions do they raise? And what is the role of Live Signed Songs in intracultural (within the Deaf community) and intercultural communication (from the Deaf community onto the hearing world)? For this purpose, Signed Songs are traced throughout time in Portugal and in the UK, and the insights of artists and spectators are gathered via in-depth interviews and questionnaires. Expectations entail making a contribute to a more generalised conception of the Deaf as a minority culture, to the preservation of Deaf cultural patrimony, and to the valorisation of Deaf Performing Arts.

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