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PANEL 3: LIVE ACCESSIBILITY NEW CONTEXTS

“Remote live real-time audio description: science fiction, technological dream or the new reality?”

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VIDEO PRESENTATION <https://youtu.be/ZgAEhqLD3HY>

ABSTRACT

In recent months, the need to preserve everyone’s health has led to unprecedented situations for most of us worldwide: social isolation, quarantine, and a reduction of urban mobility. From these new realities, human beings, who always adapt through the force of nature, have been developing strategies to be able to continue their daily, academic, professional, social, and cultural lives. Cultural life, in general, the first to be affected and the last to be restored in times of crisis, was no different in this first half of 2020. The drawback of meeting in closed spaces created a gap in people’s lives, making it impossible for them to go to shows, theater performances, or exhibitions. Gradually, live performances emerged, transmitted over the internet to a growing group of spectators. In the musical world, singers and groups of all genres started to do shows. Some were very artisanal. Others had musicians located in different parts of the country or the world, or studios, nightclubs, or temples. This paper shows data from three live online broadcasts where audio description was delivered by internet and radio, done remotely in real-time. Our team has worked on the three live shows, that were broadcasted by internet to millions of people. The first show (by the Brazilian singer Marilia Mendonça) took place on May 9 th, 2020, starting at 8 p.m. and ending on May 10 th , at 3 a.m. – with no pause. The second one (staring Bruno and Marrone, two country musicians) took place on May 16 and lasted 4 hours. The last live musical show was

broadcasted on May 23. The sisters Maiara and Maraísa sang and danced for around 5 hours, in five different stages. In all the shows, audio description was sent by internet to the technical team, who mixed the sound with the original audio, and sent it by radio to the audience. On the third show, we have also sent the audio description + the original show image to a YouTube channel.

Since the audio description was performed thanks to a partnership and support of the National Organization of Blind of Brazil (ONCB), most of the audience watching the shows were blind people, their family and friends. ONCB President (Mr Beto Pereira) has calculated that around twelve thousand people have watched the shows with audio description. The three live shows also counted on Brazilian sign language (LIBRAS) interpreting, with live interpreters taking turns throughout the show. The producers have not offered live subtitles because, in Brazil, there is a general (false) belief that one can choose between either offering sign language interpretation or subtitling (SDH). Our team has tried to make them understand that both were needed, but without success. This entire real-time process counted on the direct involvement of dozens of audio description professionals, be it audio describers or their consultants. Everyone operated remotely, from their homes hundreds of kilometers away.