



Transculture Express.

The Artistania podcast with your hosts Frida and Abilaschan.

Episode 5: Queer Visions and Voice Anthony Hüseyin

This time, we are queering it up with amazing . We talk to nonbinary singer-songwriter, performer and vocal coach Anthony Hüseyin about what it means to be queer, going beyond identity, exploring what queer politics has to do with musical expression and voice. We also talk about being at home in many places and queer opera aspirations.

Frida: Welcome to another episode of Trans Culture Express. The Artistania Podcast for queer and postcolonial music perspectives in and around Neukölln..

Frida: Today we will talk about queer culture and political musical activism with musician Anthony Hüseyin. Welcome to trans culture express Anthony.

Anthony: Thank you.

Frida: We are really glad to have you here, on the podcast.

Anthony: So happy to be here too. Like I can't stop smiling. Can you hear my smile?

Abilaschan: Naturally!

Anthony: Now you do...exactly.

Frida: Yeah! Uhm, yes we are very happy to have you here. And for those of our listeners who don't know you yet, you are a singer, songwriter. You are an interdisciplinary performance artist and a singing teacher based in Berlin. You are originally from Urfa in Turkey, but you studied singing in Istanbul and Rotterdam, both classical and jazz singing, right?

Anthony: Right.

Frida: You have released 2 albums. One is called 'Safran' from 2012 and the second album is called 'The Lucky One' from 2017. And in the past years you have toured and performed across Europe. And currently you are producing your third album. Does it have a name yet?

Anthony: Yes... but I'm not gonna reveal it yet.

Frida: OK, but the third album will be released this fall and it is supported- just like this podcast by the way- by the Music Board Berlin.

Anthony: Yes.

Abilaschan: A proper brief introduction. I would say.

Anthony: Thank you Frida.

Abilaschan: Was it about correct?

Anthony: My life in two minutes.

Abilaschan: So why do the podcast then!

Anthony: Exactly... (laughs)

Abilaschan: I'm just kidding! But now we come to the next fun element of our podcast, which is like a recurring segment that we all ask our dear guests. Your recent musical discovery in these days.

Anthony: Musical discovery....

Abilaschan: If anything comes up to your mind immediately.

Anthony: Hm..now, now, now, now. Who could be that?

Frida: It could be a song that you heard like for the first time or new artists account?

Anthony: I can check my Spotify. Because I do have actually and that would be. Well, I think what I discovered is really funny that, UM. I'm like listening to music when I'm doing yoga and and I'm also not listening like just like to Zen music or something like that. Something a bit upbeat, a bit cheerful, but also deep. And I just like found this- discovered this group or singer called Llusion and Salem Ilese. It's like Yoga- and the lyrics are so funny it's like- in the end, like yoga is not working and she's crying and etc is just like super funny and while I'm doing yoga, I'm listening to that and some how it cheers me up and it just pump me and then I just keep doing my yoga. I know it's super weird but...

Abilaschan: This is an unusual musical discovery so far but that makes it special. That's why it's an interesting element.

Frida: Yeah, we will- we will put it on our Spotify playlist. We have a Transculture express Spotify.

Anthony: I can send it to you ...

Abilaschan: Then maybe other people can listen to it while doing yoga and they want something to cheer them up.

Anthony: I mean... I mean- the thing is like, what I get from it, actually, I mean that was a little bit of the fun part, but that sometimes. I find myself doing like yoga like purposely feeling better. You know, like not accepting the present and then the feeling and then the song is also a little bit ironically about that- that also doing meditation and yoga for this obsessively like being positive and this toxic positivity. So I think that it's just like somehow sometimes I find myself also forcing and aiming for that and then. This song was just like perfect. It's just surrendering, it's like fuck it's not working and-

Frida: Nice, yeah, sometimes-

Anthony: You need this kind of like self realisation and tell yourself how it really is every day.

Frida: I know accepting failure is also an important, important part of being human I guess. Yeah, so just to start things off and come to get to know you a little bit, Anthony. Abilaschan and I, when we talked about interviewing you, we realised we need to start by kind of. Yeah, maybe going a bit back in time 'cause we are. We're both curious about kind of the history of Anthony Hüseyin, and maybe because we got an impression that becoming the artist Anthony Hüseyin that you are today was quite bumpy road filled with... yeah surprises and and unexpected turns.

Anthony: And still...

Frida: Yeah, so yeah. Let's begin with Urfa.

Anthony: Alright. So what about it?

Abilaschan: What about it Urfa! Let me tell you this, I've been to Şanlıurfa-

Anthony: No way !

Abilaschan: -back when I was doing my year abroad in Turkey like I was a year in Istanbul, and I was travelling around. Also taking the Doğu express to the other side- to Kars and then also traveling like South and East Anatolia as well. And so I've been there and for me as a like queer POC person it was also very interesting to be in this place.

Anthony: Sure

Abilaschan: With my look. And the looks that I got from other people as well. Although I really enjoyed being there in a way that I had very, very friendly. Nice warm hearted hosts that I found there through friends of friends in Istanbul. And yeah I was about to ask how was it for growing up in conservative Urfa. And then also later on living in the vibrant metropolitan city of Istanbul. I mean it's fully an experience of contrasts? What are your thoughts about that ...

Anthony: Wow, UM ...thought is like where to start? It's a very hedonist city, but it's also very religious city because also the Prophet Ibrahim was born there and there's this entire **bilocular**, like there's this entire history about it. And the population is dominated- like rooted, like with Arabs basically and then a little bit Kurdish and Turkish. So in that sense- and I think because of this, people who live in Urfa, they enjoy like food, music, so much... that made my life somehow a bit easy in that sense, because this is where you connect also. But on the other hand, there was so much on going uhm, ongoing homosexual relationships. That which also brings you pleasure an in a way I don't know, I think like I experienced so much there. And in Turkey, in Istanbul or in Urfa, doesn't matter as long as you don't rub it in people's faces like you're fine, like you're fine. But of course you're not fine, you know. And in that sense, how it's been. My father is a singer, Turkish traditional singer, and our like kind of...we were always every summer in Istanbul because he was performing in Istanbul and coming back to Urfa, so we were always connected with the West. And I always had this idea of just like moving ...like from the age of I think six or something like, I was like one day I'm just going to get out of here, you know, and I want to get out of here. And of course it's conservative. But also it, like now reflecting on it again that, when you are oppressed, you want to of course get out of that place, so you want to develop yourself like so much and you already see the future and you want to be more- of course, with the you know, white supremacy and colonialism and everything that you are always imposed to ...go to West.... go to West. So my first step was like, OK, Istanbul, you know? And somehow I have with Urfa right now, I think only a bit of like nostalgia and love... and a bit of sadness. But also I went to music high school, like I was somehow living in this...like always duality. There's always duality in Urfa that like you know...you could like live with people that were conservative, but also you could live your life in a way like secretly. But also going to the music high school like there was a lot of I don't know open minded or modern lets say people around. And Urfa has a very, very, very old traditional music history and and like roots- and it is very interesting. Once a week, groups of- some group of men come together and play instruments and like basically like a jam session and Urfa has its own repertory. And, and I find that like super homoerotic, it's like so beautiful. And it is, and the music is just like incredible and all men you see, like these like masculine men like singing so- ah, like, um, sad like dramatic longing, you know, like laments and songs, and you see them in tears. And then like, they're melting. And I'm like, like you see like I just, this fluidness actually in Urfa was just, I think, incredible for me. On gender, on food, on music, on everything. It's just, it's very hidden, it's like-like-like a hidden bars like just like ongoing. And it's like very fluid. That you know you could make love with

your best friend and now your best friend is just getting married in you know like in two years but then you know you're still really good friends and I...when I imagine like, if you know we didn't have the patriarcha and like this, all these labels and everything right now that we are also fighting for that, it would be the dream life that I would just want to have, you know? Because then like there's someone you know that I really like and he is married. But we are having a relationship and he is having relationship with women and having kids and I hope also you know. She could have, you know relationship with other people that, that-that I just yeah, I would say Urfa is like...It's like a bit like water? You know, sometimes it's like frozen and sometimes it's just like floating. It's just...

Abilaschan: Woah

Frida: Wow.

Anthony: Was it too long?

Abilaschan: No, it was not too long. I mean, just like in the way how you put it in words, how you can also conserve it as a nostalgic memory that you can also get nice memories or associations with...that's a really good way to think back of ones past. But you were also talking about visions and future thoughts that you had, and that would lead me to my next question. While you were living in Istanbul, also doing the Gezi protests, right in 2013, What did this moment of political change mean to you personally? And also then connected to the queer community there?

Anthony: Right, uhm, one Gezi was happening I was in Rotterdam, so...and suddenly this...I think... I don't know there was something in the universe, like in the air like, no matter where you were. And being from Turkey, like there was this feeling of a movement, like and I was in Rotterdam and I was following everything from social media and like days and nights and like trying to help people, to people that living there and then like getting organised... peoples Internet was being like caught and this and that and we were like finding I don't know lawyers and like kind of trying to stay connected with there... and also uhm, we were organising like protests in Rotterdam, in Amsterdam and I was going to them. But somehow, I don't ...and there was such a deep pain because I was like I left Turkey to study and then things went well. I finished my masters and then stayed there, but-but there was always the idea of like I would one day just go back to you know Turkey, like after I finish my masters and everything. And then, and this happened, and then I think now if I if I reflect upon it, that it, just, it probably was killing my hope that one day I could go back to Turkey. But also it was giving me so much hope that damn I just want to, you know, go and live there and resist. But I couldn't because of work. So I felt I did everything that I could do from there, but I felt like I need to like there was something, like-like day by day. Just like you know happening in me first I. I resisted as a person, but then one morning I just woke up like with this like unleashed emotion and songs. And then I did the I wrote the song. And my idea was not like oh I would just like release this and this and- I just wrote the song. Tell us Mr. Prime Minister who didn't love you when you were a kid...

Abilaschan: Sayim Baskan?

Anthony: Sayim Baskan. Yes. I-I released it like that and then and somebody just downloaded my video and then uploaded it, and then just like send everywhere apparently. And with this title “Tell us who didn't love you when you were a kid”

Abilaschan: That was the title.

Anthony: That was exactly but the original title was like Sayim Baskan, Prime Minister... so it was to me, a very big awakening moment. Since I was kid I, I always like, I was always like, also kind of like I would just stood up for my mother against my father. For my sisters. You know like at the age 11 now I'm just thinking, OK, my feminism started like really really early. And then with Gezi Park I suddenly, this urge I don't know, came up. And then I found myself like I'm doing activism and music, but I didn't even label it just came so organically and then the song became like with a friend of mine Fanny Hagmeier. She's like one of my best friends, film maker like we did the video in one day like, we went to Conservatory where I'm teaching and my students like colleagues and friends. I just asked them they just like 1 by 1, just like singing, like lip syncing to my song. And-and I also didn't think of like, oh from many nationalities like I didn't think, I just followed my instincts... and then people were like “wow” like from Istanbul like. “people heard our voices from all over the world and everything”. So we did- we made the video and then I released it and then it got viral. I couldn't believe my eyes. I was sitting at home because like five thousand, seven thousand, ten thousand, forty thousand... this and that. And then like I don't know I, I was approached by a lot of TV channels and stuff. But what really deeply touched me was that, a lot of people that I don't know, they just found my email address and they sent me emails. And one of them was saying that, “we were in the park, and police attacked us, and there was like smoke and everything and then the same day or day after, the day after that they met my songs” like I guess, it was apparently being played.

Abilaschan: It became a hymn, even of that protest

Anthony: Exactly and and-and in that email, was written that “we were syncing and your and your song was our like new oxygen”. It was like a new, somehow, like a shot for them too. OK, so and I'm still having goosebumps.

Abilaschan: Yeah, I'm also having goosebumps like I mean the power of music.

Anthony: It's it's incredible. And-and this is where I realised I was like holy shit...what music can do actually? Because in my first album with “Safran” I was, like it was very academic - also like I studied jazz to combine with Turkish folk, like Turkish music, to combine with my roots from Urfa and everything. And everything was like very also normatively done and normatively performed. But since the Gezi... the question of how-how it connected me with the queer community as well. After that song I was like wait, but what is my problem? Like what is, like what am I do- like? Why did I do this song? Of course, but there's something that I need to talk about too. And then thats where I did ‘Ayna’ the second song, that I

dedicated to Ahmet Yildiz. He is also from Urfa, and he came out to his father. And after two years of hiding, and everything, hiding, hide and seek...he was murdered by his own father. And that story, of course resonated a lot in me. And then I wrote that song and released it afterwards. And this is how somehow music and politics and this topics...just like kind of-

Abilaschan: Entangled.

Anthony: Exactly. And then I was like, yeah, but of course, you know, like I'm person, and this is my life and I'm making music. Of course it does, and it gives a lot of meaning.

Abilaschan: Wow, this was very touching.

Frida: Yeah I would- I would like to talk a bit more about being queer, and-and queerness? Because now you, towards the end you kind of touched upon that. When asking like what, OK, what is my message or what is the thing? What is my problem or what is the thing that I want to fix right? What is what is like the purpose that I want to? Yeah... invest my music into. And I read somewhere, in an interview, that you said for you, being queer is more than an identity, right? That it's like. More maybe like your political attitude, or a way of being? Or maybe also a way to kind of see the world. So I wanted to ask you, yeah, if you could tell us more about that. Like what does that mean for you?

Anthony: Being queer? I think... being queer is like so, for me, It's so fluid and so on going and it is so all the time, growing like it's developing. It's like me. I mean it's like person. It's like-it's like, it changes and I thank God it changes. You know that-that queer is not staying as like one thing. And-and then the more I discover life and how to live, the more I go deep on life, on sharing and-and connecting... basically for me and-and being really trying to be really intersectionally fair. I think that's it for me. And then from there you just really... it's like I think...having a really, really old friend. And then you just nurtur that all the time. I think that's what it means. Or having a really amazing, like kind of like neighbour, neighbours. And then I think in that interview I said something like, in Turkish there's a saying like if my neighbour is like hungry, you know I can't, you know, fall asleep, full stomach. I think Queerness is a little bit, a little bit for me like this and and yeah I guess. I guess there's also the fun part of course... you know the-the-the glitter and glamour and everything, and that's of course like a kind of middle finger to the, all the boring normativity and everything. I mean, I also understand people who just want to really really normal and whatever that means and normative. But I think queer is like daily basis, we all have so much fear, and how do we deal with that. And then queerness just brings this, umbrella that just like somehow protects you from this fear ...or somehow you just give it in. But it's just like you constantly deal with it. Yeah, cool-

Frida: It's a process.

Anthony: It's absolutely a process, and as I think gender and sexual identity as well. Because I don't know if you ask me that question five years ago.

Frida: What do you, what do you...?

Anthony: I mean, I always identified as like cisgender gay person but now it's completely I mean, and it makes total sense, different. Because I think, it's up to you a little bit. As in what happens that we feel things and then there is, and there's inside and then there's the outerworld, and then there are words. So now, I'm looking at the pronouns and everything and names and the criteria. None of them is really literally, can completely represent me. But I choose the closest one. Which is like right now, it's like non-binary. And five years ago, I would probably or I don't know, ten years ago, it would be completely different. Because for me being gay like already, and accepting that and coming out to myself, and still not to my family completely. But they probably know it, so I don't rub it in their face, you know. And I think also coming out should be like, you know, not mandatory. But that right now it's, that's the closest one. But I don't know what am I going to be when like, next like, in 10 years.

Frida: Yeah!

Anthony: You know. And in that sense. Hmm yeah, I think...we are all struggling with what we feel and what's there- out there and being given. Or what we are fighting to be, like make them happen. But then still it all stays so somehow limited because it depends on a bit who is fighting and who is writing and who is, who is having the access to the, you know the intellectual property and everything you know, to education.

Frida: To the language.

Anthony: To the language and everything. So in that sense to me. I would say like right now I feel much more close to like two-spirit, like as in, um, yeah and modern whatever version of it would be non binary.

Yeah yeah.

Anthony: I mean, you just, uh, touched upon like, this is a very broad question. It just shows that's a really like, a lifelong journey that people are going onto. They let it happen, to oneself and also in which way or which- how do we want to perceive the world? How do we want to encounter and meet people? Get to know people and their struggles, their stories? I mean queerness as an attitude, as you mentioned Frida, can be applied in so many different contexts and then what do you do? Also what to do with your art, with your music, with the stories, like the stories that you're going to tell. Like I think that's something we are also very ...would like to share with our audience. And we're very happy that you're going to introduce your music to us. So yeah...

Frida: Yeah, I'm very excited. So is there anything you want to say before you play for us?

Anthony: I'm going to play...the first song is going to be from my second album, "The Lucky One". And it is really super related and connected with the topic, because The Lucky One's

subject was... he is from Berlin and when I fell in love with him, I didn't have any idea of that I could make an album about it, about this whole thing. And without knowing, I did like kind of decolonize my own music, my first album and then made this album openly gay and and it's like registration of this month that I spent with him, without him, and suffering and everything. And then I made this album to like...it's like a bit Netflix. Every song is an episode. Of our story, and I will play the first song, We Make Sense Together, and then I will play the last two singles that I made.

Abilaschan: Excited!

Anthony: Enjoy!

42:20 MUSIC PLAYS

Frida: Wow, thank you so much Anthony. That was such a beautiful, beautiful concert.

Anthony: Thank you.

Abilaschan: It's really like as I said immediately after the concert. This is reminding me...us, why are we doing this? This is like very exceptional and thank you for letting us part on this.

Anthony: My pleasure. It was amazing to sing after long time with three audience and just like-

All: (Laughs)

Anthony: Other performance was two weeks ago, but it was online, but now at least you know I have you. Yeah, using the spotlight, and bowing, and having a sound engineer.

Abilaschan: So props to Tim.

Anthony: Yes yeah, thank you Tim.

Abilaschan: It was really nice impressions and I also recognise like when we did the introduction about the different singing approaches that you have also within your education that you get in classical singing, but also in modern jazz or like jazz, singing, jazz, singing, modern jazz dance, right?

Anthony: Modern jazz like I guess.

Abilaschan: yeah yeah, OK, But what I also, listened or heard when I was listening to your music right now at the performance was the different techniques that you were using the way of, like usage of head voice, or resonance. So especially the voice is very centred. And you're also a vocal teacher.

Anthony: Yes.

Abilaschan: In one of your functions, that of the many hats that we were talking about. And I just remember that you also like that you facilitated workshop in Vienna with the title "How do you want to sound?" Could you...

Anthony: My God, you know.?

Abilaschan: Yeah, what was this workshop about?

Anthony: It's UM, it's a little bit like how I started to realise, like, oh music and you know, activism or politics, and how can I you know... how can I first of all, heal myself? Kind of process all the feelings and through that connect with other people and then be oxygen for them. If I mean, like I mean, that sounds so big. But you know I'm quoting someone. That goes same for the for the workshop that I gave in Vienna that... I'm like OK, I have all this knowledge and education and why not to use it for our friends or trans-friends, especially. Because voice is just completing everything you know that... they could have the freedom and knowledge to how do they want sound? And in that workshop it was like empowering. But also I did some research and like dig into it and then talk to a lot of artists and like professionals basically. To go deeper in that, and then, how can I help or support be in the service of our trans-friends to basically how they could use their voice, and if they want to, how they want to sound? You know if they want to sound like? I don't know. We can just start from female-male but...but whatever, you know? That also redid the constructions of the end spectrum of the gender. So basically how do you want to sound as you. You know, if you don't want to be pushed into the gender, like one thing?

Abilaschan: Yeah especially that was something I wanted to ask more about thinking beyond this binary within the understanding perception of this voice that we have because...then I was also wondering or what is your opinion on this classification of vocal ranges which are actually nothing else than frequencies which are possible to reach with our anatomic techniques that we have with our body or throat. Do you think that these singing voices, or pitch, like soprano, tenor? Like especially in the Western music theory understanding? Yeah, it's when it comes to also gender deconstruction and everything

Frida: Outdated...

Abilaschan: Outdated.

Anthony: I mean, the thing is that if you look at the Western music and Western culture and everything needs to be kind of, kind of divided into, like particles categorised, and like has to be really clear and named. Like if you... I always give this example also, like if you look at the piano...it has black and white keys. But if you look at like Ottoman, Ottoman classical music or Indian music or anything that is just like also- but for example in Western music one entire whole note, just like divides into two notes. That's like sharp and flat right? But in Ottoman music or like now it's Turkish music. I can only talk for that music. That one whole note, is just divided in nine microtones, and then you move and you perform by... kind of with the cluster you know. And then you just like... it's not only sharp

or flat and that depends on... it's... it's very fluid. It's so fluid and I think also maybe if we look into before the colonialism. And and-and this entire Western idea of gender and everything. The gender was also fluid...and so I just see things are like very very connected to each other and when it comes to voice, for example in Turkish music you have like... you have songs that as a singer, either you can sing, or not. You know that it depends on your voice, but it's not labeled as this and that. And-and-and there are some songs like uzun hava. You already know that uzun hava it's, it's like a kind of a very long vocal improvisation, and you know when I say "uzun hava" that that means "long air". You know that you are going to go higher and higher and higher and higher, and then people who sing that who has like a high voice so... and in Western music and in all these classifications, I think if they needed to just like label it like this, like sure. But I think I don't see any problem with that. But then kind of imposing that or like that it has to be like this, and that-thats where the problem comes, you know. And also... that if you look into the like Baroque and then before Baroque...the castration and everything is just like incredibly barbaric and violent.

Abilaschan: But then you see exceptions, like nowadays, modern, not the castrated version, but the countertenors, for example, which is an exception within this register.

Frida: But what is that?

Abilaschan: Like the countertenors? Maybe you want to elaborate as a vocal teacher.

Anthony: I mean countertenors are like, countertenors are singing the, singing like mezzo, soprano, underparts of operas, baroque operas? Or before baroque, where as males and the castrations and everything it happened in the-in the, as far as I remember to my like music history...where women were not allowed to get in the church and they did the castrations and then so they could sing the women, the women, female parts, singing. And-and and today we have counter tenor singers without the castrations and that's in their anatomy, that that's that's I mean anatomy is like one thing, but also the way that you practice. For example, I think if one teacher of mindset, like if I had practiced like because I use a lot of like 5 falsettos and head voice and I could be a countertenor...

Abilaschan: And it's also very specific breast resonating muscle or technique that you combine with the head voice, and that's why these people are able with long practice to perform these registers and notes actually

Anthony: Was it a bit like a mix, right? Like it's a mix of chest and head voice and and then you basically. With some education and exercises, you just train those muscles and it becomes more powerful. I think something like that. I hope we didn't give any wrong information.

Abilaschan: No guarantees!

Anthony: No guarantees! I graduated from classical singing. I think like in 2004. Say it's been 16. It's been 16 years.

Abilaschan: I mean, for me it's like even more reason. I'm still studying and my major is also classical music and that's why I was also very interested in asking about this aspect. Thank you...

Anthony: My pleasure.

Frida: So you graduated from studying classical music in 2004? That was in Istanbul.

Anthony: Yes.

Frida: Yeah. And then you also studied jazz singing in Rotterdam.

Anthony: Yes.

Frida: Right. And now you live in Berlin.

Anthony: Yes.

Frida: And I noticed that you that you said in another context that you live in and between, kind of Berlin, Rotterdam, and Istanbul. And that resonated with me because I'm originally from from Norway, and I've for many years, also used to say that I kind of live in and between Berlin and Oslo then for awhile I was also living in Leipzig so that also came on to the mix. Yeah, but for me in the past year, like the pandemic has changed that for me in very kind of profound ways. And I was curious how...yeah, how the last year and then kind of also just the fact that travel has gotten yeah unsafe and kind of more complicated, how that has been for you. I perceive you as a very kind of border transcending person.

Anthony: Uhm, yeah, of course it. It affected me, my work, and like I was going to travel to many countries to perform and it didn't happen of course. And in that sense like, I work as a curator in Rotterdam and I organise my own event, Queer performance art evening, and I book only queer performer/performance artists and that happens every two months so that that couldn't happen anymore, and I couldn't go anymore. And of course, forget about even Istanbul and flying so, but in a way it is so difficult to travel and then we were just like stuck where we are. But also it became like, it really didn't anyway matter anymore where you live. So we were forced to connect in different ways and like our senses were like you know, and-and the possibilities were somehow pushed to a certain artificiality, but through that ...even we just like, I don't know, developed something. I had somehow like performing online is of course, that was the only case and everything but, but that's, of course affected so many people also in different ways, not being able to see their loved ones, parents, and work. And yeah, and and not being able to... I don't know what-what like what, what, the freedom like... I-I little bit in this period, little bit started to focus on more healing and somehow the all this physicality, and move, like moving, going to another city

and or having this like sense of freedom. Somehow I was pushed to feel all of this like in me instead of searching for outside. And then I realised, wow, OK it is. It could be, there's a space in all of us that we can do that and then we can connect through that. And this is not I'm saying... oh pandemic happen and this is one of the positive things. But I think yeah, it just expands our beings in a very weird way, and-and a good way? I don't know.

Frida: In-in ways.

Anthony: In different ways. Yeah.

Frida: Yeah. And do you feel that it has changed? Kind of how you relate to the specific places or like? How does it feel for you to now? Yeah, live in Berlin.

Anthony: The thing is, I think I'm mostly work related and wherever I have work, I just like feel like I belong there and I work there and you know. And the more I perform, the more... and since I couldn't perform anymore, it was like for me... I just felt like all the time in kind of like space, you don't like...and floating. It's just, the only beautiful, one of the beautiful things was in Berlin that I discovered all the lakes in summer and I felt like, Oh yeah, it's amazing. Amazing space. But of course the queer spaces that I just missed so much, that to just, go to those places and have a drink and-and basically you know also what makes you queer? I asked that question a lot to myself because I was mostly surrounded by-by-straight people, especially in the first lockdown, and I stopped dating because I have asthma. So I was like I have to be careful. Also have to be careful for other people so I just like went full on. That took me really somewhere, but then that made me think of also OK... so what is being queer again? Like coming to that, you know in-in pandemic, like? If I don't see another queer person like, what does that to me? You know what? What does it do to me, and or if I don't touch? Another person? Like, how, like what happens to my? What happens to my queerness? You know, does it have levels? Like queerness also, as in like in, like you know it's an umbrella, the sexuality, and the physicality, and-and then we already have limited places and all these places were all gone. But for example, that pushed me to just organise queer events online, or something like that, but it's still not the same.

Abilaschan: Yeah, you already started with organising those or what are the name of this event.

Anthony: It's like Queer Performance Art Evening that I am-

Abilaschan: Ah the one from Rotterdam

Anthony: Exactly. I started to do that like online basically.

Abilaschan: So when is the next one happening?

Anthony: Maybe 11th of June. But then, like maybe with audience, like everything like if everything changes, otherwise online 11th of June? Yes, it's warm. It's like warm.org that's the venue if they want to have a look.

Abilaschan: Let us know if we can also link it to our show.

Frida: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

Anthony: Yeah! I don't know if I answered your question.

Frida: No yeah, you did.

Abilaschan: I was just thinking that you were also not only organising these kind of like community events, I've just heard about you... for your future plans, that you were mentioning to write your very first queer opera. So since I have like this classical background, I'm also very intrigued to us how this, what is this opera might would be about?

Frida: Tell us about the opera.

Anthony: That is so exciting. So here's the thing I already did, but it's like every year in Rotterdam there's an opera festival, and I was approached by the festival that if I want to perform and it happened in like during the pandemic, and they created like very very interesting little stages that with limited audience they would just come and go and like my stage was like a round, transparent like curtain. Basically, like-like completely circle, so people would see us from outside and then we could see them. And I wrote this little 20 minutes opera with, I wrote it and then we performed with a contemporary electronic musician. It's called, Crime, passionate, passionate... like there's this law, like crime of passion right? And and I did it in French because it was French invented so it's about Carmen, and Carmen's dance.

Frida: OK

Anthony: So yeah, I'm like I'm like how am I going to just bring all this together so it's about Carmen and Carmen's dad. So what happens is that Carmen comes back. And then comes back and then asks, why did they kill her?

Frida: Good question.

Anthony: Yes. And then first to her partner. What was his name again? My God, I forgot how ... now I'm having a blackout... like I wrote the entire thing! It's a very stereotyped opera anyway, It's a very stereotyped name. Jose, of course. So she asks, like you know, and that's me. So I was Carmen. So basically I was...Carmen and Jose and then Bizet, and then the person who wrote the, actually book. So Carmen comes back and asks José, José, right. Why did you kill me? She comes like "Tell me why did you kill me?" You know like

and then. So I was Carmen and Jose at the same time, so I was answering also. And then there's, there's like a kind of electronic like experimental techno music going down like on layer. And so basically it's focusing on the femicide and femicide in Turkey and in entire world. And it's still happening and there's still this law that is protecting men. And when they say in Turkey or in many countries actually that it says, if you say oh, I was jealous and I just had a had a blackout and I just killed... like they get how do you say discount on their punishments? So I kind of like brought this topic into this opera. I think in French the title was like Le Crime Passionnell or something like that, and I called it operanarchy. That's like my title. So this, I did 20 minutes and so Carmen is asking Jose and Jose is like cannot answer anymore and then he said like I didn't do anything Bizet did it...he wrote it... and then I called Bizet like I'm like. Can I talk to Bizet. So Bizet is like coming and then and then and Bizet is on phone and he's like and then and then he's like "Oh come, come on, don't be so don't be so silly it's been 200 years like what do you want?" You know like super, this arrogant answer you know like and then "Come on did you drink like? You, like, you know, just don't be silly" and then like because I read that "Oh my career was going so bad and I just discovered like opera comique and I just wrote that blah blah blah" and then he says "I didn't do it, he did it. It was a book."

Frida: The guy who wrote the book.

Anthony: Exactly and then there I drop it.

Abilaschan: Oh my god great! Like, first of all, I love the way how you act French accent It's like super nice! But then also this kind of like plot or stories needs to be really taken to the theatrical stage because they were like lacking or missing or they just missed out on like really precepting these old narratives and shift them to a contemporary understanding and also in a queer feminist way. Somehow...

Frida: I love that I love that yeah, but is this just? Is this just the beginning or-

Anthony: It's just the beginning, and then I had to finish my album so... it's like, but I'm gonna get back to it and then also I want to perform in Berlin and yeah. Just to add that and then at the background there was the name and the pictures of the women that were murdered in Turkey in only like last year. Just like it's crazy. And yeah, so hopefully it's going to happen. I'm going to, I'm going to do it in Berlin too. Yeah, hope so too.

Frida: Yeah, yeah, I really hope so.

Anthony: I need to find funding.

Abilaschan: Yeah...go fund Anthony. This is a call for action!

Frida: We want to see that that opera here in in Berlin

Anthony: Inshallah.

Frida: Yeah Inshallah!

Frida: I'm really looking forward to that, and we-we have arrived at the end.

Anthony: Did we! I'm like, since the performance, I'm like I'm on adrenaline I don't even remember what I just said 5 minutes ago so I hope this is all fine.

Abilaschan: It's gonna be great.

Frida: Yeah, we are actually at the end.

Anthony: Did you ask every question that you wanted to?

Frida: Yeah, I think!

Anthony: That's cool. Yeah, well done.

Abilaschan: Good moderation concept that we worked out on

Anthony: Totally, you-you two are amazing.

Abilaschan: Flattering if you could see us.

Anthony: We can't stop smiling. Can you see my smile? Can you hear me?

Frida: It's been there the whole time though it's really been a pleasure. I mean both talking to you. Uh, yeah, a really good conversation and an amazing performance.

Anthony: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Frida: We will add the songs that you played and we will add them as well to the playlist

Anthony: Super

Abilaschan: And also the project that you all mentioned. The many things that you would do that they will link. Or like in our social media?

Frida: Yeah, uhm. So just check the show notes for the link to the playlist

Anthony: (whispers) And follow me on Instagram.

Abilaschan: Plug in, plug it in Anthony.

Laughs

Frida: This was the 5th episode of Trans Culture Express and we will be back in a few weeks with the last episode of Trans Culture Express, at least for now. Thank you for

listening and also thank you to Berlin Music Board for supporting this podcast and your album.

Anthony: And my album! Thank you.

Frida: Ciao !

Abilaschan: Ciao !

Anthony: Bye bye.