

## MAY OUR NUMBER MAKE A RACKET AND SPUR US ON!

José Luis Espejo

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2017, we got together for a hearty lunch of rice. We'd made a load of food, because we knew we had a big day ahead of us. We headed to a cheap shop on Calle Antonio López, and we bought some oriental parasols, a really long tail (a tiger tail, of course), and a water spray bottle. We went out like that, all dressed up, and already a bit *merry*. We got to the roundabout at Legazpi, all of us boiling hot, and there we met up with all the other *romeras* and *romeros*. Before I go on, I will have to explain, a little, what the *Romería de los Voltios* was all about, and then we'll move on to the mythologies.

### LA ROMERÍA DE LOS VOLTIOS<sup>1</sup>

In 2015, the *Grupal Crew Collective* organised a dance competition as part of Matadero Madrid's *La Plaza en Verano* summer programme. The winner, Jesús Bravo, was awarded a portable loudspeaker. When the Matadero closed for the night, a group of people took the speaker to the Legazpi roundabout, which is just up the road, and they spent the night dancing there, until 3 in the morning. Roundabouts, as we all know, are often a sort of wasteland, and, in Madrid and the surrounding areas, they have been used either as a pedestal for sculptures that are funded using part of the public budget for culture, or to celebrate, with embarrassing nationalist frenzy, the victories of some or other footballing ensemble. This roundabout was not a plaza, but there was something of the post-15M plaza culture in its short-lived occupancy<sup>2</sup>.

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1 This is the name given to the event in question. Strictly speaking, a *romería* is a form of Roman Catholic pilgrimage, the etymology of which (and broader meaning) is discussed later in the text. There is no direct English equivalent, so it has not been translated in this text. *Romeras* and *romeros* are the pilgrims. *Voltios* are 'volts', the unit of electric potential, again discussed below (Translator's Note).

2 The term *15M* refers to the social and political movement in Spain that started following a large-scale protest in Madrid on 15th May 2011.

In 2016, this roundabout gave rise to a type of charm<sup>3</sup>. With the initial push coming from the *Grupal Crew*, the *Party Committee for the Romería de los Voltios* was formed. The portable speaker, which had been making its own pilgrimage from house to house throughout that year, led the march. There were other speakers, mounted on trolleys, and banners from both real and imaginary collectives. In 2017, it went even further. The Matadero's summer programme, *La Plaza en Verano*, continued to support the project. As well as the banners, which were made in a workshop run by Eva Zaragoza, the *Escuela de Oficios Electrosonoros* ('School of Electrosonorous Trades') contributed some speaker-backpacks, created in Juan Sorrentino's workshop at Medialab Prado. The collective *Carpinteros sin Fronteras* ('Carpenters Without Borders') built the structure for the procession, which was decorated by Jesús Bravo, Pablo Durango, María España and Álvaro Yélamos. *Charivaría*, an exhibition which took place at CentroCentro Madrid, co-curated by Andrea Zarza and the present writer, commissioned a documentary from the *Grupal Crew Collective*, which was made with technical support from Ana Esteve Reig and Jonas P. Matos.

As I write this, on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018, not long before the next *Romería*<sup>4</sup>, the word "history" feels a bit too

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The protest, which included the occupying of many important squares all over Spain, called for 'real democracy' and a change in the mechanisms of political participation, amid the deep economic crisis that was devastating the country (Translator's Note).

3 Sabina Urraca, *Glorieta Fetiche* ('Charm Roundabout'). This text appeared, unfortunately with no name, in a kind of zine/publication which was published as part of Matadero Madrid's *La Plaza en Verano* summer programme, in 2016. In its own way, it recalls the origins of this *Romería* in summer 2015, and is more or less the seed of what would then become the event's 2017 opening speech.

4 "This is where another interesting aspect of the *fiesta* ritual stems from: its tendency towards cyclical repetition, [...] something which allows it to be reproduced in other social settings, and its consolidation. [...] It is important to highlight that cyclical reproduction is a fundamental characteristic of the very definition of most *fiestas*, and this is

loaded to describe what this text is about, so we'll try to keep it light, and to the point.

## LA ROMERÍA DE LOS CORNUDOS

The word 'romería' comes from *romera* or *romero*, that is, a pilgrim to Rome. Over time, this expression came to refer to any pilgrim, whatever their destination. *Romerías*, it is worth noting, are strongly associated with the much-maligned (and sometimes not-so-maligned) celebrations that take place in Andalusia. There is a collective piece in the form of a *romería*, a piece which is also pagan and somewhat older, which is very useful when trying to understand what the *Romería de los Voltios* was and is. Not because that earlier piece's contributing artists help anoint the artists of this one, and not because it was a reference (they shall be discussed below), but because it deals with some of the key points under discussion here, i.e. the modern, the popular, the sacred and the profane.

The theatre play in question opened in 1933 with the name *La Romería de los Cornudos* ('The Romería of the Cuckolded'). The script was written by Cipriano de Rivas Cherif and Federico García Lorca, with music by Gustavo Pittaluga, choreography by La Argentinita and stage design by Alberto<sup>5</sup>. The staging tried to emulate what was expressed in Diaghilev's ballets, which, from 1909 to 1929, had a long list of collaborators, including Nijinsky, Igor

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its principal method of permeating the world and transforming it." Massimiliano Casu, *We should be dancing: On the fiesta and the (social) production of (social) space*, Master's dissertation (in Spanish) in Architectural Communication, at the Escuela Superior de Arquitectura of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2016, pp. 22. [https://www.academia.edu/29218103/We\\_should\\_be\\_dancing\\_-\\_Sobre\\_la\\_fiesta\\_y\\_la\\_producci%C3%B3n\\_social\\_del\\_espacio\\_social](https://www.academia.edu/29218103/We_should_be_dancing_-_Sobre_la_fiesta_y_la_producci%C3%B3n_social_del_espacio_social)

5 It is said that Alberto designed the background as an alternative to the backgrounds that Rafael Barradas had been making for Madrid's Teatro del Arte. Carmen Fernández Aparicio, *Alberto Sánchez, La romería de los cornudos*, 1933. Museo Reina Sofia. <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/content/obra-del-mes/romeria-cornudos-1933-alberto>

Stravinsky, Erik Satie and Pablo Picasso. Note that this is not an arbitrary list of celebrities; rather they are the ones who are most closely related with primitivism, that "learned" and highly colonial interpretation of the originating or original that, via the avant-garde sleight of hand, ended up as the foundation of the modern. The *Romería de los Cornudos* has, in fact, been recuperated as an icon of Spanish Republican modernity, a modernity that scoured the roots of popular or folk culture for the roots of the vanguard. In fact, Lorca had long been studying folk and gypsy music, and he had even compiled a collection of popular folk songs for which he made the piano arrangements that were published at Odeón Barcelona in 1932, accompanied by the voice of La Argentinita<sup>6</sup>.

The plot draws inspiration from a tradition in which Christian beliefs are mixed with pagan ones, a kind of syncretism from Granada in which the *Cristo de los Paños* ('Christ of the Cloth') is bestowed with the power to cure women's infertility. Furthermore, in *Yerma*, a scene is borrowed from that *romería*, in which the young men would "grab hold of the breasts" of the adolescent girls<sup>7</sup>, a tradition very

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6 *Collection of traditional popular songs*, transcribed and harmonised by Federico García Lorca (1898 – 1936) and performed by La Argentinita (1895 – 1945). Recorded in Barcelona in 1932, by the Odeón Gramophone Company, on a 78rpm late disc, now digitalised and conserved, since 2000, at the National Library of Spain: <http://bdh.bne.es/bnearchivo/detalle/bdh0000013656>

7 "Girls enter from the left running, with large garlands in their hands. From the right, three others the same, looking behind them. There is a crescendo of voices from the stage, accompanied by bells on horse-collars and harnesses. On a higher level seven girls appear, waving their garlands towards the left. The noise increases and two traditional Masks appear: one male and the other female. The masks they carry are large. The Male carries a bull's horn in his hand. They are not in any way grotesque, but very beautiful and with a suggestion of earthly purity. The Female shakes a ring of large bells. The rear of the stage fills with people who shout and comment on the dance. It is quite dark." Federico García Lorca, *Yerma* (1931). English translation of

much kept alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century at Pamplona's *Sanfermines* festival<sup>8</sup>. Choosing an openly pagan custom, so close to folk superstition, unregulated, far removed from the parameters and power of the Roman Catholic Church, was probably not the favourite topic of those who would vote for the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (the Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing Groups), just to give an example.

"To me, the *romería* smells of baroque altar-pieces, of elaborate Easter processions, of Goya's straw manikins."

Eva Zaragoza<sup>9</sup>

It is true that, in our collective imagination, *romerías* are pretty rancid things. *La Romería de San Isidro*, which is one of the *Black Paintings* that Goya produced between 1820 and 1823, depicts a monstrous scene, although no less disturbing than the pastel-coloured scenes from the painter's more luminous periods. The most famous of all the *romerías*, the *Romería de El Rocío*, rouses in our collective imagination the most unpleasant aspects of upper-class Andalusian snobbery and the celebration of the landowners. This image is presented, somewhat peculiarly, in the poster designs of Ricardo Anaya or Antonio Cobos.

These images are important to help us understand the difference between, on the one hand, the modern crossed with the popular or the primitive and, on the other, the certain ways it has been instrumentalised in order to generate interest, but which do

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the play available online at: <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Spanish/YermaActI.php>

8 This is a reference to the events of the 2016 *San Fermín* festival in Pamplona, where a group of five young men sexually attacked an 18-year-old woman and filmed it on their mobile phones. The woman accused the men of rape, but the subsequent trial deemed them guilty of the lesser charge of sexual abuse, and they were released on bail. This resulted in widespread outcry and condemnation, as well as angry protests in many different cities in Spain (Translator's Note).

9 From an email interview, carried out for this article.

not add anything progressive to the culture. If we compare the drawings in the posters with Penagos's illustration, or Opisso's use of *ligne claire* from the early 30s, this contradiction between form and theme becomes ever more evident. Where Penagos would draw idealised bodies, as per the art deco aesthetic, doing what people drawn in that style were supposed to be doing; that is, enjoying the lush meadows and streets with record players and picnic hampers, the aforementioned poster designers of the 50s would instead present the *romeros* on their knees. The carnality depicted is upper-class in Penagos's work, it is vulgar in Opisso's, and rural in *Yerma*—all of which have very little relation to the Francoist posters that, in all their prudish restraint, are exponents of the worst deliria of the institution-alisation of the *fiesta*<sup>10</sup>.

"At one point, we took our clothes off. We were like naked little children jiggling like mad around a garden sprinkler, which was Jesús's portable speaker. We looked, there with our tits out, like lots of Liberties Leading the People, taking over the city. We danced naked as if the roundabout were the corridor of our own house. Because it was."

Sabina Urraca<sup>11</sup>

## EXORCISM

"We come here today to celebrate the *Romería de los Voltios*. A *romería* without saints, or virgins, it is anarchic and *castiza*, in the domains of Madrid-with-a-Z where there is no starring icon, and the only faith we have is the desire and the need to get together to make this a neverending night out, a city in permanent *fiesta*."

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10 Note that, in many cases, the word 'fiesta' is left in the original in this translation because, as with 'romería', there is no single satisfactory translation for this word. 'Fiesta' encompasses a range of celebrations, from discrete occasions (i.e. a 'party'), but more often to longer, public festivals and neighbourhood events. The Hemingwayan adoption of 'fiesta' into English, i.e. that they are necessarily religious events that entail bullfighting, does not accurately reflect the scope of the word in Spanish (Translator's Note).

11 Sabina Urraca, *Glorieta Fetiche*, 2017.

Opening speech for the *Romería de los Voltios* 2016<sup>12</sup>

Question: Which popular *fiesta* would you most like to resemble?

Answer: Well, a *fiesta* for the people, secular, with fancy dress, a carnival without Venice, with tails, hair, wigs, donkeys. [...] I really like the idea of the pagan procession, I'm inspired by the *Feria de Abril* but with plastic flowers instead, processions that celebrate music instead of sorrow, parties taking over the streets, everything over the top."

Eva Zaragoza

Christianity in general, and Catholicism in particular, have done great evil in the land of Spain. That is without even mentioning the version that was exported. The darkest aspects of irrationality and ignorance, so imposed by religion and mixed with affirmation, dipped in positivism, that one's own is superior to the Other, like that, with a capital letter. Within that context there is desecration. This desecration, generally speaking, comes from the people; that is, it turns their class status itself into a space for dissent against the official *fiesta* culture. As mentioned above, a *romería* supposedly entails the Catholic and the pilgrimage, but recuperating its profane or at least syncretistic roots is important for the producing of an art that is both situated and critical at the same time.

In his Master's dissertation, Massimiliano Casu (co-founding member of the *Grupal Crew Collective* and, therefore, jointly responsible for the coordination of the *Romería*, at least until it gets going) discusses, following the philosopher Giorgio Agamben, how "The *fiesta* can be an expression of the sacred, as well as the most transgressive form of the profane. This tension has been present throughout the history of mankind, and it has even justified a great many traditional *fiestas*. Let us consider,

12 Raquel G. Ibáñez, Rubén Coll, Massimiliano Casu and Jesús Bravo, *Que el número aumente el estruendo y fortalezca la lucha*. Pregón para la "Romería de los voltios, 2016. <https://raquelgibanez.com/textos/que-el-numero-aumente-el-estruendo-y-fortalezca-la-lucha> (in Spanish).

for example, the carnivals and their complementary relationship with Easter. On the one hand, we deem sacrifice to be the action which makes humanity transcend towards the sacred. Does the *fiesta* make the urban space sacred, or does it give it back to the people to use? It is not easy to give a straightforward answer to that question. The *fiesta* loads the city with symbols and meaning, hurling it towards the transcendental, sometime condoning it and making some places out of bounds for certain people. The *fiesta* can build new topographies of exclusion, as well as spaces of imposition, and spaces of control. However, the popular celebrations under discussion here lean more towards the production of another process, which is based on the subversion of established uses, and the city being turned into a playground"<sup>13</sup>.

## THE SELF-CONFESSED INFLUENCES

In that same Master's dissertation, Massi makes use of Francesco Careri's concept of *transurbancy*<sup>14</sup>, to bring in another ritual of pilgrimage, the famous *Ruta del Bakalao*, which had an undeniable influence, albeit difficult to assimilate, given the smear campaign against it<sup>15</sup>. As the *Grupal* collective say in an interview, this *Ruta*, in the 80s and 90s, "is an interesting case because it took a space that was previously designated for agricultural production, and, every weekend, turned it into a kind of temporary state devoted to socialising, having fun, and partying"<sup>16</sup>.

According to the *Romería's* website, the people and collectives involved in 2017 were La Agrupación de

13 Massimiliano Casu, *Opus cit.*, pp. 22-23.

14 Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes, El andar como práctica estética*. Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2002

15 The *Ruta del Bakalao* was the new clubbing subculture that arose in and around Valencia, on Spain's east coast, in the 1980s and 90s. It came about in the context of post-dictatorship Spain, and the rise of 'party drugs' such as ecstasy—which is partly the reason for the aforementioned 'smear campaign' (Translator's Note).

16 Tracy Sybil Arijón, *La Romería de los Voltios: Todo lo que necesitas saber*, 2017 <https://djmag.es/la-romeria-de-los-voltios-todo-lo-que-necesitas-saber/>

Technoprogresistas, Alma Soul Music, Arrecife, Ciclo de Conciertos, Clan del Groove Castizo Disruptivo, Colectivo Djs Sin Cabina, Colmado Fanón, Comunidad de Raveros Amateur de la Ribera del Manzanares, Coordinadora Castellana, Celebracional Plenairista, Corporación de las 12 Pulgadas, Dancehall Center, Delegación Madrileña de Chones, El Banquete, Electrónica Es Arte y Cultura, Enlace Funk, Escuela de Oficios Electrosonoros, Frente de Liberación de Sistemas de Amplificación Sonora Callejera, Grupal Crew Collective, Iniciativa Fiestopolitana Madrileña, Internación Bullanguera, Irie Queen, Jt Bravo, Legazpi Dub Foundation, Madrid Radical, Marian Garrido, Niccagepedia and Pablo Durango, Parcería/Salsódromo, Post Club, Raquel G. Ibáñez, Roborob Funklover, Sección Invertida, Sensi Garden Sound, Silly Europeans, Sociedad de la Jarana Cósmica and XXXO.

Although the *Romería* is collective, and is organised collectively, there are some driving forces within the Party Committee for the *Romería de los Voltios*. As well as the quotes from some of the *romeras*, like Ana Zaragoza, who gladly answered questions by e-mail, the present writer would like to extend his gratitude to the other collectives and people who, having revealed their own influences, have directly and indirectly contributed in the writing of this text.

The *Grupal Crew Collective* is mainly Rubén Coll and Massimiliano Casu. Between 2016 and 2018, their work has focused on exploring the *fiesta*, music, and the taking back of the public space. Together, they organised the *Radio Verbena Melonera Imperial* in 2017, and the *Matadero Dance Clash* where this *Romería* came into being. Aside from this, it is important to highlight Rubén's work with the *Sound Readers* collective, and Massi's aforementioned Master's dissertation, titled *We should be dancing*. For the latter, another influence is the 'naval battle' in the Vallecas neighbourhood of Madrid, in which "each year, in the month of July, the *Guild of Sailors* organises a massive water fight." As with the *romería*, it is important to bear in mind the event's cyclical repetition, in this case to commemorate what happened on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1981, when a group of people decided to cool themselves down with water, which led, just a year later, to a gathering of 3000 people, organised by collectives and the local council.

Jose Salas, who participates in the *Romería* as part of *a\_mal\_gam\_a*, is another exponent of celebration in Madrid's artistic context. Jose recalls, when speaking about celebrations, everything from the *San Ginés* parties in his paternal hometown in Extremadura, to the somewhat nearer and artistified *Flags, Banners and Streamers*, event number 5 of the Fast Gallery event held in 2010 in which, as part of the *Picnic Sessions* at the Dos de Mayo Art Centre, they completed a pilgrimage from a square in Móstoles to the museum's terrace<sup>17</sup>.

## LOS VOLTIOS

"Volts, a unit of electrical measurement, are basically the starting point when it comes to batteries, which is, essentially, autonomy of power.

So let's power through!

"*Darse un voltio*<sup>18</sup> is a now-obsolete expression which has a certain air of the carefree tackiness that

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17 *Flags, Banners and Streamers* ['Banderas, estandartes y gallardetes'], part of the *Picnic Sessions* at the CA2M (the Dos de Mayo Art Centre, Móstoles): "[...] This is an open call in which we invite you to create your own flag, banner, streamer, shield, armour, bunting, lance or pennant, and take to the streets with us to hoist these symbols and thus form a collective exhibition as a great march of portable works. FAST GALLERY needs you! What is a flag, to you? Does it identify you? Decorate you? Inspire you? Which flag would you or your group take into battle? What weapons would you use? Underneath which emblems would your tribe gather? What colours would you defend? Does your cult have any symbol? Which idols do you worship? Which images? FAST GALLERY no.5 is presented as a mobile exhibition to which everybody is invited: artists, individuals, collectives, cortèges, resistance groups, jesters, commandos, street singers, local bands, giants and *cabezudos*, royal escorts, battalions, sportspeople, beggars, rogues, protesters and rabble-rousers...There's room for all of them in our parade, and they'll all be able to wave their flags." <http://fastgallery.net>

18 This expression means to go for a walk or a wander, probably on the street, to see what's happening. Here, the use of *voltio* ('volt') is analogous to Spanish *vuelta* ('a walk') (Translator's Note).

permeated the *cañi* and hooligan nightlife culture of the 80s. The *Romería de los Voltios* tries to revive words, and traditions, to create something new between us all. Focussing on the most important thing about volts: their autonomy. Taking the relevant part of the aforementioned popular expression: the street. *Darse un voltio* with our *voltio*-containers, these speakers, is just a way of showing, in a festive and glorious way, that the streets are ours, they belong to those of us who inhabit them, who walk on them, who dance along them, and we don't need anything or anybody to let us show that."

Opening speech for the *Romería de los Voltios*, 2016

Now that we have discussed the profane, the popular and the collective, it is worth now pausing to consider the modern, from the cultural-historical perspective of the act of listening<sup>19</sup>. In modern Europe and North America, amplification has been a foolproof way of turning sound into something effective, wide-reaching, technologically progressive, as well as being a great leveller. In certain contexts it has helped in the forming of a forward-facing kind of listening, focussed on the stage or the screen, which has stunted or numbed our innate sense of ecolocalisation; that is, people's ability to perceive space through sound, a skill which blind people still use, and which remains common in other mammals. In other contexts, amplification has been used as a medical device for the normalisation of the non-listening individual, via the use of hearing aids and cochlear implants. In terms of the *fiesta* or the ritual, amplification has helped to level out and eliminate certain cultural peculiarities associated with certain territories. The tradition, in this context, is drummed, sung and blown into horns and trumpets. So this idea of the traditional, that it measures the physical strength of the musicians, is considered the polar opposite to modern amplification in a battle as strong as Carnival against Easter<sup>20</sup>. The loudspeaker

19 Emily Thompson, *Soundscape of Modernity*, MIT, Massachusetts, 2004, pp. 270-272.

20 On one occasion, the artist and cultural agent Xabier Erkizia, speaking about his immense audio archive of carnivals, made an apparently arbitrary classification: he was interested in carnivals that had no amplification. <http://www.soinumapa.net/?s=carnaval&submit=Buscar&lang=es>

is often synonymous with the urbanisation of the carnival and, in the European context, the loss of its power to bring about positive transformation.

However, this loss of the *fiesta's* power to induce positive transformation, because of amplification itself, is not always quite so clear. Among the references cited by the *romeras* here are the *sonideros*, i.e. the soundsystem-parties in Central and South America. The way they make use of amplification there, or in tropical carnivals, is not so concerned with sound quality, but rather the intensity of volume, which is borderline painful. Rubén, from the *Grupal Crew Collective*, commented that the street carnivals in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, with their floats playing *soca* music on huge speakers is, by some distance, the most intense experience of sound he had ever experienced, even more than that of the legendry Keiji Haino. If we include here the relationship with the profane which we were discussing, above, we will see that the *Romería* is consciously situated in a specific context.

Among the *romeras'* acknowledged references you can also find Berlin's Love Parade and the English raves of the 90s. When taken out of context, copying their forms to the letter could proliferate certain cultural notions that do not always match the ways of doing things in distinct territories. To continue with the logic of this text, imitating the forms of a northern-European rave would be like doing what the aforementioned 1940s poster designers used to do: taking advantage of avant-garde forms, the use of electronic music and moving amplification, without adding any of the culture's progressive side. This, as well as lacking originality, would ensure that those here remain stuck in the narrative construction that is the Anglo-Saxon cultural periphery.

In the context of southern Europe, i.e. in Madrid, in order that amplification can work as a tool for taking over space, it must make use of the symbols of the culture in which it operates. In this case, and going back to *La Romería de los Cornudos*, we are in a culture riddled with Catholicism, anxiously holding out for desecration, the formal procession, the cross-dressing figure of the *romero*: all of this makes the exorcism of culture possible, and it lays the foundations for a new tradition where the popular is

a guide, not only in terms of form, but also in questions of class. Amplification is not a medium, but rather a charm, a relic, and a protector. Music turns into the self-proclaimed reason-for-being of urban occupation.

## AND THE STREET

“This is why, more than being a free zone for chaos, we should consider the festive environment as a context for critiquing the established order, where that critique can be carried out and materialised, giving it bodies and places.”  
Massimiliano Casu<sup>21</sup>

In 2018, Article 41 (a law which decrees the limits of street music and the Special Protected Areas against Noise Pollution) was reformed. This may appear to be a promising step forward, but the text itself is a disappointment. “The city of Madrid received over 9.3 million visitors in 2017, according to the Survey of Hoteliers and the National Institute of Statistics, which means the city centre is becoming a very attractive shop window for musicians”<sup>22</sup>. The city centre as a *shop window* and using music to *lure in customers* clearly has little to do with the task of occupying space, temporarily and politically, as discussed in this text.

The city council’s environmental and mobility-focused politics is in line with the city authorities’ other attempts to “modernise” folk or popular traditions like the *Fiestas de San Isidro*, which was originally a bullfighting fair and now includes anti-bullfighting musicians in its lineup, or the *Veranos de la Villa*, which are constructing and directing a somewhat less rancid concept of ‘fiesta’, as English speakers would understand the word, i.e. its being synonymous with religious or bullfighting celebrations.

Between the extremes of organised celebration and the clamping down on self-run social centres

21 Massimiliano Casu, *Opus cit.*, pp. 21.

22 Jorge García Castaño, councillor (Madrid City Centre), *A New Decree to Regulate Music in the City Centre*, 2018 <https://diario.madrid.es/blog/notas-de-prensa/un-nuevo-decreto-regula-la-musica-en-la-calle-en-el-distrito-centro/> (in Spanish)

like Abismal, there are also less spectacular events that take the time to consider listening in a different way. Here we can include some of the projects of *Imagina Madrid*<sup>23</sup>, or within the context of the *romería*, the *Iniciativa Fiestopolitana*, which aims to “propose to the administration a regulatory context for citizen-run neighbourhood parties”, for which, supposedly, music is not something to lure people in, but rather the sound-based form of a community<sup>24</sup>. The *Romería de los Voltios*, and many of the implicated collectives and individuals, want to try and turn the public space into a social and habitable space.

“Don’t forget that this is a square, a public square, a slightly smaller square than those which we took over a few years ago to demand change, to release the anger from deep inside us, to understand that there is a kind of energy that is truly beautiful, truly special, almost invisible, that runs through the air in this polluted city. [...] This bloke has said enough. Time to enjoy ourselves and share the moment, that’s why we’re here.”

Opening speech for the *Romería de los Voltios*, 2016

23 “Within the framework of *Imagina Madrid*, a programme by Intermediae, promoted by the Department for Culture and Sports of the Madrid City Council, which supports the exploring of new forms of intervention in the public space, forms in which cultural production, environmental sustainability and social urbanism allow us to imagine and create the city that we wish to inhabit, we include En Sintonía, in the Plaza de Rutilio Gacis.” <https://laparceria.org/2018/04/10/imagina-madrid-plaza-rutilio-gacis/>

24 This is a Project that seeks to propose, to the administration, a regulatory framework for local, citizen-organised celebrations. Its aim is to simplify the organisational procedures and ensure that we can all have fun on our streets. <https://iniciativafiestopolitana.wordpress.com/>