

Live Remote Broadcasts With Audio Description in Brazil

By Ana Julia Perrotti

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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.

Classes on distance learning platforms, online conferences, working from home, and instant messaging groups, which were already quite common, became fast and efficient solutions for exchanging information and content.

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.

The National Organization of the Blind of Brazil (ONCB) radio station followed this trend and adopted the initiative to promote lives with audio description resources.

The initial proposal was to transmit the audio description through the radio station's app, and Tradusound, my company, accepted the challenge. As far as we know, a live real-time broadcast, following security and social isolation guidelines of being **totally remote**, is unprecedented in Brazil.

Up to when this article was written, we had participated in three live broadcasts. Marília Mendonça – singer from the state of Goiás, Brazil – was the first of them on May 9, perhaps the first, in the world and Brazil, done remotely in real-time. On that day, according to Rádio ONCB's internal metrics, the app was accessed over 1,000 times, maybe way more. The count freezes when the system reaches one thousand. Countless listeners watch on the website, internet radios, or other apps and platforms. According to radio data, an estimated 7,000 people followed this live audio description broadcast with these other means. This live show lasted six hours, from 8:30 pm on Saturday to 2:30 am on Sunday.

The following two Saturdays hosted the Brazilian Country duo Bruno and Marrone (May 16), and sisters Maiara and Maraisa (May 23). The schematics for the preparation and transmission were the same for all of them:

Preparing preliminary notes (introductory) and researching possible scene props (made in advance), reviewing all material immediately before the event starts; during the show, rotate descriptive narrators using real-time consultants (the consultants gave guidance and suggestions to the descriptive narrators during the show, sending recorded messages from WhatsApp and an internal secondary audio channel, a.k.a. SAP, or "*ponto*" in Portuguese).

The descriptive narrators were introduced to the listeners at the end of the shows but still within the Rádio ONCB programming schedule. We began introducing both the preliminary notes and the narrators during the “warm-up” – broadcast 30 minutes before the live shows were officially broadcast on YouTube – in the second show.

The three live shows also counted on Brazilian sign language (LIBRAS) interpreting, with live interpreters taking turns throughout the show. The interpreter changes (and their appearance) were part of our audio description, highlighting yet another accessibility feature, and honoring our LIBRAS colleagues.

Rádio ONCB established a connection that received messages from listeners on Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, enriching the whole process even more. The listeners had several means to communicate during the shows, even enabling them to request some specific items to be described.

We started to announce the name of the next audio describer during their transition. As far as we know, this is yet another pioneering and unprecedented initiative aiming to draw viewers closer to audio description, to value audio describers, and increase auditory recognition of each new audio describer.

This entire real-time process counted on the direct involvement of dozens of audio description professionals, be it audio describers or their consultants.

Luigi Kichel and Rafael Nimoi served as consultants on Marília Mendonça’s live broadcast (and on all three live shows), and Ana Julia Perrotti, Nara Marques, Luiza and Fernanda Brahemcha, and Kelly Alcântara all served in the audio description. Fabricio Beltramini was added to this audio description team in the second live show (Bruno and Marrone duo). In the third live performance – the sister team of Maiara and Maraisa – the audio-descriptive narrators were Ana Julia, Fabricio, Joselba Fonseca, and Belle Ferreira.

Everyone operated remotely, from their homes hundreds of kilometers away. Nara was in Araraquara, Brazil, more than 350 kilometers from the capital city of São Paulo, and Fernanda, Luiza, and Belle are from Jundiaí, 40 kilometers from the capital. Joselba was in Curitiba, in the state of Paraná, more than 400 kilometers from the capital of São Paulo, and Ana Julia, Kelly, and Fabrício are all three from São Paulo, Brazil. Tradusound’s technical team, Rafael and Luigi, was broadcasting from the city of Americana in the countryside of São Paulo (120 kilometers away). Then, there was Rafael Tavares, from ONCB’s technical team, who was in Santos, on the coast of the state of São Paulo (more than 80 km from the capital city with the same name).

The radio director, Marcus Aurélio de Carvalho, was in the São Paulo city neighborhood of Bela Vista, answering WhatsApp messages. The Twitter messages were received by Gustavo Torneiro, in the city of São Paulo and Isabela Rocha (in Presidente Prudente, a city more than 500 km from the capital). The program radio host, Wesley Gamaliel, was in Itapetininga, also in the countryside of São Paulo.

In fact, there were three historical breakthroughs for audio description, because we did a live show, in real-time, from a remote location. We know we could not have done this without the body of knowledge built by our colleagues who preceded us on this journey. These people did live events in theaters, cinemas, musical shows, and other modalities. All of this knowledge, these strategies and practices, were priceless in supporting this leap into the unknown, this

solution to a problem that may have never existed before. To all these colleagues, we would like to leave our utmost gratitude.

Just as we want to thank Rádio ONCB, its director Marcus Aurélio de Carvalho, Wesley Gamaliel, and the President of ONCB, Beto Pereira, for the pioneering initiative and for making the Rádio ONCB app available for transmissions. So, what are you waiting for! Sign up right now on the Tradusound channel on YouTube, on my AudiodescreVendo pages, and for the *Boletim da Acessibilidade Audiovisual* (Portuguese for Audiovisual Accessibility Newsletter). Look for us on social networks to always stay current with news, updates, courses, and releases linked to audio description and accessibility in general.

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