# RABASA Music from Cape Verde

# Rabasa (Cape Verde)

*Rabasa is a typical exponent of the Cape Verdian diaspora. They have lived in the vicinity of the Dutch harbour city of Rotterdam for many years now. In this city the success of a band that is now a respected guest of international podia and festivals, started*.

*Rabasa plays a variety of genres of the warm Cape Verdean music. The alluring and distinctive vocal sounds of Cape Verdean music, which can be moving one moment and swinging the next, are accompanied by acoustic instruments such as guitar, cavaquinho, diatonic accordion and percussion and drum.*

# *The music of Rabasa is deeply rooted in the musical traditions of Cape Verde. Over the years, Rabasa has developed its own sound based on these traditions. The repertoire takes the listener on a tour of the different genres of Cape Verdean music, from the melancholy morna to the steamy funana.*

**Rabasa**

The Rotterdam-based brothers João, Jorge, Tó and Angelito Ortet come from a farmer’s family from the little village of Rui Vaz on the island of Santiago, and make up the group’s core. Inspired by their older brothers Lindo and Emanuel, they began playing music at a very early age. They performed music and theatre in church and learned the tricks of the trade from their brothers and from playing with the older people in the village.

For many people on Cape Verde, the process of gathering water is a daily ritual, as it was for the Ortet brothers who each day had to trek many kilometres from their house in a breathtaking green mountaintop area to the water source. Rabasa is the name of an old water source near Rui Vaz. This water source played an important role in the Ortet brothers’ childhood years, and so the name Rabasa symbolises the source of the rich Cape Verdean musical traditions, which are the basis and the inspiration for the music of Rabasa.

Rabasa was founded in 1998 by the four Ortet brothers. Shortly after, they welcomed several talented musicians into the lineup: singer Terezinha Fernandes, born in São Lourenço dos Órgãos (Santiago); percussionists Hans de Lange from the Netherlands and Mike Shakison from Suriname; and trumpet player Tagus Traore from Guinea Conakry.

In 2006, percussionist Mike Shakison returned to Suriname, and guitarist Paulo Bouwman joined the band in his place. Following Tagus Traore’s retirement, drummer Nataniël (Tati) Gomes joined in 2022. Paulo left Rabasa in 2022. Tragically, Tati passed away in 2023, after which Hendrik (Diekko) Ribeiro stepped in as a temporary drummer. Shortly after, original member Mike Shakison rejoined Rabasa, replacing Diekko as the drummer.

Over the years, Rabasa’s members have remained deeply connected to Cape Verdean musical roots. Mike and Hans began their musical journeys alongside Américo Brito and collaborated on projects with renowned artists such as Ildo Lobo, Luis Morais, and Manuel d' Novas. Hans has also performed with notable musicians, including Splash, Gil Semedo, Bana, and Djozinha.

##### Lineup

João Ortet Vocals, Cavaquinho, Guitar, Ferrinho

Tó Ortet Vocals, Bass Guitar

Jorge Ortet Vocals, Guitar, Harmonica

Angelito Ortet Vocals, Diatonic Accordion, Percussion

Terezinha Fernandes Vocals, Percussion

Hans de Lange Percussion

Mike Shakisson Drums

**History**

At the presentation of their first CD “Rabasa” in La Tentation in Brussels (1999), the concert began before a rapt audience. As the concert continued and Rabasa moved on to the batuque and then the funana, the public could no longer contain itself-- chairs were pushed aside and the party went on for many hours. As it turned out, this ritual was to be repeated at many venues to come.

Rabasa played several important festivals and stages like:

Sfinks festival, België Concertgebouw, Amsterdam

Sziget , Budapest, Hongarije Paradiso, Amsterdam

Amsterdam Roots Festival De Doelen, Rotterdam

Oerol festival Oosterpoort, Groningen

Winternachten, den Haag Vredenburg, Utrecht

Happy Art Festival, Hongarije I Sanat, Istanbul, Turkije  
La Musique African, België  Theater aan het Vrijthof, Maasticht

Gentse Feesten Treibhaus, Innsbruck, Oostenrijk

Dunya Festival Tropen Instituut Theater, Amsterdam

Afrika Festival, Hertme Zuiderpershuis, Antwerpen, België

Uitmarkt, Amsterdam Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussel, België

Eruit markt, Rotterdam Rasa, Utrecht

Bevrijdingsfestival, Wageningen Paard, den Haag

Sail, Amsterdam Goudse Schouwburg

Boekenbal, Amsterdam Vereniging, Nijmegen

Colours of Ostrava, Tsjechië Chassé Theater, Breda

Zamek, Poznan, Polen Melkweg, Amsterdam

International Bursa Festival, Turkije Haarlemmerhout Festival

Cemal- Resit Rey, Istanbul

Festival Cidade Velha Cabo Verde

Festival Mundial, Tilburg

Contact:

Rabasa

E-mail: [info@rabasa.nl](mailto:info@rabasa.nl)

Tel: +31649895472

www.rabasa.nl

https://www.facebook.com/rabasa.musicadecaboverde

Bookings:

**EBB Music**  
Van Hallstraat 52

1051 HH Amsterdam

THE NETHERLANDS

T: +31 (0)20 627 9518

E: [francis@ebbmusic.eu](mailto:francis@ebbmusic.eu)

www.ebbmusic.eu

**Discography**

**Ora ta pasa**

Release january 22 2016

Coast to Coast

[www.coasttocoast.nl](http://www.coasttocoast.nl)

www.triparoundtheworld

# The new album "Ora ta pasa" (time is passing) stands for the notion that life is stressful and sometimes we do not allow ourselves to rest, but we also need to enjoy it. The busy nature of life is in part the reason why it took the band members a while before they could release a successor to the previous CD "Portucabo".

# On "Ora ta pasa", you will hear festive music, including a song about the culinary delights of multiculturalism as well as a tribute to Grogu, the national Cape Verdean drink made with liquor and sugarcane.

# "Ora ta pasa" will also evoke deep thoughts and feelings. It explores themes such as platonic love, cultural crossroads, and living away from homeland and loved ones. It also contains a tribute to the death of one of the best Cape Verdean singers Ildo Lobo, which symbolises all those who left us during the making of this CD.

# This album not only conveys different atmospheres but also different genres of Cape Verdean music. Aside from the magical sound of four brothers singing simultaneously, different musicians emerge as surprising lead singers. Guest musicians on the album include: violinist Aili Deiwiks, trombonist Efe Erdem and cellist Alejandro Sanchez.

**Portucabo**

Release april 2008

Coast to Coast

The music Rabasa plays is grounded firmly in the Cape Verdian music traditions. Rabasa has developed, on the basis of these traditions, a distinctive hip, rocking, warm and full sound. They use solely acoustical instruments like guitar, cavaquinho, accordion, trumpet and percussion that support the characteristic singing in tasteful, sometimes pop like arrangements. The lyrics and music are mainly written by Rabasa and voice for one part a loving tribute to what is precious to them and for the other part their astonishment over continuous injustice.

**Pertu di Bo**

Release February 2004

Coast to Coast

Rabasa’s first studio album was highly appreciated by both press and audience. Rabasa with many original compositions in a variety of the musical styles of Cape Verde, such as morna, coladeira, funana, batuque, mazurka and tabanka. The alluring and distinctive vocal sounds of Cape Verdean music, moving one moment and then swinging the next, are accompanied on acoustic instruments such as guitar, cavaquinho, accordion and percussion and trumpet. Guitarist Lindo Ortet is featured as a special guest performer on this CD.

**Rabasa**

Fonti Musicali

www.fontimusicali.com

Rabasa’s first CD, recorded live at Igreja Nossa Senhora da Paz, the Portuguese-language church in Rotterdam.