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The Idiosyncratic Language of Brazilian Music: Strategies for Performing Villa-Lobos Choros No. 10

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THE IDIOSYNCRATIC LANGUAGE OF BRAZILIAN MUSIC:
STRATEGIES FOR PERFORMING VILLA-LOBOS CHOROS NO. 10

by

Dennis Paz Leoni

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
and the School of Music
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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ABSTRACT

THE IDIOSYNCRATIC LANGUAGE OF BRAZILIAN MUSIC: STRATEGIES FOR PERFORMING VILLA-LOBOS CHOROS NO. 10

by Dennis Paz Leoni

May 2017

Heitor Villa-Lobos' *Choros No. 10* is a composition with many cultural and symbolic inclusions. This work seeks to support a conductor's informed performance of the piece by providing historical and technical context from the conductor's life and influences. The first section examines the ethnographic and sociopolitical factors in Brazil during the conductor's life, and then the personal influences on Villa-Lobos' career, in order to establish the foundation for a section-by-section analysis of the work which illuminates the idiosyncratic nature of the composer's masterpiece.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of Piero Bastianelli, who will eternally be present in my life. My sincere gratitude also goes to my beloved wife, Megan Fink Leoni, whose precious support made this research possible.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Villa-Lobos's music is a puzzle. Many talented, established musicians and composers hesitate to play the compositions of the twentieth-century, Brazilian composer because his orchestrations, to the foreign ear, sound disordered, cacophonous and dense. To the Brazilian ear, however, it sounds like home. Heitor Villa-Lobos' compositions, especially his masterpiece, *Chôros No. 10*, have deep cultural, historic, and political implications, to say nothing of their inherent musical complexity. Villa-Lobos' work is made up of so many unique pieces that one needs a map to navigate the puzzle. Barring an expensive and lengthy immersion trip to Brazil, a thorough native guide is the next best option.

While dictionaries of music have a vast amount of information on each major composition by Bach or Beethoven, when it comes to Villa-Lobos there is an empty place in the extant literature. Therefore, a conductor of Villa-Lobos' great orchestral works is left without a comprehensive guide that is necessary in order to lead an orchestra to an informed performance of his masterworks. In earlier periods, perhaps this did not present a problem, but now that today's globally-conscious musicians have brought Brazilian music into the mainstream, an investigation into the finer details of *Chôros No. 10* is deeply needed.

There are several reasons that *Chôros No. 10* is the most important work of Heitor Villa-Lobos. It includes a full symphonic orchestra, a full choir, as well as a plethora of traditional Brazilian percussion instruments that may be unfamiliar to many non-Brazilian musicians. In fact, Villa-Lobos writes percussion for *Chôros No. 10* almost exclusively with traditional Brazilian instruments, which speaks to the importance of the

composition as a turning point in the composer's career. *Chôros No. 10* is the plot point where Villa-Lobos and his music turn into a nationalistic symbol, and later, a political one.

A fairly extensive body of work has been done on Villa-Lobos' solo pieces, especially for guitarists. Perhaps the guitar repertoire is thoroughly studied because Brazil has a long cultural tradition of guitar, and the composer's guitar pieces are very familiar to those for whom the work is culturally native. Villa-Lobos has also been extensively studied from the compositional point of view for his harmonic and musical structure. However, the conductor's job goes beyond musical theory or even that of a dedicated soloist. The conductor's work is to understand each of the parts and all of its implications and impart to the orchestra not only technical guidance but a passion for the meaning of the composition. An orchestra's artistically united, informed and enthusiastic approach makes all the difference. After all, *Chôros No. 10* is not a piece for beginners. The highly trained musicians who set out to play this challenging composition should be inspired to authentically present this deeply meaningful composition, though it might sound very foreign to their ears.

A conductor intending to perform Villa-Lobos will be tasked with analyzing a maze of clues on how to answer the questions that will naturally come from its reading - from the most simple elements such as, "What instrument is this supposed to be?" to comprehending the rhythmic complexity and orchestration, to say nothing of the idiosyncratic notation and unconventional way Villa-Lobos translates traditional Brazilian instruments and rhythms into European notation.

In order to provide the best possible guide for a conductor of *Chôros No. 10*, this work will first delve into the musical ethnography of Brazil, which will provide the sociopolitical context in which Villa-Lobos and his work were conceived. Then, an investigation into the specific musical influences of Brazilian popular music will begin to illuminate the details of Chôro as a genre. A biography of Villa-Lobos will contextualize *Chôros No. 10* as his great masterpiece, explaining the composer's intentions and attitudes at the time of its writing. Finally, a comprehensive section-by-section analysis of each part of the work will offer a detailed map to its prospective conductors.

CHAPTER II - BRAZILIAN ETHNOGRAPHY

Mixing of Cultures

To understand Brazilian music, one must first understand the complexity of the Brazilian people and their varied cultures. Even though the country was founded in the sixteenth century, its process of cultural integration was not fully realized until after the abolition of slavery at the end of the nineteenth century¹. Brazilian culture is a homogenization of three major ethnic influences: European, African, and indigenous peoples. This combination is unique, even when compared to cultural influences in other parts of the Americas.

Brazil is the only Portuguese colony in the Americas. And even though the Lusitanian people are close neighbors of the Hispanics, they differ in several cultural aspects due to their different colonial histories. When Portugal colonized Brazil in 1535, the land became a continent-sized farm. The Portuguese intended to extract huge amounts of sugar cane and Pernambuco wood (which would become popular for the construction of viol bows) from the continent. Therefore, the colony was never intended to be a self-sufficient, functioning society on its own. Since no infrastructure was necessary for the simple extraction of cash crops, none was developed. Almost nothing was built until the early seventeenth century when forts were constructed to protect the colony from Dutch intrusion; these Netherlanders frequently encroached on areas of Northern Brazil at this time. This is in contrast to Spanish colonies, which were mined for gold and became rich places in their own right, where Spanish aristocrats wanted to live. Therefore, the Spanish colonies became far more civilized much more quickly, making it possible for them to

¹ Princess Isabel signed a law abolishing slavery in 1888.

become independent earlier. Ecuador became independent in 1809, followed by Mexico in 1810. Until the Portuguese royal family moved from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro in 1808, the most commonly spoken language in the colony was Tupi, an indigenous tongue. Brazil, the only Portuguese colony in South America, would become legally independent in 1822, but never had a large-scale revolutionary war. It was declared independent by the Portuguese prince, who became Dom Pedro Primeiro, the monarch of Brazil. Brazil remained a monarchy, closely connected to Portugal, for several more decades. Brazil was also the last Western country to abolish slavery in 1888.

The great majority of Africans that were brought to Brazil during the period of slavery were of Yoruba origin. These people have a specific understanding of spirituality that views music and religion as one interconnected concept. “In Yoruba society and culture, as in many other African societies, religion and culture are linked so much so that there cannot be a pure history of religions (*religionswissenschaft*).”² When the African people arrived in Brazil, they brought with them their holistic view of music, religion, and culture. This element will greatly impact the Brazilian miscegenation that will occur at the beginning of the twentieth century. The aesthetic aspects of African music are of extreme importance, but a philosophical understanding of why it happens in this way is very important to understanding the result of Brazilian music. There are very few places where Yoruba people had a major influence on the culture of the Americas. Even in Brazil, the major influence of Yoruba people is found mostly in the state of Bahia. Cuba also received a great number of Yoruba Africans, and the similarities between Brazilian

² Olupona 1993, 259

Candomblé and Cuban Santeria music can be seen in some aspects of both religious belief and musical traditions, such as the use of three ritual drums.

When Brazil reached the Republic era at the end of the nineteenth century, the debate about a national dimension took place, leading into Semana de Arte Moderna (Modern Art Week.) The national debate can be summarized with the question, “Tupi or not Tupi?” as the Brazilian writer, Oswald de Andrade asked in his *Anthropophagous Manifesto* in 1928.³ He defines how Brazilian people approach the concept of multiculturalism, by metaphorically referring to the Tupi people who had the custom of eating prisoners of war in order to absorb their special powers. To Oswald, who orchestrated the Modern Art Week, Brazilian culture should be cannibalistic in this fashion: absorbing aspects of each culture into the Brazilian identity. His anthropophagous concept is the practical approach the full acceptance of miscegenation.

Brazilian people tend to take advantage of any aspect of a foreign culture, digest and incorporate it, and make it something of their own. By the end of this process of cultural cannibalism, cultural elements that would have once been considered foreign or exotic would no longer be European, African or indigenous; everything would simply become Brazilian.

The development of a continent-spanning country such as Brazil does not happen at once. In the early twentieth century, urban areas were far more modern than rural ones, which kept some older traditions, including native ways of life, alive. This urban/rural

³ Hess, Carol A. "Heitor Villa-Lobos: A Life (1887-1959) (review)." *Notes* 59.3 (2003): 633-35. Web.

separation of the “two Brazils,”⁴ one being perceived to be more civilized or progressive than the more traditional, would create an environment that artists at the beginning of the twentieth century would see as the preservation of the Brazilian soul. In some jungles, entire communities of blacks and natives lived independently from the rest of society. These rural, ethnic minorities were seen as highly connected with the earth, a trait called “quilombo” that was romanticized by artists of that time. Monteiro Lobato’s character, called Saci, a black man with one leg who would pull hijinks on clueless, urban, white tourists in the jungle, was a part of popular children’s tales during this time.

During the early twentieth century, Brazilian culture was in the process of defining itself as being truly Brazilian, as opposed to simply being identified as a melting pot of its influences: an African culture that connects religion with music and a Brazilian eco-spirituality that is one with its land. In Brazilian art of the 1920s, the coastal jungles and the arid interior, or “Sertão,” assumes a nationalistic, romantic character. For Brazilian artists, natural, rural areas were not only places where their souls lay, but also where Brazil’s richness of resources were to be found. For example, the green of the Brazilian flag symbolizes the forest, while the yellow symbolizes the gold, and the blue, the sky. This trend included the profound change of lyrics to the Brazilian national anthem in 1909,⁵ which was originally composed in 1822. These new words lauded the

⁴ Franco, Jose Luiz De Andrade, and Jose Augusto Drummond. "Wilderness And The Brazilian Mind (I): Nation And Nature In Brazil From The 1920S To The 1940S." *Environmental History* 13, no. 4 (2016): 725.

⁵ The placid banks of the Ipiranga heard
The resounding cry of a heroic folk
And the sun of Liberty in shining beams
Shone in the homeland's sky at that instant.

If the pledge of this equality
We managed to conquer with strong arm,

natural beauty and ecological treasures of Brazil. The Brazilian artists were a very important part of the ongoing melting and forming of Brazilian culture, and their popular art and music became a powerful political, nationalistic force.

Nationalism

The intellectual process in Brazil led the country to create its own racial identity without resorting to armed revolution. Instead of violent and enforced segregation, Brazil found a more subtle way to stratify the racial groups according to supremacy and power. The culture was highly homogenized, but each facet was assigned a weight and value within the society's boundaries that no one misunderstood.

The Brazilian identity became entrenched with this homogenized stratification. In 1995, Gerard Behague explained Brazilian identity in this way: "We understand identity not as a national character, as diagnosed by detached social psychiatry, but as a collective

In thy bosom, O Freedom,
Our chest defies death itself!

O beloved,
Idolized homeland,
Hail, hail!

Brazil, an intense dream, a vivid ray
Of love and hope descends to earth
If in thy comely, smiling and limpid sky
The image of the (Southern) Cross blazes.

Giant by thine own nature,
Thou art beautiful, thou art strong, a fearless colossus,
And thy future mirrors that greatness.

Adored Land
Amongst a thousand others
Art thou, Brazil,
O beloved homeland!

Of the sons of this ground
Thou art kind mother,
Beloved homeland,
Brazil!

awareness of historical vocation.”⁶ The stratification of Brazilian culture is not defined by the separation of its influences, but by the different values assigned to each facet of the society.

It would be extremely naïve to think that miscegenation is an angelic, utopian paradise of brotherly cooperation. It did not happen in that way at all. When the concept of miscegenation is being used in this work, it is to differentiate from segregation. Where segregation sought to allow blacks and whites to live “separate, but equal,” the racist miscegenation of Brazil sought to establish a “Brazilian Race” that subscribed to the ideals of white supremacy. For example, by the end of President Getulio Vargas’ era (1930-1954), there was a very clear political intention of the “whitening” of the Brazilian race.⁷ This whitening came with the idea of cleanness. The concept of the white, privileged majority in Brazil was that the black race would be polluting the Brazilian race.⁸ “It is necessary to remember that one of the arguments of the slaving elite to the slavery was to redeem the captives, freeing them from their African culture.”⁹

Brazil suffered an intellectual massacre at the hand of the Portuguese people because of Brazil’s blackness. “In Brazil, the scientific culture moved the intellectuals in [deceptive maneuvers] in order to defend a country seen as homogenized, Negro, and indigenous, before the truth nailed by the racism about the fatal destiny of the people of lower blood.”¹⁰

⁶ Behague, Gerard. "Bridging South America And The United States In Black Music Research." *Black Music Research Journal* 22, no. 1 (2016): 2.

⁷ Lesser, Jeffrey. "Immigration And Shifting Concepts Of National Identity In Brazil During The Vargas Era." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 31, no. 2 (2016): 23-44

⁸ Lesser, 2008

⁹ Rodrigues, Joao Paulo Coelho de Souza. "Atravez Do Atlantico: Dialogos Luso-Brasileiros Em Torno Da Lingua Portuguesa (1820-1930)." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 45, no. 2 (2016): 21.

¹⁰ Rodrigues 2016, 33.

Another element that defines Brazil as a specific chapter in the history of the New World is the prevalence of anti-Portuguese sentiment. This attitude came after the royal monarchy of Portugal was transferred to Brazil in 1808, during the Napoleonic Wars. Brazilian peoples' awareness of their economic power and nationalistic strength, which lasted through the process of independence and into the formation of the first republic, generated a bitter feeling toward the Portuguese people. It is common in Brazil today to make pejorative jokes about Portuguese people, making their presumed cultural ignorance the punch line.

The result of this resentment was an independent movement towards the creation of the Brazilian dialect of the Portuguese language, which specifically defies some of the grammatical rules of the original linguistic form. One of the elements that the Brazilian people used in the creation of their own language was the appropriation of some Yoruba words into Brazilian Portuguese. This also reflects the incorporation of African elements into the Brazilian cultural behavior.

The establishment of a relationship between the aesthetic, cultural separation of language and the literal severance of foreign policy became part of the Brazilian attitude in the first republic. The split from European authority now became a self-fulfilling and self-repeating cycle of changing the policy in order to change the aesthetic, then changing the aesthetic in order to affect the policy. Oswald de Andrade wrote, "If European Catholicism clothed the Indian, the nakedness of the Indian disrobed the European." De Andrade specifically refers to the Europeans who came to Brazil and then became something new that didn't exist before a homogenized Brazilian. This exchange of cultural elements between natives and Europeans is explained by the concept of

multiculturalism derived from what de Andrade wrote of the Tupi cannibalism. The result was that Brazilian multiculturalism cannibalized and absorbed the language, as well as the cultural behaviors, of all their influences, even as it discriminated between them.

In “Bridging South America and the United States in Black Music Research,” Gerard Behague wrote that this cultural approach of racist homogenization greatly affected musical culture of that time. “I also argue at that time, that the significance of the preeminent social stratification that typifies Latin America’s social organization elucidates to a large extent the musical expressions that function as class identify symbols. [sic] I assert that this stratification provides the keystone for accounting for the various musical and performing practices to be found in both rural and urban areas of the continent, assuming that the stratification is contextualized in very specific terms (time and space).” Hence, the ways in which we have classified the musical perditions of the area need further reflection. Brazil considered all music to be Brazilian, though it acknowledged and stratified the influences that were present in the homogenized Brazilian music.

If we understand music as a language, and language as a communication of culture, music is a purely cultural language. As D.L. Sheth wrote in “State, Nation, and Ethnicity: Experience of Third-World Countries,”¹¹ nations were defined by ethnoreligious and ethnolinguistic groups after the end of the colonial period of Brazil. Consequently, Brazilian people can be defined as the people who create Brazilian music. And music, then, became a fundamental part of the Brazilian understanding of itself as a nation, especially in the period of the first republic.

¹¹ Sheth, D. L. “State, Nation and Ethnicity: Experience of Third World Countries.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 24, no. 12, 1989, pp. 619–626.

“When an intelligentsia took form in Brazil, it began to ask what Brazil really was.”¹²

Stratification

One can imagine the struggle that a nineteenth-century, mixed-race society has when attempting to construct a strong identity in a racially biased world, where it constantly must decide whether it is black or white in order to find its place. Simultaneously, during this period of development of the Brazilian identity, other Western cultures were engaging in a fascination with social Darwinism and eugenics with the intention to create a biological social hierarchy. The scientific community in Europe toward the end of the nineteenth century, and at the beginning of the twentieth century were deeply involved in the concept of racial supremacy. Several writings at that time linked factors such as tropical weather with sub-development, or darker skin with lower intelligence. “As intellectuals looked toward European scientific ideas to create ‘order and progress,’ they had to confront the fact that Brazil was considered an example of the ‘degeneration’ that many western scientists like Gobineau and Buckle believed took place among racially mixed people and those living in tropical climates.”¹³

As a result of this biologically based dehumanization of blacks, they were treated differently even in the legal system. This period in Brazil was marked by a legal effort to whitenize the society. The death penalty (which no longer exists in Brazil) at that time was only applied to blacks. With the legal standing of blacks being considered less

¹² Sousa, Leone Campos De, and Paulo Nascimento. "Brazilian National Identity at a Crossroads: The Myth of Racial Democracy and the Development of Black Identity." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 19.3-4 (2008): 129-43. Web.

¹³ Marchant, Elizabeth A. "Naturalism, Race, and Nationalism in Aluisio Azevedo's *O Mulato*." *Hispania* 83, no. 3 (2016): 445-453

valuable than white members of society, they were not perceived as being “real” people. Therefore, black culture was also legally discriminated against. For example, it was illegal for anyone to openly practice Capoeira, which was a dancelike martial art practiced by slaves and accompanied by music.

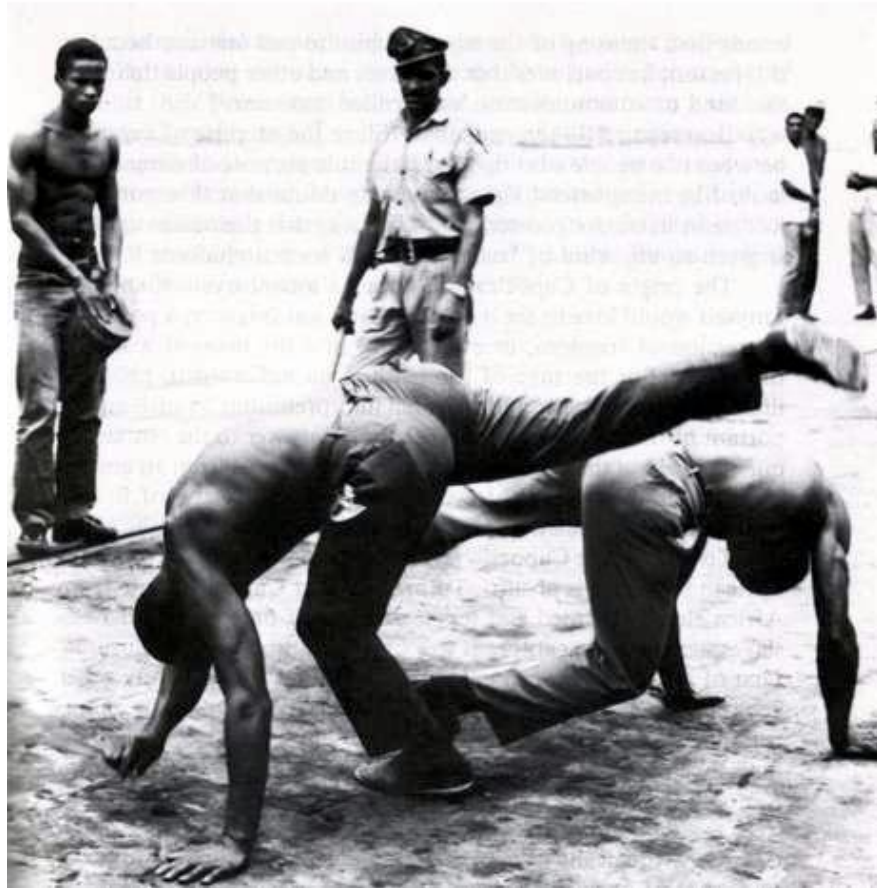


Figure 1. Two men practicing capoeira.

The figure shows two capoeira practitioners, one man playing drums and a police officer observing.

“An acrobatic Brazilian dance and martial art, with a distinctive instrumental and vocal accompaniment. The art derives primarily from African challenge dances with limited influence from Portuguese and other cultures. Long suppressed for its association with slavery, rebellion, and urban unrest, capoeira emerged in the 20th century as a

Brazilian national folk art, especially in Bahia.”¹⁴ If one were to be seen practicing this martial art it would brand that person a “Capoeira,” and would make them an outlaw by definition. It was also illegal to play guitar openly, in any style. The guitar itself was seen as a vagabond instrument, and not worthy of being part of the Brazilian identity. During the years that preceded the nationalistic movement (1920s), Brazilians were made to understand that those symbols were negative. Today, since music and culture in Brazil are almost synonymous, to outlaw Capoeira and the guitar would be to outlaw Brazil; they are major symbols of the Brazilian culture.

The enforcement of laws during this period was also antiquated by today's standards. “Whippings in pillories, and, eventually, even in city jails, signaled a kind of barbarism inappropriate to the level of greatness to which Brazil aspired.”¹⁵ The result of these legal precedents was a culture that was a partially formed “melting pot.” There was a defined and enforced social mainstream based on European culture. There were also other subcultures, as found in the quilombos and indigenous tribes that were allowed to surround it, but with limitations. Membership in mainstream culture or other subcultures was strictly defined by one's degree of “whiteness.” Brazil did not have a two-race system where one was categorized purely as “white” or “black”; the more white one was, the more mainstream one was considered to be. For example, Mulattos were accepted into society, but with social limitations.

Gerard Behague wrote that Brazilian music can only be understood in relation to Brazil's social and ethnic stratification, which corresponds to various bodies of music,

¹⁴ Greg Downey. "Capoeira." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

¹⁵ Brown, Alexandra K. "'A Black Mark On Our Legislation': Slavery, Punishment, And The Politics Of Death In Nineteenth-Century Brazil." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 37, no. 2 (2000): 95-121

fulfilling various functions, and acquiring various meanings in the numerous contexts of music making. This work hopes to analyze this music and attempt to un-melt the pot, in order to identify the influences and elements of Villa-Lobos' music. After reading this work, a conductor will have the opportunity to choose whether to reinforce the "white" European elements to the exclusion of all else or to give proper deference to the entirety of Villa-Lobos' culture of origin. When a conductor understands what is present in the composition, why it is there, and where it comes from, he or she can make fully informed choices as to how to correctly interpret the music.

CHAPTER III - BRAZILIAN MUSIC

Music History

The emergence of Brazilian music scholarship occurred relatively late in the history of Brazil, due in large part to European political control over the country, which lasted until the late nineteenth century.¹⁶ During the colonial period of Brazil, Europeans living or traveling in Brazil developed accounts of the music there, but the study of Brazilian music by Brazilians did not mature until the twentieth century.

In the eighteenth century, early Brazilian music can be traced to Salvador, Bahia, when the city was the capital of colonial Brazil. This music was played in “Terreiros,” where African slaves would gather to practice Capoeira. Though we don’t have musical iconographic documentation, it may have been an early form of Samba or an ancestor of the style, which accompanied the Capoeira with diverse percussion instruments. Capoeira is the act of a group of onlookers and musicians who form a circle around the “competitors” on the Capoeira.¹⁷ Competitors engage in “malícia,” an attempt to outsmart the other person without hitting or attacking them directly. Capoeiras (the practitioners) would attempt to trip, or throw each other off balance. This term and the underlying concept are related to the “malandro,” a trickster character of black folk tales that evolved during this period. Though the winner was often not obvious to the audience, one or the other participants often graciously admitted defeat.¹⁸

¹⁶ Reily, Suzel Ana. "Introduction: Brazilian Music, Brazilian Identities." *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 9, no. 1 (2000)

¹⁷ The term Capoeira is given to the area where it was primarily practiced: a hard dirty ground.

¹⁸ Downey, Greg. "Listening To Capoeira: Phenomenology, Embodiment, And The Materiality Of Music." *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 3 (2002): 487-509.

Music in Capoeira is structured with a multi-tonal rhythmic unit called “toque,” which is frequently mistranslated as “touch.” Capoeira music is meant to stimulate the motions of the athletes. In this sense, this use of the term relates to the action of “tocar,” which means to spur the movement of cattle. “Tocar” can also mean to play, such as to play an instrument, which might add to the misinterpretation of this terminology. A better translation is “beat,” though toque involves not only rhythms, but also the character of the music. The toque is the background rhythmic structure on which the Capoeira songs are developed.¹⁹ Understanding toque is one of the innermost concepts of Brazilian music. The moment that a musician begins to understand toque is “similar to the sensation of finally getting the right pair of glasses.”²⁰

Capoeira music is played with a few unique instruments, including the berimbau, a single-stringed instrument constructed with a resonant gourd. It is played by being tapped with a wooden stick and is found in three different sizes, (the viola, quinto, and the casa-grande) following the principle of the three ritual drums of African Camdomblé spiritualism. Percussion instruments are important to Capoeira music, including the atabaque (a tall, cylindrical, single-faced drum), pandeiros (similar to tambourines), an ago-gô (a pair of cowbells welded together), reco-recos (wood scrapers), and caxixí (a kind of rattle filled with seeds that provides accent beats or can be shaken on its own.)²¹

Capoeira and Capoeira music were both outlawed for much of Brazilian history, because the study of martial arts was forbidden for both enslaved and free blacks as late as the 1930s. During the colonial time (prior to 1808), Brazilians were also forbidden

¹⁹ Downey 2002, 494.

²⁰ Miller, Richard. "African Rhythms In Brazilian Popular Music: Tango Brasileiro, Maxixe And Chôro." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 48, no. 1 (2011): 6-35.

²¹ Downey 2002, 92.

from printing their own media, including written music. Of the many sanctions imposed by the Portuguese monarchy, the rules against the free press perhaps slowed the musical development in Brazil the most. Instead, music was passed down and taught orally, which kept styles very local.

With the arrival of Portuguese royalty in 1808, Don João VI ended those sanctions, and printing immediately began in Brazil with the first printing of music in 1813. Studies done by Nemos,²² show that the sale of printed sheet music in Brazil in the nineteenth century was dominated by waltzes, followed by polkas, with the minority of this music having Portuguese titles. Also, when the Portuguese monarchy relocated to Brazil, the capital was moved from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro. Though Samba was present in Rio de Janeiro as well, the original form of Samba was better preserved in Salvador, which was left behind in the coming decades of rapid modernization in Rio de Janeiro.

A good example of successful Brazilian music during the imperial period (1808-1889) is music by Carlos Gomes. Gomes was a young opera composer in Brazil who made a career in Italy by composing operas in the style of Verdi, but with Brazilian themes. His music does not include elements of Brazilian music, and the stories are European tales using stereotypical Brazilian characters, for which exoticism, rather than nationalism, is the defining attitude. In the modernist movement of the 1920s, Gomes

²² The Núcleo de Estudos Musicais emerged in August 1997 with the general objective of studying music and musicology of various expressions of Bahian and Brazilian music of the present and the past. In its line of research Music and Culture, several directions of action are represented among the constituents of NEMUS: musicology, composition, performance, ethnomusicology and music education.

would become an example of everything wrong with earlier Brazilian music.²³ Modern scholars discuss whether or not Gomes intended to veil his Brazilian identity, or if he feared that an accurate representation of his culture would not be accepted. If the latter is true, in a different kind of social or political situation, it is possible that Gomes could have become a pioneer in the identity of Brazilian music.²⁴

In Rio, music was highly segregated between the upper class Europeans and the ethnically mixed peoples in poor neighborhoods. Gilberto Freyre in 1968, argued that the presence of the court in Brazil actually prevented Brazil from forming its own identity during the Portuguese occupation.²⁵ The arrival of the white Portuguese colonizers in Brazil and the establishment of the court in Rio de Janeiro made Brazil's colonial status more apparent to Brazilians and created a stronger cultural separation between classes, separating the Portuguese newcomers from mixed-race locals who often did not speak Portuguese.²⁶ Native languages were much more widely spoken among Brazilians at the time. The Portuguese believed themselves to be racially superior to the Brazilian people, and deemed mixed-race and indigenous Brazilians to be of naturally lower intellectual ability.²⁷ It is reasonable to think that the Europeans similarly dismissed Brazilian music as lowbrow. The darker-complected Brazilians were often relegated to labor, while Mulattos were more likely to secure jobs in the service industry. Most musicians were Mulatto, and would play strictly European styles for their employers. At home, those classical European compositions would become blended with Samba to create Brazilian

²³ Volpe, Maria Alice. "Remaking The Brazilian Myth Of National Foundation: Il Guarany." *Latin American Music Review* 23, no. 2 (2002): 179-194.

²⁴ Volpe 2002, 179.

²⁵ Reily 2002, 3.

²⁶ Reily 2002, 5.

²⁷ Reily 2002, 2.

forms, such as Modinha and Lundu. Since education and exposure to European erudite music was limited, it makes sense that the “street” music of the lower classes was very simple in its structure.

Modinha and Lundu are commonly viewed as the first authentically Brazilian forms.²⁸ These styles at first were similar. Modinha was originally an Afro-Brazilification of the Modinha found in Portugal, and Lundu an original Afro-Brazilian style. Later, both styles would fuse and be called simply Modinha. On the other hand, Lundu would provide the basic rhythmic pattern of Chôro.²⁹

Popular Music

Chôro is one of the most important styles of music to Brazilian history. The origin of the name “Chôro” is controversial, and several theories exist of how the name became common. It is clear that the name “Chôro” is connected to the verb “chorar,” which means “to cry,” and the Portuguese influence of Modinha brought with it a strong melancholy attitude. Three additional theories are also valid: Gerard Béhague connects “Chôro” with the word “Xolo,” which are Afro-Brazilian dances performed in certain annual rituals. Another connection is to “Chula,” a type of Samba played in the Brazilian state of Bahia, which is composed only of guitar and hand claps. Ary Vasconcelos³⁰ theorizes that the word comes from “Chôromeleiros,” or “Weepers,” a musical fraternity from the colonial period. One solid conclusion is that the word describes not only the style but the ensemble and instrumentation used to create the music.

²⁸ Reily 2002, 6.

²⁹ Miller 2011, 16.

³⁰ Garcia, Thomas G. “The Chôro, The Guitar And Villa-Lobos.” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 34, no. 1 (1997):57

Chôro emerged in the 1870s as a local way of performing European dance tunes, especially polkas.³¹ Modinha fell out of fashion, giving place to Chôro as the preferred popular music of the time. When the Republic of Brazil was established in 1889, Brazilians began to seek to shed their Portuguese identity and find their own style. Because of that, the popularity of Chôro increased even further. Just as Capoeira is performed in the round, Chôro is also played in a circle. The audience is gathered around the musicians in a circle, who sit inside the crowd, facing each other in an inner circle. This performance format, called Roda de Chôro, is likely derived from the Capoeira tradition. Although Chôro performances were allowed, Capoeira and Candomblé were still illegal until the twentieth century. Chôro, even though it was popular in the late nineteenth century, was clearly “street” music for consumption by the lower classes. Another connection between Chôro and Capoeira can be found in the “maliçã” tradition, where one musician will attempt to trip another, by modulating or embellishing the rhythm so that a less experienced player cannot keep up. This friendly competition is very similar to that of Capoeira.³²

Choro ensemble arrangements were not written down but taught orally at that time. They were largely based on improvisation. Chorões (performers) were literate and trained court musicians and played complex rhythms. The oral tradition also resulted in one of the most important elements for a cultural understanding of Brazilian music making - authenticity. To be perceived as a “real” chorão, one must play with a kind of choro accent, which can only be taught face-to-face. Choros were, therefore, erudite,

³¹ Reily 2002, 7.

³² Packman, Jeff. "Signifying (G) Salvador: Professional Musicians And The Sound Of Flexibility In Bahia, Brazil's Popular Music Scenes." *Black Music Research Journal* 29, no. 1 (2009): 83-126.

even though they were not accepted by high society at this time. Less educated and untrained musicians would instead play a simpler Samba with less virtuoso skills.

Both Samba and Chôro are in 2/4 meter, where the accent hits the second beat, and are constructed with polyrhythms. However, unlike Chôro, Samba was focused more on lyrics than improvisation and was played in informal gatherings with audience participation. Samba is played by a percussion section of more than one musician, with specific parts and rhythmic patterns. Chôro will use only one percussionist, playing a pandeiro, which is similar to a tambourine. The pandeirist is highly respected among the Chôro players because his function is to imitate the entire polyrhythmic result of the Samba percussion section. The Pandeiro only became popular in Chôro of the 1920s.³³ In modern Chôro, two guitars will also be used – one with six strings, responsible for rhythm and harmony, and the other with seven strings, where the seventh is a low C. This guitarist is responsible for the basslines and improvisation. The influence from the Candomblé is seen here. In Candomblé, the biggest, lowest drum (the rum) is also responsible for improvising. This connection to Candomblé is not seen in Samba. According to Richard Miller, a good Chôro guitarist will incorporate Brazilian tango and “maxixe”³⁴ patterns into the music. In Chôro, woodwind instruments, most frequently clarinet and flute, will alternate between the melody and countermelody. Mandolin and cavaquinho (a four-stringed small guitar, similar to a ukulele) will also be present in both rhythmic accompaniment and melodic solos.

³³ Miller 2011, 9.

³⁴ A Brazilian social dance for couples, mixing the two-step and certain tango steps and enchainments, performed in moderate duple time. Mainly an exhibition dance, the maxixe (“ma-sheesh”) became popular in New York’s café society in the early 1910s. Volume Grove Music Online - The Grove Dictionary of American Music, 2nd edition, Published online February 2012

The form of Chôro music is basically an A-B-A round, where part B is commonly in a minor key, in contrast to the repeated A section. One of the most important skills for a Chorão is to avoid repeating part A in the same way – it is expected from all musicians to be creative in variations of their lines. This is somewhat similar to theme and variation structures in classical music. The main difference between Chôro and classical compositions that see these theme variations is the presence of improvisation. Chorões are expected to be able to play standard pieces in a large variety of key signatures and to be able to modulate between, which requires a relatively intellectual approach for folk music. Some scholars try to separate erudite music as being purely for upper class, distinct from lower-quality popular music. Their arguments, often based on the usage of a musical notation, are Eurocentric and misinformed. “Popular” music in this context should not be presumed vulgar and low-level.³⁵ The level of theory and musical writing required in order to fully describe what is happening in Chôro and Samba would be incredible, as the rhythms are highly complex.

Brazilian music would take a sharp turn in 1930, when a military coup d’etat put Getúlio Vargas, a nationalistic authoritarian leader, into office. Vargas called for the legitimization and celebration of Brazilian music, including Chôro and Samba.³⁶ Samba was co-opted and fashioned through censorship to promote this nationalistic agenda.³⁷ Samba even took on military connotations and a variation, Samba Enredo, is even today used in Carnival military parades. In 1935, the city government of Rio de Janeiro began

³⁵Bastos, Rafael Jose de Menezes. "The "Origin of Samba" As the Invention of Brazil (Why Do Songs Have Music?)." *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 8 (1999): 70

³⁶ Fernandes, Dimitri Cerboncini. "'E Fez-Se O Samba": Condicionantes Intelectuais Da Musica Popular No Brasil." *Latin American Music Review* 32, no. 1 (2011): 49

³⁷ Reily 2002, 2.

sponsoring the Carnival parade in order to control the themes and music used. The Samba schools, which marched in the parades, were encouraged to play patriotic music in their selections.³⁸

In the 1940s, Samba would suffer tremendous influence from Jazz from America, and its transformation would generate the most internationally famous Brazilian style, Bossa Nova. The whiter, richer classes would appropriate Samba in the 1950s, creating “Samba-canção,” which is often thought of the “white” samba, as opposed to the “black” samba of the hills.³⁹ Lyrics of Samba-canção, the “ballroom” samba, often dealt with love, unhappiness, and often are pathologically melodramatic.⁴⁰

When Chôro became identified with the elite, it separated classes in Brazil. In Rio, music preferences would separate the people from the hill and the people from the city. On the hill, Samba was more popular, whereas the elite city-dwellers and trained musicians would tend to prefer Chôro. This is due in part to the well-paying nightlife jobs that became available in the city, which attracted trained musicians. During the 1920s, the modernist movement in Brazil embraced Chôro as being the reference point for erudite Brazilian music. It elevated Chôro to the next level, and during this decade it went from being outlawed street music to the music from the elites played in grand theatres, representing the modern nationalistic music. Chôro was professionalized and marketed by professionals for paying audiences, when in previous decades it was played by amateurs for an audience of participants.⁴¹

³⁸ Fernandes 2011, 49

³⁹ Bastos 1999, 72.

⁴⁰ Bastos 1999, 211.

⁴¹ McCann, Brian. "Noel Rosa's Nationalistic Logic." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 38, no. 1 (2016): 1-16.

Samba and Chôro became the source of nationalistic sound for many composers in the 1920s. Composers like Villa-Lobos and Radames Gnattali focused their art music on this genre. Other composers like Noel Rosa would assume an intellectual character. His lyrics were considered a step above his contemporaries.⁴² Even though he was at first a street composer, Rosa's music would be considered of high intellectual level and would start being consumed by this new intellectual class of Brazilians as a nationalistic symbol.

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However, some less-progressive Brazilians still rejected the infusion of black styles into the mainstream. A famous Chorão, Pixinguinha, and his band, Os Batutas, went to France to play the Brazilian style for European crowds in the 1920s. A newspaper in the rural northeast of Brazil published an article upon their return, calling the black musicians by racial slurs and expressing fears that Brazil would come to be known internationally for the "ridiculous" performance of "savage" rhythms by the "uppity mulattos."⁴⁴

The search for a national identity led to the creation of new styles of music. Today, chorões are respected as authentic, even culturally superior Brazilian artists who exemplify the musical identity of Brazil. The changes that happened in the 1920s are fundamental to understanding the aesthetic and symbolic representation of Brazilian music for the next century. Villa-Lobos would define his understanding of Chôro based more on the presentation by the musicians than the aesthetic of the musical product in itself. As Villa-Lobos said himself, "You can ask of Chopin if he can explain what is, for

⁴² McCann 2016, 4.

⁴³ Bastos 1999,73.

⁴⁴ Fernandes 2011, 40

example, a polonaise, what is a ballad? Is there a standard form for a Chopin ballad? No... What is a Chôro? The Chôro is popular music. The Chôro of Brazil, as you could perhaps say about the Samba or something else, but truly the Chôro, is always of the musicians that play it, of good and bad musicians who play for their pleasure, often through the night, always improvising, where the musician exhibits his talent and his technique.”⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Garcia, Thomas G. "The Chôro, The Guitar And Villa-Lobos." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 34, no. 1 (1997): 58.

CHAPTER IV – HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS: LIFE AND WORK

Early Life

Heitor Villa-Lobos was born in 1887 and lived during a time of great transformation in Brazil, including some changes in governmental regimes. The first came in 1889, the beginning of the first Republic of Brazil when Villa-Lobos was two years old. Slavery had just been abolished in Brazil in 1888. His hometown of Rio de Janeiro remained the capital, placing young Villa-Lobos in the center of governmental change. Though the country became a republic, its approach to music remained punctuated by aristocracy: erudite, European-influenced art music was something reserved for the upper class and nobility, and “street music” was something not allowed or accepted in high society. The Brazilian street style was decidedly second-class.

Though Villa-Lobos was not born into nobility, he had access to erudite music from a young age through his father, Raul, who was a well-connected musician of Spanish origin. His father was not an aristocrat, but as a court musician, had access and aspirations of improving his social position, and it seems that he raised his son with the same ideals⁴⁶. His connection with the opera and symphony societies are also evidence of his aspirations to reach the upper class. Raul, a cellist, and clarinetist, did not allow street music in his home, and promoted the European style of music making with young Heitor, hosting musicians to play together in his home. Raul Villa-Lobos died of smallpox when his son was only seven years old. Many of Villa-Lobos’ phrases and attitudes seem to be related to his idealization of his father, including the denial of academic learning and his pride in being a self-taught musician.

⁴⁶ Guerios, Paulo Renato. "Heitor Villa-Lobos e o Ambiente Artístico Parisiense: Convertendo-se em um Músico Brasileiro." *Mana* 9, no. 1 (2003): 81-108

Career

As Villa-Lobos grew to become a musician in his own right, it is apparent that he saw French music as the most progressive form of music in the world, which was a very normal outlook in the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time, Paris was considered to be the world's capital of modern art. Villa-Lobos' professional music career began performing in cafes, and in orchestras that accompanied stage performances and silent movies. He was also known as a skillful guitarist during this time. He would later receive many compliments from those such as "Donga,"⁴⁷ one of the most famous Brazilian guitar Chôro players at the time, as well as the internationally famous Spanish classical guitarist, Andres Segovia.⁴⁸ These appearances may have branded him at first as a middle-class musician, which could have been detrimental to a musician with social ambition. It is understandable that this would make the young Villa-Lobos wary because, despite his level of education in music, he was fascinated by street music and knew that it was important. However, Villa-Lobos did not compose his music based on this "lowbrow" style for some time, presumably because of the associated stigma.

In 1915, Villa-Lobos started writing chamber music and giving recitals in Rio de Janeiro, but the glimpses of national elements in his music would only appear around 1921 when he started calling some of his music by popular names such as *Lenda do Caboclo* and *Viola e Sertão no Estilo*. Even then his style was not yet as nationalistic as it would later become because the aesthetic was still very beholden to French modernism.

⁴⁷ Ernesto Joaquim Maria dos Santos, known as Donga, (Rio de Janeiro, April 5, 1890 - Rio de Janeiro, August 25, 1974) was a Brazilian musician, composer and guitarist. In 1916 he recorded the song *Pelo Telefone*, considered the first recorded samba in history.

⁴⁸ Garcia 1997, 64.

To the young Villa-Lobos, to be a good musician was to have control over the modern techniques that Europeans were developing, mostly in France.

He also presented some his sketches of operatic music in 1921, but he would abandon this medium until 1940. Later on, he noted that using Portuguese in stage works was complicated, specifically because of the nasal vowel phoneme “ão.” He also said that though he began with a variety of musical structures and purposes, he would prefer to be remembered by his Chôros series, which he considered to be the most emblematic phase of his life.

This period in his professional life began with a great flop of a performance in Paris in 1923. One single evening would become the most significant moment that would change Villa-Lobos’ view of himself and his place in Brazilian music history. Because he was relatively well known and connected in Brazil, the Brazilian government funded his 1923 musical tour of Paris. While he had been invited to perform in São Paulo, Brazil’s famous Modern Art Week in 1922, he was still an unknown composer in Europe at that time. Only a few friends of his, such as Arthur Rubinstein, had performed his compositions in Europe.

The Composer

His friend, Tarsila do Amaral, a Brazilian painter living in Paris, invited Villa-Lobos to play for a select group of intellectual Parisians, including the influential critic Jean Cocteau. Immediately after this intimate performance, Cocteau remarked to everyone that the compositions were “nothing more than a copy of Ravel and Debussy,”⁴⁹ completely dismissing the recently arrived Brazilian composer. It is impossible to say

⁴⁹ Guerios 2003, 81.

that Cocteau was wrong, for at this time Villa-Lobos was writing in a European style. Cocteau's piercing remark profoundly upset Villa-Lobos, and the two men almost came to blows. Though Villa-Lobos' considerable ego was greatly bruised by the scathing statement, a gentler comment might not have caused such a great shift in Villa-Lobos' later works.

Not everyone in Paris dismissed Villa-Lobos so entirely. He also had the opportunity to meet famous Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia, who was more encouraging.⁵⁰ During their meeting, Villa-Lobos played guitar for Segovia, who later remarked that he worried Villa-Lobos might break his guitar with his forceful strumming, but was impressed with his skill and notable stature. "Among all the guests that night, I was most impressed with Villa-Lobos... despite his short stature, he had a striking appearance."⁵¹

His failure to make great inroads in France would necessitate his shifting from an "international" style of composition to become a nationalistic composer. It is interesting to note that before his trip in 1922, he gave an interview to the newspaper "À Noite," wherein he describes himself as someone who absorbs the culture of the world and puts it into his music, but in a 1926 interview for the same newspaper, he said quite the opposite, "In the formation of the arts of a country, there is a blind necessity to harvest the motives of its own nature, as all the great nations did," he said. "(to find) the concept

⁵⁰ Guerios 2003, 94.

⁵¹ Ibid.

of beauty that has nothing in common with the beauty of other peoples, to find its own beauty.”⁵²

From this point on his *Chôros* series becomes the symbol of what is to come for this new nationalistic and mature composer. Villa-Lobos started his own search for a musical Brazilian soul, as Behague would define it, after returning from France in 1924. Despite the composer’s own narration of his exploits during this time, scholars have shown that it is impossible that Villa-Lobos himself traveled around the country and its jungles collecting influential naturalistic sounds. However, there is documentation to prove that in 1924, he went to the national museum in Rio de Janeiro and listened to the collection of indigenous and naturalistic sound recordings of ethnographer Rocquete Pinto; many of these sounds would be found in his compositions later on. He also had access to the Floresta da Tijuca in Rio de Janeiro, an enormous protected national park, which had once been a royal garden. This wild nature reserve, which today hosts the internationally recognizable Cristo Redemptor sculpture at its center⁵³, is large enough to host a large variety of flora and fauna, which provided the composer plenty of natural inspiration.

Upon his return from France, Villa-Lobos also was influenced by the 1920 writings of French composer Darius Milhaud, who wrote that Brazilian music should include more of its national identity. Milhaud seemed to have influenced Villa-Lobos in a very positive way, pointing out the nationalistic influences that he saw and liked in existing Brazilian music, and suggesting that Brazilians place a stronger emphasis on

⁵² E na formacao das artes de um pais, que existe a cega necessidade imprescindivel de colher os principais motivos na sua propria natureza, como fizeram todas as grandes nacoes que mais se distinguiram pela sua maneira propria de ser, algumas delas chegando mesmo a dominar o espirito artistico

⁵³ Construction of the sculpture began in 1922 and was completed in 1931.

these folk elements. Milhaud also spoke of the importance of popular composers from Brazil like Ernesto Nazareth and Chiquinha Gonzaga, composers of maxixes and popular tunes that are still an important part of the Chôro repertoire today. Milhaud's supportive comments pointed Villa-Lobos in the direction that he would take for the next few decades.

In describing and selling his Chôro music, Villa-Lobos tried to emancipate himself from Romanticism, which was considered old-fashioned and archaic in the 1920s. He said instead that his music was about "human feelings," which seems a contradiction of his denial of Romanticism.⁵⁴ Villa-Lobos always spoke highly of the Brazil's street music but did not speak highly of the academic musical environment. Though he was only vague and abstract in his definition of what Chôro was, it is clear that, to Villa-Lobos, the process of creating music in the moment was much more important than the final product itself. When he described Chôro, he described the process, not the end result. He emphasized how important rhythm and harmony were to his music, pointing out that they are not banal elements, which are only there to support the melody. Even though Villa-Lobos was not a nationalistic composer at the beginning of his career, and had no intention of elevating Brazilian music to what it would become, he had a cultural exposure to, and knowledge of, how this music was made. This is where he begins to find his Brazilian core.

⁵⁴ One should be skeptical on taking Villa-Lobos' words about his own work. Many times, his use of hyperboles sound even delusional to other analysts of his own work. Perhaps his works better speak for themselves.

The Politician

Villa-Lobos expressed disappointment with mainstream Brazilian concert organizers, who he felt gave too much importance to foreign composers, especially Europeans. They often paid Villa-Lobos less to perform his own nationalistic music. Perhaps this is part of the reason that Villa-Lobos rebranded himself again, becoming a politician and educator.

Villa-Lobos' career took a sharp turn after the 1930 military overthrow when Getúlio Vargas orchestrated a coup d'état and became president of Brazil. Villa-Lobos' Chôros project, and search for a nationalistic sound helped connect him with Vargas' mindset and political approach. Nationalistic ideas were being used in many parts of the world at that time, including Germany.⁵⁵ Populism and cultural supremacy were popular ideals at that time, which allowed Villa-Lobos, now a well-known composer, to rise to stardom and political importance. Villa-Lobos' identification with the political regime of the 1930s strengthened his renown in music, which inspired him to become even more nationally-focused. In 1932, now at the age of 45, he took his first salaried position as a national-level administrator of secondary music education. Over the next fifteen years, Villa-Lobos established a musical curriculum in Brazilian high schools based on folk songs and nationalistic hymns. He published two volumes of these songs, called the *Orpheum Chant*.

At this time Villa-Lobos' was also having his share of problems. His party politics brought him trouble, both professionally and personally. Also, he was divorced in 1936,

⁵⁵ A notable difference between the work of Villa-Lobos and other populists of that time was that his nationalism was based on inclusion of diverse ethnicities into the national ideal, not exclusion and extermination.

apparently because his ambition and career took him away from his family. Even though Villa-Lobos was identified with the authoritarian government, he tried to verbally separate himself from this regime as much as he could. He talked about how his ideals of strict discipline and homogenized nationalistic curriculum was for the sake of the art, not for the sake of the regime, but, nevertheless, he was still identified with the governmental system because of how his music was used as one of the regime's symbols.

An analysis of Villa-Lobos' music has to take into consideration that nationalism to Villa-Lobos goes beyond a romantic, patriotic feeling in his words and compositions. It is a political statement even during its composition, and that would later become the symbol of an authoritarian regime. Patriotism is not something used as an ornament in his work; it is structural, authentic, and vital to the understanding of his body of work as a whole.

CHAPTER V CHOROS NO. 10 ANALYSIS

Structure and Gesture

How can the depth and contextual meaning of a work of art be appreciated? When a composer organizes his or her music, they have an idea, a purpose, or a theme long before the first sound is made. Great composers are those who can manifest on paper the musical ideas created in their minds. This paper analyzes the masterpiece of a great composer. To understand the depth of this highly organized musical text, we have studied the historical context in which it was created, but art is more than its context.

A conductor must first understand the composer's inspirations before setting out to bring the piece to life. In *Chôros No. 10*, naturalistic motifs, urban popular music references, and inversions and variations on European themes create the unique character of Villa-Lobos' magnum opus. By examining the specific influences that feed into *Chôros No. 10*, a conductor may better understand how to guide the orchestra to a contextually consistent performance of the piece.

Naturalism and Nationalism

One of the richest inspirations to *Chôros No. 10* is the natural beauty of rural Brazil. The rich variety of birds native all over Brazil, especially those that live in the woods and forests and those that sing at the dawn and dusk in the extensive Northeastern Sertões, were inspirations in *Chôros No. 10*. These naturalistic references are also deeply political because the reverence for nature common among Brazilian artists of this time was rooted in the birth of Brazilian nationalism in the 1920s.

In the first theme, Villa-Lobos begins with a bird-influenced nature motif. In the third measure at the beginning of this work, presented by the flute, and later, developed in

the first measure of letter [A] (page 3) by the clarinet, is interpreted, but very recognizable characteristic song of a rare bird of the Brazilian forests, known in some places as Azulão da Mata.



Figure 2. Bird motive.



Figure 3. Bird motive development.

It is crucial to the work of conductor to instruct the flutist to play this excerpt flexibly, stretching the measure in order to emulate as closely as possible the sound of this bird. Therefore, he or she must avoid strict adherence to the European music writing conventions. Several recordings of this bird's song are available online and can serve as a point of reference for conductors and musicians while preparing this section.

At letter [B] (page 4) the piccolo and clarinet begin to create a picturesque atmosphere of birds flocking. This section is written in 3/2 meter, using flutter tongue technique. While this is another example of bird motif in the piece, it is written with an entirely different musical convention from the first example. Without an understanding of the meaning of the birds, the connection between these two sections can be lost. Instead of the solo bird song in letter [A], letter [B] should sound like the chaotic flapping of a flock of birds taking flight. This undulating texture will be used as a pedal counterpoint to the melody, rather than the principal element of the section. The most important element

in this section is the harmonic progression of the brass, which depicts the exposition of one of the principal themes – indigenous character – developed in this passage by augmentation. Here we understand how Villa-Lobos separates the characters of nature and man, which seems to be one of the important meanings of the entire piece.

Though some scholars relate his work to “primitive” music because of its use of indigenous sounds, this descriptor can be taken pejoratively, or as a euphemism for simplicity, which would be a mistake. The work of Villa-Lobos is incredibly complex, though it pulls from indigenous influences.



Figure 4. Bird motive flock of birds.

From number [1] to number [3] (pages 24 – 30) another bird-flocking melody appears between the flute and the oboe. This section’s rhythm should also be approached non-mathematically in order to create an organic sound. Villa-Lobos used 16 notes and 16 triplets, showing that he did not want this rhythm to be overly precise. This section

presents a challenge to the conductor because the melody is shared between the two instruments. The conductor should seek to create a sound that is neither metronomically strict in rhythm, nor too mismatched and disheveled. The impression of flexibility should be given without too much discord between the flute and oboe. The conductor should stress the articulation of notes more than precision of rhythm.

Figure 5. Bird motive flute and oboe.

The first cell of the main phrase of *Chôros No. 10* appears in the second measure of letter [F] (page 13), which is a melody made up of a primitive chant of indigenous Brazilians. This is a theme that will reappear frequently in this work, always with a variation. It is for the conductor to decide a character for the theme, keeping it recognizable and consistent throughout the variations. The theme is written in a hemiola – the dynamic markings and accent marks on every note are misleading and could create a sharp, harsh and overly loud utterance by the brass section. The conductor should make a point to create a jazzy feel here, with syncopated swing reminiscent of African rhythms. To play this section precisely by its European writing systems would be to miss the point entirely.

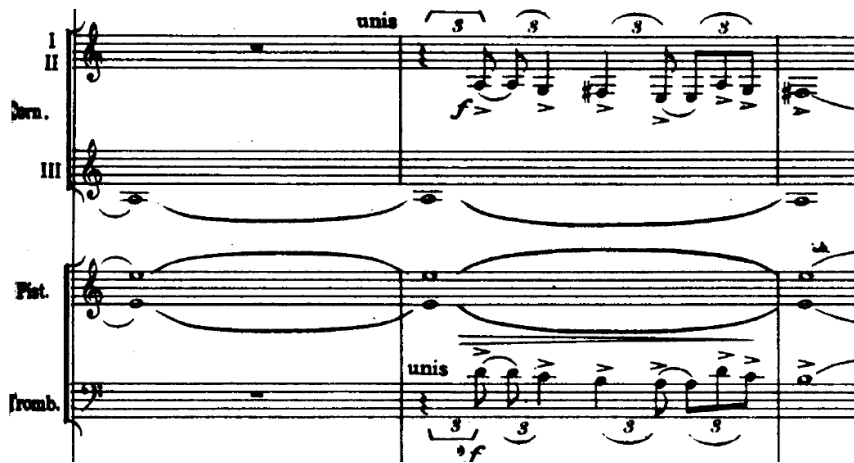


Figure 6. Solo Flexibility.

At letter [H] (page 16), there is a march-like rhythmic cadence written in common time, with accents stressing the last part of the fourth beat of each measure. The level of attention given to the dynamics is remarkable with the accents appearing and disappearing into a pianissimo. *rf* is a fairly uncommon dynamic mark, but here the conductor uses *rf* and *rff* before quickly diminishing into piano. All other notes are written with staccato marks. He also makes sure that the diminuendo is first written by the “>” sign, but later by “dim.” The diminuendo written by “>” is meant to be a very quick decrease, whereas the “dim.” marking is meant to draw out the decrease in overall sound throughout the entire section it accompanies.

One of the ways Brazilian composers express accents into rhythm is through dynamics. An accent mark would produce too “sharp” of an emphasis, whereas the dynamic markings create a fuller, heavier weight. Brazilian rhythms are built up over polyrhythms, an inheritance from the three drums of the African spiritual rituals found in Candomblé. This comes into Brazilian music via Samba. In Samba, each instrument has a unique rhythmic part and dynamic. Soft and loud dynamics are arranged in a way that

makes the ensemble sound like a single instrument. Here, Villa-Lobos tries to rewrite the even 16th notes of an African rhythm, including Chôro, making sure that the musician understands where the accent is because in folk music the accent is created by another instrument.

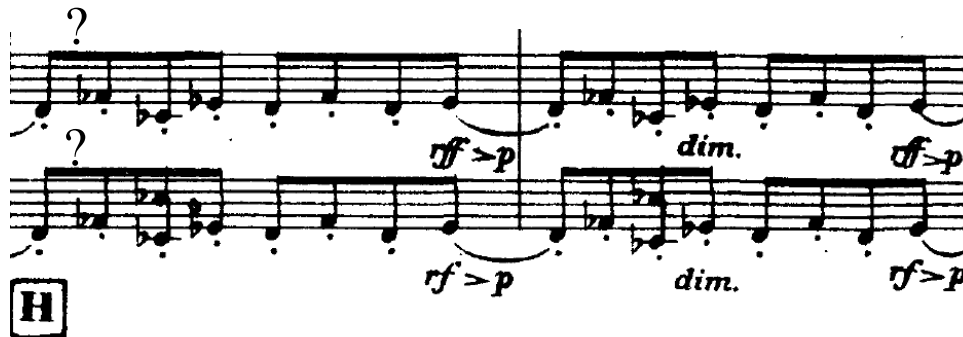


Figure 7. Accents and dynamics.

The Lent section at letter [I] (page 19) is in common time immediately following a 3/2 portion. After some counterpoint comments, there stands out a chromatic theme in the manner of an indigenous chant of the Pareci people from the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso. The chant is traditionally performed in quartertones. An authentic performance of this chant was recorded by Roquete Pinto⁵⁶ as part of a collection of indigenous recordings of Brazilian tribes in the early 20th century. Villa-Lobos had access to these recordings, which influenced many of his compositions.⁵⁷ This element will reappear many times in *Chôros No. 10*, and a conductor can use this theme to emphasize the indigenous melody Villa-Lobos included in the work.

⁵⁶ Edgar Roquette-Pinto (September 25, 1884 – October 18, 1954) was a Brazilian writer, ethnologist, anthropologist and physician. He was a member of the Academia Brasileira de Letras and is regarded as the father of radio broadcasting in Brazil. In 1912 Roquette-Pinto went on an expedition to the state of Rondônia collected extensive ethnographic material and published them in the book *Rondonia* (1916).

⁵⁷ Morira, Gabriel. "O Elemento Indigena na Obra de Heitor Villa -Lobos: uma Pesquisa em Finalizacao." *Simpom* (2010): 903-12. Web.



Figure 8. Indigenous melody.

From number [3] (page 30) to number [4] (page 34) there is a transitional section to begin the end of this *Chôros*. The bassoon plays the melody in the low register [5] (page 35), introducing a theme that will later culminate in human voices, which becomes part of the fabric of the general development until the end of this *Chôros*. Because this will be sung later, the bassoon should create a contour to mimic a human voice, fighting against the staccato in some degree to sound cantabile. This is not a reference to birds, like some earlier sections. This element is represented literally by human voices, as part of the larger image of nature versus humanity.



Figure 9. Human voicing.

The mixed chorus that adapts itself to the structure of this work is placed at the same level of value and distinction as that of the orchestral architecture. Later, Villa-Lobos will use this same element as a structural motif for the chorus. The text is comprised of syllables and vocalizations, without any literal sense or coordination of ideas, serving only as onomatopoeic effects, to form a phonetic atmosphere characteristic of the language of the indigenous peoples. Both the native culture and the birds are part of a romantic, idyllic natural habitat, but represent the two sides of nature: human vs. wildlife.

Villa-Lobos not only used natural motifs but mixed cultural “street music” from urban areas in his compositions. When the crescendo of the voices reaches its climax, there appears a lyrical and sentimental melody in the manner of the urban *Modinha*.⁵⁸ This melody is extracted from a popular song and adds a third layer, which blends with an intricate fugue-like structure. This song uses the lyrics of the poet Catulo Cearense,⁵⁹ entitled *Rasga o Coração* (Rip Apart the Heart). This blend of rural Brazilian wildlife and indigenous language with sounds of the urban streets of Brazil, suggests that Villa-Lobos may be making a statement about the beautiful evolution of the Brazilian cultural homogenization of those rural and urban elements.

In the last five measures, in the final coda of *Chôros No. 10*, the chorus and the orchestra project themselves in a great fortissimo, with the reappearance of the harmonic theme of eight bitonal chords, in the same layout as its first exposition at letter [B]. This magnificent, triumphant finale may emphasize the great celebration of Brazilian cultural identity and pride that Villa-Lobos suggests with his music.

Orchestration and Form

Chôros No. 10, for chorus & orchestra (1925) "Rasga o Coração," is written for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 1 Alto saxophone, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 3 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, 2 timpani, tam-tam, tambourine, caxambu, 2 puitas (cuicas), surdo, drums, reco-reco (large & small), chocalhos de metal e de madeira, piano, harp, and strings.

⁵⁸ See chapter two

⁵⁹ Catulo da Paixão Cearense (São Luís, October 8, 1863 - Rio de Janeiro, May 10, 1946) was a Brazilian poet, musician and composer. He was responsible for the rehabilitation of the guitar in the salons of high society in Rio and for the reform of the "modinha."

Brazilian musicologists disagree about the formal structure of *Chôros No. 10*. Jose Maria Neves found this piece to be structured in 3 parts, while Ricardo Bordini understands the piece as only 2 major sections. We know that Villa-Lobos wrote *Chôros No. 10* at two different moments in his life and that he wrote the second portion first. What is debated, however, is where the beginning ends and the next section begins. The beginning is divided by sections that are lettered A, B, C, etc. However, by the end of the piece, the sections are numbered. Bordini's two-part theory, then, seems most logical. What is very odd is that the newer portion seems, to begin with the section marked No. 5. Even more interesting is that when the lettered sections end and the numbers begin, the natural sounds seem to end, leaving only urban sounds to drive the composition.

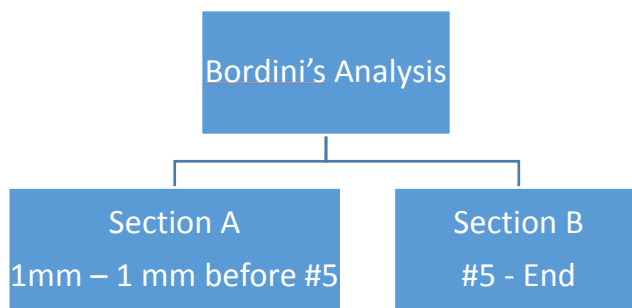


Figure 10. Form.

To understand Villa-Lobos' structure in the composition of *Chôros No. 10*, one should individually take each section of the orchestra.

Harmony

It is possible to find many different musical theories in regards to chord construction in *Chôros No. 10*. This makes even more relevant the comment found in the book *Music for Wind Orchestra by Villa-Lobos* written by Marcus Pupo Nogueira and Jose Ivo da Silva in 2007. They write that the principal aspect of Villa-Lobos' symphonic

works is that the harmony works as supportive material. This aspect of Villa-Lobos' harmonics is a result of the musical changes of his time. "The influences suffered by the Brazilian composer are inserted into his language as a description of the changes in the concept of sonority that happened around the turn of the twentieth century. The most important result of which was the emancipation of the harmony and its tonal functions, and its transformation in timbre edifications."⁶⁰

It is important to recognize that those concept changes were European. Villa-Lobos understood and revered the techniques and achievements of the European aesthetics such as impressionism and neoclassicism. The search for a national conscience in erudite music did not make him abandon the general tendency for experimenting with new musical possibilities; to sound European was to sound aristocratic, and Villa-Lobos was no stranger to Eurocentric fashions of his day.

However, at his Parisian debut in 1922, Villa-Lobos was criticized for the strong French influence in his music. His audience was expecting Brazilian music with national identity and found that his reverence for European styles destroyed his new-world exoticism. That response led him to search more intensely for a national character in his works. A few years later he was writing *Chôros No. 10*.

Therefore, while the European influences, in terms of articulation and sonority, will be immediately apparent, conductors facing an interpretation of Villa-Lobos' music should not be guided by those European sensibilities that led to Villa-Lobos' Parisian flop. *Chôros No. 10* is a marriage of Brazilian flavor and French Impressionism, and the

⁶⁰ Peppercorn, Lisa M. "Villa-Lobos's Stage Works." *Revue belge de Musicologie* 36 (1982): 175-184. Accessed March 6, 2014.

conductor must understand where one influence dominates, and where the two are perfectly blended.

In practical terms, these nationalistic ideas were achieved explicitly in Villa-Lobos' music by evoking ambiences and using exclusively national symbols, such as the imitation of native bird songs, use of folk rhythms and melodies, and characteristic instruments. In *Chôros No. 10*, orchestral effects in the strings are used to evoke some of these national symbols.

One of them, described by Neves (1977) is the emulation of the guitar, a typical instrument of chorões (players of choro). Though the guitar is not included in the orchestrations, the cultural importance of this instrument is included by using other instruments to imitate the guitar: an idiomatic transposition of one instrument to another. This idiomatic transposition is commented on by Andrade (1972). "It is how one plays the instrument [...] that will nationalize the instrumental manifestation," Andrade writes. "Our symphonists shall observe the way the people treat their instruments, not just the technical approach toward a given instrument, but how it applies to other instruments that are more symphonically viable. [...] The transposition of the techniques and effects of a given instrument over another can broaden its possibilities and nationalize the way of playing it."



Figure 11. Violins imitating cavaquinho.

The first chord in the piece immediately shows how the composer understands the guitar, the most popular instrument in Brazil, and the basis for the Chôro. After all, Villa-Lobos was a guitarist. This interpretation is, however, controversial.

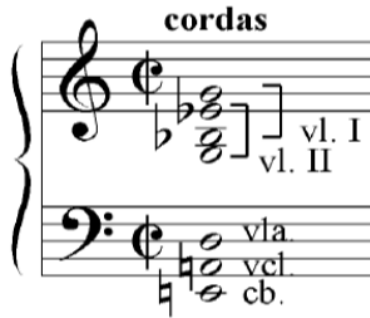


Figure 12. Guitar chord.

Though one could find many ways to interpret this chord, no theory seems to deal with this chord's ambiguity. Bordini describes it as a chord formed by simultaneities, what seems to be the most logical and modern approach.⁶¹ The answer, though, seems to be much simpler. A conductor trying to interpret the composer's desired sound only needs to imagine a guitar's six open strings being strummed strongly in a chord that relies thematically on discord: E, A, D, G, B, E. Attempts to organize it theoretically are unnecessary and possibly detrimental to an artistic understanding of the composer's intentional use of this sonic gesture.

Another effect is found in the passage between [1] and [3] on page 24, in which glissandi, tremolo, harmonics, sustained notes, and polyrhythms are found simultaneously; in the words of Villa-Lobos, it is the "bird's environment."

⁶¹ Bordini, Ricardo Mazzini. "Heitor Villa-Lobos, Chôros (Nº 10), Rasga O Coracao ou Jurupariã: Coletanea De Citacoes e uma Discussao dos Aspectos Motivicos e Formais da Obra." *Ictus* 07 (2016): 87-94.

Un peu plus encore

The score is for a piece titled "Un peu plus encore" in 4/4 time. It features several staves: Vno I div. en 4, Vno II, Viola, Violoncello div., Solo C.B., and Les autres. The Vno I part has a "gliss. gliss." instruction and a "ppp" dynamic. The Vno II and Viola parts are marked "mf" and "sem sord.". The Solo C.B. part has a "p" dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 13. Bird's environment.

The Impressionistic influence can be exemplified by the *sur la chevalet* (on the bridge) written on the score with tremolos, where the texture reminds the analyst immediately of Debussy's *La Mer*.

Sobre o covallate

The score is for a piece titled "Sobre o covallate". It features multiple staves, each with the title "Sobre o covallate" written above it. The score includes dynamic markings such as "p" and "pp". The music is characterized by a tremolo effect, indicated by the repeated notes and slurs on the staves.

Figure 14. Impressionist influence.

Mario de Andrade states that Brazilians have a nasal property in their speech, which might explain their preference for oboes and woodwinds as melodic carriers. The woodwinds are used to create the atmosphere of the Amazonian and Atlantic tropical jungles, a nationalistic reference. This is Villa-Lobos creating a musical version of a national flag. The importance of his symbolic relation to the rainforest as an image of Brazil in his compositions cannot be overstated.

At [H] on page 16, the melody is played in an extremely high register by the clarinet and doubled a fifteenth below by the muted trumpet. This exemplifies the experimentation with timbres, which goes against the recommendations commonly founded in orchestral treatises of the time. Like Debussy, Villa-Lobos was experimenting with creating new sounds through combinations of traditional instruments.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Clarinet (top staff) and Muted Trumpet (bottom staff). The Clarinet part is marked 'Solo' and '8va', indicating it is played an octave higher. The Muted Trumpet part is marked 'sord.' and 'mf'. Both parts feature complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The Clarinet part has a '3' and a '7' marking, and the Muted Trumpet part has a '7' marking. The score is written in 7/8 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 15. Unorthodox orchestration.

Villa-Lobos adopts a hybrid characteristic in *Chôros No. 10*, where both the disruption and maintenance of traditional methods of orchestration are found. He systematically diverges from Rimsky-Korsakov's suggestion to double all the melodic material played by the winds with another instrument one octave below.

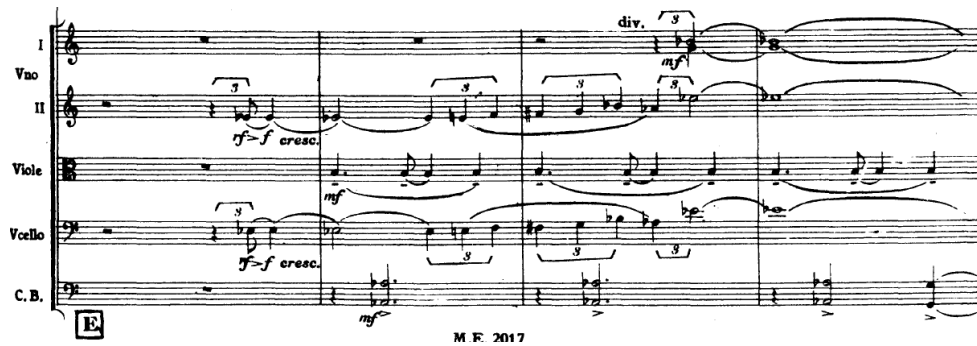
Figure 16. Unorthodox orchestration 2.

A conductor should see the indication of “solo” as a cue for expressivity in Villa-Lobos’ music. In these places, the composer expects the instrumentalist to sound as if he or she were improvising. The solo line should not sound too “square,” or blended in, but rather should extravagate the importance of the melody, and make itself known above the rest of the orchestra.

Figure 17. Solo approach.

Strings

The string section carries most of the melodic material and focuses on the high and extremely high registers. Sometimes the strings are replicated 3 octaves below and are even supported by instruments in other sections. Because violins are required to play extremely high notes, it is important that the conductor be aware of the challenges in tuning that face the violins.



The musical score for strings consists of five staves: Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The Violin I staff begins with a box containing the letter 'E'. The Violin II and Violoncello staves have dynamic markings of *mf* and *f* with *cresc.* (crescendo). The Contrabasso staff has a *mf* marking. There are trill markings (*tr*) and triplet markings (*3*) throughout the score. A *div.* (divisi) instruction is present in the Violin I staff. The score is dated 'M.F. 2017'.

Figure 18. Chord disposition.



The musical score for strings consists of five staves: Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The Violin I staff has a box containing the letter 'E'. The Violoncello and Contrabasso staves have dynamic markings of *rf* and *ppp*. The score shows various chordal textures and melodic lines across the instruments.

Figure 19. Chord disposition 2.

There are some odd orchestrations in the strings section. Five measures after [5] the basses and cellos double an ostinato, in which the cellos are playing the lower melody, while the basses are written higher, inverting the common use.



Figure 20. Inversion of cellos and basses.

Perhaps the composer intended to use the more clear articulations from the cellos as principal figures. Sometimes the cellos are used as the bass function without the basses for clarity, with the support of the basses in pizzicato.

Even though bases and cellos in the pre-Beethoven tradition were treated by the composers as one instrument, with their music written in the same line, they are completely different. The cellos are descended from the violin family, while the basses are descended from the viol family. The structure of the relationship between string thickness and length requires different techniques for each instrument. The difference in tessitura (range) between the instruments is just a sixth, but the bass has much more resonance due to the larger acoustic box and the flat back. The cello's more precise sound gives acoustic clarity and control; a quicker response from the instrument. Therefore, the passage after [5] was designed for cellos. Villa-Lobos knew that the basses attempting to play that line would sound like elephants dancing ballet. On the other hand, the passage is not intended as a solo in the context of Brazilian music: it is a rhythmic melody given to the strings.

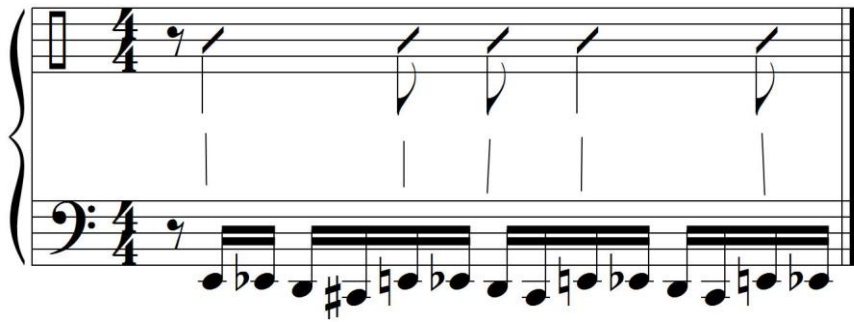


Figure 21. Natural rhythmic accentuation.

Even though this rhythmic line is not the main melody, it is crucial. It should be played as a rhythmic accompaniment to the main melody, and conductors should direct the lower strings not to make this section into a rhythmic solo. At this moment, the cellos and basses are playing the part of the black slave. The attitude in the rhythm must be reminiscent of capoeira's swooping dance of martial arts and the "malandragem" trickster character of the Afro-Brazilian underdog. These rhythmic and cultural concepts are explained in previous chapters; they cannot be described without first understanding the culture that generated them.

The next example is an excerpt written at three different dynamic levels. Villa-Lobos writes the melody at a forte level in the first violins, a counter-melody in the cellos and basses at a piano level, while the second violins and violas sustain a harmonic background at a pianissimo level. In this case, the support of an even lower register in the bass and cellos is used to balance the high register played by the violins, supported by the middle register on the violas and second violins. Obviously, it is showing the levels of importance in which different musical materials are supposed to be treated by the conductor. It is in this way that Villa-Lobos expands the concept of loud vs. soft within a context of musical space.

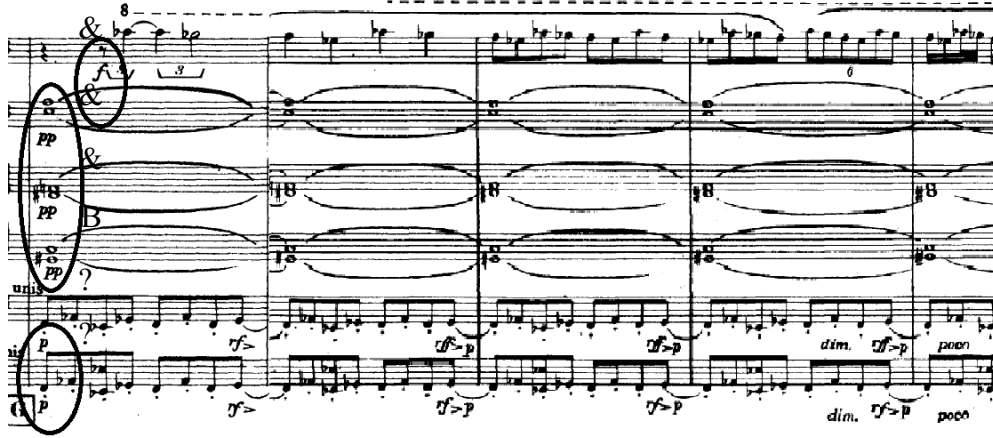


Figure 22. Dynamic as a perspective tool.

Villa-Lobos wrote the dynamics in this way in order to create an excellent sonic structure. However, this passage may take some care, because the violins, who are accustomed to always playing the melody, must now share in the responsibility of a balanced sonority. They must play in an extremely high range, but must also be aware that their melody is now accompanied across four octaves. The cellos and violas are playing comfortably, which puts the violins at ease and enables them to relax their sound during the performance, a chivalrous gesture from the composer. The conductor needs to make certain that the cellos and violas understand their importance, and that their role is to support the first violins throughout the passage.

Several times in the piece Villa-Lobos' chord disposition in the string sections of *Chôros No. 10* is a departure from normal orchestral conventions. Sometimes the design of the chord disposition is unusually open, which creates a large space in the high and middle registers.

Animez

Vno I div. *ppp*

Vno II *ppp*

Viola

Vcello *com sord.* *ppp*

C. B. *com sord.* *ppp*

M.E. 2017

Figure 23. Chord disposition 3.

The composer treated the conventional disposition of sonority, with large intervals at the bottom and closer on middle and high registers, as only one of the many voicing possibilities, rather than as the traditional defining pattern.

In these sections that depart from the norm, the conductor must take care not to allow the lower vibrations of the cellos and basses to sound cluttered. Conductors may consider asking the cellos and basses to play at a softer dynamic level to prevent this chaotic dissonance. The cluster of close notes should instead sound like a blanket, close-knit, but harmonious.

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Violin I (Vno I), Violin II (Vno II), Viola (Viola), Violoncello (Vcello), and Contrabasso (C.B.). A dashed line with the number '8' above it spans the first four staves. The Vno I staff has a 'div.' marking. The C.B. staff has 'ff' and 'v' markings.

Figure 24. Chord disposition 4.

Percussion

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the percussion section was enriched with native instruments from non-European cultures. Adler (1989) describes the four principal functions of the percussion section: simulating martial or cultural characteristics, accents, and rhythm gestures, building or complementing a climax, and doubling melodic color for individual notes or melodies. We can verify all four uses in *Chôros No. 10*.

Though all four uses are present, the most important in the context of *Chôros No. 10* is the first, to simulate cultural characteristics. A conductor, then, must understand the significance of each percussion instrument within the Brazilian culture. For example, the drums listed in the score are derived from Candomblé tradition, which is different from the Chôro tradition. In the Chôro tradition, the use of vertical, leather drums is uncommon. Therefore, when Villa-Lobos asks for those instruments, they should sound

as if in they are in a Candomblé Terreiro (place of worship) instead of the Chôro tradition.



Figure 25. Atabaques.

Wood shakers, such as Caxixí, are found in both this religious context and in Capoeira. Metal shakers (Chocalho), however, come from the urban Samba tradition.



Figure 26. Caxixi.



Figure 27. Chocalho.



Figure 28. Pandeiro.

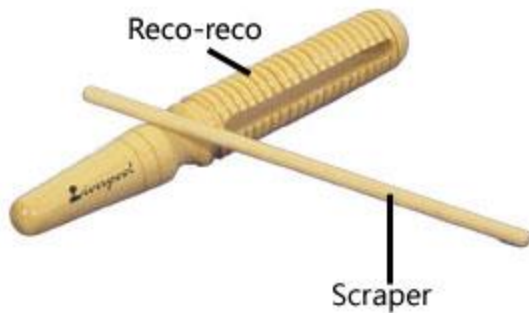


Figure 29. Reco-reco.

Five measures after C Villa-Lobos mixes the oriental and solemn property from the Tam-tam with the popular and national sound of the Reco-reco (guiro) and Caxixí (shaker).

Combined Instrumentation

Villa-Lobos adapts the popular way of playing Chôro into an orchestral approach. For example, a solo trumpet is used in an improvisational cadence typical of the Chôro way while accompanied by a choir that simulates a staccato guitar.

The denomination “Chôros” suggests that *Chôros No. 10* is an idiomatic transposition of popular performance practice from the chorões into a scholastic paradigm. Perhaps this is because Villa-Lobos was himself a Chorão at the beginning of the twentieth century, and therefore, had a vast knowledge of Brazilian cultural diversity,

including a broad understanding of folk and native music. However, it is unlikely that he would restrict himself to Chôro music, which was originally from Rio de Janeiro, and at that time was mostly kept in that region. However, because of his vast awareness, he used much more than just the Chôro music style when composing his orchestral pieces.

Though some may view Villa-Lobos as a popularizer of existing Brazilian music to a European audience, the composer's intention was likely not the promotion of native or popular Brazilian music making of that time. More important than popularizing Brazilian music is his role in the creation of a national comprehension of Brazilian erudite music making. For socioeconomic reasons, a complete departure from European techniques, instruments, and aesthetics was not possible. Therefore, Behague's *Search for a Brazilian Soul* perhaps was truly a search for an erudite Brazilian soul.

Vocals

The premiere of *Chôros No. 10* happened in Rio de Janeiro on November 15, 1926, at the Teatro Lirico. Villa-Lobos could not conduct the piece with the lyrics, due to a judicial order against the composer for having included the poem "Rasga o Coração," by Catulo da Paixao Cearense. Cearense had sold his rights to a man called Guimaraes Martins, who initiated a breach of copyright action against Villa-Lobos. This poetry was originally published in 1909 and was meant to be sung with the Scottish "Yara," by the popular composer Anacleto de Medeiros. Villa-Lobos used both the text from "Rasga o Coração" and the melody from "Yara," the latter with some liberties. According to Adhemar da Nobrega, the text had to be taken off the score. Since then, the piece has been traditionally performed without the poetry, using vowel sounds instead of the lyrics. However, some conductors have resurrected the lyrics, which was the original intention.

Although both interpretations are equally valid, Villa-Lobos himself never performed the piece with the lyrics.

Rasga o coração

Se tu queres ver a imensidão do céu e mar
Refletindo a prismação da luz solar
Rasga o coração, vem te debruçar
Sobre a vastidão do meu penar

Rasga-o, que hás de ver
Lá dentro a dor a soluçar
Sob o peso de uma cruz
De lágrimas chorar
Anjos a cantar preces divinais
Deus a ritmar seus pobres ais

Sorve todo o olor que anda a recender
Pelas espinhosas florações do meu sofrer
Vê se podes ler nas suas pulsações
As brancas ilusões e o que ele diz no seu gemer
E que não pode a tia dizer nas palpitações
Ouve-o brandamente, docemente a palpitar
Casto e purpural num treno vespéral
Mais puro que uma cândida vestal

Hás de ouvir um hino
Só de flores a cantar
Sobre um mar de pétalas
De dores ondular
Doido a te chamar, anjo tutelar
Na ânsia de te ver ou de morrer

Anjo do perdão! Flor vem me abrir
Este coração na primavera desta dor
Ao re florir mago sorrir nos rubros lábios teus
Verás minha paixão sorrindo a Deus

Palma lá do Empíreo
Que alentou Jesus na cruz
Lírio do martírio
Coração, hóstia de luz
Ai crepuscular, túmulo estelar
Rubra via-sacra do penar

Figure 30. Rasga o coração.

There are two musical elements for the vocal part. One made up of onomatopoeic sounds imitative of languages of tribal Native Brazilians, which has no literal meaning. It is deeply influenced by Stravinsky's primitivism and romanticizing of native cultures. The words are made up, however, not just any "gibberish" will do. Articulation of the sounds is very important. This rhythmic part operates in a free fugal structure. The most important characteristic of this element is rhythm. The transpositions are real, as opposed to tonal, which helps with the memorization of the phrases. As is common in the Baroque performance of a fugue, the conductor should bring out the entrances of the voices and take the same voice to a second plane when a subsequent voice enters.

The composer wrote Agudo,⁶² or upward-slashing accents on many of the Portuguese words that usually would be written with one, or no accent. Some words have accents on every syllable. This was to make it very clear where Villa-Lobos intended open and closed vowels but may cause confusion even among native Portuguese speakers.

Some phonetic challenges will be present due to the nationality of the singers. Hard Rs, flipped Rs, and open vowels are especially difficult for Americans. Americans will also tend to introduce schwas and rolled Rs, neither of which are appropriate. The intended Portuguese accent mark, when pronounced correctly, opens the vowel and can easily be misinterpreted by French vocalists, who will naturally close the vowels when they see the same marks.

Another vocal element is whether or not the conductor decides to incorporate the text of "Rasga o Coração." If not, the vocalizations are simply done with an open "ah"

⁶² The acute accent (´) is a diacritic used in many modern written languages with alphabets based on the Latin, Cyrillic, and Greek scripts.

sound. The melody is reminiscent of any operatic aria. The challenges for both the performer and the conductor will be breath control (as a cellist, Villa-Lobos had little pity for the biological instrument). It is an “unending melody,” consisting of very few moments in which the singer can breathe without ruining the magical ambience.

Despite the clear influences from other composers, such as Stravinsky and Debussy, among others, *Chôros No. 10* is an impressive representation of its author’s personality and cultural sensibilities. Villa-Lobos, like his country, was a combination of urban street culture and a deep reverence for the fantastic elements of magical jungle flora and fauna; a Romanticism of the country and its people. This rainforest Romanticism was the Brazilian pastoralism and was a popular trope of the time period.

Villa-Lobos’ *Chôros No. 10* is more than the sum of its parts, and its parts are considerable. The ostinato, the pedal notes, the atonality, the typical Villa-Lobos polyrhythms built up by the choral entrance, the invention and amplified repetition of musical ideas are elements that can and should be analyzed by the conductor. However, these characteristics of the composition cannot explain the density, the tension caused in the listener, and the magical character of this piece. The composer’s culture becomes the music’s attitude and is so rooted in cultural significance that it is far more art than it is theoretical science.

A successful strategy for a non-Brazilian conductor to make this music work may be somewhat equivalent to the Baroque performance practice of dividing the music into planes and making long notes less important than moving rhythms. But, in Villa-Lobos’s case, the melodies are rhythms and the rhythms are melodies. To understand how to interpret Brazilian music, a conductor must listen to Brazilian music until he or she can

hear the correctly stressed syllables, not in theoretical upbeats and downbeats, but in his soul. It is far more of an art than a science.

In order to accomplish a Brazilian nature in his music, Villa-Lobos inverts the European hierarchy of pitches and rhythms. The conductor has to understand that Villa-Lobos' hierarchy in order to understand what to emphasize in his music. The conductor also has to understand how to accentuate each of the rhythmic patterns for a clean performance. The result is totally dependent on a meticulous application of those elements by the performers.

CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSION

The complex, multifaceted ethnic culture of Brazil is deeply tied to its music-making traditions. What began as a colonial understanding of the country grew into a deeply nationalistic approach to the sounds that go back centuries into the land's history. The racial stratification of Brazil's cities and jungles is endemic to the evolution of the Brazilian sound, telling the story of the Capoeira, the Malandro and the indigenous mystic in turn, and then simultaneously.

From the Imperial attempts at Brazilianity by Carlos Gomez to the Republic era emergence of Lundu and Modinha, Brazilian political history and Brazilian music are deeply intertwined. With the virtuoso creation of Chôro from the cultural background of Samba and Capoeira came the first approach to the erudite Brazilian musical identity. From this cradle, *Chôros No. 10* emerged – the culmination not only of the country's search for the Brazilian soul but Villa-Lobos' search for his own identity as a composer.

From Villa-Lobos' critical flop in Paris perhaps he learned his most important lesson: the importance of his Brazilian roots. *Chôros No. 10* was written as he reinvented himself as the vanguard of nationalistic Brazilian orchestral music. To do this, he embraced all facets of his melting-pot homeland, relying on the traditional black rhythms and percussion instruments and calling upon the European writing conventions to do them justice as best they could. This period was accompanied by the political revolution of the authoritarian regime of Getúlio Vargas, which provided Villa-Lobos the opportunity to truly embody his ideal of creating and disseminating his vision of the Brazilian sound, both as a composer and a policymaker.

There is a practical difference in the way traditional Brazilian music looks on paper versus its reality. This is partly because of the translation of oral tradition into European musical notation, and partly the result of a simple language barrier. By studying the cultural implications of the rhythms and melodies present in the finest details of the written *Chôros No. 10*, a conductor can hope to bring Villa-Lobos' greatest vision to reality. This, however, is no small task, and not without immense importance. The greatest challenge to most composers is time because often, all of these crucial preparations must be done in a great hurry.

Each chapter of this work could be expanded into an entire book without drying up the oceans of rich Brazilian musical context. The best way to contextualize Brazilian music is immersion into Brazilian culture, and of course, a thousand books cannot give one a true fluency in traditional Brazilian music. One must learn it the way Brazil did not by reading, but by doing. In this modern age, the great recordings are available online for imitation and study, readers of this work are highly encouraged to seek these out to further their understanding of the complexities not only of *Chôros No. 10* but also of all of its influences and puzzle pieces.

Villa-Lobos has found his way into the repertoires of some of the most esteemed orchestras in the world. A non-Brazilian composer intending to bring this masterpiece to life must understand that he or she is setting about to present the Brazilian identity at its core to the audience. To do so haphazardly would be an affront not only to the composer but the entire nation Villa-Lobos is considered to fundamentally represent.

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