

***Brazilian Series* by Alberto Nepomuceno: Race, Philosophy and Political Agency in
Symphonic Music at the Turn of the Twentieth Century**

by

Miranda Bartira Tagliari Rodrigues Nunes de Sousa

Bachelors of Music, University of São Paulo, 1998

Master of Arts, Universidade Estadual Paulista, 2009

Master of Music, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, 2017

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DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This thesis was presented

by

Miranda Bartira Tagliari Rodrigues Nunes de Sousa

It was defended on

April 22, 2020

and approved by

Dr. Olivia Bloechl, Professor, Department of Music

MA. James P. Cassaro, Professor, Department of Music

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Deane L. Root, Professor, Department of Music

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This thesis discusses symphonic music of Brazilian composer Alberto Nepomuceno (1864-1920) within systems of thought temporally located at the turn of the twentieth century, time of profound transition in Brazilian society: from monarchy to republic, from colonial to independent nation, from rural to urban. Nepomuceno was born in the northeast of Brazil, where he had contact with folk music traditions he would later incorporate into his works, as distinctive sound markers of *Brazilianness*. His personal relationships allowed him to be in contact with the most up-to-date trends of philosophical thought of his time, and his trajectory was marked by involvement in the field of politics, actively defending abolitionism and republicanism. His proximity with the School of Recife, the first group of philosophers in the country interested in defining Brazilian culture through the examination of legacies from the three formative races (European, Indigenous and African), was key to his political and social involvement. The School of Recife developed philosophical theories about Brazilian character and race, adapting positivist methods (professed by Comte) and theories of social Darwinism (Spencer) to Brazilian reality.

According to the legal, philosophical and artistic thinkers who made the School of Recife, the maturing of a Brazilian social theory implied commitment for jurists and artists, who should create laws and artistic products to help the general public to improve itself, putting the country on the path to the ultimate positivist goals, progress and civilization. The focus of this

thesis is on his Brazilian Series, a symphonic suite in four movements, in which the composer displays his agency through the use of musical elements recognized as genuinely Brazilian by the contemporary intelligentsia, and the central argument is that the shifting climate in society and politics, as well as the proximity between Nepomuceno and the philosophers from the School of Recife, shaped the ways in which he incorporated local musical features into his instrumental music, giving rise to a nationalist style that was committed to making sense of the position of Brazil (as an independent nation) in the global sphere, discussing legacies of colonialism and national identity.

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I. Introduction-Prelúdio

*About this excerpt, we have already said it could only have been composed by the “Founder of Brazilian Music”—and this is the title which Alberto Nepomuceno deserves, the most original among our composers, and especially the most Brazilian, if not the only one.*¹

This quote from the *Jornal do Commercio* (Journal of Commerce, 1906) is a review of the overture of *O Garatuja*, an opera composed two years earlier by Alberto Beriot Nepomuceno (1864-1920).² While it seems an exaggeration to attribute the role of *founder* of a nation’s music to a single composer, Nepomuceno’s output was recognized by critics and historians of Brazilian concert music as key to the development of a new trend in Brazilian composition during the last years of the nineteenth century: music that employed sounds, rhythms, and scales related to local aesthetics, in an attempt to depict a Brazilian spirit or color, making it distinct from European production. It is clear that composers do not write music in isolation; there was a nascent interest in Brazilian artistic and philosophical circles to establish the “face” of the new-born nation, i.e., a particular identity divergent from European models and focused on national traits. Some of Nepomuceno’s peers were also invested in establishing a style that they intended to be recognized as particularly Brazilian, but the quote above defines the position of the composer in

¹ *Jornal do Commercio*, 08/30/1906. “A propósito deste trecho já dissemos que ele só poderia ter sido escrito pelo fundador da “Música Brasileira”—e esse é o título devido a Alberto Nepomuceno, de todos os nossos compositores o mais original, e principalmente o mais brasileiro senão o único.” (Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.)

² The name Beriot was of Jewish origin, on Nepomuceno’s mother side. His father, born on the island of Madeira, was also of Jewish origin, and his last name was Levi. He adopted the name Nepomuceno because that was the saint of the day on which he embraced Catholicism, according to information provided orally by the composer’s grandson and biographer Sérgio Alvim Corrêa to musicologist Monica Vermes. See Monica Vermes, “Alberto Nepomuceno e a Criação de uma Música Brasileira: Evidências em sua Música para Piano.” Master’s thesis, Universidade Estadual Paulista, 1996, 21.

this trend: his music was exemplary in this regard, and very influential to subsequent composers—hence, the titles of founder of Brazilian Music, and the most Brazilian of them all.

The tendency of including musical elements considered to be essentially Brazilian in music had a few precedents before Nepomuceno made his 1885 debut in the Rio de Janeiro musical scene where he developed most of his nationalist production. Composers such as Brasília Itiberê da Cunha (1846-1913) and Alexandre Levy (1864-1892) were also experimenting in this new language.³ Antonio Carlos Gomes (1836-1896), already recognized as one of the most famous Brazilian opera composers by that time, in 1870 premiered his opera *Il Guarany*, based on a novel by José de Alencar (1829-1877) and employing Brazilian themes, at the La Scala Theater in Milan.⁴ In literature, local writers were trying to understand and formalize ideas about the identity of the new country and its people in comparison to European models. Brazil had become independent from the Portuguese empire on September 7, 1822; writers searched for the concept of a true Brazilian soul in pre-colonial times, and the indigenist novel (in which the indigenous subject is romanticized and elevated to the role of hero) was one of the most popular genres during the second half of the 1800s. *Il Guarany*, inspired by this tendency, tells the story of the heroic Peri, from the Aymoré tribe, and his beloved Ceci, daughter of a Portuguese settler, who live a tragic love story. The popularity of the indigenist novel demonstrates a trend of thought that was pervasive to much of the artistic production of that time: the belief that the Brazilian subject was conceived as the mixture of the three races that inhabited the country: Portuguese, Indigenous, and African.

³ For biographical details about Brasília Itiberê da Cunha and Alexandre Levy, see Luiz Heitor, *150 Anos de Música no Brasil, 1800-1950* (Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, 2016), 133-134.

⁴ Luiz Heitor, *150 Anos de Música no Brasil*, 71-83.

This tripartite model was largely utilized to explain Brazilian origins. This framework looks democratic at first sight, since the three races are accounted for in the formation of the Brazilian subject. However, this framework concealed much prejudice and exclusion, as well as a power imbalance between the three races: by force of miscegenation, the white European race would “improve” the other two, making them more “civilized.” Some governmental actions, such as incentivizing European immigration starting in the 1870s, give evidence of the use of race theory by Brazilian authority: Italians, Germans and Spanish, among others, migrated to Brazil to work in the coffee plantations and to fulfill a *whitewashing* politics that intended to upgrade and refine the profile of Brazilian population. This politics derived from the notion of social Darwinism, in which society was understood as an organism in constant evolution, in which the final goal was progress. The model for progress and civilization was European society, and the ideal situation for Brazilian society was to become whiter:

During the Republic, Brazilian intellectuals and elites almost without exception came to embrace the racial ideal of *branqueamento*, or whitening, which posited that Brazil was rapidly becoming whiter due to the influx of white Europeans and the decline of nonwhite Brazilians. More than three centuries of African slavery had led planters to conclude that Brazil’s *negros* and *mulattos* were inferior workers and that European immigrants were the key to the nation’s social and economic future.⁵

These trends were extremely popular in Brazil at that time; the national flag motto, *ordem e progresso* (order and progress), demonstrates the reach of positivist ideas in Brazilian politics and social organization. After the coup d’état that expelled the royal family and the proclamation of the republic on November 15, 1889, the Imperial flag (created in 1822 by artist Jean-Baptiste Debret (1768-1848)) was modified: three colors were adopted, green, yellow and blue, symbolizing Brazilian forests (green), wealth (yellow) and sky (blue); the crown from the old

⁵ Stanley E. Blake, *The Vigorous Core of our Nationality: Regional Identity in Northeastern Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 50.

flag was replaced by a blue globe in the center of the flag, containing twenty seven stars, each star symbolizing one state of the federation and the federal district (the capital of the republic, Rio de Janeiro). The designers of the new republican flag, Raimundo Teixeira Mendes (1855-1927), Miguel Lemos (1854-1917), Manuel Pereira Reis (1837-1922) and Décio Villares (1851-1931), presented the flag to the public in November 19, 1889, and a decree by Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca (1827-1892), the first interim president of Brazil, marked the official ceremony of adoption of the new national emblem. The words “order and progress,” written at the center of the flag over a white ribbon, became the national motto, and were inspired by Auguste Comte’s quote *Ordre et Progrès*, “an express recognition and the public profession of the faith of the Republican State in modern scientism, which truths indicate a secure path to the civilizatory perfecting of society. According to Comte, this formula irrevocably demonstrates that progress represents, as does order, one of the essential requisites of modern civilization.”⁶

Composers and artists of the second half of the 1800s, Brazil’s Romantic period, received and incorporated these tendencies in their work by force of environmental influence, since these ideas pervaded social life and were taken as common sense. In the case of Alberto Nepomuceno, friendships and familial relations were the most significant factors that led him to adopt philosophical and artistic trends from his time.

Nepomuceno was born in Fortaleza, capital of the province of Ceará in the northeast of Brazil, and at eight years old moved with his family to Recife, also in the northeast and capital of the province of Pernambuco, and came of age there. He studied German and philosophy with

⁶ Wolf Paul, “*Ordem e Progresso: Origem e Significado dos Símbolos da Bandeira Nacional Brasileira*,” *Revista da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de São Paulo*, 95 (2000), 251-270: ...um reconhecimento expresso e a profissão pública da fé do Estado Republicano no cientificismo moderno, cujas verdades indicam um caminho seguro para o aperfeiçoamento civilizatório da sociedade. Segundo Comte, essa fórmula demonstra “irrevogavelmente, que o progresso representa, da mesma forma que a ordem, um dos requisitos essenciais da civilização moderna.”

Tobias Barreto (1839-1889), a student of the Recife School of Law and one of the founders of the group known as the School of Recife. This gathering of writers, poets, artists and philosophers were interested in positivist (Auguste Comte, 1798-1857) and evolutionist (Herbert Spencer, 1820-1903) thought, but also in the writings of German philosophers such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) and Johann G. Herder (1744-1803) among others; they sought ways to apply these theories to Brazilian reality.⁷ The School of Recife also discussed current politics and social affairs, positioning itself as abolitionist—Brazil was the last country in the world to abolish slavery, in 1888—and demanded republican governance, in opposition to the imperial regime adopted after the country's independence. Due to his proximity with the School of Recife, Nepomuceno was deeply influenced by these ideas, actively participating in abolitionist and republican societies and organizations. These influences would later shape his search for *Brazilianness* in music, a search that would not only look to the past while trying to define Brazilian character as the indigenist model did, but which would also discuss current societal issues such as slavery and the role of the African subject in the formation of *Brazilianness*.

The aim of this thesis is to discuss Alberto Nepomuceno's instrumental music within these systems of thought temporally located at the turn of the twentieth century, a time of profound transitions in Brazilian society from monarchy to republic, from colonial to modern (or at least aspiring for modernity), from aristocracy to a bourgeois lifestyle, from rural to urban, from the use of an enslaved workforce to the incentive of European migration. My argument is that this environment, as well as the ideas Nepomuceno had contact with through proximity with the School of Recife, shaped the ways in which he incorporated local musical features in his

⁷ For biographical information on Tobias Barreto de Meneses, see Evaristo M. Filho, *Medo à Utopia: o Pensamento Social de Tobias Barreto e Silvio Romero* (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2014). 71-192.

instrumental music, giving rise to a nationalist style that was much more informed by Brazilian reality than older models were.

Nepomuceno composed around eighty art songs, more than fifty of them using texts from Brazilian poems in Portuguese, a feature of *Brazilianness* he would defend fiercely until the end of his life. He was the first Romantic composer in Brazil to advocate for the importance of singing in the vernacular as a way of conveying nationalist spirit, a characteristic not frequently present in the music of composers of the previous period. Peri, the heroic Aymoré imagined by José de Alencar (1829-1877) and set to music by Carlos Gomes in *Il Guarany*, sang in Italian; in *Lo Schiavo (The Slave)*, 1889, premiered one year after the abolition, Gomes would substitute the black subject for an indigenous one, but still singing in Italian.

Nepomuceno's music, on the other hand, does not conceal the subject of discussion: his *Dansa de Negros* (1887, revised later in 1891, and incorporated as the fourth movement of his *Brazilian Series*) brings elements and rhythms that are Afro-Brazilian, such as syncopation and call-and-response texture. It is easy to clarify nationalist intentions in song, as lyrics and choice of vernacular language may point directly to said goal; however, the same ideas may not be easily perceived in symphonic music: it is necessary to make use of elements that can be recognized as sounding "national" to a large part of the Brazilian audience. The use of African-derived rhythms, call-and-response, syncopations and modality in the *Brazilian Series* prove that Nepomuceno's intention was to create music that would sound clearly national to Brazilian audiences. Gerard Béhague argues that Nepomuceno probably learned these rhythms and other elements by listening to popular music in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, absorbing it

unconsciously.⁸ This claim seems to reinforce my argument: Nepomuceno kept his ears open to what was going on around him, and his nationalism is organic, coming from observation and immersion in a cultural, social, political, and philosophical environment, and not from an exotic or anachronistic notion of what the national subject should be.

Many Brazilian critics tend to position Nepomuceno as the precursor of a kind of musical nationalism which would only take full form with Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) and the modernist movement launched by the Week of Modern Art in São Paulo in 1922.⁹ This positioning is problematic, inviting a perception of Nepomuceno's work not as modernist but rather as possessing a more primitive or less structured notion of nationalist ideas. During an interview for the *A Época Theatral* magazine (Theatral Epoch, Rio de Janeiro, 1917), Nepomuceno spoke about his project for nationalist music, which he idealized while still in Recife during the 1880s: there was a structured plan and purpose in his compositions, and not only "primitive ideas."¹⁰ As cited above, it is important to situate Nepomuceno in his own time, in dialogue with and responding to contemporary preoccupations, as well as to nationalist ideas from the past (as presented by Carlos Gomes).

This paper is divided into four parts, just as the *Brazilian Series* orchestral suite in four movements: *Alvorada na Serra* (Dawn on the Cordillera), *Intermédio* (Intermezzo), *Sesta na Rede* (Nap in the Hammock) and *Batuque* (generic name for Afro-Brazilian dances with a marked rhythmic content). As many pieces of symphonic music, it also has a *Prelúdio*

⁸ Gerard Béhague, "Popular Musical Currents in the Art Music of the Early Nationalistic Period in Brazil" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1966), 224.

⁹ Roberto Pontual, "Semana de Arte Moderna," Grove Art Online, accessed February 22, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T077514>.

¹⁰ *Época Theatral*, A. "A Época Theatral Entrevista o Maestro Alberto Nepomuceno," December 27, 1917.

(Introduction) and a *Coda* (Conclusion). In the first part, *Alvorada na Serra*, I present a brief biography of the composer, locating him in the northeastern cities of Fortaleza (CE) and Recife (PE), before the turn of the century. I also illustrate the ways in which Nepomuceno had contact with abolitionist and republican ideas, which may have determined his decision to write a piece with African derived elements, *Dansa de Negros*, in 1885. While the composer's family was not wealthy, it had connections with aristocrats who professed these new revolutionary ideas. Floriano Martins, poet, writer, and one of the biographers of Alberto Nepomuceno, places one of the most influential aristocratic figures of the turn of the century in Ceará, the Baron of Studart, as a habitual figure at the Nepomuceno family household.¹¹ One interesting feature of this time is that, despite the fact that Brazilian aristocracy was directly connected to royalty, many of its members professed republican ideas and were supporters of the end of slavery, one of the pillars that sustained monarchy and the plantation system. Besides his contact with some of these aristocrats, Nepomuceno had relatives who were directly involved in the abolitionist and republican movements, such as his uncle, the writer and journalist Manuel de Oliveira Paiva (1861-1892). These connections led Nepomuceno to direct a concert in commemoration of slavery emancipation in Ceará in 1884, four years before the rest of the country. Nepomuceno's political activities in this area would not come without personal cost: he was denied a governmental scholarship to study in Europe a few years later, due to his position opposing slavery and for the establishment of a republican regime.

In the second section, *Intermédio*, I clarify the composer's relationship with the thinkers of the School of Recife, and how some of their philosophical explorations may have influenced Nepomuceno's music. I also describe some of the ideas professed by the School, and the ways in

¹¹ Floriano Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 11.

which they understood Brazilian society and its subjects, as well as the proposals they had for the development of the country towards their ultimately desired goal: progress, based on the ideas of positivist philosopher Auguste Comte. Since the School promoted an evolutionist (and racist) reading of Brazilian society, this progress would be achieved by the miscegenated subject in a time to come—a utopian social theory, which placed progress in future times. This utopian model was explained by force of the only system proved to be beyond contestation for the positivist mind: science, in this case social science based on the works of Charles Darwin (1808-1882), Herbert Spencer, Ernst Haeckel, and Immanuel Kant. Positivist thinking was part of the Law School curriculum in the two schools dedicated to this subject in the country, in São Paulo and Recife, as well as in the Medical Schools of Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre.¹² Whereas in São Paulo positivism evolved to a form of political militancy, in Recife it helped students to develop a philosophical response, which influenced social theory in the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the republic, not only locally but across the country.

The next section, *Sesta na Rede*, examines Nepomuceno's positioning in *Carioca* society, in which he lived and developed his career from 1885 to 1888, and then again after his return from Europe beginning in 1895.¹³ During the periods in which Nepomuceno lived in Rio, he had contact with musical traditions and habits that he would ultimately incorporate into his music as influence (or reject, as in the case of Italian opera as well as some trends in popular music). The fact that the composer could not make a career in the northeast and had to move to the capital of the Brazilian empire, Rio de Janeiro, is symptomatic of the state of things in the country at that

¹² Blake, *The Vigorous Core of our Nationality*, 52.

¹³ Carioca: native of Rio de Janeiro - Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Batuque." Accessed March 1st, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/batuque>.

time: power, culture and opportunities were concentrated in a few localities (mainly in Rio), and still in the hands of a small number of aristocrats and landowners. This situation would change with the advent of the republic and industrialization after the turn of the century. The Modernist Week of 1922, for example, took place in São Paulo, not in Rio. Other cities such as Campinas and Ribeirão Preto (interior of São Paulo) would also incentivize the creation of local orchestras (in 1929 and 1938, respectively) and theaters.¹⁴

If the locality of *intelligentsia* changed after the turn of the twentieth century, so did the parameters used to discuss and create arts and music. The Modernists of 1922 were interested in new artistic forms, which would look at Brazilian artistic production as a synthesis of external influences mixed together with internal features, discussing coloniality and the Brazilian struggle to create an endogenous self-image. The modernists would take nationalist music to a new level and depth. Inspired by Zoltán Kodaly (1882-1967) and Béla Bartók (1881-1945), Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) traveled around the country collecting folk songs, and created a pedagogical system based on his findings.¹⁵ The previous nationalist phase, in which Nepomuceno is usually placed by critics and historians, was disregarded to a certain extent since its composers did not have the experience of doing field research on folk music, practicing a kind of “armchair” nationalism—at least in the eyes of modernists. However, the preoccupations of Nepomuceno and his fellow composers with the expression of a Brazilian identity in their music opened the way to Modernism and subsequent trends. This is also one of the reasons why Nepomuceno was granted the title of “founder” of Brazilian music: he was among those who tried to convey

¹⁴ Gisele L. Haddad, “Orquestra Sinfônica de Ribeirão Preto (SP): Representações e Significado Social” (Master’s thesis, Universidade Estadual Paulista, 2009), 38-44.

¹⁵ Rita de Cássia F. Amato, “Momento Brasileiro: Reflexões Sobre o Nacionalismo, a Educação Musical e o Canto Orfeônico em Villa-Lobos,” *Revista Electrónica Complutense de Investigación en Educación Musical* 5, no. 2 (2008), 1-18.

Brazilianness in music, based on the knowledge, models, and philosophy they had at the turn of the twentieth century. This knowledge was still very much Eurocentric, or influenced by European theories; however, for the first time, a group of philosophers, writers, poets and musicians were trying to define Brazilian society and culture from within, making sense of the position of Brazilian *intelligentsia* facing local problems, as well as inserting the country in a global order.

The last section, *Batuque*, brings a brief analysis of the *Brazilian Series* (1891), one of the most widely known orchestral pieces by Nepomuceno, as a means to discuss how the composer incorporated elements he believed were essentially Brazilian, differentiating his music from European prototypes, and translating *Brazilianness* (as it was understood at the end of the nineteenth century) into instrumental music. The piece will also serve as a demonstration of the ways in which Nepomuceno incorporated the political and philosophical concepts he learned from the School of Recife into music. It is obvious that, by composing an orchestral suite, Nepomuceno was following European models, which does not mean that his music was pure imitation of an imported model. It was an exercise of self-reflection in which the composer produced his work in relation to the larger canon of Western art music, while incorporating local accents and ideas about the national subject. This section of the thesis also discusses concepts of Brazilian identity facing colonialism, Portuguese imperialism, and the nascent identity of the new nation.

II. *Alvorada na Serra*—Alberto Nepomuceno and His Time

Alberto Beriot Nepomuceno was born in Fortaleza, Ceará, on July 6, 1864.¹⁶ His parents were Victor Augusto Nepomuceno (1840-1880) and Maria Virginia de Oliveira Paiva (1846-1892). His father was a musician, violin teacher, conductor, composer, and the organist of the Fortaleza Cathedral; he was also Alberto's first music teacher, teaching him solfege and piano. According to Floriano Martins, the Baron of Studart (Guilherme Chambly Studart, 1853-1938), was a *habitué* at the Nepomuceno family house, encouraging Alberto in his studies.¹⁷ The baron was a very active figure in the abolitionist cause in Ceará, as was Alberto's uncle, Manuel de Oliveira Paiva.¹⁸ Paiva's most well-known work is *Dona Guidinha do Poço*, a naturalist and regionalist novel published posthumously in 1945.¹⁹ Besides his work as a novelist, Paiva collaborated with the abolitionist journal *O Libertador* (The Liberator); Alberto Nepomuceno worked with Paiva briefly, writing for abolitionist publications during the 1880s.

In 1872 the family moved to Recife, the capital of Pernambuco state, also called Santo Antônio de Recife at that time. According to Santos da Silva, the move occurred due to the lack of opportunity for musicians in Fortaleza. Recife was a larger city, the capital of the Pernambuco province, with an established theater (Santa Isabel Theater) visited by many national and international companies: “Victor Augusto Nepomuceno emigrated with his family in the decade

¹⁶ Avelino Romero Pereira, *Música, Sociedade e Política: Alberto Nepomuceno e a República Musical* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. UFRJ, 2007).

¹⁷ Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 11.

¹⁸ Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 12.

¹⁹ Naturalism and Regionalism were two trends of Romantic novel in Brazil. For more details see Dante Moreira Leite, *O Caráter Nacional Brasileiro* (São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira Editora, 1969), 163-178.

of 1870, attracted, probably, by the intense musical movement in Recife, by the coming and goings of the most diverse opera companies, Italian, French and English, that already turned the capital of the province into an area of great interest for solid musical survival.”²⁰

The quote above seems to make a comparison between Fortaleza and Recife in musical terms, only; however, by reading it, it is also possible to compare social life in the two cities, and to learn about a very popular entertainment trend during the second half of the nineteenth century in Rio de Janeiro, as well as in other important and more developed cities in Brazil: opera, and Italian opera in particular. Brazilian composers were also interested in this popular genre: Carlos Gomes, accounted by critics as the greatest Brazilian composer of opera in the nineteenth century, debuted his first opera *A Noite no Castelo* (Night at the Castle) in 1861, and his most famous nationalist opera, *O Guarany* (Il Guarany), was premiered in 1870, at the La Scala Theater in Milan, Italy. Nepomuceno composed three operas, and was planning a fourth one, *O Garatuja*, when he passed away in 1920. This popularity among audiences and the willingness of composers to write opera gives a dimension of the genre as a musical and social phenomenon in Brazil.

In Recife, Alberto Nepomuceno studied violin and piano with his father, and went to secondary school for Humanities, a comprehensive course in which students learned Portuguese, math, philosophy, and foreign languages. During this period, Nepomuceno had contact with members of the School of Recife, a group of students from the Law School interested in the discussion of philosophical models to explain the Brazilian situation facing European

²⁰ Santos da Silva, José Amaro. *Música e Ópera no Santa Isabel: Subsídio para a história e o Ensino da música no Recife*. Recife: Editora Universitária da UFPE, 2006, 179. “Victor Augusto Nepomuceno, emigrou com a família na década de 1870, atraído, provavelmente, pelo intenso movimento musical do Recife, pelas idas e vindas de companhias de ópera as mais diversas entre italianas, francesas e inglesas que já davam à capital da província área de grande interesse para uma sólida sobrevivência musical.”

imperialism, as well as a sense of social and cultural Brazilian “delay” when compared to European countries. Nepomuceno studied philosophy and German with Tobias Barreto, one of the central figures of the School of Recife, and was preparing to enter superior school; however, his father died in 1880 and he had to give up his plans.²¹ He worked in typography to provide for his family, and as a music teacher (teaching piano and music theory) to increase his income. During this period, he studied harmony with Euclides D’Aquino Fonseca (1854-1929), who introduced him to members of the Club Carlos Gomes, the most significant music club active in the province.²² In 1882, when he was eighteen years old, Nepomuceno became the director of the club, and was known in the region for his piano skills and musicality. Nepomuceno also played the violin in the 1883 premiere of the opera *Leonor*, written by Fonseca, at the Santa Isabel Theater.

Despite his fame in Recife, Nepomuceno’s financial situation was still precarious: he could not afford his own residence, and lived in the house of pharmacist Numa Pompílio, described by Sérgio Alvim Corrêa (Nepomuceno's grandson and biographer) as a “convinced abolitionist,” and friend of Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910), major figure in the abolitionist campaign in Brazil.²³ Nepomuceno had previous abolitionist influences from his uncle, Oliveira Paiva, and the coexistence with abolitionist peers led the composer to actively join the abolitionist and republican movements. In 1883, he became an honorary member of the Sociedade Nova Emancipadora de Pernambuco (New Emancipation Society of Pernambuco),

²¹ Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 12.

²² Sérgio Alvim Corrêa, *Alberto Nepomuceno: Catálogo Geral*, 9.

²³ Corrêa, *Catálogo Geral*, 9. The only information provided by Corrêa about Numa Pompílio is that he was a pharmacist. Corrêa does not provide any other information about Pompílio, such as dates of birth or death.

one of the many abolitionist and republican organizations in that city.²⁴ One year later, Nepomuceno returned to Fortaleza, co-writing abolitionist editorials with Oliveira Paiva. He associated with João Brígido and João Cordeiro, also abolitionists—respectively, member and president of the Sociedade Cearense Libertadora (Ceará Liberator Society).²⁵

A brief explanation of the conditions that led to the popularity of the abolitionist cause in the northeastern regions of Brazil is necessary here. Northern and northeastern provinces, in general, supported the cause, despite the fact that Brazil was the last country in the world to end slavery, in 1888. According to Naro, the discourse of equal rights was present in the region since the first half of the nineteenth century.²⁶ It motivated the Malês Revolt (1835) and the Sabinada Rebellion (1837-1838) in Bahia.²⁷ The imperial government suffered increasing opposition from the Republican Party, created in 1870 in São Paulo by law students and congressmen, and the war effort during the Paraguayan War (also known as the War of the Triple Alliance, 1864-1870) weakened the centralized imperial power.²⁸ In 1871, Brazilian Parliament passed the Rio Branco Law, also known as the Free Birth Law, stipulating that children born from enslaved mothers would not be slaves. Another reason for the growth of the abolitionist movement in the north and northeast was the nature of work relationships in the region: while in the south coffee

²⁴ Rogério Soares de Moura, “Recompondo o Passado: Alberto Nepomuceno sob a Batuta Modernista” (Master’s thesis, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, 2008), 13.

²⁵ Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 15.

²⁶ Nancy Priscila Naro, *Blacks, Coloureds, and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2003), 142-152.

²⁷ For more detailed information about the Sabinada and Malês revolts, see Pedro Eurico Rodrigues, “Revoltas do Período Regencial,” InfoEscola, accessed February 20, 2020, <https://www.infoescola.com/historia/revoltas-do-periodo-regencial/>.

²⁸ For more information on the Paraguayan War, see “Guerra do Paraguai,” Brasil Escola, accessed February 20, 2020, <https://brasilecola.uol.com.br/historiab/guerra-paraguai.htm>.

plantations were still dependent on the slave workforce, the northeastern sugar plantations were in decline and accommodating to a new model, using a free workforce of emancipated slaves and foreign immigrants who started arriving in Brazil around the 1870s.²⁹ In Ceará, aside from the creation of many abolitionist societies (such as the Centro 25 de Dezembro, which Nepomuceno joined in 1884), the abolitionist spirit caused a general strike in the Port of Fortaleza, commanded by pilot-sailor Francisco José do Nascimento (1839-1914) in 1881.³⁰ Nascimento, a *mulatto*, refused to transport slaves to Rio de Janeiro and other Brazilian provinces, becoming a hero in the abolitionist campaign—for which writer Aluísio Azevedo named him Dragão do Mar (Sea Dragon).³¹ Nepomuceno used his musical skills to support the movement, conducting a pro-abolition concert in Fortaleza in 1884. That same year, Sátiro Dias (1844-1913), president of Ceará, signed the emancipation law in the province, four years before the rest of Brazil.³²

Nepomuceno's political involvement and associations would cause him to become well known, but not without some consequences: in 1885 the Assembléia Legislativa Cearense (Ceará Legislative Council) petitioned the Imperial Government for a scholarship, so Nepomuceno would be able to go to Europe to finish his studies. The petition was denied on the basis of the composer's political activities. Nepomuceno decided to move to Rio de Janeiro, then the capital of Brazil, in search for better working conditions, and perhaps a new chance to study abroad. He petitioned for the scholarship again when he arrived in Rio and was denied one more time—and

²⁹ Naro, *Blacks, Coloureds, and National Identity*, 147.

³⁰ Sea Dragon and the Strike at the Port of Fortaleza. See Azuir Filho, "Francisco Nascimento - O Dragão do Mar," Geledés Instituto da Mulher Negra, accessed in February 21, 2020, <https://www.geledes.org.br/francisco-nascimento-o-dragao-mar/>.

³¹ May Bletz, "Race and Modernity in *O Cortiço* by Aluísio de Azevedo" *LL Journal*, (New York, CUNY, 2007), 1-12.

³² Naro, *Blacks, Coloureds, and National Identity*, 157-160.

called a “loafer” by Princess Isabel (1846-1921), daughter of emperor D. Pedro II and heir to the throne.³³ According to musicologist Monica Vermes, a few sources agree with this version of the story, while other biographers state that the reason for having the scholarship denied was purely political. She also states that perhaps in the eyes of the monarchy the words “republican” and “loafer” had the same meaning).

Nepomuceno stayed in Rio for three years, and during this period he had the opportunity to meet some of the most significant Brazilian musicians, artists and writers. His *carioca* premiere as a piano soloist happened at the Clube Beethoven in 1885.³⁴ The Beethoven Club was an all-male association, in which members of the aristocracy and the nascent carioca bourgeoisie would gather to read European newspapers, learn about the most up-to-date trends in music, philosophy and literature, and to listen to (and to play) music. After his debut, Nepomuceno returned to the Club many times as a concert soloist and as a piano teacher. There he also met Machado de Assis (1839-1908), one of the most significant Brazilian writers of all time, since Assis was the librarian of the Club.³⁵ Later in his life, Nepomuceno would set music to some of Assis’s poems to music.

During his stay in Rio, Nepomuceno lived at the house of the Bernardelli brothers, and met many poets and writers, among them Olavo Bilac (1865-1918), Aluísio Azevedo (1857-1913) and Machado de Assis (cited above).³⁶ According to Martins, these acquaintances were extremely important for the development of a sense of nationalism in Nepomuceno: “If the

³³ Vermes, “Alberto Nepomuceno e a Criação de uma Música Brasileira,” 27.

³⁴ Corrêa, *Catálogo Geral*, 9.

³⁵ Corrêa, *Catálogo Geral*, 9.

³⁶ Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 17.

dialogue with European movements mattered, Romanticism, Realism or Parnassianism, Naturalism, the truth is that this dialogue would only truly exist when we established our own poetic voices, or better, when we stopped being only an echo of foreign experiences. He felt he would soon write a series of compositions with these young Brazilians that seemed to be acquiring their own voice.”³⁷

The Bernardelli brothers were Rodolpho (1852-1931) and Henrique (1858-1936), artists of Mexican origin who resided in Rio. They encouraged Nepomuceno to try to collect funds to pay for the expenses of his studies trip to Europe. Nepomuceno returned to the northeast for a tour with cellist Frederico Nascimento (1852-1924), organized with the aim of funding his studies.³⁸ Back in Ceará in 1888, Nepomuceno premiered his piano piece *Dansa de Negros*, which would later become the fourth movement of the Brazilian Series (*Batuque*), at the Clube Iracema (Iracema Club) in Fortaleza.³⁹ In August that same year, Nepomuceno would finally board a ship to Europe, in the company of the Bernardelli brothers, heading to Genoa, Italy. During the trip, the composer worked on his first opera with nationalist motives, *Porangaba*, based on poems by Juvenal Galeno (1838-1931) and on folk tales from Ceará.⁴⁰ The opera had a libretto in Portuguese, and is now lost; however, Nepomuceno would hold as a model the work

³⁷ Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 17: “Se importava o diálogo com os movimentos europeus, Romantismo, Realismo ou Parnasianismo, Naturalismo, a verdade é que esse diálogo só iria existir de fato quando fundássemos nossas próprias vozes poéticas, ou seja, quando deixássemos de ser apenas eco das experiências alheias. Percebeu que logo começaria a escrever uma série de composições com esses jovens brasileiros que lhe pareciam estar conquistando voz própria.”

³⁸ Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 18.

³⁹ Corrêa, *Catálogo Geral*, 9.

⁴⁰ Pereira, *Música, Sociedade e Política*, 35.

of collecting folk stories and songs as Galeno had done, and would write music for his poems later in life, all in the vernacular.

In Italy, Nepomuceno enrolled at the Liceo Musicale Santa Cecilia, studying harmony with Eugenio Terziani (1824-1889), and piano with Giovanni Sgambatti (1841-1914) and Cesare de Sanctis (1830-1915).⁴¹ The proclamation of the republic in Brazil helped him stay longer in Europe: he won third place in a competition for the composition of the new Republic Proclamation Anthem, and the prize paid for his extended stay. In 1890 he moved to Berlin, and studied composition with Heinrich von Herzogenberg (1843-1900) at the Meister Schuller Academy.⁴² Nepomuceno believed German music to be the music of the future, and the move to Berlin was his way of detaching himself from Italian traditions, realigning his learning and influences with the new German trends. Traveling to Vienna for vacations in 1891, Nepomuceno studied piano with Theodor Lechetitzky (1830-1915), and met his future wife, Norwegian pianist Walborg Rendtler Bang, student of Edward Grieg (1843-1907).⁴³ He also studied organ in Berlin at the Stern Conservatory with Arno Kleffel (1840-1913) and piano with H. Ehrlich (1822-1899).⁴⁴ In 1893 Nepomuceno traveled to Norway for his wedding, where he met Grieg, staying at his house. In 1894 he conducted the Berlin Philharmonic for his final exams at the Stern Conservatory, and moved to Paris where he studied organ with Alexander Guilmant (1837-1911) and met composers Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1921), Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and Vincent D'Indy (1851-1931), among others.

⁴¹ Corrêa, *Catálogo Geral*, 9.

⁴² Corrêa, *Catálogo Geral*, 9.

⁴³ Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 23.

⁴⁴ Corrêa, *Catálogo Geral*, 9.

In 1895 Nepomuceno returned to Brazil, winning the organ chair at the Instituto Nacional de Música (National Music Institute, the music school that replaced the Imperial Conservatory in Rio, after the fall of the monarchy). In the carioca public eye, this year marks the starting point of Nepomuceno's project of nationalist music: he conducted a concert that year at the National Institute, with some of his compositions sung in the vernacular, which caused scandal in the audience. The motto "Não tem pátria um povo que não canta em sua língua" (a people that does not sing in their mother language has no motherland) was attributed to Nepomuceno by critic Oscar Guanabarro then, as a sign of the composer's commitment to the creation of concert music that was genuinely Brazilian.⁴⁵ However, Romero Pereira, one of Nepomuceno's biographers, attributes the phrase to Guanabarro himself, and argues that the critic probably came up with it to add importance and mystique to Nepomuceno's music, spiking curiosity in the carioca audience. Other biographers, such as Floriano Martins and Luiz Heitor, attribute the phrase to Nepomuceno himself. Guanabarro played the role of Nepomuceno's nemesis until the end of the life of the composer, and it seems unlikely that he would promote Nepomuceno's career in any manner. The two men would engage in violent arguments in Rio newspapers later in the decade, when Nepomuceno advocated against Italian opera and in favor of songs in the vernacular; Guanabarro's favorite musical genre was Italian opera, and he believed that Brazilian Portuguese was not a suitable language for art song.

In 1896 the board of the Sociedade de Concertos Populares (Society for Popular Concerts) nominated Nepomuceno as the official conductor of their orchestra, and he presented premieres of music by Brazilian composers with this ensemble.⁴⁶ In 1897 he premiered the

⁴⁵ Pereira, *Música, Sociedade e Política*, 110-111.

⁴⁶ Martins, *Alberto Nepomuceno*, 34.

Brazilian Series during a festival at the Institute, and in 1900 he traveled again to Vienna, meeting Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) there.⁴⁷ In 1902 Brazilian president Rodrigues Alves (1848-1919) nominated Nepomuceno to the role of director of the National Institute, but the composer resigned a year later, due to disagreements with political interference in the Institute.⁴⁸ He returned to the position of director of the Institute in 1906, and stayed there until 1916, when the Rio de Janeiro government arbitrarily interfered and cancelled a singing competition promoted by the Institute. This interference was taken personally by the composer, causing him to resign and publicly reject the position. In the following years, Nepomuceno would travel to Europe one more time, conducting his works in Geneva, Brussels and Paris (1913). In the role of informal cultural promoter, he was responsible for many first performances of contemporary composers such as Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936), Paul Dukas (1865-1935), and Claude Debussy in Rio; he also supported Brazilian novice composers, such as Villa-Lobos (recommending him to his publisher and conducting his music in concerts at the Municipal Theater in Rio, from 1917 to 1920), and Catulo da Paixão Cearense (1863-1946), popular guitar player and composer who wrote music based on myths from the northeast.⁴⁹ In 1919 he moved to the house of Frederico Nascimento, his cellist friend, after Walborg left him due to difficulties adapting to life in Rio; she returned to Norway, alleging personal struggles in finding a job as a pianist. Nepomuceno died on October 16, 1920, at Nascimento's house in the Santa Teresa neighborhood of Rio at age 56.

⁴⁷ Corrêa, *Catálogo Geral*, 10.

⁴⁸ Pereira, *Música, Sociedade e Política*, 181-182.

⁴⁹ Corrêa, *Catálogo Geral*, 10.

Nepomuceno composed one symphony, three operas and three string quartets, orchestral suites, music for piano and voice, choral music, and songs. Many of these compositions have a nationalist character, with the inclusion of themes or musical elements that would connote *Brazianness*, or the composer's own concept of Brazilian identity in music. The discussion of such nascent identity was the focus of the School of Recife, by the time Nepomuceno lived in that city. In the next section, I discuss the philosophical trends that influenced the members of the School of Recife, and how these ideas made their way into Nepomuceno's music.

III. *Intermédio*—Classmates and Friendships

By looking at Nepomuceno's biography, it is possible to draw a few conclusions about the lives of musicians in Brazil at the turn of the twentieth century, the environments in which these musicians circulated, as well as the types of patronage they depended upon, in case they decided to further their studies in Europe. It is also easy to perceive that, in the case of Nepomuceno, familial ties and friendships were key to the development of his career and to the incorporation of concerns with *Brazilianness* in his music. While his family was influential in Fortaleza and later in Recife—his father was the organist of the most significant churches in these cities, and a well known music teacher and conductor, and his uncle was a writer—it is clear that it was not wealthy. On the other hand, his personal relations were beneficial in other instances, as he became involved in the political, philosophical and artistic trends of his time: the Bernardelli brothers, as well as Frederico Nascimento, were pivotal in the actions that allowed Nepomuceno to travel and study in Europe; his proximity with members of the School of Recife gave him a philosophical background to think about Brazilian society, people, and art that would be representative of *Brazilianness*; many of his closest friends were writers and poets, which would influence his willingness to compose songs in the vernacular, and to advocate for the use of Portuguese not only in song but also in opera. In this section, I examine the formative period of Nepomuceno's life as a student of Tobias Barreto, unveiling the thought of the School of Recife, and the ways in which his closeness to Barreto and other members of the School may have inspired him to pursue *Brazilianness* in his composition.

In *Class Mates: Male Students and the Making of a Political Class in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*, Andrew Kirkendall describes the state of superior studies in Brazil during that time.⁵⁰ For a brief period from 1808 to 1822, Brazil was the capital of the Portuguese empire, as the royal family moved to Rio de Janeiro to escape the forces of Napoleon Bonaparte—a unique situation, as no other European country had transferred their capital to a colony. This move allowed for some urban development in Rio, since it was paramount to recreate a European environment in the city—known as the *Tropical Versailles* then—to accommodate the needs of the royal family.⁵¹ The process of independence of Brazil was also probably smoother than in other countries, since it was a rupture but also a continuation: D. Pedro I (1798-1834), who proclaimed independence, was the son of D. Joao VI (1767-1826), emperor of Portugal, and Brazil retained the monarchic system until 1889, with the proclamation of the republic.

While the city of Rio de Janeiro saw large-scale developments with the presence of the royal family—for example with the creation of theaters and the Royal Conservatory—other areas such as higher education and the press did not see much improvement until independence. The first two law schools of Brazil were founded in 1827, in São Paulo (in the southeast) and in Recife (in the northeast). Before that, anyone interested in becoming a *bacharel* (a graduate in law) would be sent to the University of Coimbra, Portugal, to finish his studies. The use of the masculine pronoun is intentional here: the profile of the law student then was male, from aristocratic or wealthy families, and a supporter of the monarchy. According to Kirkendall, “graduates of the schools staffed the centrally appointed imperial bureaucracy as magistrates and

⁵⁰ Andrew Kirkendall, *Class Mates: Male Students and the Making of a Political Class in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

⁵¹ Cristina Magaldi, *Music in Imperial Rio de Janeiro: European Culture in a Tropical Milieu* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2004), xvii.

provincial presidents and served in the bicameral Congress, the foreign service, and the imperial ministries. Brazil may have had the most highly developed system of elite recruitment in the Western Hemisphere.”⁵²

By the end of the nineteenth century, though, this panorama changed. In addition to the law schools, by then the country had two medical schools in the provinces of Rio de Janeiro (in the southeast) and in Porto Alegre (in the south). The attendance policy was eliminated, and the profile of the student body changed significantly as the schools started admitting not only the elite, but also students from social other classes. Kirkendall cites a note from 1885 in the *Aurora* newspaper in which a student describes the admission of a “coachman” from Rio Grande do Norte into the School of Law of Recife, and warns about possible consequences of the presence of that individual: “If the government doesn't open its eyes, we will soon have tailors, shoemakers, cigar-makers, and *tutti quante* [sic].”⁵³

If on one hand the elite felt that diversity would have negative effects in the law schools, on the other hand it allowed students from different social classes—and political affiliations—to have access to higher education. The Republican Party was founded in 1870 in São Paulo, and being republican and federalist became part of the identity of a large part of the student body: these students demanded for decentralized power, with more political independence for the provinces, and rejected monarchy, favoring republicanism. Another common concern among these students was the definition of a Brazilian national identity, detached from elements that would resemble colonial times, or the contemporary monarchic system. The flexible attendance policy allowed for more time outside the school, and students would use that time to get

⁵² Kirkendall, *Class Mates*, 3.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 155.

acquainted with novelties in literature, arts, philosophy, and the new science of sociology. While in the south and southeast students focused more in political militancy and action, the students of the Recife Law School focused on philosophy and social science studies, which would (ideally) help them understand Brazilian identity, and would allow them to create laws, and socio-governmental models that would place the country on the path of progress and civilization:

Many Brazilian law students continued to embrace the long-standing literary ideal. Others, however, found a new justification for their role in society by embracing a new philosophy in positivism, a new source of cultural authority in social science, and a new definition of the nation as a decentralized republic instead of a centralized constitutional monarchy. The new student ideal was of a man in tune with historic laws of evolution and inspired more by sociology than literature, but still the idealistic vanguard in a corrupt society.⁵⁴

The School of Recife was a conglomerate of students who were interested in positivist ideas professed by philosopher Auguste Comte and in theories of evolutionism, social Darwinism and determinism represented by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer.⁵⁵ Their goal was to use these theories to read and explain Brazilian society, pointing to solutions for what they called the issue of the “atraso brasileiro” (Brazilian “lag”) in relation to more developed European countries. The School of Recife was not a formal organization, and it did not have a completely unified philosophy, presenting multiple readings of positivism and evolutionism. However, all of its members departed from the same positivist notion of progress as the ultimate goal to be reached, by individuals or by society as a whole (as stated in the national flag motto, *ordem e progresso*—order and progress). The ideal of ultimate progress and civilization was European society, which they saw as a model to be emulated, or adapted to Brazilian reality. These thinkers were also deeply invested in studying and explaining race, since by that time

⁵⁴ Kirkendall, *Class Mates*, 172.

⁵⁵ For further information on the School of Recife see Moraes Filho, *Medo à Utopia*, 45-70.

there was already a fair amount of *libertos* (emancipated black subjects) as well as miscegenated *mulattos* in the northeastern region. At the same time, authorities and schools were incorporating race theory (based on the works of Cesare Lombroso) in their curriculum to explain character, developmental potential or individual tendencies to get involved in crimes.⁵⁶

As cited above, by the end of the 1870s, the sugar plantation in the northeastern region was in decline and not so dependent on a slave workforce, which made some provinces decide to emancipate slaves before the rest of the country. However, emancipation was motivated more by economics than by humanistic reasons: there was much pressure from England to end slave trade in Brazil since the arrival of the Portuguese royal family to Rio, as a way of protecting their own sugar production in the international market. After the passing of the Slave Trade Suppression Act (also known as the Bill Aberdeen Act, in 1845), which authorized the English Navy to apprehend ships transporting slaves to the colonies, Brazil passed the Eusébio de Queiroz Law (1850) prohibiting the slave trade.⁵⁷ Although this law officially ended the slave trade in Brazil, there was still illegal traffic, and slavery was only abolished in 1888, which left black subjects in an unprivileged position within Brazilian society: slaves were perceived solely as non-human workforce or manpower, and the prolongation of this status until the end of the nineteenth century made it a huge challenge for the *libertos* to find space in society as individuals. They were also seen as inferior workers when compared to European migrants who started arriving in the region by the mid-1870s, and in many cases the notion of Brazilian “lag” was attributed to them. According to Blake,

⁵⁶ Blake, *The Vigorous Core of Our Nationality*, 49-54.

⁵⁷ Percy Alvin Martin, “Slavery and Abolition in Brazil,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 13, no. 2 (1993), 151-196.

During the Republic, Brazilian intellectuals and elites almost without exception came to embrace the racial ideal of *branqueamento*, or whitening, which posited that the Brazilian population was rapidly becoming whiter due to the influx of white Europeans and the decline of nonwhite Brazilians (...) northeastern politicians and intellectuals took a unique approach to the questions of race, citizenship, and national and regional identity, one that reflected their belief that the region was racially, socially, and culturally different from the rest of the nation.⁵⁸

On an institutional level, race theory was also used in criminal anthropology and legal medicine, to determine those individuals who would pose a threat to society. In this capacity, it was part of the curriculum of the Recife Law School, and race became one of the main subjects of discussion among the members of the School of Recife. They discussed race theory, as well as the position of difference of the northeast in relation to the more developed south, and while some of its members justified the hegemony of the white race based on the theory of the “survival of the fittest,” others were completely against racial and social determinism.⁵⁹

The Recife School of Law was founded in 1828, and at first it was located in Olinda, a city located about thirty miles from Recife. Nowadays, it is in downtown Recife and is one of the many schools which compose the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE). By the end of the nineteenth century, a group of students had the belief that, by understanding the philosophical principles that hypothetically governed public affairs, it would be possible to create laws to rule Brazilian society, putting it in the direction of progress. Tobias Barreto and Sílvia Romero (1851-1914) were the two main figures from the School, and their thinking influenced not only the northeastern region, but Brazil as a whole. Their intent was to apply concepts of positivism,

⁵⁸ Blake, *The Vigorous Core of our Nationality*, 50.

⁵⁹ For further information on the concepts of survival of the fittest and social Darwinism see the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Herbert Spencer,” accessed February 28, 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spencer/>.

social determinism, and evolutionism to their own reality, arriving to answers to the problem of Brazilian “lag”: a sense of delay, or cognitive dissonance, when comparing Brazil to other more developed countries, that should be examined and corrected, elevating the country to a position of civilization, similar to the model nations (mainly Europe and the United States). A newer generation, represented by Clóvis Bevilacqua (1859-1944), personal friend of Alberto Nepomuceno, was against racial determinism, and proposed a new approach to the ideas of Barreto and Romero, based on a syncretism of European theory and Brazilian perspective.⁶⁰ Many other members of the School of Recife—Graça Aranha (1868-1931), Esmeraldino Bandeira (1865-1928), Rodolfo Teófilo (1853-1932), Farias Brito (1862-1917), and others—were personal friends of Nepomuceno and defended this third wave of thought.

Tobias Barreto could possibly be acknowledged as the founder of the School of Recife. Besides his activities in the Law School (first as a student and later as a teacher), Barreto was a poet and writer. He was one of the creators of the *Condorist* (Condorism, or Condoreirism) movement in Brazilian poetry, a style of Romantic writing in which poets perceived themselves as observing reality from above and afar, like a condor.⁶¹ This vantage point would allow intellectuals to educate society on questions such as freedom and social justice. Condorism represented a shift in Romantic ideals in Brazilian literature: while Romantic writers from the previous generation would see Brazil through an excessively patriotic eye, glorifying the nation and its utmost hero (the indigenous subject), Condorist poets would turn to Realism, discussing Brazilian contemporary societal problems. Abolitionism and republicanism were among the

⁶⁰ Blake, *The Vigorous Core of our Nationality*, 55-56.

⁶¹ Leonardo de Oliveira Silva, “As Armas do Império: Guerra do Paraguai, Literatura do Brasil” (Master’s thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2014), 43-54.

preferred subjects in this poetic trend, as exemplified by the most well-known Condorist poem *The Slaveship* (O Navio Negreiro), by Castro Alves (1847-1871), which criticized the slave trade and petitioned for universal freedom.⁶² This tendency is well expressed not only in poetry, but in the naturalist novels by Aluísio de Azevedo, in which he attacks racial politics and social determinism, inspired by the writings of Émile Zola (1840-1902).⁶³

Barreto was not only a writer; as a law student, he was also an admirer of the sciences and of the adoption of scientific methods as a way of explaining phenomena, which led him to embrace Auguste Comte's positivism. According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Comte's approach, as stated in his first book *Course on Positive Philosophy* (1830-1842), can be summarized as follows:

In its development, humanity passes through three successive stages: the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. The first is the necessary starting point for the human mind; the last, its normal state; the second is but a transitory stage that makes possible the passage from the first to the last. In the theological stage, the human mind, in its search for the primary and final causes of phenomena, explains the apparent anomalies in the universe as interventions of supernatural agents. The second stage is only a simple modification of the first: the questions remain the same, but in the answers supernatural agents are replaced by abstract entities. In the positive state, the mind stops looking for causes of phenomena, and limits itself strictly to laws governing them; likewise, absolute notions are replaced by relative ones.⁶⁴

According to the positivist model, humanity would go through these three stages, reaching progress at the end of the evolutionary process. The last stage, positivism, would be the domain of empirical science, and knowledge would be achieved by means of measurements,

⁶² Sara Daniela Moreira da Silva, "Castro Alves na Cultura Brasileira" (Master's thesis, Universidade de Coimbra, 2012).

⁶³ Leite, *O Caráter Nacional Brasileiro*, 193.

⁶⁴ For further information on Auguste Comte and the concept of positivism, see the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Auguste Comte", accessed February 29, 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/comte/>.

cataloging, observation and description of phenomena. Barreto was interested in actively applying these concepts to law, which would then become sovereign rules in society; however, his approach was idealistic and utopian, and Barreto's discourse did not result in immediate political action. Nevertheless, he exerted great influence on the other thinkers of the School of Recife, as he worked as a private tutor (he taught Nepomuceno in this capacity), and translated many works by German philosophers such as Haeckel and Kant into Portuguese, facilitating access by other students. This quote by Souza Bandeira (1855-1929), one of the members of the School of Recife, shows the outreach of Barreto's ideas and actions: "Time for fights and dreams! A time in which, animated by the enthusiasm of strong convictions that one only has in their twenties, and electrified by the illuminated word of Tobias Barreto, the great master, we would battle for the promotion of the ideas of the century."⁶⁵ Alberto Nepomuceno was a student of Barreto and was preparing to enter the Law School, and this proximity would influence his musical preferences, as he declared to be, later in life, an admirer of Wagner and other German composers.

Another member of the School, Sílvio Romero, would have a more pervasive influence in Brazilian philosophical thinking.⁶⁶ While Barreto was more invested in creating rules for society, Romero was interested in the potentialities of political action informed by philosophical thinking, running for jobs as a public representative several times. He would promote a differentiated reading of the works of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, in an attempt to

⁶⁵ Moraes Filho, *Medo à Utopia*, 60. "Tempo de lutas e de sonhos! Época em que, animados pelo entusiasmo das fortes convicções que só se tem aos 20 anos, e eletrizados pela palavra iluminada de Tobias Barreto, o grande mestre, nós nos batíamos pela propaganda das idéias do século."

⁶⁶ Moraes Filho, *Medo à Utopia*, 193-250.

explain Brazilian society and the sense of delay facing European society.⁶⁷ According to Darwin, all organisms are in constant evolution, and the weaker ones will inevitably be subjugated and overpowered by the strongest ones, disappearing from the face of Earth, or adapting and becoming stronger in order to survive. Humanity develops in the same ways, and survival or defeat can only be explained by traits such as race and ability to adapt, as well as the presence of an environment which is suitable for development. Spencer would apply this theory to societies: according to social Darwinism, individuals or nations that were better suited for survival (or the strongest races, or the ones more adapted to their environment) would prevail in a society, while others would die out or become enslaved by the “fittest.” According to Spencer, these developmental stages would simply happen, as time passed, and environment and race would determine the outcomes of a given race or social group. This theory would be used to justify colonialism, enslavement of African peoples by European ones, and the idea, popular at that time, that European society was the ultimate civilizational goal, to which the “weaker” nations should look up.

Barreto professed his belief in positivism as the ideal stage of society—which Brazil had not reached at that point—as well as scientism as the prevalent method to study strategies to reach progress. Romero’s theory was a combination of the positivist method, plus ideas of evolutionism applied to society. However, Brazil presented some complications, and he would try to unveil the reasons why European theories would not work, when trying to give account of the Brazilian “lag.” He then included more elements to the evolutionist equation of race plus environment: Romero would also add external influence as a factor for the development of

⁶⁷ For further information on the concept of evolutionism, see the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Darwin: From *Origin of Species* to *Descent of Man*,” accessed February 28, 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/origin-descent/>.

Brazilian society. Three races participated in the formation of the Brazilian subject: white Europeans, enslaved Africans and Indigenous natives. If the European race was the fittest, it was natural it would subjugate the other two. Miscegenation would be beneficial in Brazil, as it would whiten the population, in an ameliorative process. Romero also believed that the environment and the climate would favor the flourishing of the strongest race, which became an issue for him: climate and environment seemed not to contribute to better the white race in Brazil, but to turn it into a lesser version of the European ideal: the adapted Portuguese subject is described in Azevedo's naturalist novel as lazy, lacking ambition or a strong character, and *abrasileirado* (turned Brazilian, acquiring character qualities of this people), in opposition to the ideal European man, which is brave, industrious and seeking progress.⁶⁸ The resulting subject of the miscegenation process, the mulatto, seemed to be more adapted to the Brazilian environment and climate than Europeans, and prevailed as the fittest race.⁶⁹ At the same time, the whole process seemed to be tampered with, since only one of the three races involved was native—and its adaptability and familiarity with Brazilian environment and climate did not help it to prevail, as it should. Romero faced a paradox: it was not possible for him to talk about an unified Brazilian subject at that time, since in his conception the evolutionist model was still ongoing in Brazil: while the mulatto was the fittest—a fact that, by itself, contradicted the European theory—this subject did not achieve progress, as expected. It was also not possible to talk about the *mulatto* as a homogeneous category, as diverse kinds of miscegenated groups populated different regions of Brazil, with particular characteristics in each site: they tended to be more

⁶⁸ Aluísio de Azevedo, *O Cortiço* (São Paulo: Livraria Martins, 1890-1959) - Renato Ortiz, *Cultura Brasileira e Identidade Nacional* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2006), 39.

⁶⁹ Leite, *O Caráter Nacional Brasileiro*, 190-192.

melancholic and indolent in the north (the *caboclo*), while they seemed completely adapted to the environment, and more active in the south (the *paulista*). For Romero, it was out of question to think about Brazilian society and culture in terms that did not involve the concept of *mestiçagem*:

The Brazilian (subject) is almost as a portrait of the Portuguese. Nature, as a transforming agent, did not do much to alter him, having, against it, little time, and the european civilization. The caboclo (indigenous), a type that is almost lost, that is vanishing more and more, contributed feebly in this sense. The african, rebel to intellectual progress, has altered, with no advantage, our past physiognomy. From the consort, then, of the old latin population (...) and african savages (...), it appeared, these people, who supposes themselves great, because they possess, among other wonders, “the most beautiful country in the world.” It is necessary to seek in History the conditions of its culture, of its civilization.⁷⁰

The process of *mestiçagem*, then, was not yet finished by the end of the nineteenth century, and to think about Brazilian society would be to think about a historical process, in which the miscegenated subject was the main agent. According to Romero, Brazilian society would only achieve the true ideal of progress and civilization after the addition of more white subjects, which would finally better Brazilian population, whitening it. This trend of thought would influence governmental action, which would encourage European migration (especially of Italian, German and Spanish origin) during the final decades of that century. In this sense, Brazilian national identity remained an open concept for Romero, as it would only be fully realized in the future. However, Romero denied Brazilian history as a history of the Portuguese,

⁷⁰ Leite, *O Caráter Nacional Brasileiro*, 185. “O brasileiro ficou quase um retrato do português. A natureza, como agente de transformação, pouco há feito para alterá-lo, tendo a lutar contra a estreiteza do tempo e a civilização européia. O caboclo (índio), tipo quase perdido, que se vai esvaecendo cada vez mais, mui fracamente contribuiu também nesse sentido. O africano, rebelde aos progressos intelectuais tem alterado, sem vantagem, nossa fisionomia pretérita. Do consórcio, pois, de velha população latina (...) e de selvagens africanos (...), surgiu, na máxima parte, êste [*sic*] povo, que se supõe grande, porque possui, entre outras maravilhas, “o mais belo país do mundo”. É necessário buscar na história as condições de sua cultura, de sua civilização.”

or natives, or Africans; it was the history of a new type, the *mestiço*. According to him, “every Brazilian is a mestiço, if not in blood, in the ideas.”⁷¹ Therefore, literature, art, and music had to bring a “national differential,” in order to contribute to the formation of the Brazilian people and its national character. This sense of responsibility regarding national art and music seems to be one of the forces that incentivized Nepomuceno to pursue new forms of expression in his music, which would include elements considered to be representative of *Brazilianness*, especially if we consider that he had close contact with Barreto and Romero by the time they were formulating their theories about Brazilian race and character.

A third wave of thought of the School of Recife, represented mainly by Clóvis Bevilacqua (personal friend of Nepomuceno), would oppose some of Romero’s ideas. This group was against social determinism, therefore Brazilian society could not be explained on the basis of the “survival of the fittest”; they also believed that *Brazilianness* was something to be discussed on the occasion, not in the future, as the Brazilian subject already existed, and was represented by the *caboclo* (in the north and northeast) or the mestiço or *paulista* (in the southeast).⁷² Despite the fact that there were diverging ideas in the School of Recife, their most important contribution to the debate about national character was the discussion of race: while still influenced by European theories (and racist ideas supported by these theories), the School was the first group in Brazil to develop local proposals for and about Brazilian society, in a philosophy that mixed syncretic elements. For the first time in the history of the country, a group would discuss Brazil from an insider's perspective, taking into account the role of racial difference in the formation of the miscegenated subject. This notion of difference was not simply imagined, but studied:

⁷¹ Ibid, 186.

⁷² Leite, *O Caráter Nacional Brasileiro*, 195-200.

Romero was the first investigator of Brazilian folk music, writing about it in 1880 in his *Cantos Populares do Brasil* (Popular Singing in Brazil).⁷³ The goal of the School of Recife was to investigate the reasons why Brazil, as an independent nation, had not yet entered a position of progress and civilization (predicated by positivism), when compared to European countries and the American model of progress, the United States. While race seemed to be one of the reasons for the Brazilian “lag,” the explorations of its effects in the project of progress achievement showed to be inconclusive, especially for Romero. On the other hand, the School proposed a native look over Brazilian society, culture, and its people, where to think of *Brazilianness* was also to acknowledge difference: if Brazilians are a product of the confluence of three races, Brazilian spirit or identity must lie in the elements in which each of these three races contributed to the formation of the nation. And as positivists, some of the members of the School of Recife were already scrutinizing what these contributions would exactly be, in the realm of language, habits, arts, and culture.

Besides their work as jurists, influencing the establishment of Brazilian Law codes in the beginning of the twentieth century, many of the members of the School of Recife were also writers and poets, or were in close contact with musicians and artists including Alberto Nepomuceno. The School of Recife would affect Brazilian law and social sciences, but also literature, music and culture at the turn of the twentieth century, as its agents transited from one area of knowledge and artistic production to the other, making those ideas circulate. Under this perspective, it is not difficult to understand Nepomuceno’s motivation to include Brazilian elements in his composition: he was responding to extremely relevant philosophical propositions of his time, as well as to changes in his social surroundings. The next section brings a brief

⁷³ Sylvio Roméro [sic], *Cantos Populares do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Clássica de Alves & Comp., 1897).

analysis of the musical environment in which Nepomuceno lived, and the ways in which elements from his surroundings, such as folk and popular music, were incorporated in the *Brazilian Series*, to depict ideas about Brazilian race and identity.

IV. *Sesta na Rede*—Music and Society in Rio by the 1880s

Alberto Nepomuceno started his career as a musician while he still lived in the northeast of Brazil, as a pianist, violinist, and later as a music teacher. His first compositions date from the late 1880s, a period in which he had already had contact with the ideas of the School of Recife, and was getting acquainted with new musical environments, first in Rio de Janeiro, and later, in Europe. Rio de Janeiro was the capital of Brazil since 1822, after being the capital of the Portuguese empire since 1808. Musical culture was well established there, with theaters dedicated to opera and operetta (some with imperial support), and private music societies or clubs, which privileged chamber music. Aside from the official venues that focused on concert music and opera, there were also salons and ballrooms, where lower classes could learn dances imported from Europe, such as the *waltz* and the *polka*, and informal gatherings, where the lowest class (formed by *libertos* and slaves) could cultivate music of African origin.⁷⁴ While at first sight these spaces seemed to be segregated, there was relative class mobility in these venues: the general public could, on special occasions, watch concerts promoted by music clubs; the same musicians who played in the operetta theater were also members of other “serious” orchestras, or played in *choro* ensembles; high society would watch operas as a form of

⁷⁴ For further information on Waltz, see Andrew Lamb, “Waltz,” Grove Music Online, accessed March 1st, 2020, <https://doi-org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.29881>. For Polka see Richard March, “Polka,” Grove Music Online, accessed March 1st, 2020, <https://doi-org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2225372>.

entertainment, but a large portion of this audience would also consume popular genres such as waltzes, polkas, *tangos* and *modinhas*.⁷⁵

By the mid-1800s, engineers were brought from Europe to urbanize the city, creating a Parisian-like Rio de Janeiro. This period was called the Rio de Janeiro *Belle Époque*, and lasted from the 1860s until the first decade of the twentieth century. In order to create the modern city, the government bought poor people's land for cheap and pushed them to the hills, where the first *favela* (slum) appeared in 1865 in Providence Hill (Morro da Providência). Former slaves, mixed-race people with low wage jobs, and low class white public officials (such as postmen and clerks) constituted the favela. In this mixed environment, new musical genres began to develop, such as the *maxixe*, *samba* and *choro*.⁷⁶

In general, these dances were a mix of European and African influences, and perceived as frivolous entertainment, since the composers of this music were part of the underprivileged classes. However, some of these dances became extremely popular before the turn of the century, as a popular form of entertainment for all classes; composers of concert music would also reach out to these popular genres as a way to depict Brazilian identity in their works, including Nepomuceno. Dances such as the *lundu*, the *maxixe*, the Brazilian tango and the *modinha* (and later the Samba) were used, in stylized forms, as an inspiration and as sources for nationalist

⁷⁵ It is paramount to keep in mind that the word *tango* refers to *Brazilian tango*, and not to Argentinian tango. Brazilian tango is a dance in a binary meter, derived from the polka and the *lundu*; *maxixes* were also labeled as tangos in order to conceal African origin. See Richard Miller, "African Rhythms in Brazilian Popular Music," *Luso Brazilian Review* 48, no. 1 (2011), 6-35. For *modinha* see Gerard Béhague, "Modinha," Grove Music Online, accessed March 1st, 2020, <https://doi-org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18840>.

⁷⁶ For *samba* and *choro*, see Miranda Sousa, "O Clube do Choro de São Paulo: Arquivo e Memória da Música Popular na Década de 1970" (Master's thesis, Universidade Estadual Paulista, 2009), 19-23. For *maxixe*, see Gerard Béhague, "Maxixe," Grove Music Online, accessed March 1st, 2020, <https://doi-org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18147>.

composition—a fact that led some Brazilian historians and music critics to equate nationalism with popular music as an urban phenomenon:

There is, then, at this point, an accentuated change of focus when it comes to the musical question. Music with national character only exists because Nation exists. But the concept of nation (at least in Brazil) only appears on the track of urban development (...) This phenomenon is common to all Latin-American countries: certain popular musical genres were born only after the structuration of big urban centers. It is the urban centers that characterize and irradiate certain genres. It is not only the urban centers that do it. In their isolation, rural communities encourage the appearance of many other genres. Some people would combine the two things: Folk and the rural environment.⁷⁷

This quote gives an account of two important facts related to music that would symbolize nationalist ideas at the end of the nineteenth century: first, much of this music, of popular origins, is related to urban centers; second, it seems that folk equals rural society, a type of environment that, in general, is not associated with Nepomuceno's music. Gerard Béhague, in his dissertation *Popular Musical Currents in the Art Music of the Early Nationalistic Period in Brazil, Circa 1870-1920*, argues that, to a certain extent, nationalist music in Brazil is also popular music, as composers absorbed rhythms and compositional procedures of *popular* genres, not focusing so much on *folk* music, as European nationalist composers. For Béhague, the folk element becomes part of Brazilian nationalist art music only after it goes through modifications that integrate it into urban popular music:

From 1890 to about 1920 there occurred a general movement of the rural population to the great cities of the coast, and the formation of compact urban concentrations in the

⁷⁷ Enio Skeff and José Miguel Wisnik, *O Nacional e o Popular na Cultura Brasileira: Música* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2004), 36. “Há portanto, a essas alturas, uma acentuada mudança de enfoque na colocação da questão musical. A música de caráter nacional só existe porque existe Nação. Mas o conceito de nação (pelo menos no Brasil) só surge no rastro do desenvolvimento urbano (...) \o fenômeno é comum a todos os países latino-americanos: certos gêneros musicais considerados populares só nascem com a estruturação dos grandes centros urbanos. São os centros urbanos que caracterizam e irradiam certos gêneros. Não que sejam só os centros urbanos que façam isso. Em seu ilhamento, as comunidades rurais estimulam o surgimento de um sem-número de gêneros. Houve inclusive quem alinhasse as duas coisas: folclore e meio rural.”

interior. The consequent social interchanges were of importance for the development of musical nationalism in Brazil through the emergence of new types of popular urban music resulting from the amalgamation of European and Afro-Brazilian components. With the abolition of slavery, the people of the cities came into actual contact with the African cultural manifestations which had generally remained within the domain of the slave quarters. Likewise the folkways of the humble immigrants and their descendants were more in evidence and soon became an integral part of the urban life. It should also be borne in mind that even during the Second Empire, the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie had proved receptive—consciously or unconsciously—to these popular manifestations.⁷⁸

Among the dances that served as inspiration and material for art music in Brazil are the *habanera*, the *lundu*, the *maxixe* and the *modinha*. The *habanera* is a dance genre of Hispanic origin, based on the French *contredanse*, and popularized in Cuba.⁷⁹ Its most characteristic rhythmic cell is the dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, plus two eighth notes (Figure 1):

Habanera: Basic rhythm and variation:



Figure 1: Habanera

In Brazil, the *habanera* would become popular thanks to Joaquim Antonio da Silva Callado (1848-1880), who used its characteristic rhythm in his compositions (polkas, choros and maxixes).⁸⁰ The *maxixe* (Figure 2) evolved as a variation of the *habanera* rhythm, substituting

⁷⁸ Béhague, “Popular Musical Currents in the Art Music of the Early Nationalistic Period in Brazil”, 17.

⁷⁹ Alejo Carpentier, *La Música en Cuba* (La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1979).

⁸⁰ Tamara Livingstone and Thomas G. C Garcia, *Choro: A Social History of a Brazilian Popular Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

the dotted eighth note plus sixteenth note for two sixteenth notes followed by three eighth notes, plus the incorporation of choro elements.



Figure 2: Most common maxixe rhythmic patterns

The word maxixe refers to a vegetable (from the family of the cucumber) which was very common in Brazil at that time, and had little to no value, as an insinuation of the lesser value of the music itself. For this reason, many maxixes were labeled as “Brazilian tangos” (a genre that had no resemblance to Argentine tango) or *choros*, as a way to conceal their origin, making them a respectable commodified product (sold first as piano music, and later, as sound cylinders or records). Chiquinha Gonzaga, composer of burlesque operettas and choro pianist, was responsible for the diffusion of the maxixe (which would later give origin to *samba*) in carioca society, and later in Europe.⁸¹ Ernesto Nazareth, another composer of that time, bridged the gap between concert and popular music, with his Brazilian tangos.⁸²

The reception of the popular element into aristocratic and bourgeois environments, signaled by Béhague, is another proof of the porosity of the line between art and popular music in carioca society, at that time: while popular music was related to lower-class entertainment, many art music composers wrote music inspired by (and based on) genres such as the modinha or the maxixe. Carlos Gomes, the most well known Brazilian opera composer, wrote modinhas

⁸¹ Miranda B. Sousa. “Chiquinha Gonzaga: Musician and Activist in the Brazilian Society at the 20th - Century Turn.” Paper presented at the Fall 2015 Conference of the American Musicological Society, Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas. October 10, 2015. <http://ams-sw.org/Pgms/PgmF15.pdf>.

⁸² See Gerard Béhague, “Ernesto Nazareth,” Grove Music Online, accessed March 1st, 2020, <https://doi-org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.19647>.

such as *Quem Sabe?* (Who Knows?- 1859), for soprano and orchestra; Brasília Itiberê da Cunha and Alexandre Levy, contemporaries of Nepomuceno, used rhythms from maxixe, habanera, and other popular genres in their compositions. The *Brazilian Series*, by Alberto Nepomuceno, presents a habanera and string accompaniments that resemble the maxixe, in the *Intermédio*, and a fourth movement called *Batuque*, a generic name for dances of African origin, with a marked rhythmic quality. The next section brings a brief analysis of the *Brazilian Series*, in which I point to the use of popular genres, as well as compositional techniques or themes, as elements that convey *Brazilianness*, in this foundational pre-modernist stage of Brazilian nationalist music.

V. *Batuque*—Brazil Meets Music

One of the most significant facts about the *Brazilian Series*, composed by Nepomuceno in 1891 in Berlin, is that the piece was not conceived, at first, as an orchestral suite. The second and fourth movements are developments of other pieces previously composed by Nepomuceno: the *Intermédio* derives from the *Intermezzo* from the *String Quartet n. 3, Brasileiro* (1891), composed in Berlin, and the *Batuque* is the expansion of the *Dansa de Negros* (Negro Dance), composed in 1887 for piano solo, and premiered in Fortaleza in 1888. While it is not possible to affirm that the originative idea for the *Series* was the *Dansa de Negros*, this one was the first excerpt composed by Nepomuceno, if a chronological order is observed. The *Dansa* was composed in 1887, a period in which he was in contact with intellectuals from the School of Recife, and writers and poets from Rio de Janeiro; he was also active in the abolitionist and republican causes at that time, which gives the piece a special political significance in this scenario. Following, I will do a brief exploration of Brazilian motives, elements and musical materials in the four movements of the *Series*.

The *Brazilian Series* is an instrumental suite for full orchestra, and consists of four movements: *Alvorada na Serra*, *Intermédio*, *Sesta na Rede* and *Batuque*. It was finished in 1891, when the composer was twenty-seven years old and was studying in Berlin. Nepomuceno would return to Brazil in 1895, and premiere the *Series* in 1898. Not only musical features are used to display a national spirit or *Brazilianness* in the suite; Nepomuceno also uses extra-musical sounds that imitate Brazilian birds or everyday activities common to people of the northeast, resembling techniques of musical painting or program music; foreign rhythms, as the habanera, give account of the composer's attention to the popular music he had contact with in Rio de

Janeiro. Meantime, several features of the suite dialogue with the larger canon of Western art music, like the use of the whole tone scale (an impressionist staple) and the use of sonata form in the second movement. It is important to remember that the project of nationalist music was not only about creating music that was genuinely Brazilian, but also to insert this music in the global order, as the main goal of the positivist ideal was progress, in the form of (European) civilization. Romero and his followers from the School of Recife counted external influences as one of the formative features of Brazilian identity, besides race, climate and environment. The presence of hybrid elements in the *Series* seems to agree with this notion: Brazilian music, as the Brazilian subject, would necessarily be *mestiça*.

The first movement, *Alvorada na Serra*, opens with the theme of the folk song *Sapo Cururu* (Cururu Frog). According to Luiz Heitor, the theme of “sapo-jururu [*sic*] is originary of the northeastern *bumba meu boi*, a kind of popular auto, represented and danced in the street.”⁸³ Figure 3 shows the melody of the folk song *Sapo Cururu*, presented at the opening of the *Brazilian Series* by the oboe and flute.

⁸³ Luiz Heitor, *150 Anos de Música no Brasil*, 142. “o tema do *sapo-jururu*, que tem origem no *bumba meu boi* nordestino, espécie de auto popular, representado e dançado no meio da rua.” Auto is a kind of theatrical presentation, created in Portugal during the Middle Ages. At first, autos were presented in churches, but later they were moved outdoors, allowing churchgoers to interact with actors. This type of play, which included text and music, used by the Jesuits as a means to catechize Brazilian indigenous populations, gave origin to theatrical folk manifestations throughout the country, such as the *bumba meu boi* (originated in the eighteenth century in the north and northeastern regions) and the *cururu* (form of poetic combat, in which two participants, accompanied by a guitar or viola (Brazilian guitar with twelve strings) improvise verses on the spot until one of them skips a rhyme, losing the fight. *Cururu* originated in southeastern Brazil, and it is still played in the western region of the state of São Paulo). For further information, see Marcos Antonio Marcondes, ed., *Enciclopédia da Música Brasileira: Popular, Erudita e Folclórica*. São Paulo: Art Editora, 1998.

Série Brasileira

I - Alvorada na Serra

Alberto Nepomuceno

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Flute and Oboe. The first system is marked 'Lentamente' and 'pp'. The Flute part has a measure rest for the first six measures, followed by a melodic line starting in measure 7. The Oboe part has a measure rest for the first six measures, followed by a melodic line starting in measure 7. The second system shows the continuation of the Flute and Oboe parts, with the Oboe playing a more active role in the lower register.

Figure 3: Sapo Cururu theme

The theme is presented by the oboe and flute in C Major, over a pedal in G (dominant). Nepomuceno holds this texture for thirteen measures, which renders the key in a kind of suspension, despite the extremely melodic character of the theme. A large crescendo, in which the entire orchestra participates, emulates the sun rising; full light is achieved when the orchestra plays a D Major chord in m. 75, in fortissimo. After a harp solo in D Major (mm. 75-83), the composer introduces a quasi cadenza in $\frac{3}{4}$, labeled *Canto do Sabiá* (The Sabiá Chant, Figure 4), when the flute imitates the singing of the sabiá, an indigenous species of Brazilian bird:

The name *sabiá* is applied to any number of thrushes scattered throughout Brazil, where it is a favorite songbird. Ever since the publication in 1846 of “Canção do Exílio” (Song of the Exile), written in 1843 by poet Antonio Gonçalves Dias, beginning “Minha terra tem palmeiras/onde canta o sabiá” (My homeland has palm trees, where the sabiá sings), the sabiá has become a symbol of the natural beauty of the Brazilian land, and for this reason Nepomuceno must have alluded to this songbird.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Béhague, “Popular Musical Currents in the Art Music of the Early Nationalistic Period in Brazil,” 245.

(Canto do Sabiá)

The image shows a musical score for two flute parts. The top staff is labeled 'Flute' and begins at measure 93 with a '1. solo' instruction. The bottom staff is labeled 'Fl.' and begins at measure 99. Both staves are in treble clef and 3/4 time. The music consists of a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and some rests. The key signature is one flat (B-flat).

Figure 4: Canto do Sabiá

The sabiá singing will appear again in brief interventions, until the emergence of the second theme, played by the violins (m. 108). The entire section after the *Canto do Sabiá* is modulatory, returning to the home key on m. 166. One more time, the pedal on the dominant G (played by the cellos) obfuscates the notion of tonality; the avoidance of the leading tone (B), both in the melody and harmony, also creates a sense of distance from tonality, and proximity with modality. The movement ends with one last citation of the *Canto do Sabiá*, this time in C Major, and one last chord in pianissimo closes the *Alvorada na Serra*.

Several elements point to *Brazilianness* in this movement. *Alvorada na Serra* translates as Dawn in the Cordillera (or mountain range), and the movement is a musical representation of the sun rising over mountains (most likely the Mantiqueira Mountains, spreading over the states of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and São Paulo, in southeastern Brazil), which Nepomuceno had probably seen when he traveled to Rio de Janeiro from the northeast. The inclusion of the *sabiá* chant is another move of musical imitation or emulation, in which the composer displays not only sounds that are easily recognizable by Brazilians, but also—as pointed by Béhague—the chant of a songbird that is symbolic of the country.

The choice for modalism over tonality is another component (and this time, a musical one) that relates to *Brazilianness*, especially to folk music of the northeastern region. According to Ermelinda Paz, northeastern folk music utilizes modal scales (probably evolved from Gregorian modes) frequently. The most recurrent ones are the Mixolydian (major scale with a lowered seventh degree), or the Lydian (major scale with a raised fourth degree).⁸⁵ In many cases, the two modes are combined into a third mode that is frequently called Lydian 7b or Mixolydian 4+ (Figure 5), consisting of a Mixolydian mode with a raised fourth degree (or Lydian mode with a lowered seventh):

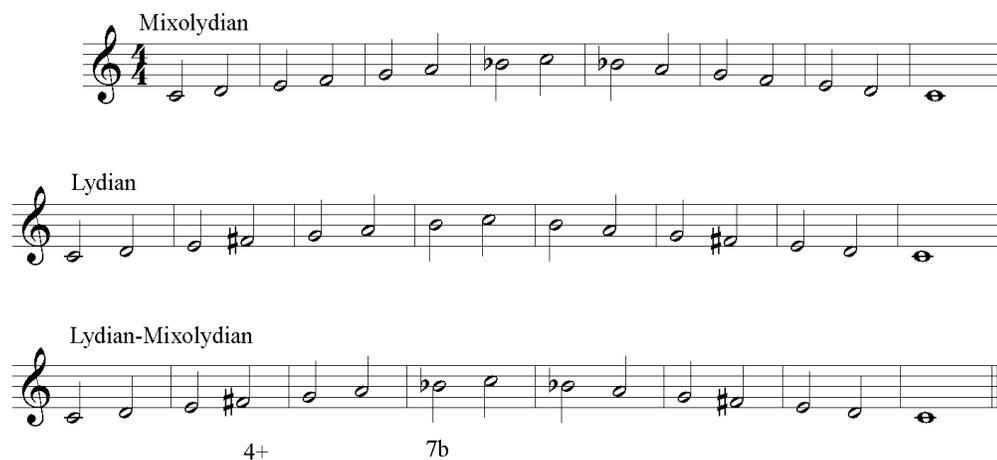


Figure 5: Most common modal scales in northeastern music

These modes are not explicitly present in *Alvorada na Serra*, but they are used in the following movements. Regardless, the avoidance of the leading tone and the use of the pedal in the dominant, by the beginning of the movement and again at the end, create a sense of tonal

⁸⁵ Ermelinda Azevedo Paz, *O Modalismo na Música Brasileira* (Brasília: Editora MUSIMED, 2002).

ambiguity, which is a staple of modalism in Brazil, particularly in the northeast, where Nepomuceno was born.

The second movement, *Intermédio*, derives from the *Intermezzo*, third movement of the String Quartet no. 3 in D minor, composed by Nepomuceno in 1891, and named *Brasileiro* (Brazilian) posthumously by his grandson and biographer, Sérgio Alvim Corrêa. The first theme, in A Major, is presented by the cellos, after two measures of rhythmic introduction in the strings, using a pattern that was common in the maxixe: an eight note and two sixteenth notes, followed by two eight notes in staccato—which emulates the character of the dance, comprised of short steps and a few short and low jumps and evolutions (Figure 6).

A *piu lento* section makes the transition to the second theme (Figures 7 and 8), presented by the oboe in F# minor (m. 47). The constant shift between E# and E natural in the melody gives an exotic feel to the melody (based on the harmonic minor scale, but with variations), while the accompaniment, played by the strings, presents the pattern of the habanera: dotted eight note and sixteenth note, followed by two eight notes. A development B section follows, in which the *habanera* theme is presented in several different keys. Transition back to the tonic starts on m. 139, and section A returns at the pickup to m. 161 (Tempo Primo). Themes 1 and 2 are presented again in A Major, and a Vivo section closes the recapitulation. A short coda (Tempo Primo, m. 259) uses fragments of the habanera pattern, and the piece closes with pizzicato strings, *diminuendo sempre*; a short fortissimo A Major chord on strings, winds, brass and timpani ends the movement.

II - Intermédio

Alberto Nepomuceno

Allegretto

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Contrabass

p

p

p

p

p

Detailed description: This musical score is for the first system of 'Intermédio' by Alberto Nepomuceno. It features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The Violin I, Violin II, and Viola parts play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Cello part has a more melodic line, also starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Contrabass part is mostly silent, indicated by a series of dashes.

6

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Ve.

Cb.

Detailed description: This musical score is for the second system of 'Intermédio' by Alberto Nepomuceno, starting at measure 6. It features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The Violin I, Violin II, and Viola parts continue with their rhythmic eighth-note patterns. The Cello part continues its melodic line. The Contrabass part remains silent, indicated by dashes.

Figure 6: Intermédio theme 1

The image displays two systems of a musical score for 'Intermédio theme 2'. The first system, starting at measure 45, features an Oboe part with a melodic line marked *p* and a string section (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass) playing a rhythmic accompaniment marked *ppp*. The second system, starting at measure 51, shows the Oboe with a more complex melodic line and the string section continuing their accompaniment, with some parts marked *ppp*. The score is written in treble clef for the Oboe and various clefs for the strings, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 2/4 time signature.

Figure 7: Intermédio theme 2

Figure 7 (continued): Intermédio theme 2

In the *Intermédio*, Nepomuceno cites popular genres (maxixe and habanera), as a way to convey *Brazilianness*. According to Luiz Heitor, “in the Intermezzo [*sic*], of a bubbly spirit, appears the stirring line of a certain maxixe, in fashion in Rio.”⁸⁶ In this sense, this movement is not exactly about musical traces that represent national spirit, but a portrayal of the time and place in which the composer lived. As seen in III, both dances, maxixe and habanera, were extremely popular in Rio de Janeiro by the time Nepomuceno arrived in that city. Mario de Andrade relates both dances: “It was from the fusion of the habanera, with its rhythmic, and the

⁸⁶ Luiz Heitor, *150 Anos de Música no Brasil*, 142. “No “Intermezzo”, de um espírito esfuziante, aparece a linha buliçosa de certo maxixe muito em voga, no Rio.” Luiz Heitor does not provide any further information about the maxixe that Nepomuceno supposedly used as a model for the second movement of the *Brazilian Series*.

polka, with its timing, with the adaptation of the Afro-Portuguese syncopation, which *Maxixe* originated.”⁸⁷

The inclusion of popular dances in a piece of concert music demonstrates that Nepomuceno was not only in synchrony with ideas of valorization of the folk element as a representational feature of national spirit. By writing a symphonic maxixe and habanera, Nepomuceno is acknowledging that *Brazilianness* is also present in everyday life, in the quotidian, and in the popular. On the other hand, by using sonata form in this movement (exposition with theme 1 in A Major, transition, theme 2 in F# minor, development, recapitulation and coda), the composer is aligning himself with European schools of composition, and with the Western art music canon. It is clear, by the end of the *Intermédio*, the willingness of Nepomuceno to make music that is at one time national, and universal.

The third movement, *Sesta na Rede* (Nap in the Hammock), is the shortest of the entire suite, and the one in which Nepomuceno used resources like imitation of non-musical sounds or musical painting to describe everyday life in the northeast of Brazil. The name of the movement recalls the habit of taking a nap in the hammock, usually after lunch when the day is too hot, especially in the northeast of Brazil which is closer to the Equator. Nepomuceno uses the pedal in the dominant G (in C Major) one more time, as in the first movement, to destabilize the notion of tonality. However, the modal idiom, only implicit in *Alvorada na Serra*, is clear in this movement in both the melody and the harmony: Nepomuceno uses the lowered seventh degree (Bb, in C Major), exposing the Mixolydian character of the piece. During the first section, the theme is presented by the flute and oboe (Figure 9), while violas and violins emulate the noises produced by the friction between the hammock moving and the peg that keeps it tied to the wall.

⁸⁷ Mário de Andrade, *Ensaio Sobre a Música Brasileira* (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Ed., 1962), 317.

III - Sesta na Rede

Alberto Nepomuceno

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Sesta na Rede" by Alberto Nepomuceno. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute, Harp, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The second system includes parts for Flute II (Fl.), Harp (Hp.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Vc.).

The music is in 4/4 time. The Flute part in the first system is mostly rests. The Harp part features a *pp* (pianissimo) accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. Violin I and Violin II parts are marked *pp* and feature a melodic line with triplets and alternating *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *arco* (arco) markings. The Viola part also features a melodic line with triplets and alternating *pizz.* and *arco* markings. The Cello part consists of a long, sustained note.

The second system begins with a *4 delicadamente* (delicately) marking. The Flute II part has a melodic line with triplets. The Harp part continues with its accompaniment. Violin I and Violin II parts continue with their melodic lines and *pizz.*/*arco* markings. The Viola part continues with its melodic line and *pizz.*/*arco* markings. The Cello part continues with its sustained note.

Figure 8: Sesta na Rede theme

The harmony remains static and unchanging, depicting the monotony of warm days and the movement of the hammock. A certain impressionist character is introduced on m. 13, with a fragment of the whole tone scale in the clarinet solo (Eb, F, G, A, m.16). The section ends with a cadenza *ad libitum* played by the flute, in which another fragment of the whole tone scale is presented (C, D, E F#, E, Figure 10). The first section is reintroduced on m. 52, remaining unchanged until a clarinet solo takes over on measure 61. The movement dissolves with pizzicati in the violins while the cello holds the dominant G, ending with a pianissimo chord in the strings.



Figure 9: Whole-tone scale flute solo

Sesta na Rede is the most pictorial movement of the *Series*. According to Luiz Heitor, it is also the most Brazilian one:

(...) it has the warm easiness of the hours of blazing sun, when, sleepy due to the smooth caress of the breeze, northeastern people seeks lazily for the hammock, and surrenders to its light and somnolent lull; there is a mix of sensuality and nostalgia in these pages (...) it is, in the *Brazilian Series*, the movement in which nationalism remains intangible, because it does not reside in the adaptation of musical formulae; it focuses, entirely, on the evocation of a picture that is typically Brazilian.⁸⁸

While Luiz Heitor finds sounds and images that are characteristic of Nepomuceno's environment when growing up in the northeast, it is a mistake to affirm that this movement

⁸⁸ Luiz Heitor, *150 Anos de Música no Brasil*, 142. "A "Sesta na Rede" tem a moleza cálida das horas de sol a pino, quando, adormentada pelo brando afago da brisa, a gente nordestina busca preguiçosamente a rede e se entrega ao seu leve e sonolento embalo; há um misto de sensualidade e nostalgia nessas páginas (...); é, na *Série Brasileira*, o número cujo nacionalismo se conserva impalpável, pois não reside na adaptação de fórmulas musicais; concentra-se, todo, na evocação do quadro tipicamente brasileiro."

conveys Brazilian spirit only due to its pictorial or descriptive aspects: the systematic use of the lowered seventh degree is a direct reference to modal music, not any modal music, but music composed in the Mixolydian mode, probably the most recurring mode in northeastern folk music. One more time in the suite, it seems that Nepomuceno is composing hybrid (or *mestiça*) music, using a modal ambiance combined with fragments of the whole tone scale, which he probably learned from impressionist composers like Debussy (whom he would meet in person three years later (1894) in Paris, after the premiere of *Prelude a l'après-midi d'un faune*).

The last movement of the *Brazilian Series*, *Batuque*, was the first one composed by Nepomuceno, in 1887 under the name *Dansa de Negros* (for piano solo). The *Dansa* was first performed in Fortaleza in 1888, in an event celebrating emancipation which happened that same year. By including it in the *Brazilian Series*, Nepomuceno was making not only a musical statement concerning Brazilian identity, but also a political one: the acknowledgement of the importance of African heritage in the formation of Brazilian culture and the Brazilian subject. *Batuque* is the only movement in the suite that uses percussion other than the timpani. Nepomuceno includes the reco-reco (scraper, instrument of African origin), the triangle (used in popular music of the northeast, especially in the *farró* and *xaxado*), bass drum and crash cymbals.⁸⁹ The use of the reco-reco in a symphonic setting caused scandal when the piece was premiered; however, this instrumentation choice was grounded on the composer's political and philosophical agency, and had the function of promoting *mestiçagem* within the orchestra: if the

⁸⁹ For *farró* see Andrew Kirkendall, "Farró—" *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture* (Detroit: Charles Schibner's Sons, 2008), 290. Xaxado is a dance originated in the interior of Pernambuco state, and practiced by outlaws known as *cangaceiros*. Some authors attribute the invention of *xaxado* to Virgulino Ferreira da Silva (1897-1938), leader of the most feared *cangaceiro* gang during the first decades of the twentieth century. Cangaceiros were nomadic outlaws that lived in northeastern hinterlands until the 1940s. See Edgard Rocca, *Ritmos Brasileiros e Seus Instrumentos de Percussão* (Recife: Editora da UFPE, 1986), 49.

Brazilian subject is a syncretic product of three races, so should be the Brazilian symphonic ensemble.

IV - Batuque

Alberto Nepomuceno

Moderato e muito ritmado

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Contrabass

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

ff

ff

ff

Figure 10: Batuque, first theme

Béhague characterizes *Batuque* as a piece in which rhythmic content is the one single feature to represent Afro-Brazilian spirit. Rhythm surely plays a major role in this movement, with the repetition of syncopated motives throughout; however, it is not the sole musical element used to convey *Brazilianness*. The first theme (Figure 11) is presented at the beginning in Lydian mode (major scale with a raised fourth, or F# in the key of C Major), and the modal ambiance remains throughout the piece, even after the modulation to F Major, in the Doppio Movimento section (double movement in 1, m. 77). Another Afro-Brazilian element present in *Batuque* is the texture of call-and-response starting on m. 18, when woodwinds play a syncopated theme, and strings and brass respond with three eighth notes in forte marcato (Figure 12).

According to Alvim Corrêa, in m. 77 (Doppio Movimento, Figure 13) the piece should have the marking “This movement which begins playfully (*en badinant*), becomes more and more savage towards the end.” The copy provided by the Brazilian Academy of Music (ABM) does not have such instructions, which were also not present in a manuscript I had access to in Rio, at the library of the Music School of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Nevertheless, Nepomuceno wanted the piece to start accelerating and increasing in dynamics to the end, emulating the kind of orgiastic trance he believed to be a staple of African dances, non-specified: *batuque* is a general term to designate Afro-Brazilian dances with a strong rhythmic content, such as the *samba* (in binary meter) or the *jongo* (in compound binary meter).⁹⁰

The accompaniment is *marcato* and accentuated in the Doppio Movimento (which can be characterized as a second section of *Batuque*, in F Major), emulating drums or other percussion instruments. There is an *ostinato* accompaniment in the lower strings (with two quarter notes in pizzicato), that changes to one single note per measure during the *accelerando* (m. 157). The

⁹⁰ Rocca, *Ritmos Brasileiros e Seus Instrumentos de Percussão*, 42-45.

reco-reco starts playing on that same measure, repeating the rhythm of the main melody. The Furioso (m. 252) displays the entire orchestra playing fortissimo, *stringendo* (accelerating) and *crescendo* until the end, in fortississimo. The wild ending of the piece may also be perceived, if we take Nepomuceno's philosophical and political background into account, as an affirmation of the success of the abolitionist campaign, resulting in emancipation.

18

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoon

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Contrabass

p

p

p

p

f

f

f

f

f

p

cresc.

p

cresc.

p

cresc.

Figure 11: Call-and-response texture

77 Doppio Movimento (em 1)

77 Doppio Movimento (em 1)

Bassoon *pp*

Timpani *pp*

Violin I *pizz.* *p* *arco* *pp*

Violin II *pizz.* *p* *arco* *pp*

Viola *f* *pp*

Cello *pizz.* *pp*

87

87

Bsn. *pp*

Timp. *pp*

Vln. I *f* *pp*

Vln. II *f* *pp*

Vla. *f* *pp*

Vc. *f* *pp*

Figure 12: Doppio Movimento (in 1)

VI. Coda

By analyzing the *Brazilian Series*, it is possible to perceive how philosophy, literature and political positioning played a role of great importance in the building of a nationalist voice in the instrumental music of Alberto Nepomuceno. The ideal of progress and civilization, combined with the notion of Brazilian difference professed by the School of Recife, is present in the character of the suite, which is profoundly hybrid and miscegenated: elements of European concert music, folk themes and compositional procedures from the northeastern region, plus popular music from Rio de Janeiro and African-derived components. One of the goals of the School of Recife, besides the creation of laws, was to understand the role of racial traces in the identity of the Brazilian subject, and particularly the northeastern subject. This investigation, however, generated a responsibility: literature, art, and music had to bring a “national differential,” in order to contribute to the formation of the Brazilian people and its national character (as Sílvia Romero pointed out). The pursuit of the ultimate positivist objectives, progress and civilization, would also align the country with model nations in Europe. This alignment seems to be one of the attributes of the *Brazilian Series*, especially when the composer cites European trends (like impressionism) or writes his maxixe in sonata form. The choice of a type of modalism that was widely used in northeastern folk music reveals a composer whose preoccupations were not only orientated to the creation of a national subject, but also to the (re)affirmation of his own origins and culture.

Modernist critique (Mario de Andrade (1893-1945) in particular) seems to place Nepomuceno in a position as precursor of nationalism, which would only be fully developed after musicological and ethnographic investigations conducted by Andrade himself and by Villa-

Lobos. Nevertheless, Nepomuceno had his own project of nationalism, based on knowledge he acquired unconsciously, by listening to the music of the streets, and consciously, through his studies of philosophy, race and social theory while in contact with members of the School of Recife, and seeking knowledge about Brazilian folk music (despite the fact he never did fieldwork). During an interview for the *Época Theatral* Magazine (Theatral Epoch, 1917), Nepomuceno explained his awareness regarding folk music and its compositional features and elements, as well as his interest in keeping on learning about it:

I have never dedicated myself to this study, but I have made, as an amateur, a collection of some eighty folk songs and dances, which I always try to increase. Almost all of these have been studied and classified. In this work I have verified a modality which is not regional, for it is found in songs collected in Pará, in Ceará, and in the interior of the state of Rio (...) This modality, of a melodic and harmonic nature, is produced by the lowering of the seventh degree (leading tone), when the treble tends toward the sixth (submediant), as a function of the second or the fourth degrees (...) Another characteristic modality confirmed in a great number of songs occurs when the final note is substituted by the third degree (mediant) and sometimes the fifth (dominant), or the second (subtonic) as a function of the fifth degree, in the harmonization of these songs, this gives rise to the use in the final cadences of the third and the seventh Gregorian (church) modes, respectively.⁹¹

When asked about the reasons why some of these procedures and elements did not appear systematically in his works, Nepomuceno argued that the refined musical education that he (and other contemporary composers) received would cause a detachment between art music and the spirit of the folk. He believed that, in the future, Brazilian composers would be able to create

⁹¹ *Época Theatral*, A. “A *Época Theatral* Entrevista o Maestro Alberto Nepomuceno,” December 27, 1917. “Nunca me dediquei a esses estudos, mas possuo, como dilettante, uma coleção de uns oitenta cantos populares e danças, e procuro sempre aumentá-la. Acham-se quase todos estudados e classificados, e, nesse trabalho, verifiquei uma modalidade que não é regional, pois que se encontra em cantos recolhidos no Pará, no Ceará e no interior do estado do Rio (...) Essa modalidade de ordem melódica e harmônica é produzida pelo abaixamento do sétimo grau sempre que o canto tenda para o sexto, como função do segundo ou do quarto grau (...) Outra modalidade característica verificada em grande número de cantos é a nota final ser o terceiro grau e, por vezes, o quinto ou o segundo como função do quinto o que dá lugar, na harmonização desses cantos, ao emprego das cadências finais do terceiro e sétimo modos gregorianos respectivamente.”

music that was totally disconnected from European models, and that *Brazilianness* would be fully realized in this utopian output:

These elements are still not incorporated to the artistic patrimony of our composers. Perhaps due to our refined European musical education, which inhibits the proximity of the artist—blossom of civilization—and the simple soul of the *sertanejos* (countrymen), that still today—blame it on criminal government action—are nothing but latecomers according to the just classification of Euclides da Cunha; or perhaps because a *sertanejo* musical genius has not appeared yet; one imbued of regionalist feelings, who, separating himself from all foreign influence, will be able to create Brazilian music par excellence, true, simple, mystical, violent, tenacious, and humanely sufferer, as are the soul and the people of the *sertão* (hinterland).⁹²

It seems that, as Romero, Nepomuceno believed that national identity was a project for the future, to be continued by subjects that would fit in a higher place than himself in a hypothetical evolutionary musical system. According to the composer, this future subject would be the *sertanejo mestiço*, composing music that was genuinely Brazilian. However, by composing hybrid music at the turn of the twentieth century, Nepomuceno was creating, in his own time and place, a new sense of Brazilian identity and culture, which acknowledged the contributions of the European, Indigenous and the Afro-Brazilian subjects, but that was at the same time different from these original sources. He created music that was, at once, looking out and absorbing external canonic influences, and looking in, depicting Brazilian sounds, ambiance and culture. According to Romero, all Brazilians are *mestiços*, at least in their ideas. So was Nepomuceno's symphonic music, simultaneously Brazilian and international.

⁹² Época Theatral, A. "A Época Theatral Entrevista o Maestro Alberto Nepomuceno," December 27, 1917. "Estes elementos ainda não estão incorporados ao patrimônio artístico dos nossos compositores. Será por culpa da nossa educação musical européia, refinada, que impede a aproximação do artista—flor de civilização—e da alma simples dos sertanejos que ainda hoje—por criminosa culpa dos governos—não passam de retardatários segundo a classificação justa de Euclides da Cunha; ou será por não ter aparecido ainda um gênio musical sertanejo, imbuído de sentimentos regionalistas, que, segregando-se de toda influência estrangeira, consiga criar uma música brasileira por excelência, sincera, simples, mística, violenta, tenaz e humanamente sofredora, como são a alma e o povo do sertão."

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