



Brief Overview of Brazilian Music After the Week of Modern Art in 1922

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It is necessary to outline a brief overview of the first aesthetic currents of Brazilian Music in the first half of the 20th century, from the Week of Modern Art to postmodernism, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In Western culture, the definition of the term research and the way its execution is conceived are linked to established traditions where factors such as historical, social, and ideological context are at stake (COESSENS, 2014).

The knowledge of avant-garde movements in the world at the beginning of the 20th century, and the desire to create modern Brazilian art, valuing the national and eliminating the models of established schools, made it possible to discuss ideas about the norms and concepts of what would be genuinely Brazilian among intellectuals and artists, initially in São Paulo, which would mark the beginning of the Modernist Movement in Brazil. According to Travassos, “the Week of Modern Art, held on February 13, 15, and 17, 1922, at the Municipal Theater of São Paulo, went down in the history of culture in Brazil as an event that symbolically inaugurates modernism” (TRAVASSOS, 2000, p. 17). One of its greatest representatives was Mário de Andrade, a figure who played a fundamental role in the pursuit of Brazilian nationalism. According to Neves, “the intellectual mentor of the Brazilian musical movement following the Week of Modern Art and the leading theorist of musical nationalism would be none other than the pope of the Modernist Movement, the poet Mário de Andrade” (NEVES, 2008, p. 59). The Movement, with the support of the writer Graça Aranha, who, despite being an accomplished writer, declared himself a supporter of modernism, gained a strong ally and became one of its leaders, alongside Mário de Andrade. The modernist group, which was born in São Paulo, had as its representative, Martins Fontes (1884-1937), Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954), Coelho Netto (1864-1934), Graça Aranha (1868-1931), Anita Malfatti (1889-1964), Lasar Segall (1891-1957), among others. With a concern regarding the national dissemination of ideas, the group saw a need to expand the

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movement and, still in 1921, organized a caravan to Rio de Janeiro in order to win over the intellectual youth of the country's capital. With the intention of organizing a Modern Art Week at the beginning of the following year, more specifically in February 1922, the group found new supporters for the movement, mainly connected to literature, both prose and poetry, such as Guilherme de Almeida (1890-1960), Manuel Bandeira (1886-1968), Sergio Buarque de Holanda (1902-1982), Ronald de Carvalho (1893-1935), and others. A representative in music was also necessary, and for the musical part of the Week, the invited guest was composer Heitor Villa-Lobos. Villa-Lobos' aesthetic independence in composing music placed him at a distinguished level compared to other composers of the time, such as Francisco Braga (1868-1945) and Henrique Oswald (1854-1931), who followed a post-Romantic aesthetic, which did not align with the musical modernist and nationalist aspirations sought by Mário de Andrade. This musical modernism was seen in Villa-Lobos' music. Villa-Lobos had already composed some of his most significant works, such as Amazonas, Uirapuru, and also some works from the Choros series, which "created during this period, exemplifies this type and attitude in which the composer, by bringing together elements from classical and popular music, maintained his commitment to a certain modernist ideal inclined towards simplicity" (NAVES, 2013, p. 103). The Modern Art Week, at least at that particular moment, had great impact. For "the ideas of the event's promoters came to constitute the artistic establishment in the country, especially since they themselves came to occupy prominent institutional positions and to fight – successfully – for the expansion of their aesthetic visions" (GUÉRIOS, 2003, p. 123). Villa-Lobos also benefited from the Week, gaining national exposure. It was the first time he presented his works outside of Rio de Janeiro. Although he was not this symbol, his importance as a recognized musician opened doors for a generation of composers seeking a new path for Nationalism. According to Wisnik, Villa-Lobos's music would then be in an “area that touches the limits of the extremely primitive and the extremely refined, where, paradoxically, the radicalization of a cultural trend momentarily leads to the re-presentation of sound in its natural state” (WISNIK, 1983, p. 166). Despite having

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compositions with nationalist themes, mentioned above, Villa-Lobos simultaneously composed works of an impressionist nature. The first nationalist generation, still according to Neves (2008), would come with the composers Luciano Gallet (1893-1931), Lorenzo Fernandez (1897-1948), Francisco Mignone (1897-1986) and Camargo Guarnieri (1907-1993), direct disciples of Mário de Andrade. Composers who created many works under the guidance and themes provided by Mário de Andrade. Being entirely focused on folkloric studies in the early 1920s, the first steps of the nationalist musical movement came through Luciano Gallet. An admirer of the work of Glauco Velásquez (1884-1914) and one of his greatest interpreters on the piano, Gallet's work shows the influence of the musician, who died prematurely. But it was the meeting and friendship with the composer Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), starting in 1918, that made him take an interest in Brazilian folklore. Milhaud was also Gallet's composition teacher during the period he was in Rio de Janeiro. In 1926, Gallet made contact with Mário de Andrade, with whom he became a great friend. Mário was a great encourager, advising him and suggesting new musical paths in terms of composition. At this time, Gallet composed the suite *Turuna*, composed of three parts: *Seresteiro*, *Saudoso*, and *Mandinga*. He also composed the first series of *Brazilian Songs* in two notebooks, which include songs such as *Ai que coração*, *Morena*, *Morena*, *A Perdiz Piou no Campo*, *Iaiá*, *Você quer morrer*, *Suspira*, *Coração triste*, and *Fotorotó*. Mário de Andrade's friendship with other composers of the post-Week of Modern Art era of 1922, such as Lorenzo Fernandez (1897-1948), Francisco Mignone (1897-1986), and Mozart Camargo Guarnieri (1907-1993), drove Brazilian nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s. Works such as *Maracatu do Chico Rei*, *Batucajé*, and *Babaloxá* by Mignone show the composer's preference (phase) for folklore, especially with themes from Black culture. From Lorenzo Fernandez, we can mention works such as the *Three Studies in the Form of a Sonatina*, *Valsa Suburbana Opus 70*, *Noite de Junho*, and *Brazilian Suites*, in which each movement explores *Modinha*, *Seresta*, *Acalanto*, *Toada*, *Jongo*, *Ponteio*, and *Cateretê*. Among all the composers of this phase, Camargo Guarnieri was the one who suffered the most influence from Mário de Andrade. The almost daily interaction with the writer and poet made the composer absorb a modernist cultural and aesthetic foundation. Camargo Guarnieri wrote in an article honoring his mentor: I began to frequent his home regularly. I had dinner at his house every Wednesday. This interaction gave me the opportunity to learn many things. The little house on Lopes Chaves Street buzzed like a beehive. Literature, sociology, philosophy, art, and everything else were discussed! "For me, it was like attending classes at a university." (GUARNIERI, 1943, p. 15 apud NEVES, 2008, p. 101) During the time when Camargo Guarnieri frequently had lessons with Mário, he composed important works for voice and piano such as *As Flores Amarelas dos Ipês*, *Trovas de Amor*, and *Lembranças do*

Losango Cáqui, based on poems by Mário de Andrade himself. According to Neves, the fundamental work of this period is the *Piano Sonatina* "in which one can see the Guarnieri was the one most influenced by Mário de Andrade. The almost daily interaction with the writer and poet made the composer assimilate a modernist cultural and aesthetic foundation. Camargo Guarnieri's solid technique as a composer, his way of creating a Brazilian atmosphere without needing folkloric citations, and his view on the use of classical forms" (NEVES, 2008, p. 102). Guarnieri received a scholarship to study in France in 1938. Despite his brief stay in that country (he had to return in 1940 due to the outbreak of the War), he came back more steadfast in his national and neoclassical aesthetic stance. With purer nationalism and a stricter musical structuring, Camargo Guarnieri would become the fiercest fighter of the new Nationalism, composing various *Toadas* and numerous *Variations* based on folk themes. All of this marked a return to Nationalism, in an attempt to counter the arrival of Twelve-Tone music in Brazil in the late 1930s. During this period, Brazil was experiencing The Vargas era, which "creates a series of institutions" aimed "precisely at cultural integration in the mold of a mass society" (ORTIZ, 2006, p. 117). In the post-war world, there was "a true cooling of nationalist ideology formed as the basis of state action in totalitarian regimes, as in the case of Stalin's Soviet Union" (SILVA, 2011, p. 118). The then Secretary of Education, Gustavo Capanema, invited Heitor Villa-Lobos to take on the role of music educator in the federal capital. The composer, already nationally and internationally recognized, besides being the greatest representative of Brazilian nationalist music, would serve the government's purpose well in shaping the mass education project. Villa-Lobos implemented in schools a project he had already envisioned since the early 1930s: the *Orfeonic Singing*, which aligned with the political aspirations of the *Estado Novo*. Many of Villa-Lobos' nationalist works originate from this period. The composer He was not interested in keeping up with the new musical currents of the early century, which were happening in Europe, such as twelve-tone and concrete music, and he says: "there was a lot of artifice and much frustrated experimentation in the creation of recent times, as if the paths opened by Schoenberg and the concretes, who make laboratory music, pleasing only a very small minority, had come to an end" (VILLA-LOBOS MUSEUM, 1960, p. 50 apud NEVES, 2008, p. 181). The classical music being made in Brazil, not completely, but for the most part at that time, was oriented toward Brazilian nationalism and folklore, whose themes were explored in the works of Villa-Lobos and the main representatives of nationalism at the time, such as Lorenzo Fernandez, Francisco Mignone, and Camargo Guarnieri, direct disciples of Mário de Andrade, as well as lesser-known composers like Brasília Itiberê (1896-1967), Jayme Ovale (1894-1955), and Hekel Tavares (1896-1969). Like other European artists who came to Brazil because of Nazism. In 1937, the young man Joachim Koellreutter (1915-

2005), coming from Germany, arrived in the country. Despite being young, Koellreutter already had a solid musical background and began teaching at the Brazilian Conservatory of Music in Rio de Janeiro. In 1939, he founded the group *Música Viva*. This impasse between Brazilian nationalism, which advocated functional music with a civic character, led by Villa-Lobos, versus the aesthetic independence defended by Koellreutter, resulted in the weakening of the *Música Viva* group starting in 1947. Some political events that occurred in the world at that time influenced the return to musical nationalism, promoted by Guarnieri. In May 1948, the II International Congress of Composers and Musical Critics was held in Prague. From this meeting came the recommendations that should spread the basic principles of socialist realism worldwide. These recommendations reached Brazil through from the *Música Viva* Magazine. The different political positions on this subject caused the weakening of the group and the departure of its main composers, such as Guerra-Peixe (1914-1993), Claudio Santoro (1919-1989), and Eunice Katunda (1915-1985). Santoro engaged in the communist movement and the French Communist Party, joining French writer Louis Aragon (1897-1982) and other South American artists and writers, such as Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) and Jorge Amado (1912-2001). According to Vieira, “the relationship with this circle of artists also indicates that the aesthetic transformations in his work during this period were related to the ideological debates of this artistic milieu [...]”, and he continues his thought by stating that “from these contacts, the composer began to advocate for the approximation of the concepts of art and reality, which allows us to relate his positions to the ideology of socialist realism” (VIEIRA, 2013, p. 58-59). “Thus, in the 1950s, there emerges the configuration of two types of nationalism: one of an aesthetic nature, led by Guarnieri; the other political, led by Santoro” (SALLES, 2005, p. 149). This detachment of the main members of *Música Viva* – Guerra-Peixe and Santoro – would strengthen Camargo Guarnieri's desire to vehemently oppose Dodecaphonism, perhaps even due to concern about the influence the movement led by Koellreutter had gained, and Guarnieri wrote the famous Open Letter of November 7, 1950, to some composers, critics, and performers from various cities in the country. The content of the letter shows us the repudiation Camargo Guarnieri felt towards Dodecaphonism, bordering on a certain hatred, and that, directly, his words were aimed at the person who had brought this movement to Brazil. It is worth mentioning that Camargo Guarnieri had experimented with dodecaphonic techniques in the early 1940s. Upon reading the letter, Koellreutter invited Guarnieri to a public debate on the subject, an invitation that was not accepted. On December 28, 1950, Koellreutter wrote his letter in response to Guarnieri's letter, which was published on January 13, 1951, in the newspaper *Folha da Tarde*. This was one of the greatest historical clashes in Brazilian classical music in the 20th century. Two important figures, each defending their own aesthetic current.

Koellreutter's Atonalism, which "was associated with the dying branch of the capitalist bourgeoisie," and Guarnieri's nationalism, linked to "the new illustrative forces of the fundamental orientations of the then political and aesthetic progressivism" (KATER, 2001, p. 131). This caused a split in the musical environment, which led to "intense realignments, favoring the massive engagement of musicians in the nationalist current, which prevailed until the end of the decade" (KATER, 2001, p. 131). On the other hand, the seed of the musical ideas introduced by Koellreutter in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo spread in the following decades to several states in the country, such as Bahia, Pernambuco, and Rio Grande do Sul, bringing about a generation of composers who sought new sound textures in their works. Such as atonality, serialism, aleatory music, and electroacoustic music. This trend became known as avant-garde music in the 1970s and it opened a new horizons for the Brazilian music on the next century.

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