



SERENATA

Brazilian Music for Chamber Orchestra

GOMES • NEPOMUCENO • BRAGA • MIGUÉZ



English Chamber Orchestra

Neil Thomson

About This Series

The series The Music of Brazil is part of the project *Brasil em Concerto*, developed by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to promote music by Brazilian composers dating back to the 18th century. Around 100 orchestral works from the 19th and 20th centuries will be recorded by the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra, the Goiás Philharmonic Orchestra and the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra. Further recordings of chamber and vocal music will gradually be added to this collection.

The works were selected according to their historical importance for Brazilian music and the existence of recordings. Most of the works recorded for the series have never had recordings available outside Brazil; many others will have their world premiere recordings. An important part of the project is the preparation of new or even first editions of the works to be recorded, many of which, despite their relevance, have only been available in the composer's manuscript. This work will be carried out by the Brazilian Academy of Music and by musicologists working together with the orchestras.



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About The Scores

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Serenata

Throughout the course of the 19th century, various organisations were created in Brazil which enabled the development of musical activities to meet the entertainment needs of the country's urban bourgeoisie. The Imperial Conservatory, for example, was founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1848, while the Academy of National Music and Opera was established in 1857, and musical societies that organised regular concert seasons also began to emerge. One means of encouraging composers and musicians to continue their training was the granting of state scholarships allowing them to study in Europe. Born in Campinas, Antônio Carlos Gomes (1836–1896) travelled to Rio to take up a place at the Conservatory, where he was taught by the Italian Gioacchino Giannini. He then worked as a répétiteur at the Academy and took part in various operatic productions. Two of his own operas were staged in Rio, earning him a scholarship to study with Lauro Rossi in Milan. Gomes' biggest artistic success was *Il Guarany* (1870), which was premiered at La Scala and opened up to him the other great opera houses of Europe.

Other Brazilian composers too consolidated their musical education overseas, writing works that were clearly in tune with the aesthetic trends then fashionable in Europe. Leopoldo Miguéz (1850–1902) was born in Niterói but his family moved to Spain when he was just two. They lived in Vigo until 1857, after which they settled in the Portuguese city of Porto. Miguéz studied violin with Nicolau Medina Ribas and harmony and composition with Giovanni Franchini. In 1870, the family returned to Brazil. Twelve years later, in France and armed with a letter of introduction from Emperor Pedro II, Miguéz met leading composers such as Ambroise Thomas, director of the Paris Conservatoire, Vincent d'Indy and César Franck. It was also at this time that he came into contact with the music of Wagner. In 1890, soon after Brazil had become a republic, the Conservatory was transformed into the National Institute of Music and Miguéz was appointed its first director.

Alberto Nepomuceno (1864–1920) was born in Fortaleza, capital of the northeastern state of Ceará. After initially studying composition with Euclides Fonseca in Recife and Miguel Cardoso in Rio de Janeiro, he left for Europe in 1888, enrolling at the Liceo Musicale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, where he studied with Eugenio Terziani, Cesare De Sanctis and Giovanni Sgambati. Nepomuceno then went to Germany where he studied at the Akademische Meisterschule and the Stern Conservatory in Berlin, with Heinrich von Herzogenberg and Max Bruch. Through Norwegian pianist Walborg Bang, a fellow student and his future wife, he met Edvard Grieg. After further studies with Alexandre Guilmant at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, he returned to Brazil in 1895 and, after the death of Miguéz, became director of the National Institute of Music.

Antônio Francisco Braga (1868–1945) was born in Rio de Janeiro, and his musical training began in 1876 at the city's Home for Destitute Children, where he lived after the death of his father. Following studies at the Imperial Conservatory he was awarded a state scholarship enabling him to study composition with Massenet at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1894 he began travelling within Europe, visiting various cities in Switzerland, Italy and Germany, before returning to Rio in 1900 and establishing his career as a conductor. Two years later, he was appointed professor of composition at the National Institute of Music.

Primarily active in Italy, Carlos Gomes was one of the composers who made the transition from Verdi's generation to that of Mascagni and Puccini, by moving towards *verismo*. Miguéz is recognised as the great Brazilian exponent of the progressive philosophies of the New German School, especially in his symphonic poems and stage works. Some of Nepomuceno's output can be classified within the Germanic current of so-called pure or absolute music, part of a tradition we can trace back to Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms. Braga, by contrast, is one of the representatives of the French-influenced trend in Brazilian music. Taking a broader view of the orchestral music of Brazilian Romanticism, however, may reveal composers whose work is more eclectic than these neat aesthetic categories might suggest.

The *Sonata for Strings* is the finest example in Gomes' catalogue of an instrumental work unconnected to one of his operas. Composed in Milan in 1894, it was dedicated to the Campinas music association run by his oldest brother, José Pedro de Sant'Anna Gomes. Its four movements demonstrate the composer's sure command of the non-operatic instrumental idiom. The first is in sonata form, while the middle two appear in reverse order as far as the conventional pattern is concerned, with the *Allegro scherzoso* coming before the slow movement. The finale is subtitled 'O burrico de pau' ('The Wooden Donkey'), and here Gomes expresses extra-musical ideas, using techniques such as pizzicato and *col legno*, as well as rhythmic ostinatos to portray galloping.

Free forms, lyrical in nature – very much to the Romantic taste – were also used by a wide range of Brazilian composers. Nepomuceno's *Serenata* is one such work. Written in 1902 in Petrópolis, it is cast in a single movement. In the first part the violins set out a light, graceful melody above a pizzicato accompaniment. Contrast is created in the dramatic second part and, after a brief transition, the work ends with the return of the opening material.

In the late 1800s, there was a widespread European trend for writing suites based on the dances of earlier centuries, and a number of Brazilian composers drew inspiration from the same source. Nepomuceno's friendship with Grieg influenced the composition of his *Suite Antiga, Op. 11* for piano. The work was written in Bergen in 1893 and premiered there during a soirée at Grieg's home. The following year, Nepomuceno transcribed three of the four movements for strings and the resulting work was first performed by the Berlin Philharmonic. He treats the typical dances of the Baroque period in Romantic style, although the *Minuet* also has echoes of its Classical counterpart. In the *Aria*, the model is Bach, especially those movements in which the latter emphasises accompanied melody, such as the *Adagio* from *Brandenburg Concerto No. 1*, the *Arioso* from the *Cantata, BWV 156* or even the *Air* from *Orchestral Suite No. 3*. The work concludes with a *Rigaudon*, in which Nepomuceno contrasts a faster-paced first section full of incisive, accented articulations with a more lyrical central section.

Another work reflecting Brazilian composers' dialogue with reinterpreted ancient forms is Braga's *Madrigal-Pavana* of 1901. His chosen title links the lyricism of the vocal genre of the madrigal with the pavane, a sedate Spanish dance featuring hesitation steps. The *Madrigal-Pavana* calls to mind the ballroom dances that were so popular in belle époque Rio de Janeiro.

Miguéz's *Suite à Antiga, Op. 25*, composed in 1893, is very different from his intensely dramatic programme music, despite calling for pairs of winds, horns and trumpets, four trombones and timpani, as well as strings. In the *Prelúdio* the emphasis is on polyphonic textures, with a predominant use of imitation. The *Sarabanda* is written for strings alone and Miguéz here explores tessituras that give the movement an austere atmosphere. Wind, brass and timpani return in the *Gavota*, whose faster pace and short articulations create the necessary contrast both with the two preceding movements and with the *Ária*, notable for its melancholy oboe solo, whose melody is later repeated by the strings and by the orchestral *tutti*. There is another prominent, and livelier, solo in the *Double*, a varied version of the *Air*, this time for flute. The work concludes with a *Giga*, whose theme is treated in fugato, as we can hear from the characteristic repeats and binary design.

André Cardoso

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English translation: Susannah Howe

GOMES • NEPOMUCENO • BRAGA • MIGUÉZ

Serenata

A criação das estruturas para o desenvolvimento de atividades musicais para atender as necessidades de entretenimento de uma burguesia urbana, no Brasil, foi um processo gradativo ao longo do século XIX. É o caso, por exemplo, da fundação, no Rio de Janeiro, do Conservatório de Música, em 1848, da Academia de Música e Ópera Nacional, em 1857, e de diversas sociedades musicais que mantiveram temporadas regulares de concertos. A concessão de bolsas de estudos para países da Europa foi um dos expedientes utilizados para promover o aperfeiçoamento de compositores e instrumentistas. Foi tal contexto que permitiu a Antônio Carlos Gomes (1836-1896) deixar Campinas e mudar para o Rio de Janeiro, onde se tornou aluno do italiano Gioacchino Giannini, no Conservatório de Música. Na Academia de Ópera, foi um dos regentes ensaiadores e participou de várias produções, estreando suas duas primeiras óperas, que lhe valeram uma bolsa para estudar com Lauro Rossi, em Milão. No emblemático Teatro La Scala estreou *Il Guarany* (1870), seu maior triunfo artístico, que lhe abriu as portas dos grandes teatros por toda Europa.

Assim como Carlos Gomes outros compositores brasileiros também consolidaram sua formação musical no exterior, vinculando sua produção às correntes estéticas em voga na Europa. Leopoldo Miguéz (1850-1902) nasceu em Niterói. Aos 2 anos sua família se mudou para Vigo, na Espanha, onde viveu até 1857, se estabelecendo em seguida no Porto, em Portugal. Miguéz estudou violino com Nicolau Medina Ribas e harmonia e composição com Giovanni Franchini. Em 1870, a família retornou ao Brasil. Na França, em 1882, com carta de apresentação do imperador D. Pedro II, Miguéz se relacionou com importantes compositores, como Ambroise Thomas, diretor do Conservatório de Paris, Vincent D'Indy e César Franck. Foi o momento no qual se aproximou da música de Wagner. Em 1890, após a Proclamação da República, o Conservatório de Música foi transformado no Instituto Nacional de Música e Miguéz foi nomeado seu primeiro diretor.

Alberto Nepomuceno (1864-1920) nasceu em Fortaleza, Ceará, após estudos iniciais de composição com Euclides Fonseca, em Recife, e com Miguel Cardoso, no Rio de Janeiro, partiu para a Europa em 1888, matriculando-se no Liceo Musicale Santa Cecilia de Roma, onde foi aluno de Eugenio Terziani, Cesare De Sanctis e Giovanni Sgambatti. Em seguida rumou para a Alemanha, onde estudou na academia Meister Schulle e no conservatório Stern de Berlim, com Heinrich von Herzogenberg e Max Bruch. Através de Walborg Bang, pianista norueguesa, sua colega de conservatório e futura esposa, conheceu Edvard Grieg. Após estudos complementares com Alexandre Guilmant, na Schola Cantorum de Paris, retornou ao Brasil em 1895, onde assumiria a direção do Instituto Nacional de Música após a morte de Miguéz.

Antônio Francisco Braga (1868-1945) nasceu no Rio de Janeiro, e sua formação musical foi realizada, a partir de 1876, no Asilo dos Meninos Desvalidos, instituição que o abrigou após a morte prematura do pai. Posteriormente, ingressou no Conservatório de Música. Com bolsa de estudos, ingressou na classe de composição de Jules Massenet no Conservatório de Paris. A partir de 1894, viajou por diversas cidades da Suíça, Itália e Alemanha. Em 1900, retornou ao Rio de Janeiro. Em 1902, assumiu a cadeira de composição do Instituto Nacional de Música e iniciou uma ativa carreira como regente.

Carlos Gomes é reconhecido como um dos compositores que, na Itália, fizeram a transição da geração de Verdi para a de Mascagni e Puccini, ou seja, aquela que caminhou em direção ao Verismo. Já Miguéz é consagrado pela historiografia musical como o grande expoente brasileiro da corrente germânica progressista, em especial por sua produção orquestral, centrada no poema sinfônico e no drama musical. Parte da produção de Nepomuceno pode ser enquadrada na corrente germânica da chamada música pura ou absoluta, numa linha de tradição que remete a Mendelssohn, Schumann e Brahms. Braga, por sua vez, é um dos representantes da vertente francesa na música brasileira. Um olhar mais abrangente sobre a produção orquestral do romantismo brasileiro, todavia, pode nos revelar compositores bem mais ecléticos que os enquadramentos estéticos nos proporcionam.

A *Sonata para cordas* é o melhor exemplo, na produção de Carlos Gomes, de obra orquestral não vinculada a uma de suas óperas. Composta em Milão em 1894, foi dedicada ao Clube Musical dirigido em Campinas por José Pedro de Sant'anna Gomes, seu irmão mais velho. Em seus quatro movimentos, Carlos Gomes demonstra um domínio seguro da linguagem instrumental fora do gênero dramático. O primeiro movimento é em forma sonata, seguido de movimentos centrais que, na ordem tradicional, aparecem invertidos, com o Allegro scherzoso antecedendo o movimento lento. O último movimento tem como subtítulo "O burrico de pau", brinquedo no qual as crianças se divertem simulando a montaria. Nele Carlos Gomes expressa ideias extramusicais, como o galope através dos *ostinatos* rítmicos e a utilização de recursos como o *pizzicato* e o *col legno*.

As formas livres, de caráter lírico, bem ao gosto do espírito romântico, também foram abordadas pelos compositores brasileiros de diferentes tendências. É o caso da *Serenata* de Alberto Nepomuceno. Composta em 1902 em Petrópolis, é uma obra em movimento único, no qual a primeira parte expõe uma melodia leve e graciosa a cargo dos violinos sobre um acompanhamento em *pizzicati*. O contraste é criado na segunda parte, com um conteúdo dramático, finalizando a obra, após uma breve transição, com o retorno do conteúdo inicial.

A composição de suítes baseadas em danças antigas foi uma tendência disseminada na música europeia, no final do século XIX, seguida por diversos compositores brasileiros. A amizade de Nepomuceno com Grieg não deixa de permear a composição da *Suíte Antiga* op.11, uma obra original para piano, escrita em 1893, na cidade de Bergen, cuja estreia ocorreu em sarau na residência do compositor norueguês. No ano seguinte, Nepomuceno realizaria a transcrição para cordas de três dos quatro movimentos, promovendo a estreia com a Filarmônica de Berlim. Nepomuceno aborda as danças típicas do período barroco estilizadas em linguagem romântica, embora o primeiro possa nos remeter também ao minueto clássico. Na Ária, o modelo é Bach, em especial os movimentos nos quais o compositor alemão destaca a melodia acompanhada, como o Adágio do Concerto de Brandemburgo nº 1, o Arioso da Cantata BWV 156 ou mesmo a Ária da Suíte orquestral nº 3. A obra concluiu com um *Rigaudon*, no qual Nepomuceno contrasta uma primeira parte em andamento fluente e articulações incisivas e acentuadas com a parte central de expressão lírica.

Ainda no campo do diálogo dos compositores brasileiros com as formas antigas reinterpretadas está o Madrigal-Pavana de Francisco Braga, de 1901. Ao caracterizar assim sua composição, Braga promove a junção do lirismo do Madrigal, uma forma de origem vocal, com a Pavana, uma dança espanhola de andamento moderado e passos pausados. A obra nos remete ao ambiente das danças de salão tão em voga no Rio de Janeiro da *belle époque*.

A *Suíte à Antiga* op.22, composta em 1893, revela um Leopoldo Miguéz muito distante da retórica exacerbada da música programática, mesmo utilizando uma orquestra com madeiras, trompas e trompetes aos pares, quatro trombones e tímpanos, além das cordas. No Prelúdio, Miguéz valoriza as texturas polifônicas, com predominância do trabalho imitativo. Na Sarabanda o compositor reduz a orquestra aos naipes das cordas, explorando tessituras que imprimem ao movimento uma ambientação austera. Os sopros e tímpanos retornam na Gavota, cujo andamento fluente e articulações curtas criam o necessário contraste com os movimentos que a antecedem, mas também com a Ária, onde se destaca um melancólico solo de oboé, cuja melodia é posteriormente repetida pelas cordas e pelo *tutti* orquestral. Outro solo se destaca no Double, uma versão variada da Ária, a cargo da flauta em andamento mais fluente. A obra concluiu com a Giga, na qual percebemos, no recorte binário característico, com as devidas repetições, o tratamento em *fugato* do tema.

André Cardoso

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Presidente da Academia Brasileira de Música

Neil Thomson

Photo: Rafaella Pessoa



Neil Thomson was born in 1966 and studied conducting at the Royal College of Music with Norman Del Mar and at Tanglewood Summer School with Leonard Bernstein. He has been principal conductor and artistic director of the Goiás Philharmonic Orchestra since 2014, leading the orchestra to national prominence with its championing of Brazilian and contemporary repertoire. He also enjoys a busy international career working with all the major UK orchestras and with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra, WDR Rundfunkorchester, Israel Symphony Orchestra, Lahti Symphony Orchestra, and the Romanian National Orchestra. He has performed with many distinguished soloists including Dame Felicity Lott, Sir Thomas Allen, Sir James Galway, Nelson Freire, Jean Louis Steurman and Antonio Meneses. From 1992 to 2006 he was Professor of Conducting at the Royal College of Music, London, the youngest person ever to hold this position. He was made an Honorary Member of the RCM in recognition of his services to the institution.

www.neilwthomson.com

English Chamber Orchestra (Leader: John Mills)



Photo: Chris Christodoulou

The English Chamber Orchestra (ECO) has been performing across the UK and globally for over 60 years and is the most recorded chamber orchestra in the world. From its beginning, the ECO has worked consistently with the most significant musical figures in classical music starting in 1960 with its first patron Benjamin Britten. The ECO celebrates and builds upon its tradition of maintaining the highest international musical standards, nurturing new talent and focusing on the 'best of British' music and musicianship. HRH The Prince of Wales has been the Patron of the ECO since 1977 and the orchestra has performed at royal weddings, birthday celebrations and other events including the first concert ever to be broadcast from Buckingham Palace. The orchestra has toured the UK and abroad with artists such as Benjamin Britten, Daniel Barenboim, Dame Janet Baker, Sir Colin Davis, Plácido Domingo, Jacqueline du Pré, Kiri Te Kanawa, Yehudi Menuhin, Luciano Pavarotti, Murray Perahia, Itzhak Perlman, André Previn, Karl Richter, Mstislav Rostropovich, Sir Georg Solti, Mitsuko Uchida, Maxim Vengerov and Pinchas Zukerman.

Brazilian composers in the 19th century often sought state scholarships to enable them to study in Europe where they were to become influenced by the German, Italian and French compositional schools. They also became involved in the vogue for writing suites based on ancient dances, such as Nepomuceno's delightful *Ancient Suite*, premiered at Grieg's home, or Braga's *Madrigal-Pavana* which evokes the belle époque ballrooms of Rio de Janeiro. Miguéz's *Suite in the Old Style* is polyphonic and lively, while Gomes' *Sonata for Strings* is his finest non-operatic work.



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Carlos GOMES (1836–1896): Sonata for Strings (1894)	21:56	9 NEPOMUCENO: Serenata (1902)	4:30
1 I. Allegro animato	5:42	Leopoldo MIGUEZ (1850–1902): Suíte à Antiga, Op. 25 (1893)	24:16
2 II. Allegro scherzoso	4:20	10 I. Prelúdio. Moderato	3:55
3 III. Largo	8:08	11 II. Sarabanda. Andante	5:03
4 IV. Vivace 'O Burrico de Pau' (‘The Wooden Donkey’)	3:39	12 III. Gavota. Allegro moderato	1:48
5 Francisco BRAGA (1868–1945): Madrigal-Pavana (1901)	4:36	13 IV. Ária e Double. Andantino	8:59
Alberto NEPOMUCENO (1864–1920): Suíte Antiga (Suite antique), Op. 11 (version for string orchestra) (1893)	12:40	14 V. Giga. Allegro vivace	4:21
6 I. Minuet – Trio	3:32		
7 II. Aria	4:18		
8 III. Rigaudon	4:46		

English Chamber Orchestra • Neil Thomson

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