

***Canções e modinhas:***  
***A lecture recital of Brazilian art song repertoire***

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As the wealth of possibilities continues to expand for students to study the vocal music and cultures of other countries, it has become increasingly important for voice teachers and coaches to augment their knowledge of repertoire from these various other non-traditional classical music cultures. I first became interested in Brazilian art song repertoire while pursuing my doctorate at the University of Michigan. One of my degree recitals included Ernani Braga's *Cinco canções nordestinas do folclore brasileiro* (*Five songs of northeastern Brazilian folklore*), a group of songs based on Afro-Brazilian folk melodies and themes. Since 2002, I have been studying and researching classical Brazilian song literature and have programmed the music of Brazilian composers on nearly every recital since my days at the University of Michigan; several recitals have been entirely of Brazilian music. My love for the music and culture resulted in my first trip to Brazil in 2003. I have traveled there since then, most recently as a Fulbright Scholar and Visiting Professor at the Universidade de São Paulo.

There is an abundance of Brazilian art song repertoire generally unknown in the United States. The music reflects the influence of several cultures, among them African, European, and Amerindian. A recorded history of Brazil's rich music tradition can be traced back to the sixteenth-century colonial period. However, prior to colonization, the Amerindians who populated Brazil had their own tradition, which included music used in rituals and in other aspects of life. For various reasons – the systematic process of *deculturação*, or cultural re-orientation imposed upon the Amerindians by Jesuit missionaries who settled in Brazil, the influx of Europeans who forced their customs on the Amerindian population, and the introduction of diseases that were foreign to the Amerindians, which killed thousands and almost completely obliterated their culture – few examples of their music have survived.

The first Africans arrived in Brazil, via the slave trade, in the mid-1530s. The trade of African slaves to Portugal had begun years before and was a continuation of the exploitation of slave labor by the Spanish and the Moors. Brazil, however, was one of the primary importers of African peoples during the slave trade, taking in more than 40 percent of those sold in the Western Hemisphere. Because of the sheer number of people transported during the slave trade, which did not end in Brazil until 1888, the African influence in Brazilian culture was evident and remains so even today. Africans provided a source of labor, yes. However, they also introduced many of their customs, languages, and musical styles and characteristics to the new colony. These included the use of complex rhythmic structures, drums, and percussive speech patterns. Some slaves, those who demonstrated musical ability or musical inclination, were taught to play Western instruments so that they could provide entertainment. Unlike in the United States where slaves were forced to abandon their traditions, in some regions of Brazil slaves were allowed to maintain many of their own customs, including musical traditions and practices. As a result, the newly trained musicians began to infuse their own rhythms into the Western music that they were being taught.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the musical language of Brazil continued to be an amalgamation of many styles and influences. Brazil's post-colonial classical music tradition reflected the changing musical aesthetics of the various nations that occupied the country from the seventeenth century until the late eighteenth century when the Portuguese returned bringing with them European instruments and skilled musicians. Despite the secular influences, much of Brazil's musical style during this period was shaped by the church, namely

by the *mestre de capela*, who was responsible for many of the daily musical activities in the church, hired musicians, taught music lessons, and prepared music for all of the major feast days and other holy days.

By the early nineteenth century Brazilian vocal literature had become heavily influenced by Italian opera and Italian *bel canto* style. However, by the mid to late 1800s there was a shift toward nationalism, which was fueled by Brazil gaining its independence from Portugal in 1822. This early trend toward nationalism was unified primarily through the use of texts written in Brazilian Portuguese, and through the implementation of subjects and themes that were relevant to the culture, for example the continued struggle for independence, slavery, and folk music that preserved the traditions and history of Brazil. Beginning with the works of Alberto Nepomuceno (1864-1920), in addition to the previously mentioned characteristics, the drive toward nationalism also emphasized several other important features: songs that used modes and minor tonalities, the incorporation of popular dance rhythms, and the prevalence of syncopation and complex rhythms. All of these elements led to the creation of a sound that has become uniquely Brazilian.

By the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, the idea of Brazilian nationalism had firmly taken hold. This was fueled by a desire to shed any vestiges of European influence. A Brazilian sound continued to be nurtured and further developed by composers such as Heitor Villa-Lobos (1867-1959), Ernani Braga (1888-1948), Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez (1897-1948), Francisco Mignone (1897-1986), and Camargo Guarnieri (1907-1993), among others. With this generation of Brazilian composers, the idea of a national school or sound became more apparent as these composers began to gradually move away from European compositional influences and models. This is not to imply, however, that all European influences were absent from their music. These influences were merely less apparent and were intermingled with the growing use of elements that were reflective of Brazilian culture.

*Canções e modinhas: A lecture recital of Brazilian art song repertoire* will feature songs by composers who were pioneers in the development of Brazilian classical song repertoire. Some of the composers to be included on the program are Antônio Carlos Gomes (1836-1896), one of the first Afro-Brazilian composers to gain international recognition for his operas; Alberto Nepomuceno (1864-1920), who was known as the “father of Brazilian art song;” Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), whose works and teachings were influential in the development of music education in Brazil; and Francisco Mignone (1897-1986), whose works demonstrate a range of influences including *bel canto* style, atonal techniques, and folk music.

I have presented variations of this program at the Teatro Minaz (Brazil), the Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil), Auburn University, the 97<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference of the National Association of Negro Musicians, the 2015 Song Collaborators Consortia at West Texas A&M, the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, the University of Michigan, and Florida State University.

**SESSION ABSTRACT:** Brazilian art song literature reflects the influence of several cultures, among them African, European, and indigenous. There is a vast array of Brazilian classical vocal literature generally unknown outside of South America. *Canções e modinhas: A lecture recital of Brazilian Art Song Repertoire* will offer a brief overview of the history of the music and feature songs by composers who were pioneers in the development of Brazilian art song literature. Some of the composers to be included on the program are Antônio Carlos Gomes, one of the first Afro-Brazilian composers to gain international recognition for his operas; Alberto Nepomuceno, who was known as the “father of Brazilian art song;” Heitor Villa-Lobos, whose works and teachings were influential to the development of music education in Brazil; and Francisco Mignone, whose works demonstrate a range of influences including *bel canto* style, atonal techniques, and folk music.