

Foreword

The first decade of the twenty-first century appears to be witnessing a new musicological interest in the romantic past of Latin America, a period that was much criticized in the musical and cultural discourses of the previous century. Condemned as decadent, as inauthentic, for its dependency on European fashion and for its exoticist leanings, reflected in its idealized view of folklore and popular culture, romanticism was judged with a severity that is comparable to that in which the music of the colonial period was evaluated after the independence movements of the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Romantic musicians were shrouded with oblivion and neglect, except for the ones who had the “good sense” to break ground for nationalism. And even then, if they did not belong to the political circles, their marginalization from Latin American cultural history was almost certain.

The present volume of the series Patrimônio Arquivístico-Musical Mineiro is devoted to the work of one of these musicians, who did not benefit from political connections or influence, at last incorporated into the history of music – our history of music or the history of our music. I refer to Francisco Valle (1869-1906), the musician from Juiz de Fora whose ephemeral life spanned the last three decades of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth century. He was a contemporary of Alberto Williams (Argentina, 1862-1952), Felipe Villanueva (Mexico, 1862-1893), Remigio Acevedo Guajardo (Chile, 1863-1911), Ricardo Castro (Mexico, 1864-1907), Alexandre Levy (Brazil, 1864-1892), Alberto Nepomuceno (Brazil, 1864-1920), Eliodoro Ortiz de Zárate (Chile, 1865-1952), Julián Aguirre (Argentina,

1868-1924), Francisco Braga (Brazil, 1868-1945), Simeón Roncal (Bolivia, 1870-1953), and Luis Duncker Lavalle (Peru, 1870-1953), only to mention the ones closer to him chronologically, as well as from an aesthetic and technical standpoint, and who participated in the construction of a corpus that can be qualified as a forerunner of Latin-American nationalism.

Valle had a close relationship in Paris with Levy and Braga, during the same period in which other musical personalities were residing in the *Cidade-Luz*, including Ricardo Castro; the Venezuelan pianist and composer Teresa Carreño (1853-1917); Alberto Williams, who studied composition with the same professors as Valle (Charles Bériot and César Franck); and the famed Cuban violinist José White (1836-1918). Valle probably would have developed a brilliant career in Europe had he not faced the usual financial difficulties that mercilessly followed the artists of romanticism, and that prompted his premature return to Brazil. In his country, he could not become the prophet that all wished him to be. To make ends meet, he had to teach piano to individuals who would not pursue a piano career, to play music that was not his music, to dedicate his time to persons out of touch with his creative urges. Like Schumann, like Hugo Wolf, he lived in great apprehension; anxiety consumed his days and death came before he could consolidate his work. His body was discovered in the Paraíba River in 1906. The neglect that ensued lasted an entire century, and only now does it seem to come to an end with the edition of his orchestral works in the series Patrimônio Arquivístico-Musical Mineiro, coordinated by Paulo Castagna.

Our musicology, a young discipline in an equally young continent, was neglectful of the romantic musicians of Latin America. Not only were they excluded from our musical histories, but their music has not yet been adequately promoted and appreciated. Among Valle's contemporaries, only the work of Carmen García Muñoz on Julián Aguerre, J. O. Pickenhain on Alberto Williams, and Consuelo Carredano on Felipe Villanueva represent serious studies dedicated to the life and the music of these composers. The available information on Acevedo Guajardo, Ortiz de Zárate, and Roncal is but scattered here and there. In reference to Duncker Lavalle, there is not a single satisfactory lexicographical entry, and, in the centennial of Ricardo Castro's death (deceased on September 28, 1907), nothing is known today beyond what was already known one century ago.

The present project, devoted to the edition of the music of Minas Gerais, from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is relevant for many reasons: it transcends our current knowledge about the music of this region (including the now historical investigations of Francisco Curt Lange); it focuses on the work of lesser-known composers (of the three names featured in the first set of volumes, José Joaquim Emerico Lobo de

Mesquita, Jerônimo de Sousa, and Francisco Valle, only the first named, to some extent, is internationally recognized); it holistically considers the cataloguing of the material and the detailed examination of the sources, as well as the study of the milieu of each composer and the musical analysis of their works, as endeavors that are both overlapping and complementary; it relies upon and draws together materials dispersed throughout several different archives; it offers philologically informed scores that, no doubt, will not only promote this repertoire, but will also contribute to the definition of a methodological framework for subsequent projects of this kind, in and outside Brazil; and, finally, it enables a direct engagement with music (to embark on a purely musicological discourse) that will contribute to its interpretation and appreciation.

It is my great honor to present this publication, which is scientifically minded in a manner not seen in more conventional contributions, and which is informed by a tolerant, ecumenical, and considerate view of the past that opens new paths and perspectives for the study of our sources, our composers, and our music, or, rather, of all of our sources, of all of our composers, and of all of our music.

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