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Francisco Mignone's 16 Valsas Brasileiras for Bassoon

An informed interpretative proposal

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ABSTRACT

Key words: Francisco Mignone, Valsas Brasileiras, Bassoon, emic, performance, interpretative proposal, Mário de Andrade.

The aim of this independent project for my master's degree is to develop an interpretative proposal for the 16 Brazilian Waltzes (16 Valsas Brasileiras) for bassoon solo composed by Francisco Mignone between 1979 and 1981. For that, I use an emic-inspired approach to really be able to understand the cultural aspects surrounding these pieces framed in the style called "Brazilian music". This style was developed by the theorist Mário de Andrade with the intention to create a Brazilian national style of music. In this project to achieve an understanding of the cultural and political context surrounding the life of the author and the creation of his Valsas, and the cultural elements to which they make reference. With this research I wish to obtain a deeper understanding of the piece and use it to propose and record my own interpretation of this works, which by any means will be the only one possible.

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Preface

The purpose of this individual project in artistic research for my master's degree is to develop an interpretative proposal for the 16 Brazilian Waltzes (*16 Valsas Brasileiras*) for bassoon solo composed at the end of his career by Francisco Mignone between 1979 and 1981. It was also the end of a century during which the influential Mario de Andrade and his nationalistic circles put a lot of effort into creating a new "own Brazilian style" for arts in general, particularly in the musical field.

The *Valsas* can be seen as an expression of this way of making "Brazilian music", the name of the collection itself makes a clear reference to this, and also the name of every piece makes reference to Brazilian composers like Heitor Villa-Lobos, different styles of Brazilian popular music or topics of Brazilian culture. All of these references and the fact that they were developed in an environment that wanted to embrace aspects of the Brazilian popular music, entail that a lot of ideas included in Mignone's *Valsas* are completely unknown for someone who is not aware of the Brazilian culture and its background, making it challenging to understand what is behind the scores, even for a good musician with a classical training.

In cases like this, when trying to understand a piece of music that is clearly framed in a different cultural context, there are two different postures that one can take according to anthropology and other disciplines that are dedicated to the study of cultures and human behavior: the emic and the etic perspectives. On the one hand, "the emic approach seeks to examine the native principles of classification and conceptualization from within each cultural system. [...] Hence, an emic analysis is culturally specific with the mentality of insiders' beliefs, thoughts and attitudes."¹ On the other hand, "the etic viewpoint studies behavior as from outside of a particular system, and as an essential initial approach to an alien system."²

If we agree that "music is a total social fact, whose definition varies according to era and culture" and that "the "musical" is any sonorous fact constructed, organized, or thought by a culture",³ then we have to use an emic approach: this is trying to understand those cultural

¹ Jingfeng Xia. "An Anthropological Emic-Etic Perspective on Open Access Practices." *Journal of Documentation* 67, no.1 (2011): 76, accessed December 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00220411111105461>.

² K. L. Pike. *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior*. (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 37. Cited in: Jingfeng, "An Anthropological Emic-Etic Perspective on Open Access Practices.": 76.

³ Jean-Jacques Nattiez. *Music and Discourse. Toward a Semiology of Music*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 67

tools and baggage that Brazilians have which have relation with this piece, to achieve a comprehensive experience as close as theirs as possible. The problem is to present a cultural description for outsiders to be able to really understand this culture and not just make another caricature of it. With this purpose, the anthropologist Goodenough⁴ proposes to isolate "the primitive elements"⁴ from that culture and then "to describe the rest of the culture in terms of them and their relative products"⁴.

In this study, these tools will be the elements that were used to construct this nationalistic style of music and the references that Mignone writes in the titles of the pieces. Also, the musical formation of Mignone and the social and artistic atmosphere in which he lived will be taken into consideration. Then the procedure will be to analyze the pieces using this tools or primitive elements.

With all these thoughts in mind, I will try to make an interpretative proposal and record the pieces in question. Using emic analysis necessarily leads to a variety of results, depending on who is researching, and therefore, my proposal too, will be critically informed but nevertheless a personal one in the end. Furthermore, the listeners will have their own cultural baggage and their own life experiences that will result into different meanings for the *Valsas*. It is almost impossible that composers, different interpreters and listeners perceive one piece of music the same way.⁵ Even so, I felt like I wanted to really dig into it and have in mind all of this knowledge before adventuring to interpret the pieces my way.

⁴ Ward H. Goodenough. "General and Particular, Describing a Culture." In *Description and Comparison in Cultural Anthropology*. (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970), 110.

⁵ Nattiez. *Music and Discourse. Toward a Semiology of Music*, 9 - 17.

Context⁶

Even though Brazil was independent since 1822, until the declaration of the country as a republic in 1889 no interest was shown to establish unique characteristics of the country, therefore there was not an idea of Brazilian cultural identity. The new form of republican independent state led to the rise of nationalistic movements which had the task of creating the identity of the new Brazil. In this environment a lot of publications of folklore and heritage started to appear, which had the focus on the musical traditions of Brazil.

The early publications of a nationalistic kind that appeared were profoundly influenced by European theories on race, climate and culture. They created a debate about the slow development of the country with the same conclusions as the one that was taking place in Europe: the racial mix and the tropical climate were responsible for the Brazilian cultural inferiority.

These ideas are not surprising when the Brazilian intellectuals had European referents, since they had been educated in a Europe where the fascist ideas about Aryan superiority were booming. Also, it is important to understand that in a place with such diversity as Brazil, the white people had been colonizers until that moment and Brazilian intellectuals belonged to the higher classes descendant of those colonizers. According to these intellectuals and their publications, the way to develop the country and make it move forward was to “whiten” it, to make the non-white “races”⁷ and therefore their culture disappear. Exactly the same philosophy that the most fascist movements in Europe had.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Brazilian culture and uniqueness was already being considered a mixture of the European Portuguese culture from the colonizers, the Indigenous culture from before the European colonization and the African culture from those brought by the Europeans from that continent. In this context new ideas started to be influential, which made responsible of the country's backwardness to the European colonization, which had made Brazil dependent from Europe. As a result of these new ideas, the whitening policies were stopped. These new thinkers assured that the non-development of the Brazilian cultural

⁶ The base narrative for this chapter comes from: Suzen Ana Reily. “Introduction: Brazilian Musics, Brazilian Identities.” *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 9, no. 1 (2000): 1–10, accessed January 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3060787>.

⁷ Note the author's certainty that all human beings belong to the same race regardless of their skin color or precedence.

identity was the result of years under the Portuguese royal family and Portuguese tribunals ruling in Brazil.

It is in this climate where the main theorist of this cause in culture appeared: Mário de Andrade. He theorized in order to create a unified Brazilian own style consisting in the mix of elements from the three cultural backgrounds mentioned before. The proof that this idea was widely extended can be found in an article written in a North American journal in 1939:

*"Brazil, rich in folk music that harks back to Amerindian sources, to Portuguese melodic importations, and to negro rhythms evolved from African dances, is a country that has been happily blessed with artists of great talent and composers of rare ability and genius."*⁸

De Andrade's ideas stuck to the Brazilian cultural thinking specially during the *Estado Novo* authoritarian regime of Getúlio Vargas, which came to power in 1930 and had a strong nationalistic component that required a unified concept of culture for the whole country, contributing that way to its objective of integrating popular classes into the country's structures. The mixed-race person (*mestiço*) was established as one of the symbols of Brazilian national identity and the musical ideas proposed by Mário de Andrade were the perfect fit for this national construct. The good relationship between government and Mário de Andrade is proven, by the power that he achieved in the Brazilian musical field, deciding over almost everything that happened in São Paulo's musical life and having the resources to bring the music he wanted anywhere he wanted:

*"[...] Mario de Andrade, director of the Cultural Bureau of São Paulo, a bureau established in 1935 to co-ordinate the cultural activities of the municipality. This organization supports a symphony orchestra, a quartet, a trio, and several choruses, and with these groups has sponsored many free public concerts for educational programs in the university and in the schools, and for social-welfare work in hospitals and prisons."*⁹

He was everywhere, even in the prisons. He had control over a huge musical network to make his ideas permeate the Brazilian society. The huge power that represents the control he had

⁸ Eunice Joiner Gates. "Brazilian Music." *Hispania* 22, no. 2 (May 1939): 120, accessed January 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/332628>.

⁹ Gates. "Brazilian Music.": 120.

over the musical scene, especially in Sao Paulo, implied that the composers of the moment had to incorporate de Andrade's philosophy to their compositions to have a chance for them to be performed and published. As the main influencer for Brazilian composers during the twentieth century, his ideas and career will be explained with more detail in a specific chapter of this paper. Under Vargas regime, the research of the Brazilian musical heritage also became uncritical and aimed to just make descriptions that could be used for nation-building and praising.

After Vargas regime, this cultural conception continued alive and became especially strong again during the military dictatorship (1964 – 1985). The life of Francisco Mignone and particularly the works object of the study are framed in this cultural and political climate.

The composer: FRANCISCO MIGNONE

Francisco Paulo Mignone was the son of Italian migrants. His father was Alferio Mignone, an Italian trained composer, flutist and teacher at the Conservatory of São Paulo¹⁰, from whom he got his first flute lessons. Very young, he was already playing the flute and the piano in local dance orchestras, where he started to be involved with popular music. He also played in folk music ensembles, mostly in the street, and composed music in popular genres, mainly for piano. He signed this music with the pseudonym "*chico Bororó*", probably to protect his image as a "serious" musician.¹¹

Mignone studied piano, flute and composition at the São Paulo Conservatory and in 1920, he went to Europe, to study at the Milan conservatory. By this time, he already had composed and conducted several orchestra pieces. During his stay in Italy, he composed some operas which had a great success in Brazil. Then, in 1929 he returned to Brazil to be a harmony teacher at the Conservatory of São Paulo and in 1933, he moved to Rio de Janeiro to be the official conductor and conducting teacher at the *Escola Nacional de Música*. In the following years he conducted through Europe and the USA. He held also different positions as conductor in main theaters and orchestras in Brazil.¹²

During the time he spent studying in Europe, he developed a compositional style close to the Italian tradition. Then, when he returned to Brazil, he started to contact Mário de Andrade and to get interested in the way of composing that this theorist was proposing with the goal of achieving a Brazilian national style. But Mignone was severely criticized by Mário de Andrade regarding his Italian way of composing and Mignone started transitioning towards a more Brazilian style. As a result, he composed works like *Cucumbyzinho* (1931), where he uses rhythms from the popular dances *samba* and *maxixe* and also works based on African cults and songs, like *Babaloxá* and *Batukajé* (1936) or *Cânticos de Obaluayê* (1934). Later, around the sixties, he had a period of experimentation with dodecaphonic compositional

¹⁰ Leonardo de Lorenzo. *My Complete Story of the Flute: The Instrument, the Performer, the Music*. (Texas, USA: Texas Tech University Press, 1992), 259-260

¹¹ Ana Maria Garcia Estrada. "16 valsas para fagote solo de Francisco Mignone: Análisis Ecléctico para la interpretación." (Master thesis, EAFIT University, 2015.), 13-14, accessed March 2019. https://repository.eafit.edu.co/bitstream/handle/10784/7759/AnaMaria_GarciaEstrada_2015.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y.

¹² Gerard Béhague. "Mignone, Francisco." *Grove Music Online*. (Oxford University Press, 2001.), accessed march 2019, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18634>.

techniques, but soon he returned to a more nationalistic style until the end of his career. In this last period, he has a large production of works, for voices and for different instrumentations, in which he uses inspiration from a lot of Brazilian popular genres and also from other Brazilian cultural aspects and works. Is in this last period where the sixteen *Valsas Brasileiras* for Solo Bassoon, the object of this study, were composed.¹³

¹³ Garcia Estrada. "16 valsas para fagote solo de Francisco Mignone: Análisis Eclético para la interpretación.", 16.

The style: the “*Música Brasileira*” of Mário de Andrade

As I have mentioned earlier, Mário de Andrade was a very influential theorist of the arts in Brazil during the 20th century and he occupied power positions in the cultural and political Brazilian scene. We have already seen how Francisco Mignone was influenced by de Andrade to create his compositional style. We know that in some periods of time Mignone composed with different rules than those set by De Andrade but in the moment in which the *Valsas* were composed, he was clearly composing in a style inspired by the aesthetic opinions of Mário de Andrade. In fact, Mignone did dedicate one of the *Valsas* to him, as we can read “*Á memória de Mario de Andrade*” just above the title of “*A escrava que não era Isaura*”¹⁴.

For this reason, I found it necessary to dedicate this chapter to explain and summarize his theory for a “Brazilian music” gathered in the *Ensaio sobre a música Brasileira*¹⁵ that he wrote. This information will become relevant when analyzing the different *Valsas* and making the proposal of interpretation. The approach is that the ideas described in this chapter are clues to understand what was in the mind of Mignone when he composed the *Valsas* and also which were the ideas that permeated the world of the Brazilian concert music during the 20th century, the composers but also the audience perception of it.

“*The artists belonging to an uncertain “race” will become uncertain about it.*”¹⁶. With this statement De Andrade describes the problematic that exists according to him around the concept of a Brazilian national music. He believes that Brazilian national art should be somehow a mixture of the three cultures that he claims exist in the country: the African, the Indigenous and the Portuguese. He states that these three cultures have persisted and mixed with each other in the popular culture but not in the “artistic” music¹⁷. For him, Brazilians at that time were used to assimilate as Brazilian music the one composed in a European way with some exotic elements, which did not represent Brazilian culture fairly.

¹⁴ Francisco Mignone. *Music for Solo Bassoon: Sixteen Waltzes and Sonatina*. (Bloomfield (USA): LQR Publishing, 2015), 26.

¹⁵ Mário de Andrade. *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira*. São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editora S. A., 1972.

¹⁶ “*Os artistas dum raça indecisa se tornaram indecisos quem nela.*” (My translation) in De Andrade. *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira*, 13.

¹⁷ Mário de Andrade refers with “artistic” music (*música artística*) to the music performed by professional classically-trained musicians in concert halls or theaters in opposition to popular music. The author of this paper does not subscribe to the use of this term and considers that all music can and should be considered art.

De Andrade thinks that Brazil is in a moment of nationalization, conforming its national reality, and that is why it's justified to apply a "primitivistic"¹⁸ concept to the arts. For de Andrade, the interesting Brazilian artworks need to have an interested primitivism and any work that just tries to follow a not national style must be rejected, even if it has artistic value. This is because the work is socially not interesting from the moment that doesn't help to the national construction, according to him. De Andrade thinks that nevertheless, the Brazilian shouldn't be an aesthetic primitivism, but a social one: every artwork exclusively artistic and socially uninterested is destructive for the national construction since it is intrinsically individualistic.

According to Mário de Andrade, this nationalization of the cultural manifestations, music among them, can and should be done without falling in xenophobia or imperialism. The criteria that should be used to achieve it in that precise historical moment is music created by Brazilians or individuals that have been nationalized (in a cultural way) and reflects the characteristics of the Brazilian culture. For him, these characteristics are to be found in the popular music.

He explains that the formation of the Brazilian popular music has different components which are found in different levels of influence. For De Andrade, it is mostly a mixture of components from the native's culture (smallest influence), African culture (bigger influence) and Portuguese culture (biggest influence). One can also find influences from the Hispano-American musics, mostly from the Atlantic; and also, from the European dances when it comes to the formation of the *Modinha*¹⁹. To those influences already assimilated, other contemporaries have to be counted like Jazz and Argentinian Tango. Although, for him, while the Jazz polyphonies are well adapted to some styles of Brazilian music without disturbing their essence, Tango melodies are being used for some composers to "simplify and pervert"²⁰ the Brazilian ones.

According to De Andrade, there are some "dangers" in which a composer may fall when trying to write in a national style. He states that to be exclusively Brazilian and not incorporating other elements is dangerous, although the composers should always maintain a Brazilian

¹⁸ De Andrade. *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira*, 17.

¹⁹ The *modinha*, in Brazil, is a type of sentimental love song. It is generally considered part of the roots of Brazilian popular music, along with the *lundu*, because both were the earliest representatives of the people of Brazil when getting their identity as Brazilians and not the dwellers of Portuguese colony.

²⁰ De Andrade. *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira*, 26.

character and style, of course. For him composers who are really exclusive with their musical resources end up being boring and repetitive. Another danger is to become unilateral and as a consequence write only music Amerindian, African or Portuguese, and not real Brazilian music. This person becomes an anti-national composer since he or she is not contributing to the growth of the nation.

One of the most important elements for Brazilian music is probably the rhythm. In this matter, Syncopation is a constant in Brazilian music, though for De Andrade it does not mean that it is compulsory to use it. Frequently, something can be called a "syncopation" which in a strict sense is no syncopation at all; the concept that music theory describes as syncopation, does not always correspond with the rhythmical movements that are called so in Brazilian popular music. For him this is due to a conflict between Brazilian rhythms and those organized and fixed in music theory, brought by the Portuguese from Europe.

De Andrade explains that early recordings of indigenous music uninfluenced yet by the European rhythms, have very varied rhythms which respond to the songs' lyrics, to the spoken prosody, denying then the existence of a "purely musical" rhythm. The African melodies registered in the "Baía" don't show these same rhythmical ideas, even though in the popular Brazilian *lundús* and *batuques* (musical styles originated by the African slaves) can be found excerpts which work again as a real *recitativo*. According to Mário de Andrade, it is possible to state that a free rhythmic without a purely musical metric is the tendency in Brazilian popular music: a lot of Brazilian popular styles work as real *recitativos*, even if they somehow respond to a fixed melody.

Mário de Andrade believes that the adaptation to the elements brought by the Portuguese created the national sense of rhythm, taking the syncopation as a way to express these inexact rhythms from Brazilian popular music. When comparing the written popular melodies, one can observe how the syncopation is used to represent a lot of different rhythms which do not correspond exactly with the writing when played. This supports the idea that a lot of movements called syncopations are not it. They are polyrhythmics or free rhythm written in a false time signature.

De Andrade thinks that the Brazilian composer must take advantage of this rhythmical richness. The use of the syncopation gives the freedom to employ apparent syncopated movements but lacked of accent, out of the time signature, responding to the musical

fantasy... In the art music the composer can take advantage of the richness and variety of popular "syncopations" in order to reflect Brazilian folklore, but in contrast to the popular music this should then be done in the way of Villa-Lobos, writing a great variety of different measured syncopations. Accordingly, the artistic music must avoid writing the syncopations as they are written in the popular music, just central syncopations in a 2/4 bar. Because, although in the popular music these written syncopations are interpreted in very different ways, Mário de Andrade thinks that in the artistic music this would create a big rhythmical poverty. For him it would be also boring and poor to use syncopation all the time as the only rhythmical pattern.

There is also a monotony in using just the simple binary time signature commonly associated to popular music. One can find compound binaries in the nord-east music from the Portuguese influence, the quaternary "Gaúcho"²¹, and the different time signatures found in *valsas*, *mazurcas* or *modinhas* precedent from the Portuguese/European tradition.

For De Andrade, the melodies of the popular music must be the source for the Brazilian composer. According to him, there is the believe that popular music doesn't have the same expressivity and capacity to create emotions as the "artistic" music. De Andrade thinks that, on the contrary, popular music is strongly emotional because is born from the essential necessities and it is free from individuality. Contrarily, he thinks that expression in the artistic music is a product of a false erudition and an exclusivist individualism. For Mário de Andrade, expression in the popular music is sort of improvised, the same way as words in an improvised conversation. Is because of this, that it creates general mood-atmospheres and not different expressive moments like the artistic music. This is what the artistic composer of Brazilian music must be able to do too according to De Andrade. He proposes some modal and melodic characteristics from the popular music that can be used to create melodies with popular elements:²²

- In Brazilian melodies with an African origin one can find a hexachord scale without the leading note.

²¹ Way to call a mestizo who, in the 18th and 19th centuries, inhabited Argentina, Uruguay, and Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, was a migratory horseman, and adept in cattle work. Here used as an adjective to denotate the precedence of the quaternary time signature used in the music belonging to this group of people.

²² De Andrade. *Ensaio sôbre a música brasileira*, 45-46.

- The melodies of the *modinhas* are full of unusual melodic twists, such as intervals of seventh, eighth and ninth. These variable melodic lines can also be found though less frequently in the *caboclo*²³ singing.
- There are a lot of examples of melodic progressions and arabesques in Brazilian popular music. Commonly used in flute counterpoints.
- The descendent melodies are very common (but not the only ones) and it sounds very Brazilian to end with the mediant.

Apart from those, De Andrade states that there are a great variety of Brazilian melodic elements that the good composer can discover from popular music and use in the artistic compositions.

About polyphony, De Andrade writes that it does not really exist in Brazilian national music. For him, harmonization has usually a minor role in popular music and that is why he considers that the development of it will coincide fatally with the European one. He states that Brazilian harmonization must be subject to the rules of acoustics and the temperate scale, and that is why he considers it impossible to have a national way of harmonizing. Regarding instrumentation, although he talks about some special voice timbres, he says that there is not a Brazilian ensemble, all of them are imported from outside the country. This does not apply anyway to this study since the *Valsas* are instrumented for bassoon solo.

Regarding form, Mário de Andrade thinks that no one respects it anymore in the artistic music, so the area is wide open for composers to experiment. He also explains how in Brazilian popular music one can find different kinds of forms (cyclic, binary, variations...), which means that Brazilian composers can also find huge amount of inspiration in these genres. Then he enumerates a wide range of different Brazilian popular musical genres from vocal and instrumental music without really giving much detail about their form or specific characteristics. This will be treated individually in those *Valsas* that have a reference to a specific popular music genre.

²³ A *caboclo* (English: cabloke) is a person of mixed Indigenous Brazilian and European ancestry (the first, most common use), or a culturally assimilated person of full Amerindian descent. In any case, here means a kind of singing derivate from the mix of Indigenous Brazilian and European cultures.

Analysis of the pieces

These *Valsas* (waltzes) written by Francisco Mignone for bassoon solo between 1979 and 1981 are a clear example of the practical application of Mário de Andrade musical ideas. It is clear from the moment one starts reading the titles of them. We can also find a great rhythmical variety and space for tempo fluctuations. According to what has been explained from Mario de Andrade's way of understanding Brazilian music, composers writing for classical-trained musicians should write all the exact rhythms, measures and *tempo* indications so the interpretation of the *Valsas* should be exact rhythmically and steady regarding to *tempo*. Although, to create the fluctuations of the popular music genres Mignone uses a lot of different rhythms translated in different figures, while other times he just adds a lot of *tempo* fluctuation indications. Due to this way of writing his compositions, I believe that the general rule for interpretation should be really having a steady *tempo* and do exact rhythms when no *tempo* fluctuations are marked. On the other hand, one can be really expressive when marked and add a lot of personal characters in those places. Also, even if there are general *tempo* indications no metronome marks are given except for one *Valsa*, so there is some flexibility in this aspect also.

Also, a lot of the indications are made in Portuguese and can be found that way in the older edition²⁴. The newer edition²⁵ made in the USA, has translated the Portuguese terms to more internationally understandable ones in Italian and English. This translation has been made by Benjamin Coelho, who also has a breve article²⁶ in "The Double Reed" with small notes about the meaning of the titles. He also has incorporated some changes regarding breath markings written by the composer, that he considers corrections. These translations and changes are a good help sometimes for non-informed players, but I will study the differences between both editions to check if the original breath marks from the composer could have any sense missed by Coelho. Also, the original terms in Portuguese sometimes give more specific and detailed information about character and interpretation than the English or Italian generics.

²⁴ Francisco Mignone. *16 Valsas Para Fagote Solo*. (Rio de Janeiro: FUNARTE, 1982).

²⁵ Mignone. *Music for Solo Bassoon: Sixteen Waltzes and Sonatina*.

²⁶ Benjamin Coelho. "Francisco Mignone and the Sixteen Waltzes for Solo Bassoon." *The Double Reed*, 26 n°2 (2003): 43–54, accessed April 2019, <https://benjamincoelho.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Benjamin-Coelho-Francisco-Mignone-and-the-Sixteen-Waltzes-for-Solo-Bassoon-Article.pdf>.

Then, another historical source of information should be the first recording of the *Valsas*²⁷ made by the bassoon player Noël Devos. Devos was a French bassoon player who moved to São Paulo to teach and play. He was friend with Mignone to whom he composed all his bassoon works, included the one object of study. We can even find one of the *Valsas* with the title “*A boa Páscoa para você, Devos!*” (Good easter for you, Devos!). In these recordings, the player adds a lot of personal ideas taking really extreme *tempi* and making a lot of *tempo* fluctuations even where is not written by the composer. It differs quite a bit from the performance idea that would correspond with the ideas of Mário de Andrade about Brazilian music. I choose to follow my theoretical research since these recordings can be representing of the way music was played at the moment but not necessarily represent the music faithfully, rather to the interpreter personal ideas. Personal ideas of the interpreter will be always present in an interpretation but I aim to influence my personal ideas with my investigation rather than other interpreter personal ideas.

Now, I will analyze the *Valsas* one by one, finding explanations and references in their titles and searching for a structure that makes them easy to understand. I will follow the same order as the old edition (there is only two *Valsas* differently placed in the new one in order to avoid having to make page turns) even if it is not the chronological order of composition. This analysis, product of my research, has its practical reflect in my own performances which I recorded and that can be find attached to this project.

Aquela Modinha que o Villa não Escreveu (That modinha that Villa didn't wrote)

[Audio 1]

Starting by the title of this piece, it refers to the *modinha*, a Brazilian popular music genre which is characterized by being lyrical and sentimental, usually a love song. Here, with “Villa” the composer refers to the great Brazilian composer “Heitor Villa-Lobos”, another of the great exponents of the “Brazilian style” in the 20th century.

If it is true that Villa-Lobos has a lot of very rhythmical pieces, he has also a lot of expressive songs and pieces for voice but also instrumental ones, all of them very dramatic. Some examples could be “*Melodia Sentimental*”, “*O Canto do Cisne Negro*”, “*Bachianas Brasileiras No 5*” or “*Modinha*”. The last one with the same name as this *Valsa*. So, it is quite clear that

²⁷ Noël Devos. *16 Valsas Para Fagote Solo*. CD. São Paulo: Atração Fonográfica, 1998.

the title of this piece is an irony, since Villa-Lobos did write *modinhas*. Also, the instruction "Implorante, saudoso e triste" (Imploring, longing and sad) at the beginning of it remembers a lot already to his songs from Villa-Lobos. Furthermore, the long very lyrical lines and with long slurs over several bars are just like the melodies of his songs.

This, mixed with the marking "Imploring, longing and sad" should give us the idea of the character that the *Valsa* should have: a slow *tempo*, with a lot of expression guided by a great quantity of *crescendi* and *diminuendi* that one can find and maintaining the waltz measure steady except for the bars marked with "*poco rit.*" (bar 14 and 33) and the end (from the upbeat to bar 38) marked with "*mais devagar*" (slower) and "*ben devagar e complete abandono*" (very slowly and with complete abandon).

It is one of the shortest, and has accordingly a quite simple structure:

- First part from bar 1 until bar 15 (*fermata*). He repeats the 4-bars theme (under a slur) 3 times building up a harmonic progression helped with the dynamics, reaching the high point the third time. After, he makes a variation of that theme in *piano* leading to a kind of half cadence.
- Second part from upbeat to bar 16 until downbeat of bar 34 (*fermata*). It restarts with a longer progression of variations of the same theme used in the first part until a little *codetta* (bar 33 with upbeat) that leads again to a half cadence (*fermata*) but now in the main tonality. The higher point is found in bar 30.
- Coda from bar 34 until the end. The coda is constructed again with the main motive from this piece but now building down decreasing both dynamic and *tempo* and also coming back to the tonic several times to end finally with a perfect cadence.

With respect to the commas (´) and break marks (v) in this piece we can observe a difference between the old edition and the newer one that "corrects" the ones Mignone wrote. I have decided to stick to the old one as a base text and make changes myself if I consider it necessary, and also make a difference between big breaths represented by a high comma (´) and short breaks represented by the "v" marks; they have been all converted to commas in the new edition. I think in this piece the two commas should be respected as big breaths before the last beat in bar 20 and before the coda, and the break mark 4 before the end to emphasize the last cadence.

6a valsa brasileira (6th Brazilian waltz)

[Audio 2]

The title of this *valsas* refers to a previous set of Brazilian waltzes that Mignone composed for Piano, since this one is the 6th in that set. The piano version is dedicated to Irany Leme, pianist and professor of the Music School of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, who propose to Mignone the creation of this set for bassoon for a cycle of recitals called *Em Tempo de Valsa* (In Waltz tempo).²⁸

In this particular piece, I find it important again to difference between the breathing comas and short break marks which the different markings indicate in the old version and that have been unified in the new one. Also, in the old version we can read "*bem seresteiro*" (very serenade-ish) which has been translated for *cantabile* in the new one; I think this translation takes away part of the meaning of the original, because it referred to a specific style of song.

To respect the breathing marks and short break marks is extremely important because they define the prosody of the speech, the different musical "sentences". When speaking about its structure, we can find an opening section like a kind of short overture, then, from bar 9 a serenade written in a waltz metric, and from bar 88 until the end a closing section that uses the theme from the opening for then extinguish the sound with a *diminuendo* at the end. The opening has the marking "*con muito entusiasmo*" (with a lot of enthusiasm) and this is why I think it should have a fast tempo with a *risoluto* character. It should be exactly in tempo which is broken by the "v" marks and the *fermata* in bar 6 which add dramatism to it.

A very special moment is the break after bar 8, which harmonically leads and with a *ritardando* and a *diminuendo* into the serenade that starts in bar 9 (see figure 1). This break is a very dramatic one because bar 8 creates a huge expectative to land into bar 9, but instead the player can just take a short moment to really state that he or she is going to play a very emotional song.

²⁸ Coelho "Francisco Mignone and the Sixteen Waltzes for Solo Bassoon.", 43-54.



Figure 1. Francisco Mignone. *16 Valsas Para Fagote Solo*, 8.

In the serenade we can find a first part until bar 26 which I identify as a “singed” part: very lyrical, *legato*... only interrupted by the break marks which separate the different “voices” that take part into the song. I distinguish at least two persons singing: the one with long phrases in *mezzo piano* or *mezzo forte* and the one making small comments in the shadows in *pianissimo*. I would play this first part which only have the indication “*bem seresteiro*” in a tempo between *moderato* and *allegretto*. From bar 27 starts a more mixed section, faster (*Vivo*), where we can find more “instrumental” phrases, the composer even indicates sometimes “*imitando violão*” (imitating a guitar), which are often *staccato* articulated with others more *cantabile* and *legato* that remember the previous part. When approaching the end of the piece the amount of indications written by Mignone grows and we find a huge quantity of *crescendi*, *diminuendi*, *ritardandi*, *accelerandi*... and other more specific character-wise like “*dramático*” (dramatic) in bars 68-69 or “*suplicante*” (begging) in bar 71.

The closing section (from bar 88) starts with the energetic and *risoluto* theme from the beginning in *fortissimo*, and with every time smaller, slower and quieter motives separated by “v” marks, Mignone conducts the music until the last two bars which are *tempo*-less and almost *diminuendo a niente*.

Mistério (Quanto amei-a!) [Mystery (How much I loved her!)]

[Audio 3]

In this piece, the title indicates us a lot about the character but in order to reassure it Mignone writes the indication “*Tempo de valsa sentimental e doentia*” (In *tempo* of a sentimental and painful waltz). With this indication I think it must be played in a slow tempo and with a lot of expression on every note, with pain. Nevertheless, this expression shouldn't be too wild

because the title indicates “Mystery” and all of it is written in piano, except a short section in *forte* where the composer writes “*apassionado*” (passionate) just before the end that occurs in *pianissimo*. I understand that the *forte* section is where all the emotion finally is expressed, it is the explosion after having inside and being silent during a long time. The *pianissimo* section at the end would be then been the resignation to the life going on after the emotional explosion that happened. I understand the big structure this way:

- Bars 1-32: Three eight-bars phrases that build up tension and one last eight-bars conclusive phrase that ends with the tonic (F#). All the eight-bars phrases are variations of the same thematic material.
- Bars 33-36: Small written cadence (it has the indication “*preludiando*”, like a prelude) which uses to modulate to the dominant (C# minor) and that ends with the dominant of the new tonality.
- Bars 37-68: Three eight-bars phrases which are more varied versions of the previous section theme in *piano* with dramatic breaks in the middle of each of them. Those build up to the *forte* section (54-68) formed by 2 four-bars phrases (the head of the main theme) and a seven-bar modulating section which leads to B flat major.
- Bars 69-80: *pianissimo* section with an eight-bars section composed all with eight notes that is used to modulate to the dominant (C# minor). The last 4 bars are a reaffirmation of the tonic (F#), diminuendo and almost without *tempo*.

This explanation works well with the suggestion from Coelho²⁹ that this *valsa* would talk about the loss of his first wife Liddy Chiafirelli who disappeared in an airplane accident exactly 20 years before its composition in 1981.

***Valsa da Outra Esquina* (Waltz from the other corner)**

[Audio 4]

The title of this *valsa* indicates that it is a faster *valsa*, and with an improvised feeling because corner waltzes is how street waltzes were commonly denominated. This street waltzes were fast and improvised and the performers tried to show their *virtuoso* skills. This corresponds with the indications that can be found like “*Valsa viva*” or “*a tempo vivo*”.

²⁹ Coelho. “Francisco Mignone and the Sixteen Waltzes for Solo Bassoon.”, 43-54.

The form of this piece is a kind of *rondo* since there is a refrain (first 34 bars) which is repeated in between the two episodes and between the second episode and the *coda*. Following I analyze the different parts:

- Refrain (bars 1-34): It is formed by two seventeen-bars sentences, being the second one a variation of the first. It is fast and has a very marked waltz feeling. It finishes with the tonic (E minor).
- First episode (bars 35-51): It is very *staccato*, maybe even faster than the refrain and again with strong waltz accents. In this episode the composer creates contrast between the high and low register in some kind of comedy effect. It is played twice and it modulates to the dominant tonality (B minor), when played the second time there is a chromatic scale in the second time bars that leads into the main tonality (E minor).
- Second episode (bars 52-85): *cantabile* is indicated and we find long slurred lines with almost no small notes. The bars are usually filled with one half and one quarter notes, which give again the possibility to insist with the waltz accentuation without losing the cantabile character and the phrasing of the big lines. The last 4 bars have small motives with fluctuating tempo. This episode is also repeated.
- *Coda* (bars 86-97): For the first four bars it seems like a new theme is starting but suddenly he wraps it up conducting it to the tonic of the main tonality, like improvising.

In conclusion, this one is a fast *valsa* with a *rondo* form that includes three contrasting themes. This differs from most of the other *valsas* seen until now, that used a quite shared thematic material across the different sections.

Valsa em Si Bemol Menor (Dolorosa) [Waltz in B flat minor (Painful)]

[Audio 5]

There is not much to explain about the title or its references: it should sound painful, and the slow tempo (*valsa lenta*) and the accents in the grace notes or the small decrescendos during just two notes, help a lot to get this mood (See figure 2). It can be difficult to keep the waltz feeling in a very slow tempo and with this character, but I think it is worth to work for it.



Figure 2. Francisco Mignone. *16 Valsas Para Fagote Solo*, 15.

The piece has a binary form with recapitulation (ABA). The first section starts with a small motive (3 bars) which is repeated two more times with small variations until bar 8. From bar 9 until bar 23 it is repeated again 5 times more with different developments and different lengths. This goes always from high notes to very low ones giving the possibility to create the effect of laments. The second part (bars 24 to 44) is faster and starts with small one-bar separated very simple motives which follow the same register pattern from before, but now with just one high and one low note. These motives form an *accelerando* for 6 bars and then we have a section which I believe has a more improvised feeling with tempo fluctuations and smaller notes. It finishes with some lament motives now without much register changes before repeating the first section. Both sections are played twice the first time. The first section finishes with the tonic while the second one does it with the dominant.

Valsa-Choro (Choro-waltz)

[Audio 6]

In this concrete *valsa* there are not any character or tempo indications apart from the title, which gives us a lot of information on these matters. The *chôro* is an instrumental Brazilian popular style originated in the 19th century in Rio de Janeiro. Although the Portuguese word means cry or sadness, this style of music has always been fast and with a happy mood. *Chôros* are characterized by including improvisation, a lot of subtle modulations and being for virtuosos, including also a lot of counterpoint. It is considered the first Brazilian genre of popular music, and it is then no surprise that Mignone used it for his compositions. According to this, I think it should be played in a quite fast and stable *tempo*.

In this particular piece, which is a mix between a waltz and a *Chôro*, one can find a lot of small notes that make it quite a difficult piece to play in a fast tempo, coinciding with the characteristic of the *Chôro* of being a virtuoso piece and sounding as improvised, but at the same time maintaining the waltz accentuation.

About the form: it has a *rondo* form with two episodes and no *coda* (ABACA):

- The refrain (bars 1-26): it is played twice with a totally new second part the second time. It has long *legato* phrases with fast notes. Both times end with the tonic (F minor). There are not any indications if the refrain should be played twice also when it comes the second and third times, so I will apply the general rule for this kind of form where the refrain is played always as the second time (without repetitions) between the episodes.
- First episode (bars 27-39): it is written mostly with a small rhythmical motive (2 bars) repeated many times. It has strong accentuations and some *tempo* fluctuations and is written entirely in the principal tonality (F minor). It is played twice.
- Second episode (bars 40-65): this is a very cantabile and happy section, written in F major. It is the only major section in this waltz and one of the few in the whole collection. It is played twice with a completely different second part, the first time going to the dominant (C) and the second one ending on the tonic (F major).

***Valsa Improvisada* (Improvised waltz)**

[Audio 7]

There is not much to explain about this title, it just implies that it should have the character of an improvised piece without losing the waltz feeling. The *tempo* marking is *moderadamente* (moderately) and has to be maintained stable most of the time, the only exceptions are the places indicated with *rit.*, *poco rit.* and *devagar* (slower). It is however important to be aware of the small break markings (“v”), in my understanding they contribute in this case to create an improvised feeling. The whole piece is written in soft nuances.

This *valsa* has a *rondo* form (ABACA) like some others already analyzed with two episodes and no *coda*:

- Refrain (bars 1-16): Long regular phrases with repeated motives, with some variations like adding a quintuplet in bar 10 or syncopations in different places to create an

improvised feeling (see figure 3). We find three phrases, one with eight bars and two with four, separated by small break marks. It ends with the tonic (C minor).

The image displays three staves of musical notation for bassoon, marked 'Moderadamente'. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), indicating C minor. It contains three phrases of music, each separated by a small break mark. The first phrase is marked 'mp', the second 'p', and the third 'mp'. The second and third staves continue the piece, with the second staff starting at measure 6 and the third at measure 11. Both the second and third staves feature a 'v' marking above the staff, likely indicating a breath mark or a specific articulation. The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Francisco Mignone. *16 Valsas Para Fagote Solo*, 18.

- First episode (bars 17-32): a section with an improvised feeling achieved by a great variety of rhythmical figures, mostly fast notes. The break marks put some organization to it. It finishes with the tonic of the main tonality (C minor) after four bars of *ritardando*.
- Second episode (bars 33-80): this long section has a first part in C major with long *legato* lines formed by half and quarter notes which create a very fluid waltz feeling. This part ends with the tonic, but in major, in bar 64 after a small *ritardando*. The second part has again a more improvised feeling with grace notes, different rhythms and some small modulations. It ends with a cadence in D major, and then introduces a chromatic upbeat that leads into the last refrain.

Apanhei-te Meu Fagotinho (Valsa paródia) [I got you my little bassoon (Parody waltz)]

[Audio 8]

This title makes reference to a *chôro* from Ernesto Nazareth entitled “*Apanhei-te meu cavaquinho*” (I got you my little guitar). This is a well-known piece among popular musicians in Brazil because of its *virtuoso* character and a fast *tempo* that allow the performer to show

his or her technical abilities.³⁰ This is immediately confirmed with the tempo indication "*bem rápido*" (very fast) and that mostly it is written with eight-notes all the time. The melody also refers to the original song in a lot of moments.

This *valsa* is the only one that has a major key as main tonality (C major) and yet it has a rondo form with two episodes and a *coda*:

- Refrain (bars 1-10): it is a variation of the melody of the original song that Mignone is parodying in this piece. It is played twice the first time and ends with the tonic after some transitional modulations.
- First episode (bars 11-33): it is entirely composed with big leaps between two eight-notes which are repeated through one bar. The high notes change every bar, while the low ones are maintained for some bars creating a sort of melody above a base note. This rhythmical pattern produces a very marked waltz feeling. We can find some transitional modulations. This section is played twice. I feel necessary to remark that in the old version some of the bars are written slured and others are separated, but in the new one all of them have been slured every two notes. I will stick to the old version since it reflects the original writing of Mignone, and it creates some variation through the section. It ends with the upbeat of the refrain.
- Second episode (bars 34-49): this section plays between a lyrical and a *scherzando* motives which could a parody of the characters of the guitar-playing. It is almost all in the principal tonality, with very few borrowed notes. It ends with the upbeat of the refrain.
- *Coda* (bars 50-58): in the first 4 bars makes a harmonic progression accompanied by the nuances in which the composer variates between *staccato* and *legato* in a clear allusion to guitar playing. In the last 5 bars he repeats the same one-bar motive four times in a dynamic progression from *piano* to *forte*, to end with the tonic in the lower register in fortissimo in the last bar preceded of a grace note which is the dominant two octaves higher. This last bar produces a mock effect and it is quite difficult to play at the same time.

³⁰ Coelho, "Francisco Mignone and the Sixteen Waltzes for Solo Bassoon.", 43-54.

+1 $\frac{3}{4}$

[Audio 9]

It is difficult to find a meaning to this particular title. Coelho³¹ suggests that Mignone shows his sense of humor with this title because it would mean something like “another more in $\frac{3}{4}$ ” but the piece is actually quite challenging technically. He also noticed that in Mignone's manuscript there is an inscription at the bottom of the page with the name Tiradentes. Tiradentes was a martyr in the initial uprising of the colony of Brazil, which is celebrated the same day that Mignone wrote this piece.

The piece has the indication “inner joy” and later “*molto allegro*” so it is a fast waltz with a lot of fast notes, different rhythms and articulations. Those characteristics plus the *valsa* not having a clear structure makes me think of it having an improvised feeling. Also, because the phrases are mainly constructed with variations of the same thematic elements. The piece is played twice finishing the first time with a *virtuoso* cadence and the second with a small three-bars *codetta*. The break marks and *fermatas* show the inflection points of the piece and mark its prosody.

***Valsa Declamada (O Viúvo)* [Recited Waltz (The widower)]**

[Audio 10]

As being explained before, his first wife died in a plane accident and this piece reflects probably his own grief as a widower. At the beginning of the *valsa* Mignone writes the indication *Moderadamente (Quasi falando)* which means Moderately (almost speaking), this makes sense with this piece which is written almost like an operatic *recitativo*, a very sad one, with a lot of repeated notes with different rhythmical figures and constant changes and fluctuations of *tempo* and dynamics (see figure 4). He uses lines or accents in groups of notes to give them more dramatic effect. It doesn't make sense to write about form in this piece which is written like a unified dramatic speech of pain. There are however some break marks and a fermata which help to organize the speech.

³¹ Coelho. “Francisco Mignone and the Sixteen Waltzes for Solo Bassoon.”, 43-54.

Moderadamente (Quase falando) *

mp

5 animando acalmado < 3 >

10 poco rit.

Francisco Mignone. *16 Valsas Para Fagote Solo*, 24.

Pattapiada

[Audio 11]

In the new edition we can find a foot note with the following content: “Homage to the Flutist Pattápio Silvio” – Mignone wrote in his manuscript: “Pattápí da Silva, flutist carioca (a person from the state of Rio de Janeiro), mulatto, celebrated by his distinguished virtuosity on his instrument. Lived in the first decades of this century (1900). Was one of the pioneers of popular music recording in Rio de Janerio. He had a short life due to tuberculosis.”³²

It is a fast waltz, written in a very flute-like way has a lot of resemblance with the waltz “*Primeiro Amor*” (First Love) written by Da Silva. The form is binary with recapitulation (ABA) and a short four-bars *codetta*. The first part (bars 1-34) is very *staccato* and has a waving and fast melody, and then Mignone uses the same thematic material through the whole part. The second part (bars 35-68) is also fast and all eight-notes but slured every two of them, this creates a very stable waltz feeling. The principal tonality of the piece is B minor but Mignone uses the *codetta* to make a “joke” and through a chromatic scale he conducts the music to a major sounding ending.

³² Mignone. *Music for Solo Bassoon: Sixteen Waltzes and Sonatina*, 18.

A Boa Páscoa para Você, Devos! (Valsa em fá sostenido menor) [Happy Easter for you, Devos! (Waltz in F sharp minor)]

[Audio 12]

This *valsa* is dedicated to Noël Devos, the great French bassoon player who moved to São Paulo and became probably the best bassoon player in Brazil at the time. Mignone and Devos had a good relationship, and the composer wrote all his bassoon pieces for him and his students. Devos premiered all of them and has, for example, the first recording of the “16 *Valsas Brasileiras*” as I explained previously.

The bassoon player was well known for his virtuosity and this is reflected in this piece that Mignone wrote to wish him happy Easter. It is a very melodic piece with a lot of *tempo* and dynamic fluctuations. The “easy” melodies, long lines and the *tempo* fluctuations create for me a popular feeling that could be easily associated with Easter. The form is binary with recapitulation (ABA) and coda:

- First part (bars 1-17): It is composed with long *legato* melodic lines. The *tempo* indication is “*andante moderato*” but we find the indication “*animando*” at the beginning and “*rit.*” at the end of every phrase (separated by a *fermata* and a break mark). This first part ends with the tonic of A major, the major relative of the main tonality (F# minor). It is played twice the first time.
- Second part (bars 18-46): This second part is composed with a *staccato* melody that then is presented with some variations also in *legato*. It is a light melody with waltz accentuation and some syncopations with a very popular feeling. The *tempo* indication is now “*piu vivo*”; it is more stable in this part, although some fluctuation indications still can be found. This part is also played twice, the first time ending with the tonic of the main tonality (F#) and the second with the dominant of the major relative (E⁴) as a modulation chord lead into the recapitulation of the first part.
- Coda (bars 47-54): It has an eight-bars phrase marked “*piu lento*” used to modulate back to the main tonality. Then, with the indication “*molto lento*” Mignone writes three bars where it looks like the piece is finishing with the tonic of the major relative (A major) but in the second half of the last bar he places the main tonic (F#) again.

Valsa Quase Modinheira (A implorante) [Waltz almost in *Modinha* style (The imploring “she”)]

[Audio 13]

The title suggests that this waltz should be played with the character of a *Modinha*, which is a very emotional love song as I have explained previously. This fits perfectly with the subtitle that talks about an imploring woman or girl and the indication “*Como saudosa canção suspirada*” (like a yearning, whispering song) that Mignone wrote at the beginning. All these indications tell us that the piece should be played in a very expressive way taking advantage of the huge quantity of slurred big intervals and the fluctuations in dynamics and *tempo*.

This particular *valsa* has not a very clear structure but I think it is a kind of variation of the binary form but with a short recapitulation (ABA') and *codetta*:

- First part (bars 1-32): According to the indication that Mignone writes at the beginning, it should not be fast and it should have sadness inside the *piano* dynamics. This part is composed with long slurred lines with a lot of big intervals, and some syncopations and irregular rhythms. It ends in the principal tonic (A minor).
- Second part (bars 33-46): This is a shorter part but it is played twice. This part is marked with “*Più vivo*” and it has very rhythmical elements like the use of accentuated syncopations. It is written in the way of a fast waltz in contrast with the first part. It ends with a half cadence on the dominant (E) which leads to the short recapitulation.
- Recapitulation (bars 47-62): I decided to call this part recapitulation because it is a short variation of the first part which ends with a small cadence-like moment (bars 58-62).
- *Codetta* (63-72): Mignone uses these bars to reassure the main tonality (A minor) with some perfect cadences.

Valsa Ingênua (Naïve waltz)

[Audio 14]

The character of this *valsa* is clearly described in the title and Mignone's composition sticks to it: almost no tempo fluctuations or irregular rhythms, just clear lines with a waltz feeling and accentuation. The form is easy and clear as well, with three sections composed with different thematic material but the similar characters and simplicity. The middle section is written in

the major relative (A major) while the first and third are in A minor. In the last section, the *tempo* gets faster and there are faster notes also which can become a technical difficulty for the player.

***A Escrava que não era Isaura (Valsa sem quadratura)* [The slave that was not Isaura (Waltz without form)]**

[Audio 15]

This piece has the inscription “*À memória de Mario de Andrade*” (to the memory of Mario de Andrade). I have explained extensively in previous chapters who Mario de Andrade was and which was his relationship with Francisco Mignone. Furthermore, the title of the *valsa* itself is also the title of an essay³³ that Mário de Andrade wrote in 1922 about the tendencies of modernistic poetry in Brazil at the moment. So, this is clearly an Homage to the person who showed him the path to his compositional style.

We find the indication “slow waltz” at the beginning of it and I think it relates well with being a solemn homage to a friend and mentor who is now dead. About the subtitle, even if Mignone wrote that this was a *valsa* without a form, I think he meant that in the detailed analysis it is hard to find clear phrases or traditional structures, but when looking to the big picture it is possible to find a structure. I would say that once again this piece has a binary form with recapitulation (ABA) and *coda*:

- First part (bars 1-39): There is a lot of movement even if it is in slow motion: Mignone wrote a lot of grace notes, “fast” notes and accentuations. It is all in *piano* until bar 30 probably like a silent suffering that suddenly comes out in a big emotional show that calms progressively. This idea fits well with the motive used in bar 31 where high eighth-notes in the second subdivision of every beat have an accent and are tied to the two eighth-notes on the beat which are two octaves lower and not accentuated. In addition, there are *decrescendi* below every two slurred notes. For me, this can simulate screams of pain or a loud cry. We find a lot of modulations during this part but it finishes with the tonic of the main tonality (C# minor).

³³ Mário de Andrade. “A escrava que não é Isaura.” In *Obra imatura* (Belo Horizonte: Editora Itatiaia Limitada, 1980).

- Second part (bars 40-81): This part has easier and simpler long lines which go along with the indication “*cantando*” (singing) that Mignone wrote. This part has as base tonality Db major although it is almost not recognizable at most points since it has so many transitional modulations. There is a really high part with the indication *allargando* which I understand as a very dramatic moment.
- *Coda* (bars 82-99): After a modulating phrase Mignone just goes around the main tonic (C# minor) using grace notes, appoggiaturas and other resources.

Macunaíma (A Valsa Sem Carácter) [Macunaíma (The waltz without character)]

[Audio 16]

The title of this last waltz is the name of the main character from the novel³⁴ with the same name written by Mário de Andrade. Once more there is a prove of the admiration that Mignone had for De Andrade, his ideas and his work. The novel follows Macunaíma, a young native man, as he travels to São Paulo and back. This man has “no character”, that means that he is very lazy, and which says it all the time. He is also fascinated with the industry and the machines. This character is a symbol of the Brazilian people.

It is a very mechanical and piece without a lot of variations and I think the key to achieve this character is to just do not try to do much with it. Just play through following the indications in a very mechanical way and without trying to express anything else than laziness and the cold and constancy of the machines.

³⁴ Mário de Andrade. *Macunaíma: O Herói Sem Nenhum Caráter*. (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2015).

Considerations about my recordings

When listening to the recordings it is easy to realize that these are really difficult pieces to play and therefore I maybe have not been able to achieve that all my musical intentions can be appreciated. With more time and practice, which will lead to a better control of the pieces, it would be easy to create all the expression and characters that I proposed in the analysis. So, they are just a promising starting point where the potential of these pieces can be appreciated.

That apart, I consider that a lot of things can be appreciated and the main characters and structures of the pieces can be heard. I have tried to be very respectful with the composer's indications and marking and just applying my musical feeling to those who are open to interpretations. I am sure that at the end this is just my interpretation and that not all the listeners will get the same experience from hearing them.

I have made sound recordings using a Zoom Q4n in wav format. The audio settings are 48kHz/24bit and the microphones were in "XZ" position and gain settled in level number 8. I have made the recordings in a standard room from the Academy of Music and Drama (University of Gothenburg) with approximate dimensions 6x5x3. There were some pieces of sound-absorbing curtains partially covering 2 of the walls and I played at approximately 75cm of distance from the recording machine, which was approximately 1 meter high.

The recordings have been named with "audio X" being "X" the number of the recording, according to the university's instructions for media files naming. Following you can find the relation of the recording names and its corresponding piece:

Audio 1 – *Aguela Modinha que o Villa não Escreveu*

Audio 2 – *6a Valsa Brasileira*

Audio 3 – *Mistério*

Audio 4 – *Valsa da Outra Esquina*

Audio 5 – *Valsa em Si Bemol Menor*

Audio 6 – *Valsa-Choro*

Audio 7 – *Valsa Improvisada*

Audio 8 – *Apanhei-te Meu Fagotinho*

Audio 9 - $+1 \frac{3}{4}$

Audio 10 – *Valsa Declamada*

Audio 11 – *Pattapiada*

Audio 12 – *Boa Páscoa para Você, Devos!*

Audio 13 – *Valsa Quase Modinheira*

Audio 14 – *Valsa Ingênuo*

Audio 15 – *A Escrava que não era Isaura*

Audio 16 – *Macunaíma*

Conclusions

This individual project has been a very enriching process for me: I have been able to find elements in the composer's background and context that have helped me not only to get a closer understanding of the piece, but also to understand all the cultural elements that are outside of my own background and experiences, without which the process of understanding the piece cannot be attempted.

In these pages I have explained which was the political and social situations that surrounded Mignone during his life and the moment of composition of the pieces. I have also identified the principal actors that influenced that climate and that influenced Mignone and his compositional style. Furthermore, I have analyzed the general elements which define the compositional style in which the pieces are inscribed consulting directly the primary sources written by its main theorist.

All that research has been necessary to approach the analysis of the pieces knowing a lot of the elements that influenced Mignone and therefore be able to make a critical analysis, based on his own way of understanding composition, music and art. I have also then investigated all the references to Brazilian culture and people that can be found in the titles and other indications of the pieces.

With all this knowledge an analysis I have recorded my own interpretation which, far from being perfect, is a great starting point to work deeper with this pieces and other music for bassoon composed by Francisco Mignone and his Brazilian contemporaries.

I believe, that it has been proven that the *16 valsas brasileiras* for bassoon were written by Francisco Mignone with a will of making Brazilian music, because he uses references and compositional elements that clearly come from the Brazilian culture and popular music. Furthermore, the compositional style of this pieces show that Mignone was following accurately the instructions given in the *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira* by Mário de Andrade, the big theorist for the creation of the Brazilian compositional style.

When playing, recording and listening to the recordings, I have also come to the conclusion that these pieces are really written having the sound, articulations and possibilities of the bassoon, and taking them to the limit. Some of the pieces have very difficult passages for a bassoon, that when are well played work perfectly with the characteristics of the instrument.

Regarding this matter, it should be pointed out that the bassoons used in Brazil during the 20th century were mostly French-system bassoons, which differ a little bit on sound and technique from the German system which I use and which is the most used nowadays across the world.

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