2009-12-12

Heitor Villa-Lobos's Mômoprecóce Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra (1919-1929): An Historical, Stylistic, and Interpretative Study

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HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS’S MÔMOPRECÔCE FANTASY
FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA (1919-1929):
AN HISTORICAL, STYLISTIC, AND INTERPRETATIVE STUDY

By

Simone Azevedo Leitão

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Coral Gables, Florida
December 2009
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

An essay submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
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The life and works of the Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) have been well documented. However, a comprehensive study concerning any of his nine works for piano and orchestra has not been undertaken. Among this prolific output, the Mômoprecôce, fantasie pour piano et orchestra, stands as a faithful representation of the composer’s skillful orchestration, descriptive piano writing through the observation of a childhood universe, and his multi-faceted approach to nationalism.

The fantasy is a through-composed arrangement of a previous solo piano suite by Villa-Lobos entitled, Carnaval das crianças brasileiras (Brazilian Children’s Carnival, 1919). This research aims to investigate the historic, stylistic, and interpretative aspects of Mômoprecôce, while discussing the composer’s unique usage of the piano through his innovative compositional techniques and comparison of the fantasy with his original solo piano suite.

Current literature in English, Portuguese and French is thoroughly examined, discussed, evaluated, and cited. In addition I provide a formal analysis, an interpretative guide, and a sociological perspective into Brazilian carnival, as specifically applied to the performance of Mômoprecôce.
I dedicate this work to Tia Ilda (1916-2008), to my beloved son Nathanael, and to Agnaldo, my husband and best friend.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was only possible with the help and guidance of many. I first wish to acknowledge the members of my committee: Ivan Davis, Dennis Kam, Deborah Schwartz-Kates, and Tian Ying for their supervision, advising, mentoring, and generous support throughout this process. I owe much to Frank Cooper, Giulio Draghi, Luiz Paulo Horta, and Dennis Janzer for their encouragement and thoughtful insights.

The Villa-Lobos Museum in Rio de Janeiro with their helpful staff added much to the present research. I am equally grateful to the professional personnel at the University of Miami Libraries.

Furthermore, I wish to thank my parents, my five sisters and six brothers for being an inspiration to me and for providing spiritual, psychological, and material support. I am forever in debt to my husband Agnaldo, and my son Nathanael for their unconditional love at all times.

S.D.G.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 MOTIVATION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background and Purpose of Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Genesis of <em>Mônoprecóce</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The French Influence</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villa-Lobos's Works for Piano and Orchestra</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and Articles</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertations and Master Theses</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sources and Discography</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 CHARACTERISTICS OF VILLA-LOBOS’S PIANO WRITING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STYLE</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic Ostinato</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvisatory Approach</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestration</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

v
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Folklore</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textural Treatment</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Key-White Key Techniques</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic Ideas</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretative Considerations</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 VILLA-LOBOS AND THE CONCEPT OF CHILDHOOD AS EXPRESSED THROUGH HIS SOLO PIANO LITERATURE</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 STRUCTURAL COMPARISON OF CARNAVAL DAS CRIANÇAS AND MÔMOPRECÔCE BY HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Remarks</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 INSTRUMENTATION, CHARACTER, AND INTERPRETATIVE ASPECTS WHEN COMPARING THE CARNAVAL DAS CRIANÇAS AND MÔMOPRECÔCE</strong></td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene One – <em>O ginete do pierrozinho</em> (Little Pierrot’s Pony)</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Two – <em>O chicote do diabinho</em> (The Little Devil’s Whip)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Three – <em>A manhã da Pierrete</em> (Pierrete’s Morning)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Four – <em>Os guizos do Dominózinho</em> (Little Domino’s Jingle Bells)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlude – Orchestra and Piano (New Material)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Five – <em>As peripécias de um trapeirozinho</em> (The Little Ragpicker’s Adventures)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scene Six – *As traquinices do mascarado mignon* (The Mischievous Little Masker)........................................................................................................... 88

Scene Seven – *A gaita do precoce fantasiado* (The Fife of the Precocious Daydreamer)........................................................................................................... 91

Finale – *A Folia de um bloco infantil* (Frolics of a Band of Children).......................................................................................................................... 93

Bloco and Samba School........................................................................................................... 93

Instrumentation and Interpretative Aspects of the Finale.............. 95

Conclusion........................................................................................................................... 99

**FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**................................................................................................. 100

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**............................................................................................................. 102
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, works for piano and orchestra ........................................ 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, <em>Carnaval das crianças brasileiras</em> and Mômoprecóce, comparison, “Little Pierrot’s Pony” ........................................................ 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, <em>Carnaval das crianças brasileiras</em> and Mômoprecóce, comparison, &quot;The Little Devil’s Whip&quot; ........................................................ 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, <em>Carnaval das crianças brasileiras</em> and Mômoprecóce, comparison, “Pierrette’s Morning” ................................................................. 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, <em>Carnaval das crianças brasileiras</em> and Mômoprecóce, comparison, “Little Domino’s Jungle Bells” ......................................................... 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, <em>Carnaval das crianças brasileiras</em> and Mômoprecóce, comparison, Orchestral interlude ................................................................. 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, <em>Carnaval das crianças brasileiras</em> and Mômoprecóce, comparison, “The Little Ragpicker’s Adventures” .............................................. 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, <em>Carnaval das crianças brasileiras</em> and Mômoprecóce, comparison, “The Mischievous Little Masker” ....................................................... 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, <em>Carnaval das crianças brasileiras</em> and Mômoprecóce, comparison, Orchestral transition ................................................................. 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Villa-Lobos, <em>Carnaval das crianças brasileiras</em> and Mômoprecóce comparison, “The Fife of the Precocious Daydreamer” ........................................ 61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.10 Villa-Lobos, *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* and *Mômoprecóce*,

comparison, “Frolics of a Band of Children”…………………………………… 62

6.1 Villa-Lobos, “Pierrete’s Morning,” formal structure…………………………… 76
### LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 1-3</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 1-4</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 1-4</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 1-4</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 10-13</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 10-13</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 20-25</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 20-25</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 22-23</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 46</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 1-4</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.12 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 5-8</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.13 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 9-13</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.14 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 21-25</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.15 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 46-54</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.16 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 58-60</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.17 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 64-68</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.18 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 85-86</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.19 Villa-Lobos, <em>Mônoprecóce</em>, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; mvt., mm. 123-125</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.20 Villa-Lobos, Pierrete’s Morning., mm. 3-6............................ 76
6.21 Villa-Lobos, Pierrete’s Morning., mm. 1-2............................ 77
6.22 Villa-Lobos, Pierrete’s Morning., mm. 11-14......................... 77
6.23 Villa-Lobos, Pierrete’s Morning., mm. 15-16........................ 78
6.24 Villa-Lobos, Pierrete’s Morning., mm. 23-26....................... 78
6.25 Villa-Lobos, Pierrete’s Morning., mm. 46-48....................... 79
6.26 Villa-Lobos, The Little Domino’s Jingle Bells, mm. 1-2........... 80
6.27 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 4th mvt., mm. 1-2...................... 81
6.28 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 4th mvt., mm. 20-23................... 81
6.29 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 4th mvt., mm. 37...................... 82
6.30 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 4th mvt., mm. 56-59................... 82
6.31 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 4th mvt., mm. 72-76................... 83
6.32 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, interlude, mm. 1-3..................... 84
6.33 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, interlude, mm. 1-2..................... 84
6.34 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, interlude, mm. 10-12.................. 85
6.35 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, interlude, mm. 17-18.................. 85
6.36 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 5th mvt., mm. 2-3..................... 86
6.37 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 5th mvt., mm. 6-9..................... 87
6.38 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 5th mvt., mm. 24..................... 88
6.39 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 6th mvt., mm. 12-15.................. 89
6.40 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 6th mvt., mm. 27-32.................. 89
6.41 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 6th mvt., mm. 50-51.................. 90
6.42 Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 6th mvt., mm. 109-110............... 91
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Villa-Lobos, <em>Mômoprecóce</em>, 7th mvt., mm. 5-8</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.43</td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.44</td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.45</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.46</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.47</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.48</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.49</td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.50</td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.51</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

MOTIVATION

Background and Purpose of Study

Among the vast output of the prolific Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), the fantasy for piano and orchestra Mômoprecóce,\(^1\) deserves special consideration. Mômoprecóce belongs to the body of Villa-Lobos’s keyboard works which reflects the composer’s fascination with childhood scenes. Mômoprecóce is a brilliant and lively score in which the piano has great responsibility and offers “unexpected and unusual sounds” provided by effective combinations of instruments.\(^2\) According to the Brazilian pianist and one of Villa-Lobos’s greatest interpreters, João de Souza Lima, it is a magnificent work which came to enrich the standard piano and orchestra repertoire.\(^3\)

Villa-Lobos’s solo piano music is widely known, performed, and studied, in contrast to his works for piano and orchestra which are frequently neglected. This fact is unfortunate. While Villa-Lobos wrote an immense literature for piano, his superior ability to deal with the capabilities of the modern orchestra cannot be ignored. He enjoyed a solid international career as a conductor as well as composer, to the extent

\(^1\) The manuscript found at the Villa-Lobos Museum designates the title as Mômoprecóce, although the printed edition by Max Eschig has it indicated as two separate words, without the second accent as in Mômo Precoce. Since the manuscript will be the source of analysis for the study, the title will be kept as in the original.


that from 1945 to 1958 he was constantly conducting American and European orchestras in performances of his own works. The eminent French composer Olivier Messiaen stated that Villa-Lobos was definitely one of twentieth century’s foremost orchestrators. Anna Stela Schic, Brazilian pianist and Villa-Lobos’s close friend reports on Messiaen’s interview to French journalist, author and critic Claude Samuel:

Samuel: Other musicians adopted a very fruitful and characteristic way, creating real masterpieces. I think of personalities such as Bartók and Falla, who found an original path recurring to folkloric inspiration.

Messiaen: You may add a very captivating composer due to his prolixity, a composer whose contribution was essential: Villa-Lobos.

Claude Samuel: I know that you have great admiration for this musician because he was a great orchestrator.

Messiaen: A fabulous orchestrator.4

With this statement, Messiaen emphasizes Villa-Lobos’s perfect command of the orchestral. However, no study treating any of his piano and orchestral works has been undertaken. This research will aim to investigate the historic, stylistic and interpretative aspects of Mômoprecóce, while discussing the composer’s unique usage of the piano through his innovative writing techniques.

From 1913 to 1954 Villa-Lobos composed nine works for piano and orchestra, five of which bore the name of Concerto (written between 1945 and 1954). His first work for this combination was a suite for piano and orchestra, written in 1913. In

1928 he wrote a massive work for piano and orchestra (ca. fifty minutes long), his
*Choros no. 11*. In 1929, already a mature composer and orchestrator, Villa-Lobos
wrote his third and most popular work for piano and orchestra, the *Mômoprecóce*.\(^5\)

The main purpose of this study is to analyze from a performance standpoint
Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Mômoprecóce*: Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra. The analysis of
the musical influences and comparison of this work to major European composers, as
well as with predecessors and contemporaries of Villa-Lobos is inevitable, since the
present study is intentionally written for an international community of performers.
However, the researcher will aim to bring to light historical and sociological aspects
pertinent to this investigation, thus leading to an accurate, less generalized study of a
South American composer, in addition to the study of practical performance issues
raised when dealing with a work for piano and orchestra by Villa-Lobos.

The following questions and tasks will guide this investigation:

1 – What are the main characteristics of Villa-Lobos's style of piano writing?

2 – How did his childhood fascination with, and implementation of, Brazilian
children's folklore shape his solo piano output?

3 – How does *Mômoprecóce* depict each of the scenes of the original piano
solo work, *Carnaval das crianças*?

4 – What is the role of the orchestration in this process?

5 – What are the similarities and differences between *Carnaval* and
*Mômoprecóce*?

---

\(^5\) Andrade Muricy, *Villa-Lobos uma interpretação* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e
In order to answer the above-proposed questions, this study will follow the provided organization: Chapter 1 will discuss the variety of Villa-Lobos's musical styles and his principal influences. It will also describe his compositional periods and examine his personal and artistic life as a composer and conductor. Finally, it will offer a biographical sketch of the composer. Chapter 2 will review the Villa-Lobos scholarly literature. Chapter 3 will study Villa-Lobos's overall style and its application to his piano solo literature. In Chapter 4, the focus will be on the consideration of Villa-Lobos's works for piano solo inspired by the world of children and a brief study of the composer’s piano procedures in the Cirandas and Prole do Bebê no. 1 and 2, which are common to Mômoprecóce. Chapter 5 will compare the structures of Carnaval das crianças and Mômoprecóce. Finally, Chapter 6 will discuss the instrumentation and interpretative aspects of Mômoprecóce and will provide an historical and sociological comment about each character, in order to culturally inform the performance.

The Genesis of Mômoprecóce

The title Mômoprecóce is made of two Portuguese words: Mômo – the king of carnival and precoce – precocious. The translation therefore would be: “The Precocious Carnival King.” Villa-Lobos invented this new word by uniting Mômo

---

6 The Mômo exists in adult carnival celebrations, after Momus, the Greek god of ridicule. Since this piano and orchestra fantasy was an arrangement of the Brazilian Children’s Carnival for solo piano, Villa-Lobos referred to a child being the “King of Carnival”, hence a “precocious momus.”
and Precoce. He made a similar play on words with his 1921 masterpiece for the piano solo: Rudepoema.\(^7\)

*Rude* and *poema* are two separate words and they mean respectively: rude and poem. 

*Mômoprecóce*, subtitled “fantasy for piano and orchestra,” was composed in 1929. The fantasy is a through-composed arrangement of a previously written solo piano suite by Heitor Villa-Lobos entitled *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* (Brazilian Children’s Carnival - 1919), which ends with a four-hand duet in the last scene. The work is orchestrated as one unified movement. This original score consisted of eight individual scenes, each with its own title that resembles diverse moods and typical characters in the four-day folk festival of carnival, viewed from a child’s perspective. According to Eero Tarasti, the aim of *Mômoprecóce* was to create orchestral colors to better depict the different characters of the children’s carnival.\(^8\)

This version for piano and orchestra was suggested by the famous Brazilian and Paris-based pianist, Magda Tagliaferro, who premiered the work in Amsterdam in 1929 under Pierre Monteux. The French première took place in Paris on April 4, 1930 at the Salle Pleyel, with the Orchestre Symphonique directed by the Spanish conductor, Enrique Fernandez Arbós (1863-1939).\(^9\) The North American première of the work took place on November 18\(^{th}\), 1951 with the Brazilian pianist Guiomar

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\(^7\) Muricy, *Villa-Lobos*, 71.


Novaes and The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra under Faben Sevitzki.\textsuperscript{10}

\textit{Môomoprecóce} was the last piece on the program of the final concert in which Villa-Lobos conducted the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra. The concert took place in August 24, 1958 at the Municipal Theater in Rio de Janeiro, with pianist Sonia Maria Strutt.

The eight scenes of the original piano suite are: 1) “Ginete do Pierrozinho” (Little Pierrot’s Spanish Horse); 2) “O chicote do diabinho” (The Little Devil’s Whip); 3) “A manhã da Pierrete” (Pierrete’s Morning); 4) “Os guizos do Dominozinho” (Little Domino’s Jingle Bells); 5) “As peripécias do trapeirozinho” (The Little Ragpicker’s Adventure); 6) “As traquinices do mascarado Mignon” (The Mischievous Little Masker); 7) “A gaita de um precoce fantasiado” (The Fife of a Precocious Daydreamer); and 8) “A folia de um bloco infantil” (Frolics of a Band of Children).\textsuperscript{11}

In 1919, when the series of solo piano pieces had been completed, according to German Scholar Lisa Peppercorn, Villa-Lobos incidentally wrote the final movement “\textit{A folia de um bloco infantil}” for four-hand piano. The solo piano suite therefore ends with this piano duet. Lisa Peppercorn suggests that this fact demonstrates that Villa-Lobos already had a “larger canvas in mind for this finale,”\textsuperscript{12} considering that the finale was not scored in the same texture as the previous seven

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{10} Villa-Lobos \textit{sua obra}, 3d. ed. (Rio de Janeiro: MinC-SPHAN Pro-Memória Museu Villa-Lobos, 1989), 80.
\end{itemize}
movements. The Carnaval das crianças was premiered on September 17, 1925 by pianist Antonieta Rudge Miller, who was joined by a small ensemble of percussion instruments for the last movement along with a second pianist. The percussion ensemble added musically and folkloric aspects for the representation of the parading idea which marks the Folia. However we do not have documentation if these added percussion ensemble was approved by Villa-Lobos.

Comparing the solo piano score with that of the piano and orchestra, it is clear that the piano part is practically kept the same. The orchestra serves as an accompaniment for most of the fantasy, and as a transition between scenes. The only new addition to the piano score can be found in the piano part for the long transition before the fifth scene: “The Little Ragpicker’s Adventures.” This newly-composed section is a clear representation of Villa-Lobos’s impressionistic writing displayed in this piece. For thirty measures (rehearsal numbers 38-41), the piano builds along with the orchestra, from dynamic markings \( ppp \) to \( fff \). In 6/4 time, the dialogue between the pianist’s hands starts with a pedal bass, uses chords with the melody \( bien chanté \), on top, for the left hand; while the right hand plays a chromatic pattern with increasingly faster figures, from quarter notes to eighth notes, triplets, groups of six and finally of groups of nine notes. At this given point, the composition reaches the climax on the highest possible region of the keyboard.

Stylistically speaking, Villa-Lobos’s compositional idiom represented in the Carnaval das crianças is quite heterogeneous. According to Bruno Kiefer:

\[ \text{Appleby, 52.} \]
This group of pieces represents a heterogeneous panorama. On one hand, there is the use of whole tone scales—as, for example, in the “Little Domino’s Jingle Bells;” and pentatonic scale, in “The Little Devil’s Whip” for three octaves. On the other hand we find passages that are undoubtedly bitonal such as in “The Mischievous Little Masker.” We find it for example, in the “Cantabile e molto legato passage.” There are also perfectly atonal passages such as in the “Little Domino’s Jingle Bells,” not to mention the modal passages. We observe in the pieces entitled “Little Pierrot’s Horse” and “Little Domino’s Jingle Bells,” traces of Villa-lobos’s musical character; in other pieces these traces are less noticeable. As for the musical point of view, this group of short pieces is extremely effective.¹⁴

The *Carnaval das crianças* belongs to the composer’s vast piano solo literature which relates to the children universe. Villa-Lobos’s intense fascination with childhood expressed through his piano music can only be compared to that of Robert Schumann.¹⁵ This fact made most Villa-Lobos scholars recognize the intrinsic romantic aspects of his creation, even though his writing style manifested early-twentieth-century compositional techniques. The *Carnaval das crianças* is also associated with Villa-Lobos’s piano writing of the first nationalistic period, which happened before the “Week of Modern Art” of 1922 in São Paulo.

The “Week of Modern Art” was a movement which served as a turning point in shifting the arts in Brazil towards a less Eurocentric, more nationalistic

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¹⁵ Kiefer; 58.
The “Week” was not the beginning of this turn toward nationalism, but rather a “manifesto” achieved through representations of Brazilian modern literature along with visual and performing arts. In light of the Centenary of Brazilian independence, a group of literary figures, artists, and intellectuals organized the “Week of Modern Art” in São Paulo, on February 1922. Villa-Lobos was invited to present some of his works, as a representation of modern music in Brazil. In fact, about half of Villa-Lobos's solo piano output was written before 1922. These works consist of the *Suite infantil no. 1* (1912), *Suite infantil* no. 2 (1913), *Danças características africanas* (1913), *Simples coletânea* (1917), *Suite floral* (1917), *A Prole do Bebê* no. 1 (1918), *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* (1919), *Histórias da Carochinha* (1919), *Lenda do Caboclo* (1920), *A Fiandeira* (1920), *Rudepoema* (1921), *A Prole do Bebê* no. 2 (1921). Such pieces were designed for the virtuoso pianist, although Heitor Villa-Lobos himself was not a concert pianist. The reason for such a vast literature for solo piano during a short period of time must be connected to the composers marriage in November 1913 to Lucília Guimarães. She was a fine and polished pianist who graduate from the Instituto Nacional de Música, known as The Escola de Música da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro School of Music). Unlike his wife, Villa-

16 Mariz, 13.


19 Appleby, 26.
Lobos did not have a formal musical education. His father was responsible for his musical training. As the Brazilian musicologist Vasco Mariz describes it:

The child was born into a traditionally Brazilian home, headed by a serious man. Raul Villa-Lobos, senior officer of the Brazilian National Library, a scholar, author of several publications on history and cosmography, and a good musician. Raul was a stern, energetic, and, at times, a despotic father. He trained his son in musical theory so that at the age of 11, when his father died, Heitor could play the cello and the clarinet.  

This upbringing suggests that although not formally trained in a conservatory or music school, Villa-Lobos received a strict and extensive musical training from an early age at home.

All Villa-Lobos’s scholars agree that the composer’s experience as a chorão (chôro musician) plays an intrinsic part of his spontaneous personality as a composer. The chôro was a particular popular musical genre of the cariocas (natives of Rio de Janeiro). Although the word is often misunderstood as a kind of Spanish serenade, the chôro can not be classified as such, due to its indelible instrumental nature. The central figure of a serenade is the singer. On the other hand, chorões were virtuoso instrumentalists who assembled to improvise. Singers were rare, and as Brazilian musicologist Vasco Mariz attests: “only Eduardo das Neves and Catulo were accepted as part of the chorões groups.”21  

The emphasis was on the spontaneity of the musician’s creation. When comparing chôro with a jam session in North American jazz, Mariz refers to the Brazilian Scholar Corrêa de Azevedo, stating:

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20 Mariz, Heitor Villa-Lobos: Life and Work of the Brazilian Composer, 3.

Corrêa de Azevedo remarked that although improvisation was common to both instrumental groups, the chôro music used to require virtuoso ability to perform it, while the jam session music is richer in harmony and orchestral color. The chôro improvisation was stressed in an instrumental solo with its modulations, while at jam sessions there is improvisation of several instruments successively or concurrently.  

Villa-Lobos grew up and became a member of the distinctive Chôro group directed by Quincas Laranjeiras, and was one of the guitarists of the ensemble. This experience added to his musical background and undeniably influenced his compositions.

Nationalism

Heitor Villa-Lobos was born in 1887, when his country was a vast, bucolic, underpopulated, and in many regions, undiscovered place. At that time, In Brazil there were about ten million inhabitants, of which the majority were of Portuguese descent, in addition to former African slaves, and native Amerindians. Other European ethnicities were present as immigrants. Cultivated musical society was completely dominated by European musical tastes. Italian operatic music reigned unchallenged, although the majority of Brazilian composers dedicated themselves chiefly to orchestral and piano music, except for Carlos Gomes, a native of Campinas in the sate of São Paulo, who received national and international recognition with his opera Il Guarany.

The Portuguese royal family lived in Rio de Janeiro from 1808 untill 1821. This fact turned Rio de Janeiro into the musical capital of Brazil and consequently of the Portuguese empire. Artistic activity remained intense after the royal family returned to Lisbon and Brazil achieved independence in 1822. Brazil adopted the

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22 Ibid.
Imperial government by choosing the son of King João VI of Portugal, Pedro I as its emperor. This form of government existed in Brazil for sixty-seven years until the Brazilian Republic was proclaimed in 1889. Both Brazilian emperors Pedro I and Pedro II were talented musicians who fostered a rich musical environment in Imperial Brazil.\(^{23}\)

The first period of Romantic nationalism in Brazil occurred from 1880 through 1920, although the first published piece of nationalistic music was a solo piano piece by Itiberê da Cunha, entitled *A Sertaneja* (1869), which anticipated the movement. Itiberê was a diplomat and pianist, habitué of the salons of the Royal family in Rio de Janeiro. For most scholars, this piece was a starting point of the Brazilian nationalism. Coincidentally, the year 1869 was when the American composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk toured Brazil.

Gerard Béhague investigates the dawn of Brazilian nationalism and divides it in two main streams:

The early phase of nationalism in Brazil, may be defined as a time of transition whose stylistic trends stands between early romantic European national music, as expressed in Brazil by Carlos Gomes’s operas or Itiberê da Cunha’s pianos piece *A Sertaneja*, and more authentic nationalism rooted in folk and popular musical traditions. Only after 1920 was this latter aspect developed by such composers as Villa-Lobos, Mignone, Lorenzo Fernandez, and Guarnieri.

By 1880 folk and ethnic music investigations in Brazil were beginning with Silvio Romero’s first publications appearing in 1883. Yet even as late as 1913-1917, when Edgardo Roquette Pinto published his first studies, art-music composers remained unaware of these publications. Furthermore, in such cosmopolitan environments as those of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, where most of the composers of this period were active, folk music was scarcely known during the nineteenth century. It took at least thirty years after the proclamation of the Republic (1889) for folk music to significantly

penetrate these urban areas. Therefore, during the period under consideration, there could not be any direct assimilation of folk music in Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo. Yet in the case of provincial cities, especially those in the north and northeast, folk manifestations could not be considered as a purely rural phenomenon. The critic-musicologist Mário de Andrade has stressed this interpretation of the rural and the urban cultural areas making clear that, with the exception of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and few others, all Brazilian cities are in direct and immediate contact with the rural zone.\[^{24}\]

Therefore, the mature Villa-Lobos writing dates from the second period of nationalism as stated by Béhague. Villa-Lobos’s restlessness and fascination for musical explorations in remote parts of Brazil is understandable, when the fact of Brazil’s ignorance of its folkloric traditions come to light.

Vasco Mariz considers the effect of Brazil’s music nationalism in perpetuating a caricaturist view of the country’s identity:

Brazilian national music has been interpreted by scholars as being superficial and descriptive. As one frequently comes across a composition of strong Negro or Indian character played as music representative of Brazil, this would seem to confirm this belief—a belief not uncommonly held to be true of countries like Brazil, which in their own right are richly endowed with folk music. Instead such music should be understood as a true expression of the Brazilian soul, of deep psychological growth, maturing through the centuries, and not solely as a depiction of the external manifestations of Brazilian life. Villa-Lobos was the explorer of this domain in Brazil and the one who showed his contemporaries the right course through it. His works have easily surpassed the obvious stages of national music and often explore the spiritual depths of the Brazilian character.\[^{25}\]

Villa-Lobos would discover this Brazilian character not only when he looked into folklore as an observer, but also when he rescued the Ameridian tradition and incorporated it within his music through the use of characteristic melodic patterns and the frequent use of ostinati, when he valued the African heritage by applying its


\[^{25}\] Mariz; xi.
rhythms and textures, and when he recreated the melodic opulence of Brazilian upper class salon. His nationalism was visceral. Villa-Lobos explains:

I compose obeying to an imperious interior calling. I write Brazilian music because I feel possessed by Brazil’s life, with its songs, its sons and daughters and their dreams, their hopes and accomplishments. My musical output is the consequence of predestination. If my music is large in quantity, it is because it is the harvest of a colossal land, generous and warm.26

Villa-Lobos’s music was not intended to entertain, but rather to clarify, explain, express, and expose his country’s identity. Brazilian musicologist José Maria Neves believes that this composer was able to synthesize his country’s “elements, such as rhythm, melodic lines, harmonies and instrumental colors.”27

Various Villa-Lobos scholars have studied the emergence of his nationalism, according to different understandings. Lisa Peppercorn, for example claims that the composer’s interest in incorporating Brazilian folklore into his music was a result of his first visit to Paris in 1923 and arose as a response to the the growing curiosity of the Parisian audience and critics to anything that was exotic and different. As Peppercorn states:

He renounced the past, took leave from traditions, broke completely with everything to which he had adhered previously. It was a vital decision, a tremendous resolution because his contemporaries, at that time, had not yet produced anything along the lines on which he now set his mind.28

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27 “Elementos como ritmo, linhas melódicas, harmonias e cores de timbres.” Neves, 15.

Villa-Lobos’s first visit to Paris was indeed a turning point in his style and career. His encounters with major composers of his time, with a critical audience, and superb interpreters, assured him that he was on the right path to become Brazil’s foremost composer. However, Peppercorn’s Eurocentric overstatement of the significance of the composer’s Parisian years is not shared by all Brazilianists and Villa-Lobos scholars. After all, he was writing in a nationalistic style before he went to Paris. The “Week of Modern Art” had already taken place in 1922. For example, upon analyzing Villa-Lobos’s ballet *Uirapuru* of 1917 (The Enchanted Bird of the Amazon), the Latin-Americanist scholar Gerard Béhague emphasizes the composer’s authenticity and prodigious intuition towards the current idiom of primitivism that took hold during the 1910s in Paris:

> The primitivistic effects, such as the furtive little chromatic motives assigned to woodwinds or the piano’s high register, the glissandi applied to trombones and French horns, the percussive use of the strings, are basically the same techniques developed concurrently in Europe to express primitivism, here the ‘crawling things’ of the forest. Harmonically and structurally, the piece announces Villa-Lobos’ future practices that become stylistic determinants especially of the 1920’s. These include profuse ostinati, pedal points, extensive chromaticism and occasional atonal passages, together with abundant cross-rhythmic and polyrhythmic textures and the frequently continuous melodic invention rather than the thematic development.  

Brazilian and international scholars who see Brazilian music through a culturally informed perspective, like Gerard Béhague, understand the complexity of Villa-Lobos’s music, whereas Eurocentric scholars seem to try to distinguish and classify the European influences on his music. However undeniable, the focus on European comparisons, seems too simplistic for any scholar who understands the

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variety and diversity of Brazil’s music and culture. Brazilians, such as Vasco Mariz, Bruno Kiefer, Luiz Paulo Horta, Andrade Muricy, José Maria Neves, and others, agree that the composer’s nationalism was the consequence of his deep study of the folklore, and his continuous expeditions in the various Brazilian regions which took place between the years 1903 to 1912. Villa-Lobos made a distinction between rural and urban traditions. His vast experience as a chôro musician in the popular musical scene of Rio de Janeiro, contributed to his development as well. Villa-Lobos played the guitar or the clarinet in these chôro groups. Andrade Muricy in his “Interpretation of Villa-Lobos” reports on the art music scene of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo during the 1910s and 1920s and Villa-Lobos’s involvement:

Only whoever saw the decline of those times is capable of evaluating the inebriatedness which exalted the boy Villa-Lobos. Popular music flourished then in complete spontaneity and carelessness, free as it was born, without being subject to music publishers and radio broadcasting studio directors. A polka by Anacleto Medeiros, a tap dance by Chiquinha Gonzaga, a tango by Nazareth, each one displayed a consoling genuineness. And Villa-Lobos, with an ear still rather unattentive for good music, sucked up the inflections, the rhythms and the specific colorings of popular music.

Muricy suggests therefore that the spontaneity of the polka and chôro


31 Chôro is a term with various musical meanings. Generically, chôro denotes urban ensemble instrumental music, often with one group member as a soloist. Specifically it refers to chorões (musician serenaders) that developed in Rio de Janeiro from 1870’s. The chôro generally includes flute, clarinet, ophicleide, trombone, cavaquinho (a type of ukulele), guitar, seven strings guitar and tambourine. The repertory of chôro consists chiefly of European dances, such as the polka, combined with popular Brazilian rhythmic genres such as maxixe and samba. Gerard Béhague: “Chôro,” Grove Music Online, ed. Laura Macy (Accessed 5 February 2008), <www.grovemusic.com>.

32 “Só quem alcançou o declinar daquela época pode avaliar da ebriedade que exaltava o menino Villa-Lobos. A música popular floria, então, em plena espontaneidade e despreocupação, livre como nascia, sem sujeição a editores e diretores de estúdios radiofônicos. Uma polka de Anacleto Medeiros, um corta-jaca de Chiquinha Gonzaga, um tango de Nazareth, eram de uma autenticidade consoladora. E Villa-Lobos, com um ouvido ainda um pouco distraído, para a música de classe, abeberava-se de inflexões, de ritmos das colorações específicas do populário.” 11.
musicians of Rio de Janeiro at the time of Villa-Lobos’s youth was a fundamental influence for the improvisatory character of his style. The development of Villa-Lobos’s writing, therefore, was a result of his paternal musical upbringing and experience as a chôro musician, allied with his study of Brazilian folklore in constant expeditions around the various regions of the country, as well as his keen musical intuition.

The French Influence

Because Mômoprecóce, was designed for a Parisian audience, it is pertinent, in this case, to find the French precedents for the genre. Before the “Week” during the years of WW1, Rio de Janeiro was an important South American refugee destination for European composers, musicians, and artists. This was particularly the case for the French, as a result of this city’s longstanding relationship with French culture. In fact, during the time of Villa-Lobos’s education, Brazilian culture depended heavily on French models. According to musicologist Adhemar Nóbrega, the uncontrolled admiration for Paris of the Belle époque (the period of European history politically marked by the end of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871 and the beginning of the World War I in 1914), exercised a tyrannical fascination over Brazil of that era.\(^{33}\) Heitor Villa-Lobos, educated as an intellectual middle-class child, spoke fluent French and used French titles in his early works.\(^{34}\)


\(^{34}\) Muricy, 110.
Bruno Kiefer, in his book “Villa-Lobos e o modernismo na música brasileira,” (Villa-Lobos and Modernism in Brazilian Music), reports his research on concert programs presented in Rio de Janeiro from 1900 to 1920. The preference for French music was undeniable for symphonic concerts and solo piano recitals. According to Kiefer, audiences heard many performances of works by César Franck (constantly played since the end of the nineteenth century), Fauré, Charpentier, Duparc, Chabrier, Dukas, Lalo, and Ravel as a group achieved significant numbers of performances. Saint-Saëns, however was by far the favored French composer, since over 1899 visit fo Brazil in appearances before sold-out audiences in Rio and São Paulo. These composer’s, along with Debussy, strongly marked the French sensibility in cariocas (natives of Rio de Janeiro), who frequently attended concerts and recitals that featured this repertoire, alongside Italian opera.

Villa-Lobos by then was playing cello at the Municipal Theater Orchestra, and was constantly performing a such repertoire. The North American musicologist David Appleby, in his monograph Heitor Villa-Lobos: A Life, discusses the French influence on Villa-Lobos’s early music experience:

On Bastille Day, July 14, 1909 the Teatro Municipal (Municipal Theater) was opened in Rio and provided the music-going public with a splendid setting for opera and theater productions. Villa-Lobos later applied for a position as cellist in the orchestra and was accepted. While Villa-Lobos participated in the orchestra, a regular schedule of opera productions and, in 1913, a series concerts by the Ballet Russe provided him with his most concentrated experience to date as a performer of serious orchestral works by French and Russian composers. Sensing a need for more systematic knowledge of composition, he also undertook the study of Vincent d’Indy’s Cours de composition musicale. It is interesting that Villa-Lobos always vigorously

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36 Ibid.
denied the influence of other composers or styles; nevertheless, various works written during this period, especially his songs, have definite characteristics associated with French impressionism. Two songs written in 1913 have French texts: *Fleur fanée* (Faded Flower) and *l’Oiseau blessé d’une fleche* (Wounded Bird), the latter based on a La Fontaine fable.\(^{37}\)

Bruno Kiefer states however, that there were no programs or newspaper articles of the time which proved the Ballet Russe’s visit to Rio in 1913 as Peppercorn\(^ {38}\) and Appleby suggest. Kiefer only states that in 1923, on his first visit to Paris, Villa-Lobos attended a performance of Stravinsky’s music, which made a strong impression on him.\(^ {39}\) The French composer Darius Milhaud (1892 – 1974), a member of “Les Six” worked for two years as Secretary to the French Minister Paul Claudel, in Rio de Janeiro, and reports meeting Villa-Lobos.\(^ {40}\) Milhaud recognized Villa-Lobos (five years his senior), as a true genius who was able to write Brazilian music in current idiomatic musical forms. Milhaud’s praise of Villa-Lobos’s style of writing would confirm Appleby’s and Peppercorn’s belief that Villa-Lobos was acquainted with the current compositional trends in France and consequently in Europe.

Villa-Lobos wrote the *Mômoprecóce*, as a piano and orchestra work that did not follow the outlines of a traditional piano concerto. Instead he followed the manner of treating the piano and orchestra in the prevailing French style, popular since the

\(^{37}\) Appleby, 26.


\(^{39}\) Kiefer, 40.

time of Vincent D’Indy. For this reason, it is pertinent to list the use of piano in orchestral works by French composers ever since Vincent d’Indy (1851-1931) Symphonie sur un chant montagnard français (1886). After that time, Florent Schmitt (1870-1958), the French composer, pianist, and critic whom Villa-Lobos admired, wrote in 1928 his Symphonie Concertante pour piano et orchestre. Claude Debussy (1862-1918), who did not write any piano concerti, composed his Fantasie pour piano et orchestre during the years of 1889-1926. Francis Poulenc (1899-1963), composed in 1921 his Esquisse d’une Fanfare, for wind, percussion and piano and only in 1949 he did write his piano concerto, although his concerto for two pianos was written in 1932. Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983), another member of “Les Six” wrote the Marceau symphonique pour piano et orchestre (1920); the Ballade pour piano et orchestre (1923), and the Trois études pour piano et orchestre (1940). Even Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), who wrote five piano concerti during the years 1858-1896, wrote three other pieces for solo piano and


42 Peppercorn, Illustrated Life of Great Composers: Villa-Lobos, 32.


orchestra: Allegro Appassionato (1884), Rhapsodie d’Auvergne (1884), and Africa (1891).\(^47\)

Milhaud’s own ballet Salade (Salad), written in 1924, was arranged later in 1926 as Le Carnaval d’Aix (The Carnival of Aix). It became a fantasy for piano and orchestra. The ballet was based on Commedia dell’Arte characters such as Pierrot, Colombine and Arlequin. Similarly, Villa-Lobos’ Mômoprecôce is a fantasy for piano and orchestra based on his own recycled material and portrays carnival (in this case Brazilian children’s carnival) characters. Carnaval was one of Milhaud’s six works for piano and orchestra that was not named concerto, the other works were titled: Poème sur un Cantique Comarque (1913), Balade pour piano et orchestre (1920), 5 Études (1920), Fantasie Pastorale (1938), and Fantasie Concertante (1952).\(^48\) During the years 1933-1955 Milhaud wrote five piano concerti,\(^49\) the same number as Villa-Lobos. His early piano and orchestral works were written either in fantasy or symphonic poem form, whereas his last works for piano and orchestra (five concerti) followed a more traditional outline.

In 1928, Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) composed the Caprice for piano and orchestra which was premiered in Paris on December 4, 1929.\(^50\) During 1929-1931,


\(^{49}\) Ibid.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) wrote the piano concerto in G major. 1929 was the year, in which Villa-Lobos composed the piano and orchestra version of *Carnaval das crianças*, entitled *Mômoprecóce*.

It is evident that Villa-Lobos was aware of the French tradition of piano and orchestra. The textures present in *Mômoprecóce* owe much to this idiom. This important topic will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

**Villa-Lobos’s Works for Piano and Orchestra**

Among the vast collected works of Heitor Villa-Lobos, the music for piano and orchestra deserves special attention. Villa-Lobos wrote nine works for solo piano and orchestra. Five of them received the name concerto. The remaining four are as follows: one suite, one fantasy (*Mômoprecóce*), the *Chôros* no.11 and the *Bachianas Brasileiras* no. 3. Along with the composer’s twelve symphonies and seventeen string quartets, his piano and orchestra composition stand as a preferred genre, since during his productive life, from 1913 to 1957, he always returned to this medium. Although studies have analyzed his symphonies and string quartets, no one has written specifically about any of his piano and orchestral works, nor has anyone approached them from a performance standpoint.

The following is a table with the works for piano and orchestra by Villa-Lobos, along with their dedications, cities of composition, and lengths in minutes.

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Table 1.1. Villa-Lobos, Works for Piano and Orchestra.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>Place and Year of Composition</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suite</td>
<td>Rio, 1913</td>
<td>25’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chôros no. 8 for two pianos</td>
<td>Rio, 1925</td>
<td>18’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chôros no. 11</td>
<td>Rio, 1928</td>
<td>50’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mônoprecoce</td>
<td>Magdalena Tagliaferro</td>
<td>Rio, 1929</td>
<td>22’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachianas Brasileiras no. 3</td>
<td>Rio, 1938</td>
<td>29’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerto no. 1</td>
<td>Ellen Ballon</td>
<td>Rio, 1945</td>
<td>29’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerto no. 2</td>
<td>Souza Lima</td>
<td>Rio, 1948</td>
<td>26’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerto no. 3</td>
<td>Arnaldo Estrella</td>
<td>Rio and New York, 1952</td>
<td>27’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerto no. 4</td>
<td>Bernardo Segall</td>
<td>New York and Paris, 1952</td>
<td>31’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerto no. 5</td>
<td>Felicja Blumenthal</td>
<td>Rio, 1954</td>
<td>22’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Tarasti, the Suite for piano and orchestra holds a certain interest because it was written in 1913, and was evidently one of the composer’s first orchestral works.\(^{54}\) The composition is divided into four different movements each representing a different country: 1) Spain, 2) Portugal, 3) Brazil and 4) Italy. It has not been published and is not a faithful representation of Villa-Lobos's mature style, although it follows the Romantic tradition of piano and orchestra dialogue and is the composer’s first excursion into a field of what would latter become more significant works.\(^{55}\) Continuing a chronological listing of the piano and orchestra compositions, the Chôro no. 11 for piano and orchestra was written in 1928. Villa-Lobos himself reports having used the form of a symphonic poem. According to the composer, “the

\(^{54}\) Tarasti, 335.

\(^{55}\) Lima, 12.
piece exemplifies pure music as well as psychological states which emanate from an advanced aesthetic sense.”

The Chôro no. 11 is Villa-Lobos's longest orchestra work; the piece last for ca. fifty minutes. It is still in manuscript form at the Villa-Lobos Museum in Rio de Janeiro. The composer was aware that few concert occasions could accommodate such a long piece; therefore he provided a condensed version that was only thirty five minutes long.

Chôros no. 11 was one of his favorite Chôros but is the least performed of all his works for piano and orchestra. The orchestration is of massive Wagnerian dimensions. From a practical point of view, this piece requires several rehearsals sections. According to Arminda Villa-Lobos, the composer’s wife, the work holds some of Villa-Lobos’s best themes for piano and orchestra. For José Maria Neves, the Chôros no. 11 is the most complex, the richest, and the best written of all his pieces of the genre. Neves states that the dialog which takes place between the soloist and orchestra, approximates the style of a concerto grosso.

Completed in 1938, the Bachianas Brasileiras no. 3 is the only piece in the series scored for this combination. It has a romantic, neo-baroque dialogue between piano, strings, and clarinets. It was premiered in 1947 in New York, by José Vieira Brandão (pianist and conductor) with the CBS Orchestra. The work presents four movements using titles typical of Bach’s nomenclature followed by nationalistic subtitles. They are: 1. Prelude—Ponteio, 2. Fantasia—Devaneio, 3. Aria—Modinha, 4. Toccatta—Pica-pau. In all of the Bachianas, Villa-Lobos with his daring

56 Tarasti, 130.

57 Villa-Lobos, sua obra (1972), 49.

58 Neves, 72.
personality, according to Béhague: “attempts to nationalize this holy European artistic heritage, by intuitively perceiving clear affinities between contrapunctual textures and rhythmic procedures in Bach and those of certain aspects of Brazilian folk music.”

The fusion between Brazilian folkloric expressions and Bach’s compositional processes and language, has proven to be one of Villa-Lobos signatures features. The Bachianas remain popular works in his catalogue, considering the regular symphonic and solo performances in Brazil and abroad.

His last five works for piano and orchestra received the name of concerto. The period of these compositions coincided with his visits to the United States and his own turn to more classic forms. These pieces, four of which were commissioned, were written from 1945 to 1957. The concertos demonstrate Villa-Lobos’s last compositional period when he retreats from Brazilian folklore while still adopting a universal style and enjoying a solid international career both as composer and conductor.

The Piano Concerto no. 1 (1945) was commissioned by the Canadian pianist Ellen Ballon, who premiered the work on December 29, 1946 in Rio de Janeiro, with Villa-Lobos conducting the Orquestra Sinfonica do Teatro Municipal. The Concerto has four movements: 1. Allegro, 2. Allegro (poco scherzando), 3. Andante, and 4. Allegro non troppo. Likewise the Concerto no. 2 (1948) also has four movements: Vivo, Lento, Cadencia (quasi Allegro), and Allegro. The Concerto no. 2 was premiered in April 21, 1950, in Rio de Janeiro, with Brazilian pianist João de Souza

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59 Béhague, 106.

60 Tarasti, 339.
Lima performing the piano part, and the composer conducting the Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Municipal. This work was dedicated to Souza Lima.

The Concerto no. 3 (1952-1957) was dedicated to the Brazilian pianist Arnaldo Estrella who premiered the work. It was performed on August 24, 1957, which was the year of the composer’s seventieth birthday, with Estrella, and the Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Municipal conducted by Eleazar de Carvalho. This concerto has the following movements: 1. Allegro non troppo, 2. Andante con moto, 3. Scherzo (Vivace), and 4. Allegro vivace (decisivo). Bernardo Segall commissioned the Fourth Concerto (1952), which was premiered in January 9, 1953, in the United States with Segall and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra directed by the composer himself. This work has four movements that follow the same structure as the third (which had not been finished until 1957): 1. Allegro non troppo, 2. Andante con moto, 3. Scherzo (Allegro Vivace), and 4. Allegro moderato. The Concerto no. 5 (1954), commissioned by Felicja Blumenthal, is the most popular of all. Premiered by Blumenthal and the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Jean Martinon at the Royal Festival Hall in London on May 8, 1955, the work has four movements: 1. Allegro non troppo, 2. Poco adagio, 3. Allegretto scherzando, and 4. Allegretto.

From 1913 through 1957, Villa-Lobos always returned to the piano and orchestral medium. Not an accomplished pianist himself, his piano writing for the instrument was undoubtedly virtuosic and of the highest caliber. Although Villa-Lobos went on to write the monumental series called Chôros during the 1920s and Bachianas Brasileiras in the 1930s, his contribution to the twentieth century piano
literature is undeniable.\textsuperscript{61} The variety of forms, nomenclature, and orchestration which encompasses these works for piano and orchestra attests to his own development as a composer and orchestrator.

\textsuperscript{61} Béhague; pp. 58.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Books and Articles

There are approximately sixty books written about Heitor Villa-Lobos. His biographers are of diverse nationalities and cultural backgrounds, including scholars from Brazil (Andrade Muricy, Bruno Kiefer, José Maria Neves, and Vasco Mariz), Germany (Lisa Peppercorn), North America (Simon Wright, and David Appleby), and Finland (Eero Tarasti), along with the French-born Brazilian, Gerard Béhague, to name a few. Villa-Lobos is undoubtedly one of the most studied composers of the Americas. The early biographies written by his contemporaries, such as Vasco Mariz and Andrade Muricy, are of extreme importance for they represent the first historical record of his life. However, Villa-Lobos had the chance to influence those works himself and was one of the primary sources for such studies. This fact creates a doubt as to the level of accuracy and critical examination of the subject, since many of the narratives from that period are strongly influenced by Villa-Lobos’s own opinions of his life and work.

Bruno Kiefer refers to this lack of objectivity in his 1981 monograph Villa-Lobos e o modernismo na música brasileira:

Villa-Lobos! The study of his musical output, his pedagogical activities, his life, the impression he made around the world, his creations, is a duty which surpasses the working ability of one individual, no matter how well prepared he or she may be. The analysis of his gigantic opera omnia is yet to be undertaken. In the existing literature, which is very abundant and relies on some excellent works, the majority unfortunately consist of unconditionally
ludatory studies. It is therefore urgent, in the case of Villa-Lobos, that a serious, critical, balanced, and broad study be undertaken to help separate the chaff from the wheat, and also situate aesthetically, what in his works is definitive.\textsuperscript{62}

From 1987, in light of the one hundredth anniversary of the composer’s birth, numerous biographies and studies were published about Villa-Lobos from a more critical and analytical perspective, not only about his life, but also about the contribution of his works to the development of future generations of Brazilian composers. A major issue found in reviewing such literature is the constant controversy regarding accurate information about the dates and facts of Villa-Lobos’s life, the Brazilian musical scene, and folklore that is said to influence his music. This issue is evident when the international literature is compared with that of the Brazilian authors and those who have lived in Brazil for a long period of time. In most cases, serious studies like that of the frequently-cited Brazilian scholar Bruno Kiefer are only available in Portuguese.

The German musicologist Lisa Peppercorn, dedicated about four decades to the study of Villa-Lobos’s life and music. She produced a number of studies in book format as well as about thirty articles in specialized journals. She knew the composer herself and spoke Portuguese. All of her studies were written in German and translated into English and other European languages. Her contribution is therefore unquestionable. Peppercorn opened the path for other international researchers such as Simon Wright, and David Appleby and recently Eero Tarasti. However, among

\textsuperscript{62} “Villa-Lobos! O estudo da sua produção musical, de suas atividades didáticas, de sua vida, da repercussão, pelo mundo afora, de suas criações, e uma tarefa que supera a capacidade de trabalho de um indivíduo so, por mais bem preparado que seja. A análise crítica de sua gigantesca obra ainda está por ser feita. Na literatura existente, muito abundante e contando com excelentes trabalhos, predominam infelizmente, os escritos laudatórios, incondicionalmente laudatórios. Urge, no caso de Villa-Lobos, que um trabalho crítico sério, abrangente, equilibrado, ajude a separar o joio do trigo e situar, estéticamente, o que sua obra tem de definitivo.” Kiefer, 9.
Brazilian and French scholars, it is possible to find controversies regarding Peppercorn’s own understanding of the composer’s style and even the dates and events that surround him. For instance, Peppercorn divides Villa-Lobos’s productive life into periods of fifteen years. She explains:

The life of Heitor Villa-Lobos, the Brazilian composer, divides itself into clearly defined fifteen-year-periods. Each differs from the previous ones. The interesting phenomenon is that the changes which occurred were brought about by outside happenings. Partly responsible for these abrupt shifts is the fact that Villa-Lobos’s life-span fell into an epoch of important historical events in Brazil as well as in the world.\(^63\)

However, the Brazilianist and Latin-American music scholar Gerard Béhague reports in his book, *Heitor Villa-Lobos: In Search of Brazil’s Musical Soul* that Adhemar Nóbrega, a close friend of the composer’s had an alternative view about the classification of Villa-Lobos’s works. According to Nóbrega, the composer himself, in 1947 divided his style into five different categories:

The basic criteria refer to the relative presence or absence of folk-music elements or influence. To Group 1, “with indirect folk intervention,” for example, correspond such works as the first two symphonies (1916, 1917), the four piano pieces that make up the *Ciclo Brasileiro* (1936). To Group 2, “with some direct folk intervention,” belong such piano pieces as the *Prole do Bebê* no. 1 (1918) and *Lenda do Caboclo* (1920). The *Choros* are listed in Group 3, “with transfigured folk influence” permeated with the musical atmosphere of Bach, includes the *Bachianas*, the mass-oratorio *Vidapura* and the guitar preludes. Finally in Group 5, “in total control of universalism” are listed the sixth and seventh symphonies (1944, 1945), the first piano concerto (1945), and several chamber music works of the 1940s.\(^64\)

According to Nóbrega, Villa-Lobos did not write in distinct compositional periods, divided chronologically, but rather worked with five different groupings of style that could coexist at the same time during his productive musical life. According

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\(^63\) Peppercorn, Lisa, *Collected Studies*, 16.

\(^64\) Béhague, 44.
to this system, *Mомопраcéóce* belongs to what Nóbrega calls the second group “with some direct folk intervention.”

Although many Brazilian scholars have written about Villa-Lobos’s music and cultural legacy over the past twenty years, this role has actively fallen to increasing numbers of international scholars. In recent times, while musicological research in Brazilian universities concentrated on pre-Villa-Lobos and post-Villa-Lobos generations of composers, such as Camargo Guarnieri (1907-1993), Claudio Santoro (1919-1989), and Marlos Nobre (b. 1938), international Villa-Lobos scholarship has increased. For example, David Appleby in his *Music of Brazil* supports a different scholarly interpretation than that of Nóbrega with his statement: “Villa-Lobos became a legend and sometimes it is difficult to separate the man from the legend.”

Gerard Béhague attributes to the composer’s music, personality, and style, adjectives that are inherent to Brazilian character. In his view, this made Villa-Lobos's music and persona unique:

In many ways, his personality, his career, and his production reflect the typical Brazilian traits such as grandeur, flamboyance, restlessness, lack of organic unity, disparity and gaudiness, along with others such as individuality, spontaneity, allurement and sophistication. He often said that musical composition constituted for him a biological necessity. This not only explains his gargantuan production but also his instinctive approach to music. Throughout his career he avoided conformity, in his life as well as his musical style. His nonconformity helped him in achieving strength, originality and success.

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There are some controversies between experts on Villa-Lobos. According to Gerard Béhague, in one of his articles “Recent Studies on the Music of Latin America,” Appleby treats the study of the music of Brazil superficially and carelessly. Béhague states that this publication by a reputable university press (University of Texas Press) does not contribute to the subject since the author extensively quotes and paraphrases other sources like Mario de Andrade in his Essay on Brazilian Music, and neglects a rigorous analysis of the music itself, apart from the common generalizations that pervade, Latin-American studies.\(^{67}\) Below, Béhague accuses Appleby of flimsy scholarship:

As a result, the reader is offered a compilation of data from secondary sources, which Appleby quotes and paraphrases extensively, usually without verifying the accuracy of the data. Hailed by the publisher as “the most comprehensive history of Brazilian music available in English,” The Music of Brazil unfortunately adds little to Brazilian musical studies because it lacks well-conceived objectives. Latin Americanists know too well that European or North American subjects in any discipline are generally evaluated more seriously by publishers.\(^{68}\)

With a similar criticism, Gerard Béhague, harshly evaluates the bio-bibliography on Villa-Lobos by the Finnish musicologist Eero Tarasti. Béhague states that once again a European scholar looks with condescension and generalizations about the artistic production of a Brazilian composer, while neglecting the most recent studies written in Portuguese on the subject.\(^{69}\) Béhague warns about the analytical processes implied by Tarasti on reviewing Villa-Lobos’s literature:


\(^{68}\) Ibid.

This type of analytical methodology explains why this book offers no conclusion at all on Villa-Lobos’s creative output. Particularly irritating because of the inappropriateness are the numerous unwarranted comparisons with specific works by European composers. Such comparisons add nothing to a further understanding of Villa-Lobos.\textsuperscript{70}

In 1988, Appleby published a bio-bibliography about Villa-Lobos,\textsuperscript{71} edited by Greenwood Press which was followed by his biography of Villa-Lobos published by Scarecrow Press in 2002.\textsuperscript{72} This monograph is helpful in understanding the main roles of Villa-Lobos in the development of Brazilian nationalism and musical awareness. The author explores the man and the educator as well as the composer, along with his travels to United States and Europe and his twenty-five years stay in Paris. The composer’s impulsive temperament and his pure frustration about Brazilian musical life are also documented in this book through interviews and letters drawn from his late years. Appleby writes about the interview that Villa-Lobos granted for \textit{O Globo} newspaper in 1959, the year of his death:

When asked by Renato Bittencourt, the interviewer, why Villa-Lobos spent so much time abroad he answered that his music has gained acceptance in both United States and Europe, whereas in Brazil he was constantly hounded by questions about copyright infringements.\textsuperscript{73}

In another part of the interview, the composer stated: “I like my native country because I am sentimental. But abroad there are many more opportunities for my activities. I advise young composers: make your reputation abroad, and you may be

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 169.
recognized in Brazil.” About mediocrity, Villa-Lobos said: “I did everything I could to bring about a true culture in Brazil. It’s useless. The country is dominated by mediocrity. Every time a mediocre person dies, five more are born.

What is important to note in these interviews is that Villa-Lobos’s music was impregnated with his character and personality. It is almost impossible to separate the man from his creation. The Brazilian novelist Erico Veríssimo served as Villa-Lobos’s translator for various occasions, including the composer’s first visit to the U.S. The result of this constant contact with the composer is revealed in two chapters of Veríssimo’s 1947 memoirs that recall his time as a visiting professor at UCLA. In those chapters, he narrates details, dialogues and events that involved Villa-Lobos. In this monograph, we uncover the composer’s personality through a series of stories that portray his behavior on the international scene.

The following year, 1948, the first Villa-Lobos biography was published. The author was the diplomat and musicologist Vasco Mariz, who under the auspices of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, collaborated closely with the composer. Mariz’s biography remains one of the most important books on the subject, due to his distinguished musicological career. However, since he wrote the study in 1948, it lacks the final productive period of the composer’s life and is one example of early over-indulgent Villa-Lobos scholarship. On the positive side, Mariz’s book provides a clear idea of how Villa-Lobos, the man, composer and educator was seen by his contemporaries. This source is constantly cited in most major recent biographies.

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74 Ibid.
75 Ibid, 170.
76 Verissimo, Erico. A volta do gato preto.
Modern Villa-Lobos scholars, such as Gerard Béhague, Bruno Kiefer, José Maria Neves, and Lisa Peppercorn, developed different approaches to the composer’s life. Gerard Béhague’s profound knowledge of the Brazilian cultural background, along with the history and popular manifestations of the nation’s music traditions, render his biography a careful account of Villa-Lobos’s stylistic and aesthetic orientation. Béhague analyzes not only the composer’s evident European influences, but also his distinct experience as a popular musician as well as his undeniable authenticity. Peppercorn seems to orient her studies around comparisons of Villa-Lobos’s music and that of his European forerunners and contemporaries. However, her attentive effort in providing documentation of the composer’s career and personal life does offer a useful contribution. Her contribution is well represented in her book: Villa-Lobos in Pictures and Documents, in which researchers can find in one resource copies of numerous important documents, which they would have needed to trace and copy separately, if this monograph did not exist.

The Brazilian musicologist José Maria Neves discusses Villa-Lobos’s monumental cycle in his book Villa-Lobos: O chôro e os Choros (Villa-Lobos: The Chôro and the Choros). This is not a biography, but rather a study of the composer’s style through the discussion of the various techniques that Villa-Lobos applied to his monumental cycle of works. In this research, Neves concentrates on describing in technical terms, how Villa-Lobos conveyed his nationalism through folkloric applications, and the originality he achieved through his individual compositional techniques. This debate complements to the overall understanding of Villa-Lobos’s style, and is only available in Portuguese.
Two Brazilian pianists who enjoyed a close relationship with the composer and were two of his favorite interpreters, left important books about his works for solo piano. They are: Ana Stela Schic and João de Souza Lima. Schic’s book entitled *Villa-Lobos, o índio branco* (Villa-Lobos, the White Indian) explores the composer’s vast solo piano literature, through the author’s own account of her practice sessions with him. This work is abundant in practical advice to interpreters and is impregnated with the composer’s warnings about how to approach his original piano technique. These “lessons” cover pedal use, the proper treatment melodic lines, and the execution of the Villa-Lobos’s ever-present rhythmic *ostinati*. Lima’s monograph *Comentários sobre a obra pianística de Villa-Lobos* on the other hand, indicates specific compositional details about each work presenting numerous musical examples and briefly analyzing each composition. About Villa-Lobos’s *modus operandi* Lima concludes:

The fact that Villa-Lobos was not a specialist surprises us when we realize that his pianistic output manifests one distinct way of treating the instrument right from the first opus. He finds new processes, different methods applied to the instrument’s mechanics, unusual rhythmic problems, all in order to produce innovative sound effects.77

In fact Neves and Kiefer agree that the composer’s unusual piano writing results from his steadfast search for new sounds on the piano as well as on other instruments.

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Numerous articles in journals of the Academia Brasileira de Música (Brazilian Music Society), such as Brasiliana, and Per Musi, along with the Latin American Music Review of the University of Texas, and the French La revue musicale have been of extreme importance in conducting a literature review of Villa-Lobos’s compositional writing. These articles explore his compositional techniques in particular works or discuss the composer’s idiosyncratic musical idiom. Maria Lúcia Pascoal,\textsuperscript{78} discusses the composer’s textural and timbral strategies in A Prole do Bebê. Such compositional tools can be richly noticed in his piano writing of the Carnaval and subsequently Mômoprecóce. Another useful article which deals with Villa-Lobos’s keyboard procedures is titled “Black Key versus White Key: a Villa-Lobos Device,”\textsuperscript{79} by Jamary de Oliveira. In this document Oliveira illustrates and discusses the various types of white-versus-black key formulas: the percussive effect sequence between hands; the binary alternation implied by different numbers of organizations both harmonically and melodically; the black-white or white-black neighboring relationship; the combination of pentatonic sets in black and white keys simultaneously; and chord formations based on key color or “color chords,” to name just a few. This article was extremely valuable in understanding and locating these same devices and effects in Villa-Lobos’s Carnaval and Mômoprecóce.

\textsuperscript{78} Maria Lúcia Pascoal, “A Prole do Bebê no. 1 e no. 2 de Villa-Lobos: estratégias de texturas como recurso composicional,” Per Musi, no. 11 (June 2005): 95-105.

Dissertations and Master Theses about Villa-Lobos’s Solo and Orchestral Works

It is important to mention here the existence of David Coifman’s master’s thesis entitled “Momoprecoce by Heitor Villa-Lobos: A Musical Example of Latin-American Carnivalization.” This work, completed at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, studies the carnivalization in the musical setting of the piano fantasy, through a theory drawn from symbolism and the essential process of parodying official social, cultural and political values. This study is not a performance practice guide and was not intended to investigate the work from a pianist’s standpoint. However, in the fourth chapter Coifman analyzed each movement. The author divided the work into what called a trinomial structure of the piece. Coifman states:

The piano fantasy can be divided into three parts, following the traditional order of three contrasting movements of a concerto. In order to depict these three parts, I have subtitled them using Latin American common trinomial ideas: 1. Allegro: the European heritage (mm. 1-442); 2. Theme and variations: the Amerindian heritage (mm. 443-725); and 3. Samba-like music finale: the African heritage (mm. 726-938).

This statement is quite simplistic. The author tries to create a structure that divides a through-composed work which was originally written as a series of short descriptive pieces for piano solo into three-part conventional form. In his bibliography, there are no sources in Portuguese or French and just a few in Spanish.

Several dissertations dealing with one individual or a group of solo pieces by Villa-Lobos were helpful to the design of the present study. These documents

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81 Coifman, 60.
include: Roberta Rust’s “Piano Works of Heitor Villa-Lobos’ Middle Period”\textsuperscript{82} and Sonia Rubinsky’s “Villa-Lobos’ Rudepoema, An Analysis.”\textsuperscript{83} Heitor Villa-Lobos’s famous guitar concerto also earned the attention of a Ph.D. dissertation by Gregory Engstrom of Kent State University. Since this dissertation dealt with a work for solo instrument and orchestra, similar to this proposed study, it was significant to review such research.

**Primary Sources and Discography**

On a recent visit to the Villa-Lobos Museum in Rio de Janeiro (December 2007), it was a surprise to realize that *Chôros no. 11* has not been published and is still in manuscript. Both the orchestral score as well as the two-piano reduction were in the handwriting of the composer. This fact illuminates the question of why this particular work is so seldom performed. All of the concerti, *Mômoprecóce, Bachianas no 3* and *Chôros no. 8* were published by Max Eschig in Paris.

The main primary source for the present study was the manuscript of the *Mômoprecóce* in open score. It is located at the Villa-Lobos Museum in Rio de Janeiro. It was interesting to notice the various times in which Villa-Lobos changed directions from Portuguese to French to Italian. In order to better direct the percussionist to play the various uniquely Brazilian percussion instruments, he wrote warnings in French and even drew pictures of how he specifically wanted that particular instrument to be played.


Another important primary source is the six-CD edition entitled, *Villa-Lobos par lui même*, issued by EMI classics.\footnote{Heitor Villa-Lobos, *Villa-Lobos par lui même*, Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, EMI France Records D637.} Here the *Chôros* no. 11, *Bachianas* no. 3. Concerto no. 5 and *Mômoprecóce* are conducted by the composer. In the same edition there is a valuable twenty-five minutes lecture in French by Villa-Lobos, in which he explains his compositional methods and his understanding of the *Chôros*. This resource is undeniably useful. As far as modern recordings are concerned, it is relevant to mention the Brazilian pianist Cristina Ortiz who in 1992 recorded for DECCA, the composer’s entire works for piano and orchestra except for *Chôros* no. 11.

To summarize, the existing scholarly literature, in the forms of books, encyclopedia entries, journal articles, recordings, and newspapers columns is numerous. Each source makes an essential contribution to the comprehensive knowledge of Villa-Lobos’s creative output.
For Villa-Lobos, originality was vital. His piano writing is unique due to his constant search for innovation on the keyboard. Although the piano was not his major instrument (he was a virtuoso on the cello and the guitar), he left an immense and diverse body of music for solo piano as well as for piano and orchestra. Most Villa-Lobos’s scholars agree that, in his permanent search for novelty, he encountered modern compositional techniques, which were also used by his international contemporaries as well. Nevertheless, these new methods did not result from his preoccupation with current compositional fashions, but stemmed from his commitment to individuality. Still, there are certain European influences which should not be denied. The Brazilian musicologist, José Maria Neves, for instance, believes that it was Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du printemps*, that stimulated Villa-Lobos to return to primitivism.\(^{85}\) The Brazilian composer’s primary compositional techniques and their application to his piano literature serves as the focus of the present chapter.

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Rhythmic Ostinato

Villa-Lobos utilized a myriad of compositional processes. The rhythmic ostinato was one of his favorite musical techniques.\(^{86}\) For the piano in particular, this device can be found in the opening of some of his most famous pieces, such as the “Dança do Índio Branco” (Dance of the White Indian), from the *Ciclo Brasileiro*, and the “Polichinelô” from *Prole do Bebê* No. 1. The *ostinato* is an imposing element associated with the composer’s attraction to primitivism, which was not an external preoccupation, but an internal disposition. Villa-Lobos sought primitivism as a reflection of his intrinsic approach to nationalism.

Improvisatory Approach

Another permanent aspect of Villa-Lobos's works is the improvisatory character of the pieces. This quality, sometimes taken to extremes, explains the rapid speed at which he composed and his large number of works. He also enjoyed producing music in chaotic surroundings. Most scholars refer to Villa-Lobos’s work routine and how these circumstances might have affected the somewhat chaotic nature of his compositional output. José Maria Neves reports:

Villa-Lobos used to compose amid noise (which was necessary for him) the comings-and-goings in his home, the constant conversation of his friends, the radio, and the piano. His absolute concentration did not prevent him from participating in these conversations, listening to the radio, and correcting the pianist who was reading the page he had just written.\(^{87}\)

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\(^{86}\) Bruno Kiefer, *Villa-Lobos e o modernismo*, 104.

\(^{87}\) “Villa-Lobos compunha no meio do maior barulho (que lhe era necessário) do entra e sai de sua casa, da conversa dos amigos, do rádio sempre ligado e do piano. Sua concentração absoluta não lhe impedia, entretanto, de acompanhar todo o movimento da casa, participando das conversas, ouvindo o seu rádio e corrigindo erros do pianista que lia a página que ele acabava de escrever.” Neves, 9.
As Neves reveals, this eccentric mode of composition might have resulted in the inconsistency of Villa-Lobos’s works. He further argues that the composer’s indiscriminate mixture of creative ideas with elements of less significance might also have weakened some of his compositions. Moreover, he believes that there were few elements of formal structure common to his entire output only the undisciplined variety of ideas and techniques. For the anthropologist and ethnomusicologist, Mário de Andrade, Villa-Lobos in his effort to express his ideas through an individual idiom, abandoned tradition but did not fight against it. He did not even try to create his own compositional technique. Instead, he sought innovative manners to express new ideas, without ever making these procedures an imposed theoretical obligation.\(^8^8\)

**Orchestration**

A number of important twentieth-century composers admired Villa-Lobos’s orchestration. His scoring was typically dense but not heavy; his profound knowledge of the different instruments of the orchestra was a positive factor in the success of his orchestration. Some of these instrumental techniques were uncovered by the Chilean composer and musicologist Juan Orrego-Salas and are summarized in detail below:

a) abrupt contrast between textures of great density and concerted episodes

b) duplication of thematic elements through extreme instrumental registers

c) use of glissandi as a device for punctuating or linking together adjacent episodes

d) preference for instrumental doublings in one, two, or three octaves by instruments of different families instead of the unison

e) polytonal clashes between harmonies assigned to different instrumental families

f) use of native Brazilian instruments (especially percussive) ... or the employment of little used instruments in the orchestra like the alto saxophone, sarrusophone, trumpets in F, zither, [and] viola d’amour

g) utilization of the human voice as a coloristic instrument in vocalizations or onomatopoeias, with or without instrumental combinations.  

Orrego-Salas describes in this list, some of Villa-Lobos’s compositional techniques which were similar to those of other major composers in the first half of the twentieth century. Another aspect of his works relates to the way he created a sense of unity through programmatic music. He applies this technique in *Mômoprecôce* with much success and uses the orchestra to transition between moods and atmospheres.

**Use of folklore**

Another aspect of the overall characteristics of Villa-Lobos’s style is the dominant use of folklore, not only as a source of inspiration, but also as a fundamental structural element in his musical creation. Villa-Lobos is not a folklorist who collects and compiles data, rather, according to José Maria Neves, he is a composer “who creates under folkloric inspiration, which he does not use, but transforms.”

Villa-Lobos’s original method of incorporating folklore into music as described by Neves, is found in various manifestations in his solo piano works. For

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90 Neves, 15.
instance, the sixteen Cirandas are made of miniatures based on Brazilian children’s folklore. The composer treats the folkloric material in diverse ways. In this suite’s first piece, after a pedal bass supporting an ostinato pattern for twenty-seven measures, a traditional melody appears with transformations. An ABA or AB form is frequently present, and, in most cases, the folk melody is presented in the B section. He frequently uses a given melody juxtaposed with another folkloric theme in polyphonic texture, Villa-Lobos also applies canonic imitations, and harmonic and rhythmic variations of traditional materials, modeled on common procedures in the standard piano literature.

**Textural Treatment**

A unique form of musical elaboration occurs in his Prole do Bebê nos. 1-2. Here Villa-Lobos quotes the folkloric material usually in the right hand, which he presents on top of complex textures and explorations of piano timbres. Maria Lúcia Pascoal, on her article about this technique, provides a comparison of such methods, which contributes to a deeper understanding of the composer’s musical techniques. Pascoal classifies chords of added seconds and fourths, rhythmic cells, clusters, pentatonic and whole tone scales, groups of two to four sounds, polyphonic passages, ostinati, and superpositions, as textural elements. She divides these procedures associated with Villa-Lobos’s “emancipation of tonality” (an expression used by

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91 Kiefer, 104.

92 Ibid.

Arnold Schoenberg) into two main streams: 1) textures of vertical dimensions and 2) textures of horizontal dimensions. These techniques are applied to the *Carnaval das crianças* and *Mômoprecóce*: They will be discussed extensively in Chapter 5.

**Black Key-White Key Techniques**

Another highly idiosyncratic characteristic of Villa-Lobos’s piano music is the use of black keys versus white keys. Jamary Oliveira, discusses these devices and asserts that “Villa-Lobos’s use of the black-and white-key alternations can be viewed in two ways: first, as the alternation itself and its treatment regarding the number of notes, both melodically and harmonically; and second, as the motivic formation and its relation to the beat subdivision.” For the *Carnaval das crianças* and consequently *Mômoprecóce*, Villa-Lobos applies such alternation to motive constructions, to percussive passages that connect episodes, and to final cadenza-like ostinati.

**Programmatic Ideas**

In *Mômoprecóce*, Villa-Lobos frequently evokes the idea of joy with parallel staccato passages, sometimes using diatonic chordal scale episodes, other times employing motives based on parallel fourths or fifths. Such devices, also found in the *Prole do Bebê no. 1*, were considered by João de Souza Lima to refer to the laughter

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95 Oliveira, 37.
of children. Lima points to Villa-Lobos’s variety of descriptive manners achieved through rhythm and articulation. Among the evocative passages he recognized were: appoggiaturas and grace notes to depict elements of joy or the sound image of riding a horse, polyrhythms to express the movement of a toy as in the rubber doll in Prole do Bebê no. 1, ostinato tremolo accompaniments to illustrate the sound of jingling bells as in the third scene of Mômoprecóce’s and the use of arpeggiated juxtaposed chords of sevenths, ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths in his final scenes commonly used in Mômoprecóce.

The present study does not aim to catalogue Villa-Lobos’s stylistic characteristics as applied to his piano writing. However, one should still remember that even though his works apparently lack stylistic uniformity, they present analogous methods and musical events to describe similar characters, atmosphere, or pictures.

**Interpretative considerations**

Villa-Lobos enjoyed the friendship of many pianists during his lifetime. He dedicated his masterpiece Rudepoema to Arthur Rubinstein, who also premiered the Prole do Bebê no. 1 in Rio de Janeiro in 1922. Rubinstein, Lucília Guimarães (the composer’s first wife), Anna Stela Schic, João de Souza Lima, and Magdalena Tagliaferro are some of the pianists who worked closely with Villa-Lobos and had the chance to receive guidance about interpreting his music. According to Anna Stela Schic, Villa-Lobos knew “exactly the type of sound result he wanted. Although not a concert pianist himself, he could extract rare colors, textures, and timbres from the

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There are certain common points in almost all Villa-Lobos’s piano works: motives in triplets, large melodies accompanied by groups of notes or chords, polyrhythms opposed to the melodic line juxtaposed by fourths or fifths interpolated or not by thirds, differentiated sound textures. Without being a pianist, Villa-Lobos achieved from the instrument an exceptional sonorous quality because he “dared” to make the piano sound. He applied the flat finger technique when needed, or played with his fingers close to the keyboard and barely moving, in order to find the best cantabile, with absolute evenness within the rhythmic texture. We cannot forget that his admiration for Bach and his constant study of the German composer impregnated his works with polyphony, which makes the complete clarity necessary. The paradox is that Villa-Lobos always called for much pedal in his pieces, but demanded clarity at the same time; the challenge of the interpreter is therefore to wisely balance the sound to create a form of clear “cacophony” which he mentioned constantly. Nothing could irritate him more, then in certain works to hear a timid, dry percussive sound without pedal.

Regarding the nationalistic works with an intrinsic Brazilian personality, the interpreter needs to have complete accuracy in the execution of the rhythm, but never neglecting the composer’s expressive indications such as “com alegria” (with joy), “ironicamente” (ironically), “elegantemente” (with elegance), and others. The

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97 “Ele sabia exatamente qual era o resultado sonoro que desejava e, apesar de não ser pianista, conseguia extrair do piano um colorido e uma riqueza de timbres raros de se ouvir.” Anna Stela Schic, Villa-Lobos: O Índio Branco, 93.

98 “Em Villa-Lobos há certos pontos comuns em quase toda sua obra pianística: desenhos em quáleras, larga melodia acompanhada de grupos de notas ou acordes, a polirritmia aplicada em oposição à melodia, em quartas ou quintas intercaladas ou não, por terças; os planos sonoros bem diferenciados. Sem ser pianista, Villa-Lobos obtinha do instrumento uma qualidade sonora excepcional, porque “ousava” fazer o piano soar. Atacava as notas com os dedos em riste quando necessário ou grudava as mãos no teclado procurando destacar um cantabile com absoluta igualdade no meio da trama rítmica do acompanhamento. Não podemos esquecer que a sua admiração por Bach e o estudo constante que fazia de sua obra não podiam deixar de impregná-lo do sentido polifônico dessa obra e da clareza absoluta necessária para bem transmiti-la. O paradoxo é que Villa-Lobos queria muito pedal em suas músicas, mas exigia clareza ao mesmo tempo; o problema do intérprete é pois dosar sabiamente para criar essa espécie de “cacofonia” brilhante que ele mencionava constantemente. Nada o irritava mais do que, em certas obras, a timidez de um toque percutido e seco, e sobretudo sem pedal.” Schic, 111.
understanding of Brazilian music, nature, and atmosphere is a condition to perform
Villa-Lobos’s piano works successfully. However, the careful investigation of sound
effects, rhythmic clarity, timbre, and textures are just as significant to achieve a
successful performance.
Chapter 4

VILLA-LOBOS AND THE CONCEPT OF CHILDHOOD AS EXPRESSED THROUGH HIS SOLO PIANO LITERATURE

Villa-Lobos’s fascination with childhood and his intense observation of the Brazilian child’s universe is widely and significantly expressed through his solo piano pieces. The piano is the only medium chosen by the composer to depict childhood naïvité. Curiously, his guitar solo works—(the most extensive literature written for that instrument by a single composer), consists only on pieces that rely on typical nineteenth-century piano genres such as—etudes, preludes, waltzes, and dances. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate Villa-Lobos's *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* and consequently his *Mômoprecóce* in relation to childhood.

The Villa-Lobos boy nicknamed “Tuhú”, had a happy childhood. He lived comfortably in Rio with his parents and brothers, when at the age of six, he moved to a small rural town in the state of Minas Gerais, in the mountains of southeastern Brazil. This change occurred due to a negative article that his father Raul wrote to the local newspaper in Rio, against a “towering Brazilian political personality, Marshall Floriano Peixoto.” For this reason, the Villa-Lobos family had to escape to the interior of Brazil, and “Tuhú” had his first encounter with native mountain melodies

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and rural folk music. As an adult, he was constantly surrounded by children. When he married Lucília Guimarães in 1913, they moved in to her parents’ home. She had young brothers, and was surrounded by piano students who were constantly nearby while her husband was composing. The couple continued to live with the Guimarães family until 1919, when, due to Heitor’s first commissions, they could afford their own home. Coincidentally, half of Villa-Lobos’s works for piano inspired by the childhood universe was written during this period.

Villa-Lobos’s vast piano literature related to childhood scenes calls for an immediate comparison with that of Robert Schumann, concludes Bruno Kiefer. This statement is valid, but there is more to the phenomenon than simply a comparison with the German Romantic master. Rather the works reflect an inherent naiveté that is fundamental characteristic of Villa-Lobos’s personality. In this respect, the distinguished Brazilian composer, Marlos Nobre, comments:

With a musically complex and multiform personality—sometimes barbaric, sometimes extremely lyrical, and sometimes viscerally dramatic—Villa-Lobos has his best creative moments of touching ingenuity when inspired by the observation of the child’s universe. He himself was an eternal child and his life is full of witty stories that confirm his childlike personality. These pieces are not works meant to be played by children, due to the technical difficulties of the Carnaval das crianças for example, but rather works inspired by the colorful world of these little beings. In these various suites, Villa-Lobos writes valuable and perfect miniatures of childhood scenes; at other times, without any thematic guidance, he creates psychological suggestions which are admirably realized instrumentally and musically.


102 “Personalidade musicalmente complexa e multiforme, ora bárbaro, ora extremamente lírico, ora visceralmente dramático, Villa-Lobos tem alguns de seus melhores momentos como criador, dentro de uma tocente ingenuidade, nessas peças inspiradas na observação do mundo infantil. Eterna criança o foi e sua vida está rica de graciosas anedotas que permitem antever claramente esse aspecto típico de seu temperamento. Mas nunca infantil, veja-se bem. Mantendo-se sempre numa posição eminentemente espontanea de mero observador da infância. Não se trata de obras escritas para serem
Villa-Lobos’s piano suites, inspired in childhood, are a result of his observance of the child universe, as well as his romantic nationalistic identity achieved through individual and spontaneous writing. Although most such output represents the composer’s nationalism in action, these works concerning childhood go beyond that; they permeate his entire creative life.

Villa-Lobos uses the piano to specifically portray the Brazilian children’s universe through evoking typical characters, games, dolls, toy animals, parties, and psychological states. His entire output of childhood pieces includes: *História de Pierrot* (1904), *Petizada* (1912), *Brinquedo de roda* (1912), *Suite infantil no. 1* (1912), *Suite infantil no. 2* (1913), *Fábulas características* (1914), *Suite floral* (1917), *Prole do Bebê no. 1 – As bonecas* (1918), *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* (1919), *Histórias da Carochinha* (1919), *Prole do Bebê no. 2 – Os bichinhos* (1921), *Prole do Bebê no. 3 – Jogos* (1926), *Cirandinhas* (1925), *Cirandas* (1926), *Francette et Piá* (1928), and *Caixinha de música quebrada* (1931). The eleven albums of *Guia Prático* were not listed here, because, even though they centered in children’s themes, they do not belong to the concert literature, but to the composer’s collection for music written for pedagogical purposes.
Ultimately, Villa-Lobos wrote 206 works for piano solo. Three major compositional styles coexist in these pieces. First are the works that have a central musical theme based on preexistent folkloric material, such as the colossal suites *Cirandas*, *Cirandinhas* or the *Prole do Bebê* nos. 1-3. Second, we find suites based on childhood scenes. These are purely descriptive pieces, such as *Brinquedo de roda*, *Suite infantil* and *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras*. They describe scenes, moods and characters. Finally, there is the group of suites which tell a children’s story. These pieces could be seen as miniature operas. In this group we find *Francette et Piá*, which tells the story of a French girl who visits a Brazilian boy, and *Histórias da Carochinha* (Brazilian fables). In *Francette et Piá*, in order to depict the conversation between the French girl and the Brazilian boy, Villa-Lobos writes a left-hand accompaniment using a Brazilian rhythm, while the right hand plays a melody of French folkloric derivation.

Villa-Lobos’s children’s music also makes strong use of folkloric materials. This connection becomes clear when examining the classificatory system of Adhemar da Nóbrega, who grouped the composer’s music into five categories, based on the extent to which they affiliated with the traditional Brazilian music. In the first group (with indirect folkloric intervention), the works *Petizada* (1912), *Suite infantil no. 1* (1912), *Suite infantil no. 2* (1913), *Fábulas características* (1914), and *Suite floral* (1917) are present. In the second group (with some direct folkloric intervention), we find *Mômoprecóce* (1929), *Prole do Bebê no. 1* (1918), *Cirandas* (1925), and *Carnaval das crianças* (1919). Finally, *Prole do Bebê no. 2* (1921) and *Prole do Bebê no. 3* (1923) are represented.

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103 Anna Stella Schic, *Villa-Lobos: O Índio branco*, 105.
no. 3 (1926; lost manuscript) comprehend the third group (with transfigured folkloric influence).

Nóbrega’s fourth and fifth categories (Works with Transfigured Folkloric Influence and Works Affiliated with Universalism), do not include any solo piano music based on the composer’s observation of childhood. Thus, we can conclude that folklore was intrinsically linked to Villa-Lobos's picture of childhood. As Marlos Nobre once said, the composer had an inherently childlike personality. His chosen compositional processes were tied to his inventive artistic personality and his inner aesthetic orientation.
CHAPTER 5

STRUCTURAL COMPARISON OF THE CARNIVAL DAS CRIANÇAS AND MÔMOPRECÔCE BY HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS

Introductory Remarks

Mômoprecôce was the title that Villa-Lobos gave to his Carnaval das crianças brasileiras when he reworked the piece for piano and orchestra. By giving the fantasy a different title, the composer in fact created a new work. As João de Souza Lima stated: “The eight pieces of Carnaval das crianças brasileiras remain intact, but were clothed by an orchestral part that, apart from presenting an introduction, also connected one piece to the other while accompanying and working as a collaborative partner.” As Lima suggests, the orchestra illustrates, unifies, and contributes to the existent piano solo material. Its fundamental role in the work will be a fundamental consideration of this chapter.

To understand how the Carnaval das crianças developed into the Mômoprecôce, it is important to understand the changes the composer’s style underwent in the ten years that separated the two works. Villa-Lobos composed the Carnaval das crianças in 1919-20 when he was living in Rio de Janeiro. The title of the composition is in Portuguese, and all musical indications in the manuscript are either in Portuguese or Italian, since this work was designed for Brazilian performers.
Villa-Lobos wrote this piano suite while living with his wife’s younger brothers at her parents’ house. This experience gave him the opportunity to immerse himself more deeply into the world of children. Dedicated to his nephews, the *Carnaval das crianças* reflects this particular creative moment in his life.

In the meantime, however, his career began to ascend due to two major events: his friendship with Arthur Rubinstein and Darius Milhaud and his first commissioned orchestral piece.

1918 was a very positive year professionally for Villa-Lobos. He had the chance to meet Darius Milhaud and Arthur Rubinstein in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, he received his first favorable review from Brazil’s most important critic, Oscar Guanabario, for his first *Prole do Bebê*. Rubinstein became a vital figure in promoting and performing Villa-Lobos’s music in Europe and United States. He adopted Villa-Lobos as his protégé which opened opportunities for the Brazilian composer to be sponsored by a pair of philanthropist brothers, Arnaldo and Carlos Guinle. Villa-Lobos’s first trip to Paris in 1923 was sponsored by such patrons, who, four years later, financed his second and longest stay in the French capital city. His first commission came in 1919, an important and accomplished year in his life and career. He was asked to write an orchestral piece, which resulted in his Symphony no.

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106 Ibid.

107 The President of Brazil, Epitácio Pessoa, asked the Director of the Brazilian Institute of Music, Abdon Milanés, to organize a concert to celebrate the Peace Conference. Three Brazilian composers—João Gonçalves, Francisco Braga, and Alberto Nepomuceno—were invited to write symphonies about war, victory, and peace. Nepomuceno declined the commission and Villa-Lobos was contacted to write a Symphony about war. Peppercorn, *The World of Villa-Lobos in Pictures and Documents*, 71.
The year 1927 in Paris marked Villa-Lobos’s maturity and international recognition. Arthur Rubinstein recalls the composer’s debut at Salle Gaveau, where Rubinstein played the *Rudepoema*:

Villa-Lobos had a brilliant debut at Salle Gaveau. He presented some of his larger things for orchestra, some with voice, but I don’t remember the titles. The concert was a great success without any doubt. The ideas, and the novel treatment of his songs and solo instruments intrigued and pleased the Parisians. There were many important musicians in the hall – Prokofiev and Ravel, I remember, among them. These two showed a respectful interest in the music of the Brazilian, but Florent Schmitt, who was also an influential critic, became a steadfast follower of Villa-Lobos. Carlos Guinle and his wife were present in a box. At the end of the concert Heitor received an ovation from an audience consisting of many Parisians and a large number of South Americans – among them, the same Brazilians who had booed him in their capital but had changed their minds in Paris.

Villa-Lobos remained in Paris with Lucília from 1927 through 1929, when he returned to Brazil. Back in his native country, he received the commission from Magda Tagliaferro to write a work for piano and orchestra. The resulting work, *Mômoprecôce: fantasie pour piano et orchestra sur le carnaval des enfantes brésiliens*, with a title in French, was dedicated to Magda Tagliaferro. According to the manuscript, all musical indications were either in French or Italian with the international performer and audience in mind (however some instrument names were in Portuguese). The difference between the composer’s style in 1919 when he wrote the solo piano suite and in 1929, the year of the piano and orchestral version, is of vital importance for the analytical component of this study. When Villa-Lobos wrote

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108 Ibid.

109 Ibid, 134.
the piano and orchestra fantasy, his command of orchestral color to represent
descriptive scenes was that of a master. His self-assurance, after all the national and
international recognition his works received, gave him the freedom to polish his
musical ideas based on Brazilian folklore. Yet he cast this conception within an
international idiomatic framework that favored the dominant French school of
orchestration.

**Structure**

Villa-Lobos was able to transform a group of eight small solo pieces into a
large-scale work for piano and orchestra by using existing materials as well as new
musical ideas. The orchestral version of the work included most of the preexistent
elements of the solo piano version, but was also enriched by completely new ideas
and sections. The orchestra now permeated the entire piece, and its continuous
character unified the piece. The piano solo part was maintained with the exception
that Villa-Lobos repeated some original passages to elongate the work. Every
transition is played by the orchestra only, excluding the interlude to the fifth scene in
which Villa-Lobos wrote a completely new quasi-cadenza part for the piano added to
the orchestra. The final scene received thirty measures of new material. Villa-Lobos
maintained the original AB or ABA forms of all individual scenes.

The orchestration uses the following instruments: solo piano, piccolo, flutes,
oboes, English horn, clarinets, bassoons, contrabassoon, alto saxophone, French
horns, trumpets in C, trombones, timpani, *bombo*\(^{110}\), *tambor, tambour de basque*,

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\(^{110}\) The *zabumba*, variously called *bombo, bumba* and *tambor grande*, is a bass drum played
with a beater, popular in the northeastern states. Gerard Behague. “Brazil: Traditional Music:
tamborim, caisse claire (snare drum), toy drum, chocalho (shaken rattle), chocalho de metal (metal shaken rattle), guizos (jingle bell), reco-reco (wooden scraper), celesta, and strings.

The following are tables of comparison between Carnaval das crianças (solo piano version) and Mômoprecóce (after every double bar, a new measure count begins):

Table 5.1. Villa-Lobos, Carnaval das crianças brasileiras and Mômoprecóce, Comparison. “O ginète do pierrozinho” (Little Pierrot’s Pony).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>A minor; mm. 1-9 (orch.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 1</td>
<td>A minor; mm. 1-36 (piano)</td>
<td>A minor; mm. 10-46 (piano and orchestra)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2. Villa-Lobos, Carnaval das crianças brasileiras and Mômoprecóce, Comparison. “O chicote do diabinho” (The Little Devil’s Whip).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—orchestra</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—piano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>F major; mm. 1-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 2</td>
<td>F major; 1-100</td>
<td>F major; mm. 21-125</td>
<td>F major; mm. 21-83 (84-86) 87-98 (99) 100-125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

111 The standard tambourine in Brazil, is known as pandeiro. The instrument known in Portuguese as tamborim is a small (30 cm long and 15 to 18 cm in diameter) cylindrical drum percussed with a stick, used in dramatic dances such as congada and moçambique and in percussion ensembles of Carnival bands. Ibid, 276.

112 Ibid, 275.

113 Ibid.
Table 5.3. Villa-Lobos, *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* and *Mômoprecóce*, Comparison. “A manhã da pierrete” (Pierrete’s Morning).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—orchestra</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—piano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>F major; mm. 1-32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 3</td>
<td>C major; mm. 1-48</td>
<td>C major and A mixolydian; mm. 33-107</td>
<td>C major; mm. 1-48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4. Villa-Lobos, *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* and *Mômoprecóce*, Comparison. “Os guizos do dominózinho” (Little Domino’s Jingle Bells).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—orchestra</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—piano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>mm. 1-37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 4</td>
<td>D major; 1 - 64</td>
<td>D major; mm. 38-79</td>
<td>D major; mm. 1-11 (12-15) 16-30 (31-33) 34-35 (36) 37-39 (40-42) 43-49 (50-52) 53-78 (79)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5. Villa-Lobos, *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* and *Mômoprecóce*, Comparison. Orchestral Interlude.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval</th>
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<th>Mômoprecóce—piano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Chromatic pedal points from D to B; mm. 1-9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition with new material</td>
<td>Pedal point from C# (arrival on D9/B); mm. 10-39</td>
<td>Pedal point from C# (arrival on D9/B); mm. 10-39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6. Villa-Lobos, *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* and *Mômoprecóce*, Comparison. “As peripécias do traperozinho” (The Little Ragpicker’s Adventures).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—orchestra</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—piano</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene 5</td>
<td>C# minor; mm. 1 - 44</td>
<td>C# minor; mm. 1 - 48</td>
<td>C# minor; mm. (1- 3) 4 – 47 (48)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—orchestra</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—piano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>mm. 1 – 10</td>
<td>mm. 1 – 10</td>
<td>(11) 12-42 (43-44) 45-59 (60-63) 64-73 (74-75) 76-95 (96-97) 98-106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 6</td>
<td>D minor; mm. 1 - 64</td>
<td>D minor; mm. 11-106</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8. Villa-Lobos, *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* and *Mômoprecóce*, Comparison. Orchestral transition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—orchestra</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—piano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orchestral transition</td>
<td>Modulatory transitions; mm. 107-134</td>
<td></td>
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</table>


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—orchestra</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce—piano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene 7</td>
<td>E minor; mm. 1-20. D# minor; mm. 21-34. E minor; mm. 35-50</td>
<td>E minor; mm. 1-20. D# minor; mm. 21-34. E minor; mm. 35-50</td>
<td>E minor; mm. 1-20. D# minor; mm. 21-34. E minor; mm. 35-50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.10. Villa-Lobos, *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras* and *Mômoprecóce*, Comparison. “A folia de um bloco infantil” (Frolics of a Band of Children).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Carnaval piano I</th>
<th>Carnaval piano II</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce Orchestra</th>
<th>Mômoprecóce piano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene 8</td>
<td>A minor</td>
<td>mm. 1-16</td>
<td>mm. 1-32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 8</td>
<td>mm. 17-76 A minor</td>
<td>mm. 17-76</td>
<td>mm. 33 – 76</td>
<td>mm. 33-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 8</td>
<td>mm.77-178 C major</td>
<td>mm. 77-178</td>
<td>mm. 77-92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 8</td>
<td>C major</td>
<td>mm. 93-213</td>
<td>mm. 93-213</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining the above tables, it is possible to conclude that Villa-Lobos transformed a piano suite of short descriptive pieces into a piano and orchestra masterpiece through the application of his orchestration ability. The composer not only adorned his solo piano ideas (which remained almost intact) with a large sonorous variety that developed the primary character of the solo piano version, but he also for the piano and enhanced the piano writing technically by adding new virtuoso sections for the orchestra. The suite’s new format with its various layers of sound successfully reinforces Villa-Lobos’s original conception of the work.
CHAPTER 6

INSTRUMENTATION, CHARACTER, AND INTERPRETATIVE ASPECTS, WHEN COMPARING THE CARNAVAL DAS CRIANÇAS AND MÔMOPRECÔCE

The main focus of this chapter is to investigate how the instrumentation of Mômoprecôce enhances the character of the original pieces of the Carnaval das crianças, and determine how such an orchestration will aid in the interpretative understanding of the work. A brief history and description of the psychological disposition of each character which generated the original scenes will begin the chapter. With these tools, it will then be possible to identify the interpretative elements to bring about a culturally informed performance of the Mômoprecôce.

Born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Villa-Lobos could not escape the influence of the Brazilian pre-Lenten carnival in his music. This form of popular manifestation played an intrinsic part of Brazilian society since 1840. However, only after the First World War did it become an emblem of Brazilian culture. According to Brazilianist Roberto da Matta, the years following 1917 saw the development of a national identity founded on racial mixing. Therefore, samba as a musical genre, as a blend of African and Portuguese musical ideas, stands as the major symbol of a cherished

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vision of Brazilian identity. The word samba was associated closely with various forms of dance. At first it did not have a specific connection to music until 1917, when the first samba hit “Pelo telefone” by Donga crystallized the musical genre. The investigation of the history of Brazilian carnival and the role of samba in Brazilian culture extends beyond the scope of this study; however it is essential for the interpreter of the Mômoprecóce to understand the basis of this tradition. Additional details about musical elements specifically derived from and related to the samba will be discussed later in this chapter.

Scene 1. “O ginete do pierrozinho” (Pierrot’s Little Pony)

The first scene works as an introduction to the piece. The fanfare nature of the theme prepares the listener for what is to come: a parade of little characters and their personalities. The most famous character, Pierrot of the Commedia dell’Arte, is the symbol of Carnival in Western history of celebrations. Villa-Lobos chooses Little Pierrot to open the series of descriptive pieces which encompass the Carnaval das crianças. He creates the image of the little character galloping on his pony to open the festivities and announce the fanfare. The introductory motive creates a sound image of the galloping little horse and symbolizes through sound effect the laughter of children, as seen in Example 6.1. The piano solo suite opens with the indication, Grazioso e ben ritmado, whereas, in the Mômoprecóce manuscript the composer writes, Allegro graciozo (Bien rythmé).

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115 Chasteen, 30.

116 Ibid.
The piano part of the opening piece is kept as in the original solo version. The orchestral part basically accompanies the preexistent piano solo adding instrumental color to enhance the composer’s descriptive resources. The rhythmic motive of the galloping pony permeates the entire piece and is omnipresent throughout the scene. The orchestral introduction announces this motive in the flute. After one measure, it passes along to the oboe which is doubled by the first violins.

Example 6.1. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 1st mvt., mm. 1-3.\(^{117}\)

To this motive, two accompanying voices are added. The first is the clarinet, doubled by the second violins, which harmonizes the motivic line a major third below; the second is the viola, which mirrors the movement of the original motive, starting one major seventh below, as shown in Examples 6.2 and 6.3 respectively.

Example 6.2. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 1st mvt., mm. 1- 4, clarinet.

\(^{117}\)Although Mômoprecóce is a through composed work, with no movement indications, the musical examples will indicate movement to clarify the comparative analysis with the Carnaval das crianças brasileiras. Each original scene will be called a movement.

As seen in Example 6.4 the brass, bassoons and timpani add a dotted rhythmic figure, which will also be present throughout the piece while the double bass and cello sustain an A pedal point.


The first time that the galloping motive is presented, it begins on a high F in the flute. The second time, in measure five, it starts on a high C. The original piano version starts in measure nine on high A. Villa-Lobos chose to present the motive in the woodwinds, always starting on a different starting pitch. This choice allowed him to create a sense of progression in the introduction, which prepares the listener for the entrance of the piano in measure ten.

This rhythmic cell continues throughout the piece as an *ostinato*, while the entrance of the main theme is juxtaposed with it. The piano solo part begins as in
Carnaval, as shown in Example 6.5. Here the piano plays the accompaniment, while the oboe and bassoon expose the theme that will appear later in the solo piano section. Thus, the instrumentation functions to announce the main theme while thickening the sound textures.

Example 6.5. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 1st mvt., mm. 10-13, piano.

Example 6.6 shows the main theme presented by the oboe and bassoon.

Example 6.6. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, mvt., mm. 10-13, oboe and bassoon.

The B section of the introduction begins on the pick-up of measure twenty-one and is centered in G major. The piano part holds the center of the piece. The orchestra collaborates with the piano part, sometimes, doubling textural elements for emphasis and at other times entering into a dialogue with the piano.

As Villa-Lobos enriches the color, the excitement increases. At rehearsal number four (or m. 21 according to the manuscript), we find four elements in juxtaposition:
1 – The left-hand rhythmic pattern in rising fourths or fifths, doubled by the bassoon and cello in pizzicato. This pattern, with its accent on the weak beat of the measure with an ascending interval, imitates the surdo part,\(^{118}\) of the basic samba rhythm as seen below in Example 6.7. The surdo is a double-headed drum of European origins which marks the basis of the samba instrumentation. Among other such drums are snare drums (known as caixa) of various sizes (the smaller is referred to as tarol, the larger as caixa-surda or surdo).\(^{119}\)

Example 6.7. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 1\(^{st}\) mvt., mm. 20-25, bassoon and cello.

2 – The ostinato rhythmic motive shared by both hands in the piano part.

3 – The melody "en dehors" (at distance) in the extreme right hand, using mainly the fourth and fifth fingers, as shown in Example 6.8.

\(^{118}\) The surdo is a drum with a deep shell, of about 50 X 66 cm, used in samba school’s “bateria” to play the basic beats. It can be replaced by a small bass drum. Villa-Lobos sua obra (Rio de Janeiro: Museu Villa-Lobos, 1989), 32.

\(^{119}\) Ibid.

4 – The answer to the melodic line by the piccolo. This figure appears in staccato triplets in a chromatic passage which suggests the laughter and gaiety of a children’s carnival as seen in Example 6.9.


The A section returns in m. 34, but this time with the trumpet and trombone playing the main theme, while the piano accompanies the brass instruments with the galloping motive. The piece ends with a *tutti* gesture on an A-major chord, with an eighth note following a quarter-note fermata, as found in Example 6.10. This gesture suggests the arrival of little Pierrot’s pony.

**Scene 2. “O chicote do Diabinho” (The Little Devil’s Whip)**

Since the genesis of Brazilian street carnival, the favorite of all characters was the *diabinho* (little Devil). This figure dominated street carnival celebrations in Rio until the 1920’s. Therefore, it is natural that Villa-Lobos casts this personage as the protagonist of the second scene in *Carnaval das crianças*. The orchestral introduction of “The Little Devil’s Whip” has two basic elements: the arrival of the carnival parade and the descriptive rhythmic figure of the whip.

The carnival parade arrival is stated through an ostinato rhythm, which is performed by the percussion, cello and double bass only. Villa-Lobos chooses soft dynamics, which range from $ppp$ to $p$, throughout the twenty measures duration of this episode. These dynamics successfully depict the arrival scene, since the parade can be heard in a distance when the orchestra plays $ppp$ and is perceived as arriving when the $p$ dynamics appear. According to the manuscript, Villa-Lobos asks for a “*bateria*” (drum set), to be executed by one player. Specifically, he calls for a *caisse claire*, tambor, and *grand caisse*, which he includes under the Portuguese word: “*bateria*.” Although samba is the most popular of all Brazilian rhythms, the *marchinha* (carnaval march), is the favorite rhythm of the *cariocas* (natives of Rio de Janeiro). Villa-Lobos properly chooses a *marchinha* for the arrival of the parade and the little Devil with his whip as the center figure as seen in Example 6.11.

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From measure 5 onward, the French horns present a chordal setting of the main theme that will later appear in the solo piano part in m. 21. The illustration found in Example 6.12 shows the melodic line within a folkloric style of melody.

Example 6.12. Villa-Lobos, *Mômoprecóce*, 2\textsuperscript{nd} mvt., mm. 5-8, French horns.

Finally, the whip of the little Devil is evoked by the violin and violas, with an ascending gesture of juxtaposed fourths within a minor seventh ascending gesture. The displacement of this figure increases the surprise element of the whip, which seems to be guided by the little Devil without direction. Such an effect can be seen in Example 6.13.

For sixteen measures, the A pedal tone is sustained by the cello and double bass section. The remaining four measures of the introduction is marked by a *rallentando* chromatic passage of the pedal, which will arrive on C, the new pedal point and the new key for the piano solo. The strings sustain a C-major chord while the piano uses a major second tremolo in the left hand and plays the whip figure in the right hand. Now, however the ascending chord is that of a fifth, reducing the sense of tension as seen in Example 6.14


The piano presents the chordal theme previously announced by the French horns, from mm. 26-40. The transition to the new theme occurs on m. 43 with a descending pentatonic passage played on the black keys. Villa-Lobos frequently uses this device in transitions of his solo piano works. As seen in Example 6.15, the piano
part, still dominating, is characterized by three musical elements: 1) the *marchinha* rhythm in the left hand, with a major second interval; 2) the melody marked “*bem fora a canto*” (sing out), played with the upper part of the left hand; and 3) a right-hand staccato, with a grace note line marked “*ligeiro e saltitante*” (*leggero* and leaping).

A polyrhythmic section takes place, in which, in juxtaposition with the piano part, the strings and later the woodwinds rely on a descending staccato scale passage in triplets. The triplets turn into sixteenths, now with the addition of the solo viola and alto saxophone on a D-flat major scale in counterpoint. The viola part is shown in Example 6.16.

Example 6.15. Villa-Lobos, *Mômoprecóce*, 2\textsuperscript{nd} mvt., mm. 46-54, piano.

The increasingly faster figures culminate in the climax of the B section from measures 64-72. The soloist is required to possess a good command of rhythm and tone color, when the right hand plays a passage in D-flat major with six sixteenth notes every beat with occasional accents that are vital to the subtlety of the *marchinha* rhythm as shown in Example 6.17.

The transition back to the A section takes place from mm. 73-86 and is clearly led by the soloist in a virtuosic scale passage up and down the keyboard. Example 6.18 illustrates the arrival of this passage on a cluster in a decisive childlike rhythm that concludes this entire section.


Now centered in F major, the A’ section starts exactly as A did, except that the ascending interval gesture which illustrated the whip in the left hand is now played as an orchestral introduction on a minor seventh ascending passage. The piano is preparing an introduction for its own statement of the theme in measure 101, again in C major. This time the A section is shorter and terminates abruptly in a percussive irregular codetta on a harmonic major second sounded in the piano, accompanied by a tremolo in the woodwinds and strings, as shown in Example 6.19.


Scene 3. “A manhã da Pierrete” (Pierrete’s Morning)

This scene serves as a lyrical interlude between the excitement of the intervening scenes. Villa-Lobos composed a long orchestral introduction to this part of the work which extends for 107 measures. Since the orchestral introduction is newly composed for Mômoprecóce, and is based on main materials from the corresponding piece from Carnaval, it is pertinent to begin by analyzing the original solo piece.

The atmosphere present throughout most of “Pierrete’s Morning” is nostalgic and reflective. The indication, Allegretto capricietto, is quite an unusual one. It is possible to find the same indication in the scene, “Chez Petrushka,” by Igor Stravinsky. The Brazilian composer Marlos Nobre has compared the Mômoprecóce to
Petrushka, noting similarities of style, mood, and compositional technique. Villa-Lobos’s successfully depicts Pierrete, who perhaps is in her bedroom on the second morning of carnival, tired from the first night of adventures and trying to get ready mentally and physically for one more day of dancing and playing.

The solo piece is 48 measures long and explores the upper register of the piano. Both hands are written in the treble clef. A formal structural diagram of the piece is seen below on Table 6.1:

Table 6.1. Villa-Lobos, “Pierrete’s Morning,” formal structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Tonal center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>11-14</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>Ab pedal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>21-32</td>
<td>Db – G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>33-40</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>41-48</td>
<td>G – C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first motive of this piece starts in the left hand at the beginning of the A section. This motive is a simple diatonic line, descending from C to A in half notes. It gives a nostalgic and weary mood to the opening, as shown in Example 6.20. After two statements of the motive on C, it rises to D, perhaps attempting to awaken from the tired mood by transforming the motive from Bb, moving to a high G on a chromatic line.

Example 6.20. Villa-Lobos, *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras*, “Pierrete’s Morning,” mm. 3-6, piano left hand.
A second major musical gesture that Villa-Lobos develops in “Pierrete’s Morning,” is the right-hand ascending and descending melodic line in thirds and fourths, as shown in Example 6.21. This rhythmic pattern is a quasi grace-note in a dotted motivic pattern. This line, in opposition to the steady lefthand motive moving elegantly downward, gives an impression of morning freshness, happiness, and lazy excitement. The rhythmic figure could also relate to bird singing, which Villa-Lobos frequently represented in pieces such as his “Passarinho de pano” from his Prole do Bebê no. 2.


For the four-measure transition, an element of surprise changes the character with percussive juxtaposed seconds, as shown in Example 6.22.

Example 6.22. Villa-Lobos, Carnaval das crianças brasileiras, “Pierrete’s Morning,” mm. 11-14, piano.
Villa-Lobos states a new motive in section B (Example 6.23). This motive resembles a fanfare with parallel fifths, fourths and thirds in two voices. In the piano solo version, it is possible to imagine the brass playing this theme. As we shall see, this is exactly how Villa-Lobos treats this material in the orchestral introduction.

Example 6.23. Villa-Lobos, *Carnaval das crianças brasileiras*, “Pierrette’s Morning,” mm. 15-16, piano

The next section depicts an indecisive Pierrete, who can hear the parade outside, wants to return to play, but enjoys her nostalgic quiet morning moments before she returns to chidlike celebrations. The long melodic line in steady quarter notes, played by the left hand piano part, dominates the atmosphere. This melodic line is built on an ascending and descending chromatic gesture. The idea is similar to that of the right hand in section A, but this time lacks a stable direction. The melody could almost be called a dodecaphonic passage. It works around eleven pitches, ascending in thirds and descending with the chromatic scale. Such a device enhances the uncertainty of the character as shown in Example 6.24.

The coda ends on an *affretando* passage on a pedal G, and arrives on a fortissimo G dominant ninth chord before it returns to the first mood, which opens the scene. The ascending dotted rhythms shown in Example 6.25 finally reach from B to high G, thus completing the cycle of thirds.


For the orchestral introduction to “Pierrete’s Morning,” Villa-Lobos formulates an extended 107-measure interlude with borrowed musical material from the abovementioned scene.

**Scene 4. “Os guizos do Dominózinho” (Little Domino’s Jingle Bells)**

The *guizos*, or jingling bells, played an intrinsic part in the Brazilian festivities of carnival during the first half of the twentieth century. Their presence characterized the mocking spirit of such celebrations.\(^{121}\) The *dominó* (masked figure wearing a hooded robe) was a historical carnival character dating from the 1850s, when the Venetian carnival practice copied from Paris, gained popularity among Brazilians.\(^{122}\)

\(^{121}\) Lima, 38.

The piece, titled “Little Domino’s Guizos” (Jingle Bells), contrasts with the reflective mood of “Pierrete’s Morning.” Here, the orchestral introduction begins with the hochet and chocalho (both types of rattle used)\textsuperscript{123} announcing the continuation of the festivities.

The ABC coda form of the piece presents four themes, two of them are found on section B. The guizo motive, which dominates the piece, makes up the A section. The orchestral introduction announces the guizo motive and partially the B section’s first theme. Example 6.26 shows the guizo motive from the solo piano version of the work.

The orchestral introduction begins with the first and second violins presenting the guizo motive in tremolos. The violas accompany the violins in parallel fifths as seen below in Example 6.27.


\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example6.26.png}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{123} Hochet, the French word for rattle, is indicated on the original manuscript. Chocalho is the Portuguese word for the same instrument.
Example 6.27. Villa-Lobos, *Mômoprecóce*, 4\textsuperscript{nd} mvt., mm. 1-2, violins and viola.

To complete the joyous atmosphere of the second day of carnival celebrations, other orchestra instruments are added. The English horn, trombones, and cellos in ascending scales of staccato triplets are challenged by the contrasting movement of the bassoon and bass, playing steady eighth notes in staccato descending scale. A melodic line is played by the French horns. This melody is intentionally presented at this moment. According to my understanding, the composer sought a descriptive device to enhance the joyous character of the work.

In m. 7, the saxophones and clarinets begin an ostinato dotted rhythm that ascends a major third—the same device that Villa-Lobos used to end “Pierrete’s Morning.” It accompanies the first theme of the B section, announced by the oboe solo in A major, as indicated in Example 6.28.

Example 6.28. Villa-Lobos, *Mômoprecóce*, 4\textsuperscript{nd} mvt., mm. 20-23, oboe.
As in the third scene, once the piano enters, the soloistic writing features the treble clef in both hands. Very rarely is there a note in the middle range of the piano. By using such a device, the composer developed and enhanced melodic lines and themes, since in the solo piano version, these ideas are shifted more drastically. One of Villa-Lobos’s most frequent compositional techniques is the use of pentatonic and whole tone glissandi to connect parts, which is found constantly in Mômoprecóce. In m. 37, shown in Example 6.29, he writes black against white key chords in an ascending percussive passage and then repeats the same pattern a fourth higher.

Example 6.29. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 4\textsuperscript{nd} mvt., mm. 37, piano.

After eleven measures of percussive passages for the piano with a trombone response to the second theme of section B, a folkloric theme is played in the left-hand piano part, as seen in Example 6.30.

Example 6.30. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 4\textsuperscript{nd} mvt., mm. 56-59, piano.
The close of the C section is marked by an ascending whole-tone glissando in alternating hands, which leads to the final theme of the coda. Here the *guizo* effect of the tremolos stop, and the melody in folkloric fashion closes the parade in parallel ninth chords, as seen in Example 6.31.


In my opinion, the soloist in this passage should recall all the joy of childhood games and play. There should be a sense of carelessness and naïvité.

**Interlude – Orchestra and Piano (new material)**

The following interlude is a completely new section of the *Mômoprecóce*. It consists of a relatively sophisticated style, which owes a great deal to the French school of piano and orchestral composition. The Brazilian aspect of the piece can be recognized through the improvisatory character of the melodic lines, which resembles the *chôro* style of improvisation. Contrasting with the previously energetic joyous movement, the interlude is reflective and increasingly tense. It is a through-composed, non-programmatic section in 6/4 time. The *ad libitum* introduction of the woodwinds in solos overlapping each other may well be the composer’s attempt to emulate an improvised *chôro* ensemble warm-up to a rehearsal, since he depicted so
many characteristic aspects of the *chôro* elsewhere in his works. The French horn playing an unsteady pedal rhythm maintains the harmonic and rhythmic treatment of the nine-measure introduction, as shown in Example 6.32.

Example 6.32. Villa-Lobos, *Mômoprecóce*, interlude, mm. 1-3, horn in F.

![Example 6.32](image)

The bassoon line, which resembles Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du printemps*, opens the introduction, as seen in Example 6.33.


![Example 6.33](image)

From m. 5 onward, the saxophone and the clarinet musically comment on the melodic statement presented by the bassoon. The flute eventually overlaps with the clarinet line in an ascending-descending scale of thirds from F to D. The section ends with oboe and flute solos in counterpoint. The piano entrance coincides with the string entrance as well, with the dynamic marking *pppp*. The orchestral color drastically changes, and tension begins to mount. Example 6.34 shows the violin solo in a steady ascending diatonic scale in the extreme high range of the instrument, which helps establish this apprehensive mood.

![Example 6.34](image)
Example 6.34. Villa-Lobos, *Mômoprecóce*, interlude, mm. 10-12, violin solo.

On a continuous C-sharp pedal, the right hand develops the flute’s final statement. The melody, which lasts for five measures, gradually coalesces into the composer’s favored white against black key technique, which will orient the following piano cadenza. Example 6.35 shows this motivic pattern that works as a constructive cell throughout the nineteen-measure passage.


As seen in the example above, the groups of triplets now become groups of nine. The dynamics from mm. 17-36 gradually move from *pp* to *ffff*. The left hand presents the melody in the top voice and the orchestral texture works in conjunction with the piano creating the extreme ranges.

This dramatic interlude, not present in *Carnaval*, diverges markedly in mood, character, and writing style from the first part of the Fantasy. Villa-Lobos clearly had Magdalena Tagliaferro’s virtuosity in mind when he wrote this portion of the work. This is the moment the music shift from a programmatic approach to a non-
descriptive style in order to highlight the technique of both the soloist and the orchestra.

**Scene 5. “As peripécias de um trapeirozinho” (The Little Ragpicker’s Adventures)**

The subsequent two scenes correlate in psychological character. The spirited attitude and artful mood embodied in the two different characters link them together. This similarity is illustrated by the compatible use of compositional techniques, in which Villa-Lobos treats the piano as well as the orchestra parts. He constantly applies pentatonic melodies, glissandi in pentatonic or whole-tone scales, black versus white key percussive passages, scales in thirds, children’s folkloric motives, and polyrhythms.

Scene 5 is written in the key of C-sharp minor, has an A (transition) B A’ form. In a 6/4 meter, the clarinet introduces the accompaniment, which is an arpeggiated C-sharp minor seventh chord, which is borrowed in the piano part, as seen in Example 6.36.

**Example 6.36. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 5th mvt., mm. 2-3, piano (right hand).**

The adventures of the Ragpicker and his wondrous playing around the streets after the parade is depicted by the geographical leaping figures of the right-hand melody as demonstrated in Example 6.37.

For this scene, the orchestra minimizes the accompaniment. Villa-Lobos treats orchestral colors in this movement very economically. Strings and woodwinds basically hold chords in long notes, without strong rhythmic events. For the piano writing he adopts the same techniques, already displayed so far in this fantasy. One example of his white versus black key technique for transitions is found in the bridge to the B section. The soloist is called upon to explore the highest range of the keyboard and, at the same time, musically portray the jumping motion of the Ragpicker. Here, Villa-Lobos writes an amusing and unusual passage. Five grace notes precede the notes E# - B, A#, G#, and F#. The instrumentalist places his or her fifth finger on a white key (B), and rolls all remaining fingers on the black keys before he or she arrives on the E# with the thumb. The left hand accompanies this action by rolling the group of two black keys from C# in ascending motion, contrasting with the descending motion of the right hand. Similarly, the right hand plays a descending group of grace notes in a C-major five-finger pattern, thus using only white keys, while the left hand, plays a descending roll on the three black keys from F#. The effect is surprisingly rough and violent, as shown in Example 6.38.

This measure is repeated five times, each at a lower octave. The B section displays a melodic line, which derives from the A section melody. This scene easily connects with the next. On the manuscript, Villa-Lobos indicates the following instruction to the performer: “Dans le même movement” (within the same movement).

**Scene 6. “As traquinices do mascarado mignon” (The Mischievous Little Masker)**

The formal structure of this scene is: ABCA coda. After a ten-measure orchestral introduction, the piano enters with an open fifth tremolo in D minor, played in the left hand. Villa-Lobos gives the following expressive indication in Portuguese: “sempre leve” (lightly throughout). He instructs the performer to play the right hand melody “com muita graça” (with much grace). The element of innovation in this scene is the use of polyrhythm, which takes place during nineteen measures and provides a transition to the new material in 3/4 time. It is important to notice that this is the first time that the time signature changes, since the transition from Scene 4. Example 6.39, shows the motivic cell of the section:

It is significant that Villa-Lobos constantly writes instructions in Portuguese when orienting moods, atmospheres, or characters in new passages. Six measures into the ostinato drive of section B, he indicates that the melodic line of the piano part should be played, “com ironia” (ironically). As shown below in Example 6.40, the hand then bifurcates into two voices, which is subsequently followed by three or four voices.

Example 6.40. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 6th mvt., mm. 27-32, piano.

The ostinato bass of the left hand is emphasized by the staccato indication “trés sec” played *mf*, with the timpani doubling the line at a *pp* dynamic.

Several different translations for “As traquinices do mascarado mignon” exist. The Dover edition uses “The Coquette’s Mischievousness,” and Peppercorn translates the title as “The Masked Boy’s Pranks.” The one chosen for this study is a hybrid version: “The Mischief of Masked Mignon.”
A proper understanding of the title is essential in order for the performer to produce a convincing interpretation. For instance, passages such as the ironic melody, with accents on the second eighth note of the second beat and a tenuto marking on the first eighth note of the measure, require a light touch and a mischievous character. Here the left hand plays the carnival ostinato, while the right hand evokes the impish temperament of the masked boy with its rhythmic pattern in triplets. The melody, with all its accents and expressive indications, reveals characteristics of children’s games. Once again, Villa-Lobos’s profound knowledge of the Brazilian soul is demonstrated by his compositional craft and musical directions. The ostinato pattern continues until m. 43, when the transition from mm. 44-49 consists of the repeated notes, F and C, up and down the keyboard. In the C section of the piece, the melody continues with the right hand. Villa-Lobos notes, “com muita alegria” (with much joy), and the time signature changes to 2/4 while the strings and woodwinds maintain the harmony. The trombone solo enhances the melodic line of the right hand. In Example 6.41 we see the two first measures of this section:

Example 6.41. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóece, 6th mvt., mm. 50-51, piano.

The left-hand repeated tremolo accompaniment featuring intervals of seconds leads the accompaniment back to the open fifths of section A. This time, Villa-Lobos uses a pentatonic C# scale, which is played only on the black keys. The orchestral
accompaniment with pizzicato strings and woodwinds changes to the first violin in descending sixteenth-note triplets, while the oboe repeats a theme based on the C section. The right-hand melody this time in a G-flat pentatonic pitch center, starts a new orchestral transition, which could also be called the coda to the sixth scene. This basically works with two materials from this scene and also anticipates the opening motive of the seventh scene in the violin parts, as shown in Example 6.42.

Example 6.42. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, 6th mvt., mm. 109-110, first and second violins

Scene 7. “A gaita do precoce fantasiado” (The Fife of The Precocious Daydreamer)

This is a reflective movement in ABA form. The molto lento section in E minor which begins in m. 5 has the longest and clearest melody presented so far during the entire piece. The neo-Baroque style characterized by suspensions, shows a close resemblance to the second movement of Ravel’s G major piano concerto. Yet, Ravel could not have influenced Villa-Lobos in this work, because the Brazilian composer wrote the Carnaval das crianças brasileiras in 1919, seven years before the celebrated French piano concerto. Example 6.43 shows the opening piano melody:
The orchestration is simple and very effective. It follows an ABA form: E minor section for piano and woodwinds; a D# minor part for piano and woodwinds as well and a E minor section for piano, woodwinds, and strings. This particular piece was destined for an orchestral accompaniment. The piano solo version is enriched by the sound colors and depth made possible with the woodwinds and strings.

The melody in the B section represents well the *chôro* melodic style adopted by Villa-Lobos (Example 6.44).


This movement portrays a melancholic and individualistic reflection in a definite contrast with what is to come: the frenetic joyous community celebration of the Finale.
Finale – *A folia de um bloco infantil* (Frolics of a Band of Children)

To interpret this movement with cultural awareness, it is important for the pianist to understand the concept of *bloco* during Villa-Lobos’s day, and the highly commercialized spectacle of samba schools in the *Sambódromo*\(^{124}\) of our days in Rio.

**Bloco and Samba School**

At the turn of the twentieth century, Rio de Janeiro’s carnival saw the rise of diverse types of parading clubs, representing their own part of society and with their specific music trademarks. The predecessor of all these parading clubs was the *Entrudo*, the Venetian inspired parade, which was popular since the 1850’s in Rio, and was formed by inherently bourgeois white members. With the abolition movement in 1888, a group of predominantly dark-skinned people dancing Afro-oriented rhythms was formed: the *Cucumbys*. According to Chasteen they might have been the forerunners of the *escolas de samba* (samba schools). A third parading group emerged with extraordinary popularity, the *Zé Pereiras*. They symbolized the Portuguese immigrant, by its center character *Zé Pereira*, who did not dance but led the group along the streets. The *Zé Pereira* groups marched through the sound of staccato bass and snare drums. The *cordões* dancing several types of polyrhythmic roars were poor males who paraded in doggy costumes. They were also called *sujos* (dirty ones). The *blocos* was the name given to the “looser and less ambitious of parading groups in the streets of Rio.”\(^{125}\) This spontaneous gathering of street

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\(^{124}\) *Sambódromo*: the avenue in Rio de Janeiro, where the parade of samba schools takes place during the carnival week.

\(^{125}\) Chasteen, 44.
dancers, which became popular in around 1913, was first predominant of youth of both sexes, without “distinction of race, education or color.” The dominant musical genre for *blocos* was the *marcha de carnaval* (carnival march).

The first *escolas de samba* (samba schools) were organized by the end of the 1920’s. Such phenomenon was the result of the predominantly popular character of the carnival. The components of these organizations came from the poor portion of the society, out of the inevitable growth in consequence of the abolition of slavery without opportunity. These impoverished, mostly dark-skinned members of this non-equalitarian social system concentrated in the hills around urban areas. Born as spontaneous organizations, samba schools could not avoid the inescapable institutional progress of every popular phenomenon. This institutional process took place during the second half of the 1930s, when the competition between samba schools in Rio de Janeiro became a trademark of the Brazilian carnival and the center of this country’s tourism. Brazilian historian Rachel Soihet reports that Rio’s illustrious foreign visitors obligatorily added a visit to a samba school in their agendas. Villa-Lobos presented the *Mangueira* samba school to the American composer, Aaron Copland, for the 1941 carnival kick-off. Copland described this experience.

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128 The hills, called *morros* in Portuguese, designated these ghettos.

129 Soihet, 150.
There is a contrast between the music and the dance. The melody is strong and vibrant, but the dance is relaxed and slow. The music did not surprise me, but the singing did. I had noticed this same rhythm present in the music of all Brazilian composers who I listened: Villa-Lobos, Gnatalli, Ovalle, Vianna, Cosme, Guarnieri, Mignone, Fernandes.¹³⁰

The samba school “constitutes the synthesis of all previous carnival manifestations, presenting elements of bloco, rancho, and even large societies. It left an indelible influence on the popular and concert music of Brazil.”¹³¹

**Instrumentation and interpretative aspects of the Finale**

“Folia de um bloco infantil” is the apotheosis of this parade of characters portrayed in Mômoprecóce. This final scene presents two major motives: a pentatonic motive and a folkloric melody which leads the second half of the piece. The percussion ensemble is present throughout the scene, and the piano solo leads the ongoing transformations of the work. Villa-Lobos indicates a movimento de marcha moderé tempo at the beginning of the piece, with a pizzicato bass section presenting the march ostinato using pianissimo dynamics. The “bateria” played by one percussionist, as seen in Example 6.45, joins in with the indication: grosse caisse avec mailloche de timbales (large double-headed drum with timbales mallets), which produces the low bass drum effect of the Brazilian instrument known as “surdo.”


¹³¹ Soihet, 152.
With strings harmonies and the bassoon added to the march ostinato, the tamborim announces the entrance of the piano, which presents the first theme. The tempo indication of the section is “alegre,” as shown in Example 6.46.

Example 6.45. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, Finale, mm. 5-6, cellos basses, and bass drum.

Example 6.46. Villa-Lobos, Mômoprecóce, finale, mm. 34-36, piano and tamborim.

The principal motivic line, which encompasses a significant portion of the piece, is now played by the piano, as seen in Example 6.47.

![Example 6.47](image)

The instrumentation continues to thicken, until the climax of the piano development, when Villa-Lobos writes a new transition that did not exist in his solo piece. Interesting to notice is the rhythmic ostinato which encompasses this section of the finale. As seen in Example 6.48. the *grosse caisse* or “surdo” perseveres with the *tamborim*.


![Example 6.48](image)

In measure 93, the piano re-enters with the same cell played in a chordal texture, followed by a fast arpeggio passage, as shown in Example 6.49. Here, in this virtuoso passage, Villa-Lobos chooses to double the speed of the arpeggio from the original note values he used in *Carnaval* (from thirty-seconds to sixty-fourths).
A new element is introduced in the beginning of the B section. The soloist now plays a folkloric melody in the left hand (Example 6.50).


The melodic line now performed by the woodwinds and strings is embellished by a percussive repeated note in octaves in the high register of the piano. This virtuosic passage leads to new material in a samba style led by the piano, as shown in Example 6.51.

At this point the percussion set has its full climatic moment with the timpani, *chocalho, reco-reco, bateria, tamborim* and *grosse caisse*. The coda is a tutti on
prestissimo presenting the melody in pentatonic scale seemingly, which evokes the running movement of children.


**Conclusion**

The above discussion of the instrumentation of each scene is indispensable to understand the relationship between the preexistent piano writing of *Carnaval das crianças* and the new orchestral writing of *Mômoprecóce*. The piano part and the orchestral writing, work in the fantasy for piano and orchestra, as two separate music episodes happening simultaneously, producing different layers of sound. The pianist is required to know the orchestral part well enough to be aware of the intricacies of the work. The instrumentation also brings the cultural aspects of each character and its actions to life, by enhancing the piano part and transforming it through the choice of folkloric instruments as well as standard timbric combinations.
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Heitor Villa-Lobos’s writing for piano and orchestra reflects his diverse compositional periods. The present study observed the mastery of his orchestration represented in remodeling a suite of short children’s pieces into a masterpiece for piano and orchestra. In reworking the solo piano suite, he demonstrated his ability as orchestrator that he acquired in the 1920s during his Chôros period. By using such ability, Villa-Lobos transformed the Carnaval das crianças brasileiras into Mômoprecôce which, along with Bachianas Brasileiras no. 3, is his most frequently performed piano and orchestral work. Mômoprecôce also exemplifies the French influence in his music through the continuous one-movement structure and instrumentation. It presents common compositional devices such as the use of ostinato, clusters, black-key versus white-key relationships, pentatonic scales, modal passages, and interval interpolations, among others techniques, which became trademarks of his piano writing.

I was exposed to Villa-Lobos’s piano music since the early stages of my career but this investigation has fostered in me a more profound understanding of the composer’s multi-faceted approach to nationalism, his descriptive writing, and his various methods of incorporating folklore into his works. In investigating the musical output for the present study, I came across a yet unknown literature of high artistic standards. Villa-Lobos left for posterity nine works for piano and orchestra and one additional two-piano and symphonic work. These pieces deserve more frequent
performances, and the comprehensive study and analysis of them will contribute greatly to the enrichment of the standard piano and orchestral literature. My hope is that the present D.M.A. essay will foster future research on Villa-Lobos’s diverse solo and accompanied piano literature.
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