

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: TRADITION AND INNOVATION:
ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED
COMPOSITIONS FOR VIOLONCELLO BY
HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS

Yi-Shien Lien, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2003

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Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) began his musical career as a cellist. When he was only twelve years old, it became imperative—upon the sudden and untimely death of his father—that the young Villa-Lobos earn money as a cellist to provide financial support for his mother and sisters. Villa-Lobos's intimate relationship with the cello eventually inspired him to compose great music for this instrument. This dissertation explores both the diversity of compositional technique and the evolution of style found in the music for cello written by Villa-Lobos. The project consists of two

recorded recital performances and a written document exploring and analyzing those pieces.

In the study of the music of Villa-Lobos, it is of great interest to consider the music's traditional European elements in combination (or even juxtaposition) with its imaginative and sometimes wildly innovative Brazilian character. His early works were greatly influenced by European Romantic composers such as Robert Schumann, Frédéric Chopin, and the virtuoso cellist/composer David Popper (whom Villa-Lobos idolized). Later, Villa-Lobos flourished in a newfound compositional independence and moved away from Euro-romanticism and toward the folk music of his Brazilian homeland. It is intriguing to experience this transition through an exploration of his cello compositions. The works examined and performed in this dissertation project are chosen from among the extensive number of Villa-Lobos's cello compositions and are his most important works for cello with piano, cello with another instrument, and cello with orchestra. The chosen works demonstrate the evolving range and combination of characteristic elements found in Villa-Lobos's compositional repertoire.

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SELECTED COMPOSITIONS FOR VIOLONCELLO BY HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS

by

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I
EARLY LIFE
(1887-1922)

The Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos, famous at home and abroad, is one of the most important representatives of his country because of the Brazilian character of his music. In Villa-Lobos's life, the main events that deserve consideration include 1) his childhood in Rio de Janeiro; 2) the important role of his father, Raúl, in his early music training; 3) his attraction to the *chorões* (street musicians in Rio); 4) his various trips to the jungle; 5) his marriage to Lucília Guimarães and later to Arminda Neves d'Almeida; 6) his meeting and friendship with Rubinstein; 7) his activities at the "Week of Modern Art" in São Paulo; 8) his first residency in Paris and the recognition of his talent. Other areas of importance involve his contribution in music education and related projects, and his international acclamation from the time of his first trip to the United States in 1944.

Villa-Lobos never wrote an autobiography, but had requested his friend C. Paula

Barros, a poet, painter and musician, to write his life story. The biography reveals in numerous ways that the composer tends to create a legendary aura around himself. One of the examples of Villa-Lobos's manipulation of facts was the confusion of his birthdate. A Brazilian-German musicologist, Lisa Peppercorn, who knew the composer fairly well, stated in 1948 that the purported date of his birth varied from 1881 to 1891 in many sources. It was Vasco Mariz, while working on his first edition of his book on the composer, who found the baptism certificate of the composer's sister at Rio de Janeiro's São José Church. It indicates that the composer was baptized on the same occasion, and the date of birth was recorded 5 March 1887.

Youth and Early Adulthood

Heitor Villa-Lobos's father, Raúl, worked at the National Library in Rio and was a good amateur musician. Raúl liked to hold informal musical evenings at the house in the tradition of the salon concerts. Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin, and Schumann were favored. Raúl Villa-Lobos was a serious man. He taught his son, from a very early age, to play the cello using a viola at first. The severe discipline on Heitor Villa-Lobos was resented but

later recognized as beneficial. The composer said in a 1957 interview about his father:

“With him, I always attended rehearsals, concerts and operas...I also learned how to play the clarinet, and I was required to identify the genre, style, character, and origin of the compositions, in addition to recognizing quickly the name of a note, of sounds or noises... Watch out, when I didn't get it right.”¹ The young Villa-Lobos managed playing the cello, the guitar and the clarinet with little problems. The cello remained his instrument, the only one that he studied seriously. After his father's death, he had to play the cello in cafés, cinemas, and vaudeville to earn a living for his family.

Throughout his life, Villa-Lobos rejected academic training, and composed music with the natural feeling. When an interviewer later asked him about his musical training, he said: “This is my conservatory,” pointing at a map of Brazil. Between the ages of 18 and 25, Villa-Lobos claimed that he had traveled throughout Brazil to absorb folklore material. He declared that he had made at least four trips and even stayed in Bahia for three years. Here is another example of the composer's fondness for dramatizing his life

¹ Gerard Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos: The Search for Brazil's Musical Soul* (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas Press, 1994), 3

with his imagined experience. He told outrageous stories about being captured and almost boiled alive by cannibals, and he had to calm them by playing records on a phonograph. A newspaper even published an exciting article about the experience of Villa-Lobos as a member in a German expedition. Eventually people found out that the stories came from the book *Voyage to Brazil* written by a German traveler, Hans Staden, three centuries earlier! In Lisa Peppercorn's *The World of Villa-Lobos in Picture and Documents*, she said: "It seems most unlikely that even a courageous young man, such as Villa-Lobos undoubtedly was, undertook all these adventurous trips in those days... Villa-Lobos enjoyed dramatizing and embroidering simple facts and he invented stories to put himself into the limelight and make himself attractive and interesting."² Peppercorn further declared: "nor earlier or later in life, did Villa-Lobos join any scientific expeditions, nor did he travel on his own through Brazil's interior or to far-off territories to get to know the music of the aborigines or to study and collect folklore material."³ He did make two trips with the band he played in to make a living, including

² Lisa M. Peppercorn, *The World of Villa-Lobos in Picture and Documents* (England: Scolar Press, 1996), 47

³ Lisa M. Peppercorn, *Villa-Lobos: Collected Studies by L. M. Peppercorn* (England: Scolar Press, 1992),

one in Curitiba, in the southern Brazilian state, where he worked in a match factory. The other was his trip to Manaus on the Amazon river. About the source of Villa-Lobos's folkloric material, Peppercorn claimed: "In Villa-Lobos's entire musical output there is not a single folk tune or any folklore material that he had collected himself. His compositions are, however, full of pseudo-folklore melodies of his own creation."⁴

Although the adventurous tales mostly came from the composer's imagination, he did admit to Vasco Mariz that they helped him greatly to attract a larger crowd to concerts.

The adventures ended when Villa-Lobos met the pianist Lucília Guimarães in 1912 and married her in 1913. Although they separated in 1936, Mrs. Villa-Lobos devoted herself to her husband's career and remained loyal throughout her life. With the support from Lucília, the period 1912-1917 was full of intense and creative activities. At this stage, Villa-Lobos gradually moved from traditional European elements to an artistic world full of his personal style using innovative, primitive, and folkloric material.

Important works during this period include early guitar pieces (such as the *Suite Popular*

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⁴Ibid., 39

Brasileira, 1908-1912), numerous chamber music works (including the first four string quartets), two symphonies, and two symphonic poems *Amazonas* and *Uirapuru*. Pieces featuring the cello include *Concerto No. 1*, *Pequena Sonata*, *Pequena Suite*, *Prelude*, *Sonhar*, *Berceuse*, *Capricho*, *Sonata No. 1*, *Sonata, No. 2*, *Elegie*, and *O Canto do Cysne Negro* (Song of the Black Swan). A thorough analysis of these pieces will be given in the later chapters.

Since Villa-Lobos was trying to free himself from European tradition, he abandoned the use of opus numbers around 1918 when he realized how meaningless they were. As a result, no one knows exactly how much music he actually wrote.

Other than Villa-Lobos's father, another important person in the composer's life was the great pianist, Arthur Rubinstein. Before their first meeting, Rubinstein had heard great compliments about the composer, and he was naturally curious to meet this person. During the first visit to Rio in 1918, Rubinstein met Villa-Lobos. As Rubinstein described vividly in his autobiography, the first meeting was unpleasant since Villa-Lobos thought that Rubinstein had come only to show off himself. Villa-Lobos said

to him: “You are a virtuoso. You cannot understand my music!”⁵ To Rubinstein’s surprise, the next morning Villa-Lobos and a number of other musicians invaded Rubinstein’s hotel room. He apologized for his rudeness and played some music with the musicians for Rubinstein. It was the beginning of a long-term friendship. The great pianist encouraged Villa-Lobos to turn his attention to piano compositions. Among the resulting works, there were two piano cycles, *Suíte floral*, and *Simples coletânea*; two piano suites, entitled *A Prole do Bebê* (The Baby’s Family); and the monumental work *Rudepoema*, dedicated to Rubinstein. Those piano pieces were performed worldwide and recorded by Rubinstein. In order to help Villa-Lobos financially, Rubinstein urged Carlos Guinle, the Brazilian industrialist, to support Villa-Lobos’s trip to Europe. It was also Rubinstein who created a hypothetical collector and bought from the composer the autographed manuscript of his cello sonata for a very high price.

The “Week of Modern Art”

A turning point in the culture of Brazil and in Villa-Lobos’s life was the “Week of Modern Art” in São Paulo on 11-18 February 1922. During the Week, creative painters,

⁵ Arthur Rubinstein, *My Many Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf., 1980), 90-3

poets and composers presented their works at the Municipal Theater to stress the ideology of modernism. The Brazilian poet and musicologist, Mário de Andrade, was the key person who encouraged others to help him organize this extraordinary affair.

Villa-Lobos thus had a golden opportunity to be heard, and his contemporaries considered his music a perfect expression of Brazilian culture. However, the Week was harshly criticized by the public, and several performances turned out to be disasters.

When the shoulder strap of a female violinist kept slipping down, a man yelled, “Hold that strap.” She eventually burst into tears in front of the audience. One man brought a flute to the concerts and at the end of each melody he would imitate it. When someone in the audience made loud noise during the performance, a baritone lost his temper and invited the public to fight him on the street. Nevertheless, the rejection and debate of the Week actually helped to speed the transformation of people’s ideological position. The musical nationalism started to take shape at this stage. Artists began to realize that the mere use of the folkloric material as an exotic element must be abandoned in favor of presenting a natural expression of the nationality. The Week definitely made Villa-Lobos

the Brazilian composer and led him away from his attachment to internationally style.

II MATURITY (1923-1929)

In the summer of 1923, Villa-Lobos left Rio for Paris, funded by the Brazilian government and the Guinle family. His purpose was not to learn but to show what he had done. Thus principally what he did in Paris was to organize and play Brazilian music. Again Rubinstein gave him great help to get into the sophisticated world of music by introducing him to many artists. Among them were Schmitt, Honegger, d'Indy, Varèse, Ravel, de Falla, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and the publisher Max Eschig, who became his principal European publisher. As Vasco Mariz said: "hardly any foreign composer, who arrived in Paris from a country musically so backward as Brazil, had as much luck as Villa-Lobos."⁶ At the home of Prokofiev, Villa-Lobos also met Diaghilev, who was impressed by his music. Unfortunately, the great Russian impresario died before the choreography of the *A Prole do Bebê No. 1* and the *Cirandas* was finished.

The trip to Paris helped exposed Villa-Lobos's music to Europe. More importantly,

Paris awakened the composer to realize what direction he should follow. Since exoticism and national elements were the fashionable trends in Paris, he would have to reject international elements and instead express the soul of Brazil in his music. He gave his compositions names unknown in serious music like *Chôros*, *Serestas*, *Cirandas*, and used unconventional instrumental chamber ensembles. Although his works were not accepted by everyone at the beginning, he rapidly achieved a growing success. The period from 1922 to 1930 was one of the most creative and productive in Villa-Lobos's life. He was happy and confident, and enjoyed being recognized as a composer and a controversial figure.

In this period, Villa-Lobos's production reached its peak in the 14 *Chôros*. The term *Chôros* is derived from the street musicians, calling themselves "chorões", who grouped informally together in different instrumental combinations. Usually the group included a flute, clarinet, cornet, trombone or an old ophicleide, and naturally a guitar, mandolin and *cavaquinho*, a Brazilian guitar. The *Chôros* musicians wandered along the streets of Rio at night and improvised their endless serenades. Thus Villa-Lobos's *Chôros* consist

⁶ Vasco Mariz, *Heitor Villa-Lobos* (Paris: Editions Sefhers, 1967), 57-58

of different instrumental combinations: solo instrument, small ensemble and large group up to chorus and orchestra.

In Simon Wright's opinion, "Stylization and synthesis are the two key words for a complete understanding of the *Chôros*..."⁷ Villa-Lobos did not merely imitate the chorões-musicians, but strove to express the essence of Brazil.

⁷ Simon Wright, *Villa-Lobos* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 62

Table 1. The *Chôros*

Date	Number	Instrumentation
1920	1	solo guitar
1924	2	flute, clarinet
1925	3	clarinet, bassoon, saxophone, 3 horns, trombone, male voices
1926	4	3 horns, trombone
1925	5	solo piano
1926	6	Orchestra
1924	7	Flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, violin, cello, tam-tam
1925	8	Orchestra, with 2 pianos
1929	9	Orchestra
1926	10	Orchestra and chorus
1928	11	Orchestra and solo piano
1929	12	Orchestra
1929	13	2 orchestras and band (lost)
1928	14	Orchestra, band, and chorus (lost)
1928	<i>Deux Choros bis</i>	Violin and cello
1929	<i>Introdução aos Choros</i>	Orchestra, with solo guitar
1929	<i>Quinteto em forma de Choros</i>	Flute, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bassoon

Other significant works include the *Cirandas* for piano solo, the *Noneto* for chamber orchestra, the *Mômoprecóce* for piano and orchestra, the *Rudepoema* (dedicated to Rubinstein), and the well-known *Serestas* for voice and orchestra. Surprisingly, Villa-Lobos hardly composed anything for cello except the *Deux Choros bis* written for

violin and cello. He intended to use it as an encore after the whole series of *Chôros* was performed. At the end of this period, Villa-Lobos already found his identity as a composer validated by his European acceptance and success.

In 1930, Villa-Lobos and his wife returned to Brazil. What was meant to be a short visit became a ten-year's stay. He was destined to remain in his homeland for an unexpected reason: music education, somewhat paradoxical for this self-taught composer.

III
LATE YEARS
(1930-1959)

When Villa-Lobos returned to Brazil for short visits during his stay in Paris, he felt disappointed by the lack of musical activities in Brazilian schools. He started to make a plan of music education and sent it to the secretary of Education of the State of São Paulo during his short return in 1930. Julio Prestes, who was a candidate for the President, studied the plan and decided to support it if he could. However, he never reached the presidency. The revolution catapulted Getulio Vargas to the presidential palace in Rio. Just when Villa-Lobos was disappointed and getting ready to leave for Paris, the new government agreed to support the project. In 1931, he took the first step of the program, which was four concert tours through the state of São Paulo to bring music to the hinterland. Sometimes the attendance of the concerts was poor and Villa-Lobos once blamed soccer as the reason. He declared tactlessly: "Soccer has sidetracked human

intelligence from the head to the feet.”⁸

Also in 1931, Villa-Lobos began to organize massive *a capella* choral performances, and collected some twelve thousand voices, made of workers, students, and teachers. Further developments were not long in coming. In 1932, he became the director of the Music Education Department of Rio de Janeiro’s Municipality. At the age of forty-five, for the first time, Villa-Lobos had a steady job with a fixed salary. Thus Villa-Lobos remained in Brazil until shortly before the end of World War II with only a few trips abroad.

When Villa-Lobos was finally professionally settled and financially secure, a big change occurred in his private life. He had fallen in love with another woman and his marriage was threatened. It was in 1936 that Villa-Lobos wrote his wife Lucília that he would leave her and not return to their home in Rio. Villa-Lobos’s new companion until his death was Arminda Neves d’Almeida, twenty-five years younger than the composer. Later she became the first director of the Museum Villa-Lobos. Since divorce was

⁸ Gerard Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos: The Search for Brazil’s Musical Soul* (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas Press, 1994), 22

impossible in Brazil until 1977 and Lucília survived her husband by six and half years, Arminda and Villa-Lobos were unable to get married. Nevertheless, Arminda devoted herself to Villa-Lobos's career. She was the organizing mind behind the composer and helped copy his works. Much later she changed her name to Arminda Villa-Lobos and became effectively the second wife of Villa-Lobos.

During the war, France fell and the role of the United States rose rapidly.

Villa-Lobos was suddenly idolized by Americans who visited Brazil. As Peppercorn said:

“Villa-Lobos was, this time, not fate's victim, he was, instead, fate's chosen angel.”⁹ In

1944 Villa-Lobos went to the United States for the first time. Although he spoke no

English, he toured the U.S. and conducted some of the best orchestras including the

Boston Symphony Orchestra. From 1944 to 1959, Villa-Lobos traveled constantly

between South America, United States, and Paris. Mainly he engaged in conducting his

works, making recordings, and writing compositions. Many honors were awarded to

Villa-Lobos during his lifetime. Brazil even declared 1957 a “Villa-Lobos Year” on his

⁹ Lisa M. Peppercorn, *Villa-Lobos: Collected Studies by L. M. Peppercorn* (England: Scholar Press, 1992), 84

seventieth birthday.

In this phase, Villa-Lobos, inspired by Neo-classicism, composed the monumental series: the cycle of nine *Bachianas Brasileiras*. Like the *Chôros*, the *Bachianas Brasileiras* include unconventional instrumentation. One of the characteristic elements at this time was the use of his instrument, cello. *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1* and *5* require an ensemble of eight cellos with an added soprano in No. 5.

Villa-Lobos was deeply attached to the music of Bach, and he was excited by the idea of synthesizing Bach's works and Brazilian folk music. Most movements have two titles: one referring to the Baroque (Prelude, Aria, Toccata, etc), the other referring to Brazil popular forms (Modinha, Embolada, etc). However, the combination between Neo-classicism and Brazilian elements was not always successful. Some of the *Bachianas Brasileiras* have little or no connection with Bach at all. "There are fast movements called 'Toccata' merely because they are fast, or 'Prelúdio' because they open the work."¹⁰

Nevertheless, *Bachianas Brasileiras* achieved the aim of the composer: two major

musical forces in Villa-Lobos's life became synthesized and reconciled.

Table 2. The *Bachianas Brasileiras*

Number	Date	Movements	Instrumentation
1	1938	Introdução (Embolada)	orchestra of cellos
	1930	Prelude (Modinha) Fuga (conversa)	
2	1930	Prelúdio(O canto do capadócio) Ária (O canto da nossa terra) Dança (Lembrança sertão) Toccata (O trenzinho do caipira)	orchestra
3	1938	Prelúdio (Ponteio) Fantasia (Devaneio) Ária (Modinha) Toccata (Picapau)	orchestra with solo piano
4	1941	Prelúdio (Introdução)	solo piano
	1941	Coral (Canto do sertão)	
	1935	Ária (Cantiga)	
	1930	Dança (Miudinho)	
4	1941		orchestra version
5	1938	Ária (Cantilena)	soprano with orchestra of cellos
	1945	Dança (Martelo)	
6	1938	Ária (Choro) Fantasia (Allegro)	flute, bassoon
7	1942	Prelúdio (Ponteio) Giga (Quadrilha caipira) Toccata (Desafio) Fuga (Conversa)	orchestra
8	1944	Prelúdio Ária (Modinha) Toccata Catira batida) Fuga	orchestra

¹⁰ Simon Wright, *Villa-Lobos* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 85

9	1945	Prelúdio Fuga	orchestra of voices
9	1945	Prelúdio Fuga	string orchestra

In 1948 Villa-Lobos's health began to decline due to cancer of the bladder. An operation in New York's Memorial Hospital was successful later that year, and the composer continued his medical treatment until the end of his life. He died of uremia at home in Rio on November 17, 1959.

IV
VILLA-LOBOS
THE MAN

Before examining the works of Villa-Lobos, it would be beneficial to briefly portray Villa-Lobos's controversial personality. Although he was recognized as a musical genius, he was not very fond of social life. Vasco Mariz described Villa-Lobos: "He was a conceited man. He was also rude, a character trait often discernible in his music—boyish rudeness it is true, but sometimes violent and shocking."¹¹ It can be observed from the first meeting with Rubinstein that Villa-Lobos could be a tough enemy, but he could also be a good friend to those who cherished him.

Villa-Lobos was considered an extraordinary composer, but was he a good performer? Mariz declared: "He was not a good performer, even of his own music. In his youth, he played the cello well but later he did not dare play in public. He played the piano with certain superficial ease and was completely familiar with the mechanics of all

¹¹ Vasco Mariz, *Heitor Villa-Lobos* (Paris: Editions Sephers, 1967), 29

instruments. As a conductor, he took certain liberties in the interpretation of scores, which the orchestra could not always understand at the first rehearsal. As a lecturer, he was—Villa-Lobos.”¹²

Mário de Andrade also commented on Villa-Lobos’s orchestra conducting performance: “What distinguishes Villa-Lobos as a conductor is his same personality as a composer... Violent, irregular, very rich, almost bewildering even in the variety of his accents, sometimes wild, sometimes Brazilian-like sentimental, sometimes childish and extremely delicate... It is obvious that a temperament like this cannot yield a carver. Of all the artists I know Villa-Lobos is the most unfit to make a crochet.”¹³ Andrade further criticized Villa-Lobos’s last concert in São Paulo: “Villa-Lobos is not a good conductor at least for our orchestras... even if he were starving, Villa-Lobos should not remain in the conducting field.”¹⁴

Villa-Lobos was always with his cigar even when he was composing—playing the

¹² Ibid., 29

¹³ Mário de Andrade, *Música, doce música* (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editôra, 1963), 147, trans. in Gerard Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos: The Search for Brazil’s Musical Soul* (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas Press, 1994), 26

¹⁴ Ibid., 27

piano for hours without stopping. He certainly had strong creative power. Sometimes Villa-Lobos would announce and send printed programs of concerts including his works, which existed barely a theme or a sketch on paper. Only a few days before the concert would he send to the musician the music that was to be performed. This was verified by the famous cellist, Aldo Parisot, who wrote a vivid description of the second cello concerto (see chapter VII).

According to his wife, Guimarães, Villa-Lobos often woke up late and had only a cup of coffee for breakfast. When giving a cello lesson, the lessons were sometimes scheduled in the morning. Only after the student had arrived, would Villa-Lobos try to wake up, not without difficulties. Five to ten minutes later he was asleep again. If a student insisted on having the lesson, Villa-Lobos would go to the next room and ask the pupil to start. He would shout, “Start again!” “Wrong!” and eventually he would say “You may leave; come back tomorrow morning.”¹⁵

The composer also liked to visit the cinema, to play billiards and to fly kites made

¹⁵ Eero Tarasti, *Heitor Villa-Lobos: the Life and Works, 1887-1959* (North Carolina: Mcfarland & Company, Inc., 1995), 42

by himself. It is thus understandable that he dedicated the third *A Prole do Bebê* suite to different games and sports. He also composed a suite about the cinema, *Suite sugestiva*, and a symphonic poem, *O Papagaio do moleque*, depicting the kite of a Negro boy in Rio.

V

MUSICAL INFLUENCES

Villa-Lobos was a self-taught composer. In Rubinstein's memoirs *My Many Years*, he mentioned that two young musicians came to see him and told him about Villa-Lobos:

"A genius," they said. "He was expelled twice from the conservatory for rejecting any intervention or criticism from the teacher. He didn't believe in any regular musical curriculum. In our opinion he is a man who relies entirely on his own creative genius and is completely independent." 16

Although Villa-Lobos was recognized as the most important representative of Brazil, it was not until his late thirties that he turned his attention to Brazilian folklore. It is obvious that various composers including Popper, Franck, Debussy, Stravinsky, and Tchaikovsky had influenced Villa-Lobos until 1924, even though he completely denied it in an interview:

I do not believe in quoting anyone else's music. In my music there are no so called influences. It is thoroughly American—of our continent—belonging to no school or special trend. How do I know what inspired Choros no. 8 and no. 9? My answer is that I do not know what the word inspiration means. I create music out of necessity, biological necessity. I write because I cannot help it. I follow no style or fashion.... When I write, it is according to the style of Villa-Lobos.¹⁷

Peppercorn listed the "Foreign influences in Villa-Lobos's music" as follows:

Wagner's expression of ideological thoughts

16 Arthur Rubinstein, *My Many Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf., 1980), 90

17 Simon Wright, *Villa-Lobos* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 67

Wagner had inspired Villa-Lobos to express his own philosophy, belief, and ideas in words. But since Villa-Lobos did not write more than three operas in his life, he could not compete with Wagner in expressing his philosophy in words. He, therefore, did it with symphonies. The first symphony “The Unforeseen”, written in 1916, was based on a text about the artist’s soul and fate in relation to the universe. In his third symphony “The War”, Villa-Lobos was not satisfied with what he had said musically, so he added a preface including his philosophy about the war. The fourth symphony “The Victory”, too, conveyed his ideas about the nature of victory. He also planned to call the fifth symphony “The Peace”, but he did not finish it.

The use of large instrumental ensemble by Wagner and Richard Strauss

Already in his symphonic poem *Amazonas*, he used Wagner’s *Ring* and Strauss’s *Elektra* and *Salome* orchestras. The third symphony “The War” requires 164 players plus a 37-member fanfare ensemble.

Melody, texture, rhythm, timber of Tchaikovsky and the Russian Five

Villa-Lobos had played Russian music in orchestras and had attended performances

of the Russian Ballet under Fokine's direction with Nijinsky as soloist. Works included Borodin's *Prince Igor*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, as well as Stravinsky's *Petrushka*. He absorbed the music of the Russians easily because the melodic line and compositional technique were similar to his own thoughts. Villa-Lobos once claimed he disliked Russian music. He acted that way probably because he refused to admit the similarity between himself and the Russians musically. Tchaikovsky's influence is unmistakable, especially in the first cello concerto, written in 1915.

Although there is no doubt that Villa-Lobos's early works were influenced profoundly by Tchaikovsky; in later years the treatment of themes was not influenced by Tchaikovsky anymore, but the technique of composition in rhapsodic writing was similar to that of Russian composers.

Refined color of French Impressionism

French culture played an important role in Brazil before the Second World War. Villa-Lobos gave his compositions French names and composed songs with French texts. Like French Impressionism, Villa-Lobos's music often evokes moods and sensuous

impressions mainly through harmony and tone color. It does not seek to express emotion or to tell a story but to evoke mood. Sometimes it also creates reminiscences of natural sounds.

Debussy's music guided him to use different instrumental combinations to create unique tone colors. For example, Villa-Lobos's *Quatuor* (1921), composed for harp, celesta, flute, alto-saxophone and women's chorus, shows Debussy's strong influence at that time. The ensemble gives Villa-Lobos new possibilities for color combinations. It can be traced to Debussy's Sonata for flute, viola and harp, and *Nocturnes* for orchestra and chorus. The use of unusual instrumental combinations was something that Villa-Lobos never gave up during his life.

Opera writings of Puccini

Villa-Lobos's contact with Italian operas occurred fairly early. His father, Raúl, was fascinated by Puccini's operas. When "La Bohème" was performed in Rio, Raúl was so impressed that he played parts from the opera to his son. Puccini's choice of exotic subjects influenced Villa-Lobos at the beginning of his career. When Villa-Lobos wrote

his opera *Yerma*, Puccini was his musical model. Perhaps he realized a Puccini-styled opera would appeal to the public, and he was right. The premiere of the opera in New Mexico was sold out. A press commented: “It’s a piece much like ‘Turandot’— polytonal Puccini.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Newsweek, New York City, August 23, 1971, from Lisa M. Peppercorn, “Foreign Influences in Villa-Lobos’s Music” in *Villa-Lobos: Collected Studies by L. M. Peppercorn* (England: Scholar Press, 1992), 65

VI
EARLY CELLO WORKS
(up to 1923)

The first trip to Paris was an important turning point in Villa-Lobos's musical style. Thus I divide his cello works into two periods: early works (1913-1923) and late works (1924-1953). His early cello pieces with piano accompaniment were mostly written for violin first and later arranged for cello, except *O Canto do Cysne Negro* (Song of the Black Swan), which was written for the cello, and later transcribed for the violin. The first piece he wrote for cello and piano was the *Pequena Sonata*. According to the composer, it was based on the style of César Franck in the key of E minor, but it is now lost. The second composition is the *Prelúdio No. 2, Op. 20*.

Prelúdio No. 2, Op. 20 (1913)

This piece was also written in the style of César Franck with continuous arpeggios and chords in the glorious piano part. It consists of sequences and scales (Example 1).

Example 1. *Prelúdio No. 2, Op. 20*, bar 13-15

The image shows a musical score for three systems of music. The top system consists of a single staff with a treble clef, containing a melodic line with a 'cresc.' marking. The middle system is a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The upper staff has a 'cresc.' marking, and the lower staff has an 'animato' marking. The bottom system is another grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff, featuring complex chordal textures and arpeggiated patterns.

In Villa-Lobos's early cello pieces, the beginning passage is often repeated at the end of the piece (ABA) while the middle section is in a faster tempo (*piu mosso*). Unlike most pieces, this prelude can be analyzed as AA'-coda. The piano begins the piece in *Allegro non troppo* for ten bars, and the cello comes in with a slower tempo (*Moderate*). Although the piece can be divided into three sections, the middle section starts with the

same material as the beginning (A').

Example 2. *Prelúdio No. 2, Op. 20, bar 1-23*

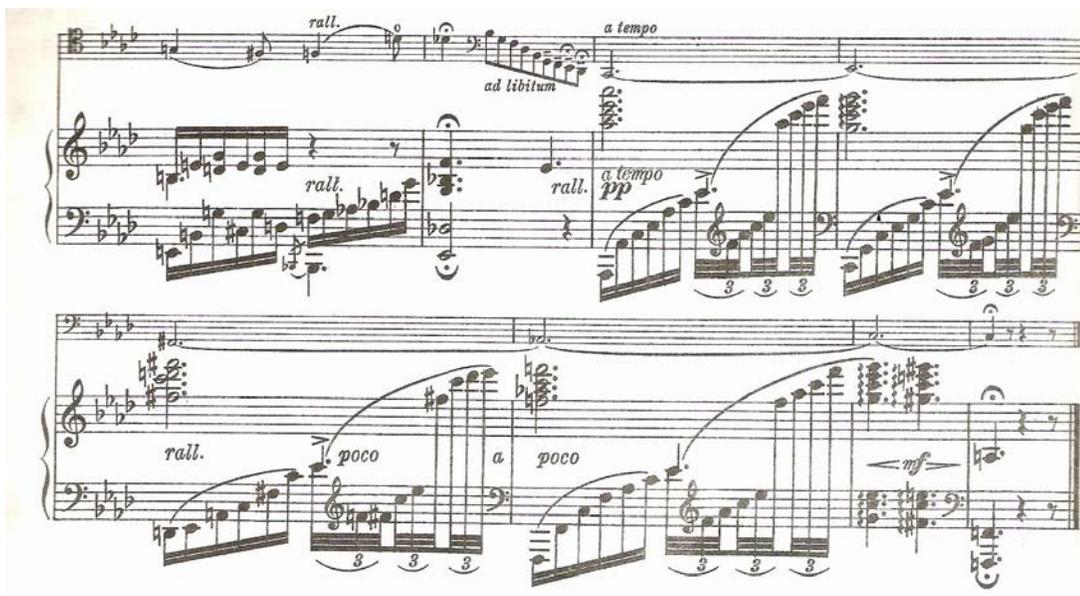
Musical score for Example 2, *Prelúdio No. 2, Op. 20, bar 1-23*. The score is in B-flat major, 3/4 time, and consists of two staves. The first staff begins with the tempo marking "Allegro non troppo." and the second staff with "Moderato." The first staff contains measures 1-10, with a double bar line and the number "10" below it. The second staff contains measures 11-23. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with some notes marked with accents.

Example 3. *Prelúdio No. 2, Op. 20, bar 47-58*

Musical score for Example 3, *Prelúdio No. 2, Op. 20, bar 47-58*. The score is in B-flat major, 3/4 time, and consists of two staves. The first staff contains measures 47-50, with tempo markings "a tempo" and "rall." (rallentando). The second staff contains measures 51-58, with a tempo marking "a tempo". The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with some notes marked with accents. The second staff ends with a double bar line.

The last section seems to be a retrospection written in a slow tempo (Adagio) with the fragments going downward from previous passages. The piano plays an important role in this prelude, and it ends the piece with harp-like arpeggios while the cello holds long notes in the very low register.

Example 4. *Prelúdio No. 2, Op. 20, the end*



***Pequena suíte* (Little Suite) (1913)**

- Romancette
- Legebdária
- Harmonias Soltas
- Fugato (all'antica)
- Melodia
- Gavotte-Scherzo

In 1913, Villa-Lobos wrote a group of six traditional salon pieces entitled *Pequena suíte*, which was premiered by the composer six years later.

Pequena suíte was written in the romantic style of Schumann, Chopin and Popper, with very little Brazilian influence. For example, the use of sixteenth notes staccato in Gavotte-Scherzo is the device often adopted by Popper (whom Villa-Lobos idolized).

Example 5. Gavotte-Scherzo from *Pequena suíte*, bar 8-16

The musical score for Example 5 consists of three staves. The first staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a half note G4, followed by a series of sixteenth notes. The second staff is in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature, continuing the sixteenth-note pattern. The third staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, featuring a dense sixteenth-note texture. The piece concludes with a *rall. molto* marking and a triplet of eighth notes.

Example 6. David Popper: *Dance of the Elves* Op.39, bar11-20

The musical score for Example 6 consists of two staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The first staff features a melodic line with sixteenth-note runs and accents, marked with fingerings 1, 2, and 0. The second staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with sixteenth-note patterns, also marked with fingerings (1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 0) and a *mf* dynamic marking.

Yet it still reveals some traits of Villa-Lobos's modernism to come. For example, in Melodia Villa-Lobos uses pizzicato-like accompaniment to support the long irregular phrase. The same device is employed again twenty-five years later in *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*.

Example 7. Melodia from *Pequena suíte*, bar 1-12

The image displays a musical score for two instruments: Violoncello and Piano. The score is for the first twelve bars of a piece titled 'Melodia' from the 'Pequena suíte'. The tempo is marked 'Andantino' and the key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 2/4. The Violoncello part begins with a long, irregular phrase, marked 'mf espressivo', and includes triplets. The Piano part provides a rhythmic accompaniment, marked 'pp e molto legato', consisting of chords and eighth notes. The score is presented in two systems, with the Violoncello part on the top staff and the Piano part on the bottom staff.

The Fugato shows the composer's interest in counterpoint, which foreshadows the coming of the series of *Bachianas Brasileiras*. In addition, Villa-Lobos uses a traditional form in the Gavotte-Scherzo as a basis fused with a lively dance far from the European

origins. The idea, again, was developed later in the *Bachianas Brasileiras* series.

Generally, the structure of each piece is fairly simple, and the beginning passage is often repeated at the end of the piece with the middle section in a different tempo (ABA). In the suite, I especially appreciate the sadness and the dark color of *Harmonias Soltas*, and the romantic and charming *Melodia*, which suggests a picture of two people expressing their love in a boat on a moonlit lake.

***Sonhar*, Op. 14 (Dreaming) (1914)**

The atmosphere of this piece is calm, naïve, and pleasant especially in the key of C major. It also contains three sections (ABA) with a faster B section (*Piu mosso*) with more chromatics. During this period, Villa-Lobos was under the strong influence of impressionism, which is noticeable in *Sonhar*.

***Capricho*, Op. 49 (1915)**

Like Popper's *Capriccio*, this work contains three short sections (ABA). The A section starts with a humorous and delightful descending scale, and the instruction *a capriccio* indicates that it should be played with free tempo.

Example 8. *Capricho, Op. 49, bar 8-17*



The B section is repeated with a lyrical and melancholy manner in a slower tempo (Molto Meno) accompanied by broken chords.

Example 9. *Capricho, Op. 49, bar 73-77*



Berceuse, Op. 50 (1915)

This piece was composed in honor of Villa-Lobos's mother, Dona Noêmia, on her birthday (25 February). The manuscript contains a short text, which was deleted when the piece was published: "25 February, your birthday; when I am thinking of this date,

my soul is rocked in this *Berceuse* as I was years ago, going to sleep in the maternal cradle, maybe listening to one or two of these melodies.”¹⁹ In this piece, Villa-Lobos intended to capture the nostalgia of his childhood, and it is indeed a charming and sweet piece. Sometimes the music reminds one rather more of Puccini. For example, the music often contains the broken seventh chords such as in the beginning of the piece.

Example 10. *Berceuse, Op. 50*, bar 1-4

The image shows a musical score for the first four bars of the piece 'Berceuse, Op. 50'. The score is written for Violoncello and Piano. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto.' and the piano part is marked 'dolcissimo'. The music is in 3/8 time. The Violoncello part consists of whole notes. The Piano part consists of eighth notes and chords, with a broken seventh chord structure. The score is presented on a yellowed page with a light blue background.

¹⁹ Lisa M. Peppercorn, *Villa-Lobos: The Music, an Analysis of his style*, trans. Stefan de Haan (New York: Am Music Resources Inc., 1991), 18

Like many of the other short pieces, *Berceuse* can be divided into three sections (ABA) except the third section is an octave higher and in a much more passionate mood.

Concert No. 1, Op. 50 (Grand Concerto for Cello) (1915)

Allegro con brio

Tempo de Gavotta, Assai moderato

Allegro moderato

This concerto is less influenced by the romantics of Central Europe than by the Russians, especially Tchaikovsky, as shown in some of the descending melodic line in the first movement. Since Villa-Lobos had begun to compose seriously only two years before he wrote the first cello concerto, he had not yet found his own musical language. This first concerto recalls themes from other composers and lacks originality. Lisa Peppercorn stated: "...while Villa-Lobos was obviously intent on preserving the conventional forms, he was apparently undecided whether he should follow Liszt, Tchaikovsky or César Franck. No doubt he was aiming to write a concerto in the traditional style and simply connect the three movements, in imitation of César Franck, by repeating the themes."²⁰ Thus the reason why the concerto is inconsistent is because

²⁰ Lisa M. Peppercorn, *Villa-Lobos: The Music, an Analysis of his style*, trans. Stefan de Haan (New York: Am Music Resources Inc., 1991), 69

Villa-Lobos tried to follow different principles at the same time.

While Villa-Lobos was writing this concerto, he was an active member of an orchestra, and thus became quite familiar with the Russian style. The rich tone color and the sonority of Tchaikovsky must have affected him greatly. As mentioned in the previous chapter, he felt a close connection with the Russian composers.

As mentioned by Peppercorn, to connect movements Villa-Lobos used a cyclical form throughout. He also adopted a manner that he did not use again in any of his other works: the movements were connected by transitions in which the principal theme of the following movement was forecasted, and there was thus no break between movements. This idea probably came from his experience of playing in coffee shops where he had to improvise transitions between pieces.

The main theme of the first movement is evocative of Tchaikovsky:

Example 11. *First Cello Concerto*, 1st movement, 13 after C



The colorful harmonies and cantabile melody make the second movement more effective. Like many of Villa-Lobos's other pieces, this movement simply contains sections with the same material and thus lacks development. The first theme has a character of European folk song:

Example 12. *First Cello Concerto*, 2nd movement, bar 4-12



This folk song is immediately followed by a theme first heard in the transition between the first and second movements. The use of triplets in this motif reminds this writer of the delightful theme in Tchaikovsky's *Symphonie Pathétique*.

Example 13. *First Cello Concerto*, 2nd movement, bar 37-40

Tempo di Gavotta (Mod^{to})



The third movement repeats themes from the previous movements. Obviously, he did not bother to innovate. Like the Gavotte-Scherzo of *Pequena suíte*, the third movement is filled with sixteenth-note staccato, a device from Popper:

Example 14. *First Cello Concerto*, 3rd movement



Sonata No. 1 (1915) (lost)

The Sonata No. 1 is now lost and we do not have any knowledge of it. Villa-Lobos often considered a work already composed as soon as it took some shape in his mind, even before a note was written. As a result, it is unknown whether a lot of pieces had been lost or whether they had ever existed other than in the composer's imagination.

Elegie (1916)

This melancholy *Elegie* has a special feature in which the piano plays descending chords with grace notes throughout to express the sadness.

Example 15. *Elegie*, bar 1-5



At the beginning of each section, the piano introduces the melody followed by the cello playing the same material, but soon turning to another direction. This piece does not give any indication of Villa-Lobos's modernism to come. The color and harmonies and melodic line undoubtedly display the influence from French Impressionism.

Sonata No. 2 (1916)

Allegro moderato

Andante cantabile

Allegro scherzando

Allegro vivace sostenuto

This Sonata No. 2 was again written in the style of César Franck, with a heavy and massive piano part. Villa-Lobos believed that this piece already reflected the ideology of modernism with dissonant chords, and complex rhythmic pattern. However, as I play this piece, the European influence is still obvious, notably in the tone color, the mood and the harmonies of the French style.

Although the work was designed as a sonata, it contains little connection to the sonata form, lacking contrasts in thematic material or tonal development. The first movement contains elements of the sonata form but is treated in a cyclical fashion. It shows disconnected motifs and unpleasant dissonances in disjointed sections, sometimes with both instruments playing in totally unrelated manners simultaneously.

Example 16. *Sonata No. 2*, 1st movement, bar 126-129



Lisa Peppercorn stated: “It is difficult to say what the reason is for Villa-Lobos’s inability to think in organic wholes.”²¹ Since his works are usually composed with multiple sections, the lack of formal structure may be the reason. Peppercorn added: “Villa-Lobos has unquestionably become aware of some sort of difficulty in conceiving formal structure.”²²

Another of the composer’s habits can be observed here: although Villa-Lobos was creative and full of ideas, he frequently repeats himself. For example, the beginning of

²¹ Lisa M. Peppercorn, “Some Aspects of Villa-Lobos’ Principles of compositions” from *Villa-Lobos: Collected Studies by L. M. Peppercorn* (England: Scholar Press, 1992), 18

²² *Ibid.*, 16

this sonata appears again in the theme of the *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1*.

Example 17. *Sonata No. 2*, 1st movement, bar 1-6

Allegro moderato (100 = ♩)
p cantabile et en dehors *mf* *mf*

Example 18. *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1*, bar 9-24

ff *rall.* *f > mf*

The piano starts the third movement with an ascending line filled with humorous and joyful atmosphere only to be answered with a descending line.

Example 19. *Sonata No. 2*, 3rd movement, bar 1-10

The image shows a page of a musical score for Violoncello and Piano. The title is "Allegro scherzando (M. 126 = ♩)". The Violoncello part is written in a single staff with a bass clef. The Piano part consists of two staves, with the right hand in a treble clef and the left hand in a bass clef. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *sf*, and *mf*. There is a section labeled "CELLO harm." with a *mf* marking. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many rests and slurs.

The second half of the third movement contains the same opening material in the piano part with the cello playing a repeated rhythmic pattern through the end of the movement.

Example 20. *Sonata No. 2, 3rd movement*

The image shows a page of a musical score for Violoncello and Piano. The title is "I° Tempo". The Violoncello part is written in a single staff with a bass clef. The Piano part consists of two staves, with the right hand in a treble clef and the left hand in a bass clef. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *p*, and a *cresc.* marking. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many rests and slurs.

In the third movement, Villa-Lobos invokes some special sound effect including harmonics and glissandi:

Example 21. *Sonata No. 2, 3rd movement, sound effect*



Table 3. Early cello works

Piece	Translation	Year	Premiere
<i>Prelúdio</i>		1913	3 Feb.1917
<i>Pequena suite</i>	Little suite	1913	5 Jan.1915
<i>Sonhar</i>	Dreaming	1914	29 Jan.1915
<i>Capricho</i>		1915	29 Jan.1915
<i>Berceuse</i>		1915	13 Nov. 1915
<i>Concert No. 1</i>		1915	10 May 1919
<i>Sonata No. 1</i>		1915	lost
<i>Elegie</i>		1916	3 Feb. 1917
<i>Sonata No. 2</i>		1916	17 Nov. 1917
<i>O Canto do Cysne Negro</i>	Song of the Black Swan	1917	

VII
LATE CELLO WORKS
(1924-1953)

The Paris experience was absolutely the turning point that inspired Villa-Lobos to focus on his native musical elements. “In fact it was Paris which made him realize that being a Brazilian composer, if he ever wanted to succeed in a world where competition was strong and others had made a reputation for themselves due to their particular style and ideas, he, too, had to show the world something that was not only outstanding but totally different from European music.”²³ The first piece written during his Paris stay was *Chôros bis* for violin and cello.

Deux Chôros bis for violin and cello (1929)

Villa-Lobos designed this piece to be used as an encore after a series of *Chôros* was performed. The contrapuntal writing and the repeated abnormal metric stressed rhythmic pattern are very similar to another duo, *Chôro No. 2*, for clarinet and flute.

²³ Lisa M. Peppercorn, *Villa-Lobos: Collected Studies by L. M. Peppercorn* (England: Scolar Press, 1992), 53

Deux Chôros bis consists of two short movements—*Modéré* and *Lent*. Like *Chôro*

No. 2, the first half of *Modéré* contains folk-like melody by the violin and accompanied by repeated, completely unrelated rhythmic patterns played by the cello simultaneously.

It has rhapsodic flavor, brutal dissonances, and character of improvisation. The use of repeated notes is frequently employed by the composer for his melodic line as seen here

and also in the vocal line in *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*:

Example 26. *Deux Chôros bis*, 1st movement, bar 6-11

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff features a melodic line with repeated notes and accents, marked with dynamics like *mf* and *rfz*. The bass staff contains a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and repeated notes. The second system continues this musical texture, showing further melodic development in the treble and rhythmic patterns in the bass.

Example 27. *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*, Aria (Cantilena), bar 44-46

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. The top staff is a single melodic line, and the bottom staff is a piano accompaniment. The score is divided into three measures. The first measure is marked 'a tempo' and features a melodic line with a slur and a 'rall.' marking. The second measure is also marked 'a tempo' and features a melodic line with a slur and a 'rall.' marking. The third measure is marked 'a tempo' and features a melodic line with a slur and a 'rall.' marking. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, with 'a tempo' and 'rall.' markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings.

One of the most important characteristics of Villa-Lobos's melodic line appears in the transition between the first and second sections. This writing was used in so many of the composer's compositions that it has become typical. It is probably not derived from folk music but from his own invention. Villa-Lobos also adopted a special sound effect of the cello playing hemiola with glissando, pizzicato chords to support this melodic line.

Example 28. *Deux Chôros bis*, 1st movement, bar 18-19

The image shows a musical score for 'Deux Chôros bis', 1st movement, bars 18-19. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of two staves. The top staff is a melodic line, and the bottom staff is a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment includes glissando and pizzicato markings. The score is marked 'mf' and includes the instruction 'PIZZ. avec le pouce et vibrez la main gauche'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings.

This melodic line also reminds me of some passages from *Ein Heldenleben* by Richard Strauss, who had a great influence on Villa-Lobos.

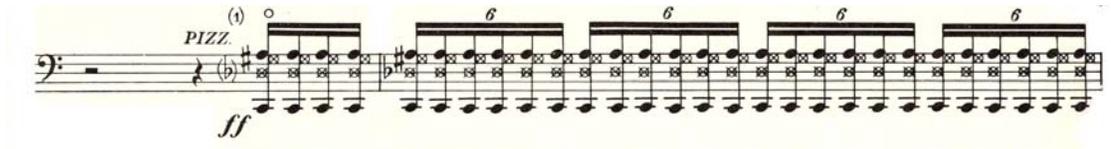
The second half of *Modéré* seems to be reminiscences of the first part. The melody switches to the cello with the violin playing hemiola pizzicato. The repeated abnormal metric stressed rhythmic pattern is gone. Finally both instruments briefly return to the opening material and end the piece with long notes while the cello plays left hand pizzicato in major seconds (Example 29).

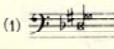
Example 29. *Deux Chôros bis*, 1st movement, the end

The musical score for the end of the first movement of *Deux Chôros bis* is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is for the violin and the bottom staff is for the cello. The time signature is 2/4. The violin part begins with a melodic line marked 'ARCO' and 'mf', followed by a section marked 'f' and 'mf'. The cello part begins with a rhythmic pattern marked 'f' and 'PIZZ.', followed by a section marked 'f' and 'PP PIZZ.'. The piece ends with long notes in both parts.

The second movement seems richer and more interesting. After a slow introduction with dissonant chords, the writing for both instruments is exciting and quasi-contrapuntal. It also demonstrates Villa-Lobos's talent of creating special sound effects on the cello including pizzicati harmonics:

Example 30. *Deux Chôros bis*, 2nd movement, bar 38-39



(1)  Croiser la 3^e Corde au dessus de la 2^{ème} à l'endroit de la quinte de # sol # On obtient ainsi un effet simultané de tambour et pizzicato.

Cross the third string above the second string at the position of the fifth (C sharp-G sharp) thus obtaining a simultaneous effect of drum and pizzicato²⁴

²⁴ Lisa Peppercorn, *Villa-Lobos: the Music: an Analysis of his Style* (New York: Pro/Am Music Resources Inc., 1991), 61

Example 31. *Deux Chôros bis*, 2nd movement, bar 44-50

The musical score for Example 31, *Deux Chôros bis*, 2nd movement, bars 44-50, is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 44-50) features a treble clef with a melodic line of eighth-note triplets, some marked with accents and a '3' below them. The bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A 'Harm.(doublés)' instruction is placed above the treble staff. The second system (bars 51-54) shows a 'rall.' instruction above the treble staff, which contains a melodic line with a triplet and a fermata. The bass clef continues with the eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include 'mf' and 'ppp'.

This piece reveals some of the characteristics of Villa-Lobos's own compositional technique, such as folk-like melodic lines, unconventional rhythmic patterns and unique sound effect. Yet it also reveals one characteristic feature of Villa-Lobos: lack of development.

Fantasia for Violoncello and Orchestra (1945)

(Reduction for Cello and Piano by the composer)

Largo

Molto vivace

Allegro espressivo

This work was dedicated to Serge Koussevitzky, an American conductor of Russian birth and also a good friend to Villa-Lobos.

When Villa-Lobos wrote this *Fantasia for Violoncello and Orchestra*, it was near the end of the Bachiana period. Since he had been inspired by Neo-classicism, he quoted folkloric material but with baroque stylization. The melodic lines are sometimes treated in Bach-like sequences. The structure of the first two movements, like his short pieces, is simply ABA, returning to the opening material of the movement in the last section.

The beginning of *Fantasia* reminds this writer of the famous *Bachianas Brasileiras*

No. 5 but here Villa-Lobos moved to a more inner and spiritual level in the mixture of his Brazilian and European musical forces (Example 32).

Example 32. *Fantasia for Violoncello and Orchestra*, 1st movement, bar 8-13

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of *Fantasia for Violoncello and Orchestra*, specifically bars 8 through 13. The score is presented in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The first system (bars 8-10) features a melodic line in the treble clef starting with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5. The bass clef contains a series of chords, with dynamic markings *mf*, *pp sempre*, and *sfz*. The second system (bars 11-13) continues the melodic line with quarter notes D5, E5, and F5. The bass clef continues with chords and dynamic markings *sim.* and *sfz*. The notation includes various articulations such as slurs and accents.

In *Fantasia for Cello and Orchestra*, Villa-Lobos focuses on instrumental virtuosity—especially in the difficult second movement. It is filled with fast and intense sixteenth notes.

Example 33. *Fantasia for Violoncello and Orchestra*, 2nd movement, bar 4-15

Molto vivace

The musical score consists of six staves. The first staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature and a *mf* dynamic marking. It begins with a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff is in bass clef and contains a complex sixteenth-note passage with fingerings 1, 3, 1, 3, 2, 4, 2, 1, 2, 3, 1, 1. The third staff is in treble clef with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 4. The fourth staff is in bass clef with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4, 0, 1, 3, 1. The fifth staff is in bass clef with a 4-measure rest at the beginning and fingerings 4, 4, 4, 4. The sixth staff is in bass clef with fingerings 1, 3, 4, 1, 3, 3.

The last movement is sectionalized with various styles. The first section begins with a melody containing sustained notes and large intervals accompanied by tango rhythmic pattern.

Example 34. *Fantasia for Violoncello and Orchestra*, 3rd movement, bar 16-23

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a cello and orchestra. The first system consists of a cello staff (treble clef) and two piano staves (bass clefs). The cello part features a melodic line with sustained notes and large intervals, including a prominent interval of a major sixth. The piano accompaniment is characterized by a tango rhythmic pattern, with chords and single notes. Dynamics are marked with *p* (piano) and *fz* (forzando), often with accents. The second system is similar, but includes a first ending bracket labeled '2' over the final two measures of the cello part. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern and dynamics.

It is followed by a delightful and lively passage with the cello playing fast broken thirds with brisk triplets accompaniment. The third section requires virtuoso playing, and it has the flavor of a cadenza and the character of a rhapsody.

Example 35. *Fantasia for Violoncello and Orchestra*, 3rd movement, 3 bars after [8]

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of three measures. The top staff is for the Cello, featuring a melodic line with fast broken thirds and triplets, marked with a forte 'fz' dynamic. The bottom two staves are for the Piano, providing accompaniment with chords and rhythmic patterns. The second system also consists of three measures, starting with a measure number '9' in a box above the first measure. The Cello part continues with similar virtuosic patterns, while the Piano accompaniment evolves with more complex harmonic textures.

Like many of Villa-Lobos's compositions, the opening material comes back again towards the end. Although Villa-Lobos was full of creative ideas, his work often lacks a decent ending, as if he did not know how to finish a piece.

Divagation for piano and cello and tambour ad libitum (1946)

The idea to use a drum (ad lib.) was not uncommon for Villa-Lobos since many of his works were written for unusual instrumental combination. In this striking little piece, it is obvious that the composer had totally shaken off his European influences. Instead, he found his individuality by presenting music from his own culture. A unique rhythmic pattern starts the piece and serves as a central pulse throughout.

Example 36. *Divagation*, bar 1-12

Pour Piano et Violoncelle
(avec Tambour ad libitum)

Audantino (80 = ♩)

PIANO *p*

***Assobio a Jato* (The Jet Whistle) for flute and cello (1950)**

Allegro non troppo

Adagio

Vivo

Assobio a Jato (The Jet Whistle) for Flute and Cello (1950) combines a folk feeling with instrumental virtuosity. *Assobio a Jato* derives its name from a special effect found at a climactic moment in the final movement. The flutist is instructed to blow air directly

into the flute, covering the mouthpiece completely with his lips.

Example 37. *Assobio a Jato*, 3rd movement, the end

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system is for a flute and cello. The flute part is marked 'Prestissimo' and 'imitando fischi in toni ascendenti*'. It features a series of notes with glissando markings and a cello part with a low register. The second system continues the piece with a forte (f) dynamic and a cello line with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic.

*The only way to achieve the effect which the composer wishes, as indicated by the words *imitando fischi in toni ascendenti*, is to blow into the embouchure *fff* as if one were warming up the instrument on a cold day. The first blast should be fingered as a low D, the second E, and so on through A.



The only way to achieve the effect which the composer wishes, as indicated by the words *imitando fischi in toni ascendenti*, is to blow into the embouchure *fff* as if one were warming up the instrument on a cold day. The first blast should be fingered as a low D, the second E, and so on through A.

The technique gives the sound of a run ascending to pitches beyond the highest range of

the flute generated with such force as to create a shriek or “jet whistle” sound. The

unconventional combination of cello and flute also recalls the character of Brazilian

street *chorões*-musicians.

Concerto No. 2 (1953)

Allegro non troppo
Molto andante cantabile
Vivace
Allegro energico

This is Villa-Lobos' final composition featuring cello. It was commissioned by the famous Brazilian cellist, Aldo Parisot. He premiered the concerto with New York Philharmonic on February 5, 1955. The work was well received by the critics especially for its melodic essence. The whole concerto does not have any important melody, but its style is very melodic.

The opening has an impression of a minor modality with a rhapsodic nature. The sound of the minor seventh chord is not aggressive yet it has some characteristics of folk music. Here Villa-Lobos's stylistic feature appears again as it does in *Chôros Bis*:

Example 38. *Second Concerto for Violoncello*, 1st movement, bar 12-22

The musical score for Example 38 consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, marked 'Impetuoso' and 'f', and contains three measures of music. The middle staff is in bass clef and contains six measures, with the last three measures circled. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains six measures, with the first three measures circled.

Example 39. *Chôros Bis*, violin part, bar 18-19

The musical score for Example 39 shows a single staff of music in treble clef, 4/4 time. It features a melodic line with syncopation and a tango-like rhythmic feel. A section of the music is highlighted in yellow, and a fermata is placed over the first measure of this section.

After the rhapsodic section, Villa-Lobos wrote melodic syncopation with highly-stylized tango rhythmic environment:

Example 40. *Second Concerto for Violoncello*, 1st movement, [4]

The musical score for Example 40 consists of four staves. The top staff is in bass clef, marked 'Allegro', and contains three measures of music. The second and third staves are grand staff notation (treble and bass clefs) and contain three measures of music. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains three measures of music.

More fragments of early works can easily be recognized in this concerto especially from the *Bachianas Brasileiras*. The three-note motif in the *Bachianas Brasileiras* No. 1 reappears with the same rhythmic approach:

Example 41. *Second Concerto for Violoncello*, 1st movement, 2 before [12]



Ex

Example 42. *Bachianas Brasileiras* No. 1, Introdução (Embolada), second theme



The second movement also contains reminiscences of the famous Aria of *Bachianas Brasileiras* No. 5. They were both written with mysterious pizzicati accompaniment and lyrical melodic line. The opening melody and the middle section is the most obvious:



The third movement is considered the best of the concerto. It mixes Brazilian ideas with Spanish dance, and requires instrumental virtuosity. The orchestra plays a brief introduction and the cello enters impressively using ricochet strokes playing its running triplets. The ample adoption of open strings creates bigger sonority and wilder atmosphere:

Example 47. *Second Concerto for Violoncello*, 3rd movement, bar 4-8



The third movement leads directly into a cadenza, which contains motion in fifths and fragments of the earlier movements. It begins with the exact same notes as the first movement. The lyrical melody of the second movement reappears in the middle section. Finally the ricochet passage of the third movement comes back at the beginning of the closing section.

Villa-Lobos connected the last two movements with a chromatic scale in fifths from the highest register to the lowest:

Example 48. *Second Concerto for Violoncello*, 3rd movement, the end

The image shows a musical score for the end of the 3rd movement of the Second Concerto for Violoncello by Villa-Lobos. The score is in 4/4 time and features a chromatic scale in fifths. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata. The tempo is marked 'Allegro energico' and the dynamics are 'ff'.

Compared to the previous movements, the last movement seems less interesting. Although it is energetic, it somehow lacks a striking thematic material or a strong climatic point.

Parisot has a vivid description of his meeting with Villa-Lobos and how the concerto was finished by the composer during his late years:

When I was engaged to make my first appearance with the New York Philharmonic in Carnegie Hall, I commissioned a concerto from Heitor Villa-Lobos. Three months before my appearance, I still did not have the concerto, and I was worried. One day, in November, 1954, I received a telephone call: "Parisot, come to the New Weston Hotel and practice for me while I write your concerto," and the maestro's rich chuckle traveled the telephone line.

He wanted to hear me play as much as possible in order to suit the work to my temperament and capabilities. I went to his hotel everyday for a whole week, playing several hours each day in his room. Villa-Lobos would begin composing around seven in the morning and continue far into the night. And between him and the rest of the world was a large cigar and an intense concentration no disturbance of any kind could dislodge. Yet, as far as I could see, the hotel room was as beset with interruptions as a waterfall is with rocks. But his pen would continue to gush a torrent of notes with never a pause that did not concern his writing.

Each time he finished a difficult passage, he asked me to try it on the cello. If my playing did not express his feeling about the part or the phrase, he would grab the cello himself (he was a cellist once) and show me how he wished it to sound. Villa-Lobos finished the piece in one week, and I had barely three months to learn it. For ordinary people time is a clock or a calendar; for a genius like Villa-Lobos, it is an empty space to be filled with creation.²⁵

This concerto displays Villa-Lobos's intimate knowledge of the cello. It is surprising that he did not use more special effects like pizzicato or harmonics in the concerto. Maybe he wished to prove that he could also compose an excellent work without making strange sounds on the instrument. Because of the exquisite melody, the exotic elements, the mixture of various styles, and the idiomatic writing, this concerto has become one of my favorite concertos.

²⁵ Aldo Parisot, "Parisot on Parisot." *Musical America*, Dec. 1962, 64-5

Example 49. First page of the score of the *Second Concerto for Violoncello*²⁶

A ALDO PARISOT
**CONCERTO (Nº 2) PARA VIOLONCELO
 E ORQUESTRA**
 H. VILLA-LOBOS
 (Rio, 1953)

ALLEGRO NON-TROPPO. (84=d.)

Toda direi...
 reproduzido...
 1953

²⁶ Lisa M. Peppercorn, *The World of Villa-Lobos in Picture and Documents* (England: Scolar Press, 1996), 209

Example 50. Program of the world premiere of the *Second Cello Concerto*²⁷

CONSOLIDATED 1928 1878

THE PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

DIMITRI MITROPOULOS, Musical Director

1954 ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH SEASON 1955

Guest Conductors: BRUNO WALTER, GEORGE SZELL, GUIDO CANTELLI

Associate Conductor Three Special Saturdays Young People's Concerts
 LANGO AUTORI ANDRE KOSTELANETZ WILFRID PELLETER

CARNEGIE HALL

5371st Concert

Saturday Evening, February 5, 1955, at 8:45

Under the Direction of
WALTER HENDL

Soloist: **ALDO PARISOT, Violoncellist**

<p>BEETHOVEN</p> <p>*BRAHMS</p> <p style="font-size: small;">I. Allegro non troppo II. Andante moderato</p>	<p>Overture, "Prometheus," Opus 43</p> <p>Symphony No. 4, E minor, Opus 98</p> <p style="font-size: small;">III. Scherzo: Allegro giocoso IV. Finale: Allegro energico e passionato</p>	
Intermission		
<p>VILLA-LOBOS</p> <p style="font-size: small;">I. Allegro non troppo II. Molto andante cantabile</p>	<p>Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra, No. 2, A minor</p> <p style="font-size: small;">(World Premiere) III. Vivace IV. Allegro energico</p>	<p>ALDO PARISOT</p>
<p>RESPIGHI</p>	<p>Symphonic Poem, "Roman Festivals"</p>	

ARTHUR JUDSON, BRUNO ZIRATO, Managers
 George E. Judd, Jr., Assistant Manager

THE STEINWAY is the Official Piano of The Philharmonic-Symphony Society
 *Recorded by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra
 COLUMBIA RECORDS

441

²⁷Ibid., 206

Table 4. Late cello works

Piece	Translation	Year	Premiere
<i>Deux Chôros bis</i>		1929	14 May, 1930
<i>Fantasia for Violoncello and Orchestra</i>		1945	8 Oct. 1946
<i>Divagation</i>		1946	
<i>Assobio a Jato</i>	The Jet Whistle	1950	13 March, 1950
<i>Concerto No. 2</i>		1953	5 Feb. 1955

VIII CONCLUSION

As a cellist, it is important to expand the repertoire and to absorb as much knowledge as possible, especially the repertoire from a composer who was a cellist himself. I believe for most people, the musical world of Villa-Lobos is an unfamiliar territory. In Grout and Palisca's *A History of Western Music*, there are only two sentences referring to Villa-Lobos. That does not mean he is not worthy of our attention. On the contrary, it is our obligation to pay more attention to composers like Villa-Lobos. When examining how a composer was influenced and transfigured, we can further understand how different musical forces work and receive a more comprehensive view of music history. In any case, I consider this dissertation to be an introduction to a further and deeper understanding of Villa-Lobos's music.

I gave my former teacher in Taiwan the recordings I have made playing Villa-Lobos. She asked me if I ever got tired of playing just a single composer's pieces in 2 recitals. She told me that it was not easy even just to listen to them. Frankly, I never get tired of

the music. I always like to play exotic music, and my interest and love for Villa-Lobos's music never fade a bit. In the future, I would like to continue playing his music as much as possible.

When doing this project, I was also asked if I think Villa-Lobos was or was not a genius after knowing the composer better. Villa-Lobos might not have a perfect personality: he was rude and conceited; he sometimes manipulated facts; he was not a good performer and conductor; he stole tunes from other people's collection and he repeated same material in different compositions. But after all, he created unique music that nobody else had ever composed. Although the melodies might come from other people's collection, it was he who used them profoundly and catapulted the Brazilian culture to the world. So, yes, I think he is a genius.

DISCOGRAPHY

Since there is a vast amount of recordings of Villa-Lobos, the following discography only displays the works mentioned in this document. For complementary information, see the discography section in David P. Appleby's *Heitor Villa-Lobos: A Bio-Bibliography* (1988).

Amazonas

EMI/LA VOIX DE SON MAITRE 2 C 165-16250/9, Anna Stella Schic, piano
MARC 8.223357 (1991), Czecho-Slovak (Bratislava) Radio Symphony Orchestra

Assobio a jato

CHANTECLER 2-08-404-088, Obras cameristicas brasileiras
HYPERION CDH55057, William Bennett and friends

Bachianas Brasileiras

ANGEL CDC-47433, cellists of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; Enrique Batiz, cond
GASPARO GS-222CX, members of the National Philharmonic of England; Morris
Hochberg, cond
EVEREST SDBR 3016, Stadium Symphony Orchestra of New York; Leopold Stokowski,
cond
ANGEL 35547, Orchestra National de Radiodiffusion Française; Villa-Lobos, cond
LONDON 411 730, Kiri Te Kanawa, soprano; Lynn Harrell, cello; Jeffrey Tate, cond
ODYSSEY 32 16 0377, Bidu Sayão, soprano; Leonard Rose, cello; Villa-Lobos, cond
EMI 5 72670 2, New Philharmonia Orchestra; Vladimir Ashkenazy, cond
HYPERION CDA66257, The Pleeth Cello Octet
EVEREST EVC 9007, London Symphony Orchestra; Sir Eugene Goossens, cond
HYPERION CDH55057, William Bennett and friends

Berceuse

ERASMUS WVH 156, Beitseke Verheij, cello; Bernd Brackman, piano

Capricho

ERASMUS WVH 156, Beitseke Verheij, cello; Bernd Brackman, piano

Chôros

VALOIS V 6114, Roland Dyens, guitar; Ensemble Instrumental; Jean Walter Audoli, cond

ADDA 581053, Groupe Instrumental de Paris

DELOS DE 1017, Orquestra Sinfonica da Paraiba; Eleazar de Carvalho, cond

SIGNUM SIG X19-00, Die Kammersolisten der Staatsphilharmonie Eheinland-Pfalz

HYPERION CDH55057, William Bennett and friends

CPO 999 827-2, Deutsches Streichtrio

CALIG CAL 30840, Residenz-Quintett Munchen

KUARUP KLP BV1-4, Quinteto Villa-Lobos

WESTMINSTER WL 5360, New Art Wind Quintet

Cirandas

ADES 14095-2, Anna Stella Schic, piano

KUARUP KLP BV1-4, Roberto Szidon, piano

Concerto No. 2 for cello and orchestra

ABC WESTMINSTER GOLD 6-30-404-004, Aldo Parisot, cello; Vienna State Opera Orchestra; Gustav Meier, cond

Deux Chôros bis for violin and cello

SIGNUM SIG X19-00, Die Kammersolisten der Staatsphilharmonie Eheinland-Pfalz

CPO 999 827-2, Deutsches Streichtrio

Divagation for piano and cello and tambour ad libitum

ERASMUS WVH 156, Beitseke Verheij, cello; Bernd Brackman, piano

Elegie

ERASMUS WVH 156, Beitseke Verheij, cello; Bernd Brackman, piano

Fantasia for Violoncello and Orchestra

DELOS DE 1017, Jano Starker, cello; Orquestra Sinfonica da Paraiba; Eleazar de Carvalho, cond

MEC.MVL.FUNARTE – 017/1976, Csaba Onczay, cello; F. Egger, piano

Mômoprecóce

EMI 5 72670 2, Cristina Ortiz, piano; New Philharmonia Orchestra; Vladimir Ashkenazy, cond

EMI 2 C 153-14090/9, Orchestra National de Radiodiffusion Française; Villa-Lobos, cond

EMI-Reference-2909621, Magda Tagliaferro, piano; Orchestra National de Radiodiffusion Française; Villa-Lobos, cond

Noneto

CAPITOL CLASSICS P8191, Concert Arts Ensemble; Roger Wagner Chorale; Roger Wagner, cond

O Canto do Cysne Negro

ERASMUS WVH 156, Beitseke Verheij, cello; Bernd Brackman, piano

TAPECAR GRAVAÇÕES MES/MVL 019, Victor Addiego and Laurien Laufmann, cello; F. Eger, piano

Pequena Suite

ERASMUS WVH 156, Beitseke Verheij, cello; Bernd Brackman, piano

TAPECAR GRAVAÇÕES MES/MVL 019, Victor Addiego and Laurien Laufmann, cello; F. Eger, piano

Prelúdio No. 2, Op. 20

ERASMUS WVH 156, Beitseke Verheij, cello; Bernd Brackman, piano

Prole do Bebê

EMI 5 72670 2, Cristina Ortiz, piano
HYPERION CDA67176, Marc-André Hamelin, piano
DENON OX-7113-ND, Arthur Moreira-Lima, piano
ADES 14095-2, Anna Stella Schic, piano
EMS 10, Jacques Abram, piano
WESTMINSTER WN 18065, Jose Echaniz, piano

Quatuor

CALIG CAL 30840, Residenz-Quintett Munchen
CARAVELLE MEC/MVL 004, Quarteto Santiago
WESTMINSTER WL 5360, New Art Wind Quintet
CAPITOL CLASSICS P8191, Concert Arts Ensemble

Rudepoema

DENON OX-7113-ND, Arthur Moreira-Lima, piano
EMS 10, Jacques Abram, piano
WERGO WER 60110, Volker Banfield, piano

Serestas

PHILIPS 4122111, Maria Lúcia Godoy, soprano; Muguel Proença, piano
SFP 31024/5/6, l'Oeuvre pour Voix et Instruments

Simples coletânea

EMI/LA VOIX DE SON MAITRE 2 C 165-16250/9, Anna Stella Schic, piano

String Quartets

No. 1, 6, 17 DORIAN DOR-90205, Cuarteto Latinoamericano
No. 2, 12, 16 DORIAN DOR-93179, Cuarteto Latinoamericano
No. 3, 8, 14 DORIAN DOR-90220, Cuarteto Latinoamericano
No. 4, 9, 11 DORIAN DOR-93229, Cuarteto Latinoamericano

No. 5, 10, 13 DORIAN DOR-90246, Cuarteto Latinoamericano

No. 7, 15 DORIAN DOR-90246, Cuarteto Latinoamericano

Sonata, No. 2 for cello and piano

ERASMUS WVH 156, Beitseke Verheij, cello; Bernd Brackman, piano

MEC.MVL.FUNARTE – 017/1976, Csaba Onczay, cello; F. Egger, piano

FESTA IG 79.013, Radamés Gnattali, piano; Iberê Gomes Grosso, cello

Sonhar

ERASMUS WVH 156, Beitseke Verheij, cello; Bernd Brackman, piano

Suíte floral

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 534, Roberto Szidon, piano; Richard Metzler,
piano

EMI/LA VOIX DE SON MAITRE 2 C 165-16250/9, Anna Stella Schic, piano

Suite Popular Brasileira

VALOIS V 6114, Roland Dyens, guitar

BIS LP-233, Diego Blanco, guitar

DA CAMERA MAGNA SM 93609, Sonja prunnbauer, guitar

Symphonies

EMI 2 C 153-14090/9, Orchestra National de Radiodiffusion Française; Villa-Lobos,
cond

Uirapuru

DELOS DE 1017, Orquestra Sinfonica da Paraiba; Eleazar de Carvalho, cond

EVEREST SDBR 3016, Stadium Symphony Orchestra of New York; Leopold Stokowski,
cond

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