

most to the people of his times. Moreover, her account of Root's resilience and determination following Chicago's 1871 fire allows us to appreciate his humanity, vulnerability, and compassion. Hopefully, Carder's work will inspire additional scholarly exploration of Root and his music, especially on the critical reception of his work by his contemporaries, and on the performance practices associated with his choral pieces and cantatas.

Juanita Karpf



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*Music in Imperial Rio de Janeiro: European Culture in a Tropical Milieu.* By Cristina Magaldi. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004.

*Choro: A Social History of a Brazilian Popular Music.* By Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.

In a 1966 interview recorded in Rio de Janeiro, the famous Brazilian composer and flutist Pixinguinha (Alfredo da Rocha Vianna, Jr., 1897–1973) described his well-known song “Carinhoso” (Loving) of 1917 as a “slow polka,” and explained that, “during those times everything was polkas, no matter the tempo.”<sup>1</sup> It is ironic that such an unmistakably Brazilian song, praised as a leading example of the national musical form of the *choro*, was based on a Central European dance, which has not prevented “Carinhoso” from remaining popular even when the *choro* has been eclipsed by the bolero and jazz crossovers of *samba-canção*. Brazilians are known for embracing foreign musical genres and styles, reworking them into local practices and art forms, many times exporting them as genuine Brazilian national music. Although the influential and controversial critic José Ramos Tinhorão despised each new wave of foreign influence as a step further away from the country's Afro-Brazilian and working-class roots,<sup>2</sup> composer-singer Caetano Veloso thought of this as essential to a perceived “evolutionary line” of Brazilian music.<sup>3</sup> Whether or not this recycling produced a genuinely national music has been a subject of debate over the last century.

Two books covering music in Rio de Janeiro circa 1850–1950 analyze these processes of appropriation and resignification of musical practices and their changing

<sup>1</sup> Marília T. Barboza da Silva, Marília Trindade Barboza, and Arthur L. de Oliveira Filho, *Filho de ogum bexiguento* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1979), 160.

<sup>2</sup> José Ramos Tinhorão, *Pequena história da música popular brasileira* (São Paulo: Círculo do Livro, 1974).

<sup>3</sup> Caetano Veloso and Ferreira Gullar, “Que caminho seguir na música popular brasileira?” *Revista Civilização Brasileira* 7 (May 1966): 375–85.

functions and meanings through time. The authors approach their subjects with different methodologies, sometimes following a similar path, and both volumes end with a discussion of nationalism in music, although each reaches different conclusions.

Cristina Magaldi's *Music in Imperial Rio de Janeiro* (winner of the 2005 Robert Stevenson Award from the American Musicological Society) opens with a famous quote from Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Tristes tropiques*: "The tropics are less exotic than out of date."<sup>4</sup> This line anticipates some of her findings and sets the stage for an exploration of the musical tastes and practices of nineteenth-century *cariocas*—the inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro. Magaldi's main argument is that by strategically importing some musical genres, particularly from France, carioca elites were actually importing and manipulating what they perceived as symbols of civilization and high culture, while at the same time enforcing social and cultural boundaries.

The first chapter establishes Paris as a point of reference. The French capital provided many types of music that cariocas would adopt as their own, as well as a model of civilization that they could emulate. However, there were limitations. Although Rio de Janeiro may not have had the resources to produce French grand opera adequately, its impresarios and musicians used Parisian institutions as models for their music societies and concert halls, and were able to replicate some other aspects of European musical culture. Renewed commercial music activity, initiated by French and Portuguese immigrants, increased the availability of pianos and piano music, especially in the form of variation sets, fantasias, operatic arrangements, and ballroom dances. A polysemic icon of economic power and female submission, the piano embodied some of the values associated with civilization, such as advanced technology, cosmopolitanism, and urbanity. The piano was also an excellent tool for "playing with" the score, allowing a more creative and informal relationship with music and thus promoting the domestication of European music; this transformation of the foreign into the national is an important element in Magaldi's argument, and returns in the last chapter.

As shown in the second chapter, if good pianos were too expensive for some cariocas, many more could afford a ticket to the opera. Magaldi presents the opera house as a monumental symbol of European civilization transplanted to Brazil and largely subsidized by the Portuguese aristocracy that ruled the newly independent country. (Brazil achieved its independence in 1822.) Rio de Janeiro's opera houses, such as the Theatro São Pedro de Alcantara (first opened in 1813 as Real Theatro São João; it burned and reopened several times throughout the nineteenth century), as well as the Theatro Lyrico Fluminense (1852) and Theatro D. Pedro II (1871), were places of social inclusiveness. The price of admission—the cheapest tickets cost roughly the same as ten newspapers—would entitle a middle-class citizen, a student, or a shop clerk, to attend a performance alongside an elite circle of aristocrats, intellectuals, and the wealthy.<sup>5</sup> Smaller theatres such as the Alcazar

<sup>4</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 37.

<sup>5</sup> Around 1830, a ticket for the main audience at the Theatro São Pedro de Alcântara costed 640 réis; for comparative purposes, a monthly subscription of the local newspaper *Jornal do Commercio* cost 1,000 réis. For a more detailed account on the social inclusiveness of nineteenth-century theater

Lyrique, Gymnasio Dramatico, and Phenix Dramatica, modeled after the Parisian boulevard theaters, were also ideal sites for the dissemination of newer, imported ideas, from politics to fashion. These more popularly oriented theaters were highly successful in presenting operettas, usually performed by French casts, and attracted a more diverse audience in terms of social class and economic status than did the larger opera houses. Because the smaller theaters did not receive government subsidies, governmental authorities paid them less attention, and the theaters enjoyed a greater freedom of repertory and less censorship.

Chapter 3, “Music for the Elite,” deals with *música clássica*, the generic term then used for symphonies, concertos, and chamber music. It shows that the late nineteenth-century interest in German instrumental music was also influenced by recent developments in European concert life. Cariocas created musical societies, such as the Club Mozart and the Club Beethoven, and even imported from France the ongoing controversies on the musical superiority of one nation over another, along with the fields of music criticism and musical scholarship. Magaldi argues that if German music represented an embodiment of culture, progress, and modernity, it also functioned as a filter, further delimitating segments of the elite on the basis of intellectual, rather than economic superiority.

Chapter 4, “Music, Satire, and Politics,” further explores musical theater and the polarization of audiences between tradition and modernity. Whereas the conservative monarchist elite attended Italian opera, the Republican abolitionist middle class, in tune with recent European political ideas, had stronger connections with French operetta. Original plots were reinterpreted according to local politics, mocking public figures and expressing distaste with social conventions. The high point of the chapter is the analysis of *Orfeo na roça* (Orpheus in the Countryside), a parody of Offenbach’s *Orphée aux Enfers*, in which the cancan finale is replaced with a *fadinho*. However, Magaldi contends that this use of a local dance relies ultimately on the French enthusiasm for African-derived dances (106). This point is problematic, however, as it fails to acknowledge the Luso-Brazilian comic tradition. Indeed, cross-Atlantic theatrical and musical exchanges would be worth examining, particularly the retention in Brazil of some eighteenth-century Portuguese comic theatrical conventions such as the gracioso character and the grotesco dancer, and the representation of Brazilian musical genres such as *lundu* and *modinha brasileira* in the Portuguese comic theater. When Magaldi mentions local traditions and lists a variety of Portuguese and Spanish dances included in the theatrical *entremezes* and *farsas*, she states, “the great majority of [them] had already been presented in Parisian theaters” (125–26). This assertion might be true with regard to some Spanish dances, but certainly not for the Luso-Brazilian examples. No matter when the theatrical use of Afro-Brazilian music began, and no matter how closely it followed its models, it was nonetheless a constructed black music, sanctioned by the white elite, and used to perpetuate stereotypes that rendered the real Afro-Brazilian culture invisible (127). As Magaldi poignantly observes, references to actual

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in Rio, see Silvia Cristina Martins de Souza, *As noites do Ginásio: Teatro e tensões culturais na corte (1832–1860)* (Campinas: UNICAMP, 2002), 128, 279–82.

Afro-Brazilian culture were often found in newspapers, “not in the entertainment section, but in police reports” (129).

The last chapter, “The National, the European, the Local, and the Foreign,” examines how these concepts were heavily influenced by social and political change. Magaldi shows how *Il Guarany* (1870), an Italian opera on a Brazilian theme by Brazilian composer Carlos Gomes (1836–96), became a symbol of the young nation. She concludes her study by demonstrating that the iconic piano piece that many regard as the forerunner of nationalism in Brazilian music—*A Sertaneja* (The Country Girl [The Country Piece]) by Brazilio Itiberê da Cunha (1846–1913)—was actually influenced by views of European exoticism. For Magaldi, far from emphasizing Brazilian uniqueness, Gomes’s depiction of the Amerindian in *Il Guarany* does the opposite by stressing the European enthusiasm for the “uncivilized Other.” Attempting to find something national in *Il Guarany*, later generations of nationalistically minded intellectuals failed to perceive that Gomes’s real intention was to align Brazilian culture with European tradition.

The nationalist attempts at creating national music were equally flawed, as they were mostly based on a few notated reminiscences of a largely oral Afro-Brazilian musical tradition, but reframed according to European harmonic and formal structures. As Magaldi points out, “the genuine music growing out of the cultural interaction between blacks, mulattoes, and immigrants in the poor neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro in the last decades of the monarchical regime (which ended in 1889) was seldom retained in print” (158). This music was dismissed as “hideous” by critics and, with a few exceptions, ignored by nationalist intellectuals. Free from the demands of an elite audience and the ideological pressure attached to government subsidies, the choro grew out of this social and ethnic interaction.

The word *choro*—meaning cry, or lament—suggests a connection with the melancholy style of playing associated with mid-nineteenth century serenaders. However, it might also be a corruption of *charameleiros* (players of an early double-reed instrument), or even an allusion to the way some musicians asked for tips. Most scholars and performers agree that since the 1870s the word has referred to the performance of European dances, mainly polkas, waltzes, mazurkas, and schottisches, by an ensemble consisting of flute, *cavaquinho* (a close relative of the ukulele), and one or more guitars. Other wind instruments have been associated with choro, such as ophicleides, clarinets, and trombones, but in its most common configuration a flute or a clarinet carries the melody in a more or less ornamented fashion, while plucked strings or other winds play semi-improvised accompaniments on simple harmonic progressions along with Afro-Brazilian rhythmic patterns. Plucked strings can also take the lead, and there have been notable *chorões* (choro performers) who have played the *cavaquinho*, mandolin, and guitar. As a genre and ensemble, choro was recorded from the birth of the Brazilian recording industry in the early twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> It had almost disappeared by the 1950s, but experienced a remarkable rebirth in the 1970s, and today is a regular presence in cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Brasília, and São Paulo.

<sup>6</sup> Humberto M. Franceschi, *A Casa Edison e seu tempo* (Rio de Janeiro: Petrobras; Sarapu, Biscoito Fino, 2002).

*Choro: A Social History of a Brazilian Popular Music*, by Tamara E. Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas G. C. Garcia, offers a good introduction to its subject. It is also the first attempt at understanding this genre in the context of social and political transformations in Rio de Janeiro during the last decades of the nineteenth century and during its twentieth-century revivals. This book is a joint effort: Livingston-Isenhour's chapters (3, 5, 7) are sociologically and ethnographical oriented, whereas Garcia's chapters (2, 4, 6, 9) gravitate towards musicology and social history. Readers may thus get the impression of having two different books at hand; yet both authors move quite naturally in their respective territories.

The first chapter gives what is probably the best short introduction to the structure and performance of choro.<sup>7</sup> The second chapter explains the development of popular genres such as the *modinha*, *lundu*, and maxixe in relation to repression by elites of non-elite groups, as well as the resistance of the oppressed and the mediation of the middle class. Chapter 3, "The Roda de Choro," presents a convincing attempt at an ethnography of the past—an imaginary *roda de choro* (a circle of players) in the Laranjeiras neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro in 1893—and connects the first amateur rodas de choro to late-twentieth-century developments such as the rise of presentational or professional *rodas*, concluding with a consideration of spontaneity and authenticity as applied to music. *Rodas de choro* and other performance settings and venues are also discussed in chapter 7, which considers the revival of choro in the late twentieth century and its connections to the military dictatorship of the time. Chapter 8, "Contemporary Choro," considers the change of status of choro in the 1990s, from a state-sponsored movement to an independent genre embraced by a new generation of Brazilians. Chapter 9, "Choro and the Brazilian Classical Tradition," concludes the study by tracing some connections with Brazilian art music.

Some topics introduced by the authors could have been explored more fully. For example, issues of race, ethnicity, and class that are prominently emphasized in the first few chapters are given less attention by the middle of the book and disappear in the last two chapters. The coverage of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century musical genres in chapters 2 and 4, particularly the *modinha* and *lundu*, is based on outdated scholarship and does not take into account recent research by scholars such as Carlos Sandroni, Rui Vieira Nery, and Manuel Morais.<sup>8</sup> For future editions, the authors might want to recheck some original sources. Blanchardière's 1748 account, as cited by Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia (61), for example, does not mention a "charamela," only violons, *guittares*, and *trompettes*.<sup>9</sup> Neither Henrique Cazes's *Choro: Do Quintal ao Municipal*<sup>10</sup> nor André Diniz's *Almanaque do Choro*,<sup>11</sup> two of the most important books on choro, are cited in the bibliography. Cazes's book in particular would have provided the authors with divergent views of their

<sup>7</sup> See also Carlos Almada, *A estrutura do choro* (Rio de Janeiro: Da Fonseca, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Carlos Sandroni, *Feitiço decente: Transformações do samba no Rio de Janeiro (1917–1933)* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2001); Manuel Morais, *Modinhas, lunduns e caçonetes*, preface by Ruy Vieira Nery (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, Casa da Moeda, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> René Courte de la Blanchardière, *Nouveau voyage fait au Pérou* (Paris: Delaguette, 1751), 190–91.

<sup>10</sup> Henrique Cazes, *Choro: Do quintal ao municipal* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> André Diniz, *Almanaque do choro* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2003).

topic, as well as some important information, such as Heitor Villa-Lobos's use of guitar techniques and quotations of popular works in his orchestral *Choros*. Because there currently are no English translations available of any of the recently published works on choro by Brazilian authors, Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia's volume takes on an added importance. Their book will serve as a reference source for choro, and no doubt will spark interest and future research in this important genre.

By the end of *Tristes tropiques*, after meeting all types of Brazilians from the largest cities to the most remote jungles, Lévi-Strauss finally faced the Tupi-Kawahib—the last survivors of the Tupi who once ruled the entire Brazilian coast—finding the “natural,” “real” Brazilian he had been dreaming of since his youth in France. Although this was not her intention, Magaldi seems to have followed a similar trajectory, connecting the pathway of European music in Brazil to the music growing out of the interaction between ethnic and social groups in more informal contexts. Curiously, Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia went in the opposite direction, beginning with the flourishing of the new musical genre born out of the reworking of different traditions in Rio de Janeiro's suburbs to its commodification and exhaustion around the 1950s, and they conclude with its institutional “rescuing” as a national tradition in the 1970s. The trajectory of choro shows how Brazilians have always assimilated and reworked foreign music. Regardless of the popular appeal of these hybrid products, the intellectual elite and middle-class institutions historically have decided whether those appropriations should or should not be deemed “true” Brazilian music. This process continues: today, the suburbs and slums of Rio are boiling with the sounds of funk, rap, reggae, and *eletrônica*, making some cringe in disgust and ask, “why don't these people play Brazilian music instead?”

Rogério Budasz