

**Music in Brazil at the turn of the 18th to the 19th centuries –
The Influence of D.João VI's Court's Music Outside Rio de Janeiro**

Harry Crowl

Composer and Musicologist

The arrival of the Portuguese Court in Rio Janeiro in 1808 represented a great deal of changes in the colony's life. Musical practices were to be changed forever, not only in Rio with the establishment of the Royal Chapel, but also in other parts of the country. Mostly concentrated on Catholic Church liturgical practices, the music extant from those days was of homophonic choral tradition with few occasional polyphonic passages and short never very elaborated solo passages, usually for higher voices.

Some of the music produced in Portugal was already known in Rio and other parts of Brazil. Although, only functional religious music has been found, some evidence of opera practices have already been traced. Occasional use of "*recitativo and aria*", as well as "*arias da capo*" forms can be found in many of the religious works composed by both Portuguese and Brazilian composers active prior to the court's arrival in 1808. Opera houses already existed in Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Recife, Vila Rica (present Ouro Preto) and other villages, although no evidence of music locally composed for the theater has been found to this moment before the court's arrival. Especially after the arrival of the Royal Chapel, more operatic trends were introduced in church music. From the 17th century on, the boundaries between church and theater music have become progressively thinner. During the 18th century, virtuoso arias were widespread throughout many masses and other religious musical forms in the west. After the French Revolution, when comic operas became highly popular, the taste for church music tended to adopt a considerable amount of procedures from the stage.

Music in Minas

For the last four decades, much has been done to promote the music composed in that part of Brazil. Although that area became important due to its gold mines and underground wealth, most of that was long gone when nearly all the music discovered so far was composed. In fact, the repertoire extant from Minas Gerais General Captaincy is all concentrated on the last quarter of the 18th century. Several names of composers are listed in local religious brotherhoods documents. However, in most cases, only one or two compositions were found. There are also many anonymous manuscripts available that show the same stylistic traits of those with authorship. The names of José Joaquim Emerico Lobo de Mesquita (1746?-1805), Francisco Gomes da Rocha (1754?-1808), Manuel Dias de Oliveira (1735-1813) and João de Deus de Castro Lobo (1794-1830) could be easily pointed out as the most important ones in Minas. There are other names that could be mentioned, of course. But, those composers already named are the most representative for the purpose of stylistic contrasts. J.J.E. Lobo de Mesquita wrote practically for all sorts of religious events around the liturgical year of the time. There are some 65 compositions surviving in many different archives, mostly in Minas. Many of them have already been

transcribed into modern scores and published. His music is highly functional and, in all his surviving pieces, polyphony is not present. It also lacks larger structural development in favor to shorter movements. That can also be said about most composers from Minas. Another very interesting characteristic of Lobo de Mesquita's music is the use of harmony. He tends to create very unexpected modulations, breaking somehow the linear treat of his classic late eighteenth century style. Some few vocal solo parts can be found in his music. They are mostly alternated with homophonic choral writing that prevails throughout. In his output, there are very pieces such as his two Masses and the complete settings for Holy Week Liturgy, comprising the Offices for "Palm Sunday" (there are 3 versions of that service extant), for Holy Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday/Holy Saturday. These "Offices" are divided in "nocturnes", usually three, which are divided in "responses". All "responses", as well as the brief motets by Lobo de Mesquita, are in A-B-A form.

Francisco Gomes da Rocha was active as both a composer and singer. He was a male contralto. There are indications that he also was a kettle-drummer at the local Regiment, the "Dragoons" Regiment. Only three of his compositions survived. This small number of works would not justify leaving the names of other composers aside. There were composers active those days in Vila Rica with a larger number of pieces. However, Gomes da Rocha's extant music displays some very contrasting characteristics when compared to others. His surviving works are "*Novena de Nossa Senhora do Pilar*", dated from 1789; "*Matinas do Espírito Santo – Spiritus Domini a 8*", dated from 1795; and "*Invitatorio a 4*", undated. In all three compositions, there are orchestral introductions. Such procedure is very uncommon among this repertoire. The other aspect that makes this music special is the fact that Gomes da Rocha's orchestral writing is far more elaborated than other composers of his generation. In all three pieces, the orchestra moves on considerably independent from the voices. In "*Novena de Nsa. Sra. do Pilar*"'s case, his concern with musical form can be noticed through the use of short movements recalling, though very distant, a *divertimento* or a serenade. However, his choral writing is entirely homophonic. Vocal solos are occasional and alternated with choir.

The inclusion of Manuel Dias de Oliveira's in this present study has more to do with the controversial nature of the music bearing his name than with its inner qualities. Many short motets and other minor liturgical pieces have been discovered and attributed to Manuel Dias de Oliveira. The whole set comprises unaccompanied choral pieces and voices and orchestra ones. The main issue regarding those pieces is the large scope of musical styles found in them. They range from the late renaissance/early baroque "*Bajulans*", that resembles both harmonically and formally some motets by the Portuguese composer Diogo Dias Melgás (1638-1700), who was active throughout his entire life in the town of Évora, Portugal. The above mentioned motet also displays some fine knowledge of contrapuntal writing, never found in other pieces by composers from Minas, including Manuel Dias de Oliveira. Some 16 compositions from the whole set of manuscripts found have very acceptable characteristics related to that very well defined late 18th century style. From these compositions that could be considered unmistakably by M.D. de Oliveira, one stands out, the "*Magnificat*". This is a well balanced piece divided in stanzas according to the liturgical Latin poem, like Gomes da Rocha's "*Novena*". It's not however, as well elaborated as this one. Manuel Dias de Oliveira spent all his life in Vila de São José do Rio das Mortes, present Tiradentes, state of Minas Gerais.

Father João de Castro Lobo was born in Vila Rica to a traditionally musical family. He died in nearby Mariana, the Bishopric's home, where he held the post of Chapel Master until his premature death, in 1832. He was a much younger composer than the ones above mentioned. In fact, his father, Gabriel de Castro Lobo was active at the same time Francisco Gomes da Rocha was. They both served at the Brotherhood of Our Lady of Pilar. The earliest documents referring to his activities as a composer date from 1817 (?). Those are from the church of Carmo in Vila Rica, or the Church of Our Lady of Carmel's 3rd Order. These 3rd Order Churches were the most important back those days, as they gathered primarily white influential men. All Our Lady of Carmel Churches were located near the main administration building during colonial Brazil, according to the Portuguese tradition. Most musicians had contracts from many different brotherhoods. However, attending the Church of Carmel's requests was always a privilege.

João de Deus output wasn't very large. He wasn't a full time composer. So, most of his approximately 40 compositions survived, mostly in archives from Minas. His music is already completely different from the other composers. There are characteristics that were introduced in Brazil only after the Portuguese Court's arrival in Rio, in 1808. Not only extremely difficult operatic arias were introduced, but also a more symphonic approach to the orchestra. Although his music presents a very high quality, the larger compositions displays more interesting aspects to be observed. He left two Masses, two Credos, *Te Deum*, *Matinas de Natal*, *6 Responsórios Fúnebres* and an Overture in D Major. Besides these mentioned pieces, there are many motets for various liturgical functions. As already observed in composers of that time, such as Lobo de Mesquita, João de Deus de Castro Lobo also reused the same themes and movements in different works. That is particularly the case of his Overture in D Major. This composition, which is a unique case of purely instrumental music in the colonial history Minas Gerais, was meant for church and not for the theater. Very characteristic of the operatic elements transplanted to church music, this overture was probably composed for some festive solemnity, like the Holy Saturday ceremony. It has two parts, as it was usual for that time. A slow introduction, Adagio and; the main movement, Allegro. There is a large section in the first part written for a solo 'cello. Most likely, this was especially composed for the cellist João Nunes Maurício Lisboa, who was very active those days. This musician was responsible for the copies of some very rare chamber music found in Vila Rica, including some Haydn string quartets and a Boccherini string trio which the manuscript bearing the musician's signature is dated from 1799. The main themes from the Overture's Allegro will appear in João de Deus's Mass in D Major's Gloria. It's a brilliantly orchestrated introduction with many new elements brought together. In fact, this Mass is probably his most striking compositions. It has the traditional "Kyrie" and "Gloria" structure. The "Kyrie" is divided in three parts: *Kirye eleison* – orchestral introduction and chorus; *Christe eleison* – 4 solo voices SATB *concertatto*; *Kirie eleison* – chorus and orchestra in polyphonic treatment with many modulations approaching a fugue. The "Gloria" also presents an orchestral introduction followed by chorus and orchestra. The next parts follow the liturgical verses. *Laudamus* is duo for soprano and contralto. *Gratias* is for homophonic chorus and orchestra. *Domine Deus* is a *concertatto* for the four voices with orchestra. Both *Qui tollis* and *Qui sedes* are solo tenor and orchestra. Here, only one piece was intended. There is a slow introduction for the first verse, with a solo 'cello part prior to the singing and an aria for the second verse. This is a real *bravura* piece. It displays the best of Rossini's comic operas' style that were so dear to Brazilian audiences in the first half of the 19th century. Then, there is

another aria: the *Quoniam*. This is another virtuoso aria for the bass voice, curiously accompanied by a solo violin. Both the *Cum Sancto Spiritu* and *Amen* are for chorus and orchestra with an indication on the manuscript of a fugues. That doesn't actually occur, despite of the composer's attempt to create a brief, but more elaborated polyphonic texture. Despite of the of the last *Kyrie* and the *Amen*, all choral parts are in the same homophonic style found in the previously mentioned composers' music. However, the orchestration is much more dense and rather independent from the vocal lines. It's more complex and idiomatic than the earlier composers.

Castro Lobo's other larger pieces show very similar features as the Mass in D major. The Mass for 8 voices and orchestra, also in D major, doesn't have orchestral introductions. It has though, a very strange solo violin cadenza preceding an aria for bass at the *Qui tollis*, and a very challenging tenor aria for the *Qui sedes*. Other solos appear occasionally for instruments such as 'cello and flute. The opening theme of this Mass for 8 voices and instruments also appear on *Matinas de Natal*'s last response. These Matins follow the structure as the Offices. It's really incredible how these composers concentrated their musical ideas in such short pieces as these tripartite responses. The same procedures are found in these other works. Another case is the use of the music for a different text. The *Matinas de Ntatal*'s music was adapted to a *Matinas de São Vicente de Paula*. The same music to a different liturgical text.

The *Te Deum*, from 1821 and, the *6 Responsórios Fúnebres (6 Funeral Responses)*, from 1831, are the only dated works by João de Deus de Castro Lobo. The first one was especially commissioned in Vila Rica for the king's visit to the city. D.Pedro I was in Vila Rica few months prior to the declaration of Independence, on September 7th, 1822. This is an alternated *Te Deum*. It follows local tradition of always having these celebrations presented with the vicar and brotherhood members singing the plainchant from the main altar, while the choir, orchestra and soloists sang from the balcony on the opposite side, suspended above the church's main entrance door. Whereas the *6 Responsórios Fúnebres* were meant to be a complete Office for the Dead. The composer died before he could finish them on January, 1832. Although an interesting set of pieces, this unfinished Office doesn't stand to qualities of the previous compositions.

The contrast between João de Deus de Castro Lobo's music and his predecessors' is a clear indication of that the music brought by Royal Chapel received a widespread acknowledgement. Together with manuscripts of local composers, in many others were found the names of Marcos Portugal, António Leal Moreira, José Joaquim dos Santos, all from Portugal, as well as a large number of Father José Maurício Nunes Garcia's music, from Rio de Janeiro.

Music in Bahia

Musical activities in Bahia are documented since the 16th century. Names of chapel-masters appear in many documents throughout both 17th and 18th centuries. Even important activities such as polychoral music practices, are documented in Salvador during the 17th century. However, no music prior to the second half of the 18th century has been found. The earliest manuscript found in Bahia bearing a date is the anonymous *Recitativo e Aria*, from 1759. This is a very unique composition. It is a piece sung in Portuguese with a structure typical of the Neapolitan opera style so fashionable those days in both sides of the Atlantic.

It's scored for treble voice, two violins and *basso continuo*. The *recitativo* is presented accompanied by all instruments, not as a *recitativo secco*, as it was common in the operas. This piece has been attributed by Robert Stevenson to Caetano Melo de Jesus, on the grounds that he was the chapel-master of Salvador at that time. According to Gerard Behague,

"The Recitativo and Aria is dedicated to José Mascarenhas Pacheco Pereira de Mello, a magistrate of the "Casa de Suplicação", Portugal's supreme court of justice, and was composed on the occasion of Mascarenhas' s recovery from a serious illness.... Mascarenhas was also known as a patron of the arts and letters, and while he was in Brazil his name was associated with the Academia Brasileira dos Renascidos (of the reborn), a new academy of Bahia intelligentsia" [Music in Latin America: an introduction, page 72]

It's also known that the presence of Pereira de Mello in Bahia was meant to deal with the expelling of Jesuits from Brazil, which took place in 1760.

The examples of music composed in Bahia during the 18th century are very few. Another important name to be mentioned is that of Teodoro Cyro de Souza (Caldas da Rainha, Portugal 1766 – Salvador, 18...). He was appointed chapel-master of Salvador in 1781. He received his training at the *Seminário da Patriarcal*, Lisbon. Some of his compositions still survive at the Lisbon Cathedral's archive. The only composition of Cyro de Souza found to date is a manuscript of his "*Motetos para os Passos da Procissão do Senhor*". This is a collection of eight motets for 4 voices and orchestra. There is some moderate use of polyphony in these pieces. This shows the current Portuguese practice of that time as found in composers such as José Joaquim dos Santos and João de Souza Carvalho. The orchestra is very light and occasionally displays some *Galante* style treatment. Not much can be said about this piece's orchestration as its original manuscript is a transcription dated from the 19th century, mostly for wind band instruments. A modern adaptation has been made by Sérgio Dias, following 18th century models.

Two other composers active in Salvador will have their names directly associated with the court in Rio, José Joaquim de Souza Negrão and Damião Barbosa Araújo (1778-1856).

J.J. de Souza Negrão was active in Salvador around 1815 and 1818. Very little is known about this composer. Not even if he was Brazilian or Portuguese. The only information found is that he was a *Conde dos Arcos'* s protegé. This Count was Bahia's General Governor at that time and at a certain point, wrote a letter to D. João VI requesting the creation of a music school for Souza Negrão. Two very important works were found bearing his authorship. The cantata "*A Estrela do Brazil*", from 1816, composed to celebrate D. Pedro I's birthday and, "*O Último Cântico de Davi*", from the following year, 1817. Both cantatas are sung in Portuguese. Their structure follows the same patterns of operatic cantatas with *recitativos*, solo arias, duos and brilliant homophonic choruses in the post French revolution manner.

Damião Barbosa Araújo was born in the town of Itaparica and died in Salvador. He lived for many years in Rio after joining the Portuguese court, during their scale in Salvador during their journey to Rio, in 1808. He was active at the Royal Chapel as a concert master. He had many disagreements with the Portuguese composer Marcos Portugal after his arrival in Rio, in 1810. He remained in Rio until 1828. Many of his compositions remain in archives both in Bahia and Rio. Not many of them though, have been performed in our days. The few pieces already made public to contemporary

audiences show that he followed the same operatic style as the other composers of his time. In a previous list of his compositions, besides religious music, there are *modinhas*, overtures and some dramatic music, still pending more precise qualification.

Music in São Paulo

The considerable relevance of the music produced at the São Paulo's Cathedral during the late 18th century and early 19th is directly related to its chapel-master André da Silva Gomes. He was born in Lisbon, where he also received his musical training. He arrived in São Paulo in 1774, as part of the bishop Dom Manuel da Conceição's comitee. His duty was to reorganize the city's religious musical life. He also had to rehearse the cathedral's choir as well as write the music for the religious occasions and keep a public musical school. There are 130 religious works extant by André da Silva Gomes. Many of them were recompiled and performed during the 19th century. Some, were even performed during the first years of the 20th century. He died on June 17th, 1844, aged 91. During his lifetime, he was the most distinguished musical personality in São Paulo.

The Thematic Catalogue of André da Silva Gomes's works comprises masses, offertories, psalms, matins, offices for holy week services, hymns, motets and other genres of religious music. Over a hundred of them are autograph manuscripts. Despite of this large output, most of his music follows functional trends. There are two works, however, that stands out from the whole set. They are the "Mass for 5 voices" and, the "Mass for Eight voices and instruments". Both masses date from the last quarter of the 18th century. That was certainly, the most prolific moment of his career. He was at that time, fully devoted to his functions as São Paulo Cathedral's Chapel Master.

The Mass for 5 voices comprises only "Kyrie" and "Gloria" (divided into 11 sections). The first "Christe" and the last "Cum Sancto Spiritu" are fugues. Actually, the fugues in his works are the only real ones found in all music composed in colonial Brazil that we know. The only exception maybe, for the composer Luís Álvares Pinto (1719-1789), from Pernambuco, who wrote a fugue for the "Non confundar" of his *Te Deum*. Despite of this polyphonic procedure, Silva Gomes's music is mostly in a *galante* style. It has arias, duos, trios, *concertatti* and everything related to the music of those days. The Mass for 8 voices has many aspects in common with the previous one. They were composed around the same time. It has, like the other one, only *Kyrie* and *Gloria*. The *Gloria* has nine sections. This is a more brilliant mass as it has in its instrumentation plus two trumpets, and a reminiscent polychoral treatment with the two antiphonal choruses. Most of the pieces of that time in Brazil were meant for orchestras with two french horns and strings, sometimes complete, sometimes with no violas. It's possible to say that André da Silva Gomes with his style brought from Lisbon, somehow, anticipated in São Paulo the music that was going to arrive in Rio with the court many years later.