

Meridian

# The Brazilian Cello

Tânia Lisboa - 'cello  
Cristina Capparelli - piano



**Alberto Nepomuceno** (1864-1920) was one of the first composers to take into account Brazil's rich and multifaceted African, Amerindian and European heritage. Nevertheless, this enchanting *Romance* and virtuosic *Tarantella* relate to earlier times spent in Norway with his friend Edward Grieg and to his student days in German academies. The *Romance* settles on a ternary scheme juxtaposing melodic content with a turbulent middle section. The *Tarantella* follows the scherzo and trio design with lively figurations and a well crafted contrasting middle section. Following the traditional dance mould, the virtuosic cello writing acquires an ever-quickening pace to bring the dance to its brilliant conclusion.

**Francisco Mignone** (1897-1986), the son of an Italian flautist, was born in São Paulo but spent years of study in renowned academies throughout Europe. A natural melodist, upon his return to Brazil in the late 1920s he embraced nationalist traits such as guitarlike bass lines, soulful melodies and languid but persistent rhythmic patterns as evidenced in the charming serenade-like qualities of this *Modinha*. Written as two double periods both graced by melodic variations of understated contrasting content, the cello carries forth the plangent melodic recitation while the piano emulates a quiet but persistent guitar.

**João Octaviano** (1892-1962), composer and pianist, was also professor of music theory publishing a book that was adopted for the curriculum of the National Institute of Music in Rio de Janeiro. Amongst compositions for piano and other instruments, Octaviano arranged Nepomuceno's *Valsas Humorísticas* for piano and string orchestra. He also composed the music for a film dedicated to the centenary of the famous Brazilian writer Machado de Assis (1939). Thematically and spiritually reminiscent of Fauré's song "Après un Rêve" the **Canto Elegíaco**, also in C minor, is a piece of the utmost tenderness which explores the melancholic expressiveness of the cello in a simple ternary form.

The French family of **Luiz Henrique Levy** (1861-1935) settled in São Paulo where they owned a thriving musical business. Unlike his brother, the eminent nationalist composer Alexandre, Luiz, also a remarkably gifted pianist, did not study in Europe but produced delightful pieces in a light romantic style so cherished at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The *Romance Sans Paroles* epitomizes the salon style, while the piano features an array of arpeggiated figures, the cello persuasively presents the wordless song by means of rising and falling melodic waves. Following its highest point, the work dwindles to a soft but appealing ending as the style requires.

As with so many distinguished Brazilian composers, **Henrique Oswald** (1852-1931) spent time in Europe, initially as a student and later as a teacher and composer. His piano piece, *Il Neige*, written in 1902, was awarded first prize by Saint-Saëns and Fauré in a competition of 600 contestants. Upon his return to Brazil in 1903 he assumed duties as Director of the National Institute of Music in Rio de Janeiro. His compositions reveal delicacy, elegance and a deft handling of harmonies, qualities which also manifest themselves in this lovely *Berceuse* written for his son Carlo. Within a ternary form, the piano depicts the gentle moving of a cradle with its ostinato figuration as the cello sings a lullaby. The piece imposes itself by its very effortlessness.

As highlighted by Mario de Andrade, (1891-1945) the acknowledged doyen of Brazilian nationalistic music, **Sérgio de Vasconcelos-Corrêa** (1934), a student of Guarnieri, distinguished himself in the nationalist vein. His *Seresta* captures the melancholic mood of a serenade in its involving and fluent harmonies. Imbued in this tradition, the piano provides a rhythmic and harmonic base leaving the cello with unfettered freedom to sing its captivating melody. The overall tonal foundation permits the composer to call upon unexpected modal and chromatic inflections of its harmonic substance.



**Homage to Guarneri:  
Complete works for cello and piano**

**M. Camargo Guarneri** (1907-1993), the son of an Italian immigrant father and a Brazilian mother, was born in Tietê in the State of São Paulo. At 13, his father captured the attention of the music critics with the publication of Camargo's first composition, a slow waltz. In 1922 the family moved to São Paulo where the 15 year-old found employment at a musical establishment demonstrating pianos for potential buyers but was soon dismissed due to his insistence on playing all the classical music he could find. In 1926, Italian maestro Lamberto Baldi accepted him as his student and for five years. Guarneri worked under the enlightened guidance of this generous musician for whom he never ceased to express gratitude and appreciation. Under his mentorship, he received a thorough grounding in harmony, counterpoint and orchestration, and became acquainted with the "new" music from Europe and the United States. He played keyboard instruments in Baldi's orchestra becoming in the process an avid enthusiast of Bartok and Stravinsky. In 1928 Guarneri met Mario de Andrade who was deeply impressed by the Brazilian identity of his work, concluding that he had found his successor to carry forth his ideal of a Brazilian national music.

The *First Sonata* for cello and piano (1931) reveals a certain stringency in the construction of its melodic lines and harmonic movements. Its resourceful formal construction presents an expansive theme imitated between cello and piano, later manipulated by augmentations, diminutions and other derivations rhythmically transformed. It shows a budding composer asserting his personal style albeit caught between the harmonic daring of his European contemporaries and the strictures of contrapuntal writing. Aspects of Brazilian modernistic nationalism emerge in the lyrical second movement - a *modinha* with a passionate and sorrowful middle section - but above all in the third movement, which combines African and Amerindian

ostinato patterns, bird song, rural and urban elements, all fused with great mastery.

Written in 1955 in a decidedly modernistic vein, Guarneri's *Second Sonata* for cello and piano displays the composer's gift for motivic transformation allied to an ambiguous modal setting. Permeating the work, major and minor thirds compete for the listener's attention throughout fast and slow movements at times establishing an outright bitonal harshness of competing musical strands. The disconsolately expressive second movement with its poignant moods and alluring sonorities is followed by a wholly Brazilian-style finale with its exuberant *caipira* dance rhythm, all in double-stops, presenting a formidable challenge to the cellist.

The *Third Sonata* (1977) exhibits Guarneri's mature style: terse, resolute and decidedly neoclassical. As observed by Verhaalen, the first of the three movements reveals his skilful handling of formal design within sonata schemes. The second movement is rhapsodic with plangent writing for both instruments. The third, in which Guarneri once again explores Amerindian strands of Brazilian eloquence, is a piquant Rondo with acerbic dance-like tunes culminating with cyclic grandeur in a restatement of the work's opening theme.

The *Cantilena No.1* (1974) captures a gentle and sorrowful mood omnipresent in Brazilian popular song. The cello line blends purpose with sadness, lines rise and fall, piano harmonies slide from one sonority to the next, expressiveness is built out of delicate but sustained feeling.

The *Cantilena No.2* (1982) follows an ABA form. The first theme - *Muito tranquilo* - has the character of a serenade. After a short development this leads to a second theme - *Bem ritado* - recalling the *caipira* dances of Guarneri's native São Paulo. The piece ends as it started with the return of the reflective melancholy of the first theme.



*Ponteio and Dança* (1946) is Guarnieri's best known composition for cello and piano. The *Ponteio*, is a prelude of intense longing, improvised upon an upward guitar strand of open strings followed by delicate intertwining melody. By contrast, the *Dança* takes us once again to the Brazilian countryside punctuated by syncopated figuration and catching melodic patterns.

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The cellist **Tânia Lisboa** is widely acknowledged as one of Brazil's foremost musical personalities with an international profile and an extensive range of recordings. She has received acclaimed reviews for her solo concerts and recitals as well as for her appearances with the Trio Villa-Lobos. She has performed in Japan, Korea, Turkey, Poland, France, Italy, Spain,

Germany, Mexico, Canada, South America, the U.S.A. and the UK. An award winner of scholarships from the Brazilian Government and the British Council, Tânia Lisboa holds a PhD in performance and in parallel to her solo career; she has given master classes and lectures worldwide. Dr Lisboa is currently a member of staff at the Royal College of Music in London and at the Orpheus Institute in Belgium. Her recent CD releases for *Meridian Records* include: *Octachord*; *Virtuoso Duos for violin and 'cello*; *Les Soirées Intimes*, the complete works for 'cello and piano by Gabriel Fauré; and *O Violoncello do Villa* (in three volumes), the complete works for 'cello and piano and all piano trios by Villa-Lobos.

Prizewinner of the *Anne and Aaron Richmond Piano Competition*, **Cristina Capparelli** made her home in Boston for several years, where she was a founding member of the Longyear Chamber Music Series. As pianist with Trio Panamericano, she toured throughout Brazil and North America to critical acclaim. Twice a recipient of Fulbright scholarships she holds a Masters Degree with honors from the New England Conservatory, and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the Boston University School of the Arts. In Brazil, she was instrumental in establishing the highly respected Graduate Music Program at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, in Porto Alegre, where she is Professor of Music and Chair of Keyboard Studies. Committed to playing all styles of piano music, her CD recordings include the piano music of Bruno Kiefer, a southern Brazilian contemporary composer, Villa-Lobos and Camargo Guarnieri. Her ongoing research project on Latin American piano music is attracting the attention of pianists and scholars worldwide, and can be seen on the World Wide Web at [www.ufrgs.br/gppi](http://www.ufrgs.br/gppi).



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The Brazilian Cello Tânia Lisboa - cello Cristina Capparelli - piano CDE 84572

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# The Brazilian Cello

## Alberto Nepomuceno

### *Romance and Tarantella*

- |                |      |
|----------------|------|
| [1] Romance    | 3:59 |
| [2] Tarantella | 3:34 |

## Francisco Mignone

- |             |      |
|-------------|------|
| [3] Modinha | 3:56 |
|-------------|------|

## João Octaviano

- |                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| [4] Canto Elegiaco | 2:09 |
|--------------------|------|

## Luiz Henrique Levy

- |                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| [5] Romance Sans Paroles | 3:37 |
|--------------------------|------|

## Henrique Oswald

- |              |      |
|--------------|------|
| [6] Berceuse | 3:24 |
|--------------|------|

## Sérgio de Vasconcelos-Corrêa

- |             |      |
|-------------|------|
| [7] Seresta | 1:53 |
|-------------|------|

## Camargo Guarnieri

### *Complete works for cello and piano*

#### Sonata No. 1

- |                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| [8] Tristonho       | 8:30 |
| [9] Apaixonadamente | 4:08 |
| [10] Selvagem       | 3:58 |

#### [11] Cantilena No. 1

4:11

#### Sonata No. 2

- |                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| [12] Allegro moderato | 4:08 |
| [13] Melancolico      | 4:55 |
| [14] Festivo          | 3:41 |

#### [15] Cantilena No. 2

3:38

#### Sonata No. 3

- |                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| [16] Sem pressa      | 4:14 |
| [17] Sereno e Triste | 4:43 |
| [18] Com alegria     | 3:19 |

## Ponteio and Dança

- |              |      |
|--------------|------|
| [19] Ponteio | 2:47 |
| [20] Dança   | 2:36 |

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