

NAXOS

THE MUSIC OF
BRAZIL

Carlos
GOMES

Opera Overtures and Preludes



Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra • Fabio Mechetti

About This Series

The series The Music of Brazil is part of the project *Brasil em Concerto*, developed by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to promote music by Brazilian composers dating back to the 18th century. Around 100 orchestral works from the 19th and 20th centuries will be recorded by the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra, the Goiás Philharmonic Orchestra and the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra. Further recordings of chamber and vocal music will gradually be added to this collection.

The works were selected according to their historical importance for Brazilian music and the existence of recordings. Most of the works recorded for the series have never had recordings available outside Brazil; many others will have their world premiere recordings. An important part of the project is the preparation of new or even first editions of the works to be recorded, many of which, despite their relevance, have only been available in the composer's manuscript. This work will be carried out by the Brazilian Academy of Music, by the Instituto Musica Brasiliis and by musicologists working together with the orchestras.



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BRAZIL

About The Scores

All scores published by Musica Brasiliis (www.musicabrasiliis.org.br).
Full scores and orchestral parts of all works available for free legal download on the website.

Carlos Gomes (1836–1896)

Opera Overtures and Preludes

Antônio Carlos Gomes, Brazil's leading opera composer, also played a key role in the Italian opera scene in the second half of the 19th century. His work paved the way for the emergence of *verismo*, a movement that turned away from the Romantic aesthetic and flourished into the early 20th century in the operas of composers such as Catalani, Leoncavallo, Puccini, Mascagni, Cilea and Giordano.

Gomes was born in 1836 in Campinas, where his early musical education was based around church music and his experience playing in wind bands, with a repertoire including operatic transcriptions and whose stylistic reference point was Italian music. After a brief period in São Paulo, Gomes moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1859 and took up a place at the Imperial Conservatory, where he was taught by the Italian Gioacchino Giannini. Two early operas, *A noite do castelo* and *Joana de Flandres*, were premiered at the National Academy and earned Gomes a scholarship to study in Italy with Lauro Rossi at the Milan Conservatory. His first works in that country were the musical comedies *Se sa minga* (1867) and *Nella luna* (1868). Their success took him to La Scala, where he would premiere the operas *Il Guarany* (1870), his greatest artistic triumph, and *Fosca* (1873). These were followed by *Salvator Rosa* (1874), the most frequently staged of his works in the 19th century, and *Maria Tudor* (1879), setting a libretto by Emilio Praga and Arrigo Boito. The latter work brought Gomes into contact with the *scapigliatura* movement that sought to rejuvenate Italian culture. A decade then passed before the premieres of his last three works for the stage, *Lo schiavo*, *Condor* and *Colombo*. The final years of his life were overshadowed by illness and financial problems, but also saw him compose his most significant non-operatic work, the *Sonata for Strings* (1894) (Naxos 8.574405). In 1896, he accepted an invitation to return to Brazil to take over the direction of the Belém Conservatory, but he died on 16 September that year, soon after arriving in Belém.

The *Prelude* to his first opera, *A noite do castelo* ('The Night of the Castle'), reveals a composer not yet

experienced enough to move away from set patterns of writing, but also one already interested in experimenting with sonorities and giving his music a sense of drama. There is, for example, his use of unaccompanied timpani, whose sound is then enriched as other instruments join in, or his inclusion of the ophicleide, recalling the world of the wind band. By contrast, the *Prelude to Joana de Flandres* ('Joan of Flanders') uses a smaller palette of timbres, but is more homogeneous in sonority, its material divided more evenly between the different sections of the orchestra.

Il Guarany ('The Guarany') demonstrates the influence of Gomes's studies with Rossi and his first-hand experience of Italian opera in Milan. The original version of the work began with a brief prelude that led into the first scene; in 1871, the composer replaced it with what proved to be the longest and most often performed of his overtures (the *Protofonia*), based on some of the opera's main themes. He does not, however, simply quote these in order to prepare the listener for the plot about to unfold, but weaves them into an organic musical discourse derived from a motif representing the character Peri (the Guarany Indian of the title).

With *Fosca*, too, Gomes substituted the original prelude for a more extended overture. Indeed of all his operas, this was the one he revised most radically after its first production. In the *Overture* we can hear how he establishes a relationship between the different themes using motivic transformation and creates a more accentuated polyphonic texture. The orchestration here is more subtle and varied, with special prominence given to the second theme, derived from the first, presented in a slow tempo and in the upper register, by muted *divisi* strings.

The opening bars of the *Overture* to his next opera, *Salvator Rosa*, depict the tense atmosphere of the clashes between the army of the viceroy of Naples and the Italian insurgents rebelling against Spanish rule in the mid-17th century. The first theme is characterised by its rhythmic and incisive nature, with staccato fanfares for the brass followed by powerful interventions from the

bass drum and timpani, simulating cannon fire. The second theme brings necessary contrast, with the *legato*, expressive phrasing associated with the title role.

Maria Tudor ('Mary Tudor') sets a libretto by Emilio Praga, based on the play by Victor Hugo. The *Prelude* is based on two themes. Full of drive and drama, the first is taken from the *concertato* of Act III, in which the protagonist expresses her desire for revenge. The second corresponds to that of the *March of Condemned Men* in Act IV. Its lyricism and change of metre again provide suitable contrast with what has come before.

After a long period in which he wrote nothing new for the stage, Gomes composed *Lo schiavo* ('The Slave'). The work took a long time to reach completion, and the conflict between the composer and his librettist, Rodolfo Paravicini, eventually made it impossible to stage the opera in Italy. It was premiered instead in Rio de Janeiro, in 1889, a few weeks before the Proclamation of the Republic. The plot is directly related to the abolition of slavery in Brazil, which came about in 1888 (although the action is set in the 16th century and the black slaves are replaced by Indians). The *Prelude* to Act I is a brief introduction which sets the mood for the first scene, with its tonal ambiguity and static harmonies, over which floats a poignant oboe solo – after a more dramatic *tutti* episode, this is passed to solo flute, then back to the oboe again. The *Prelude* to Act IV, known as *Alvorada* ('Dawn'), takes on another dimension, not only in the opera, but in the composer's output as a whole, since it is the closest he came to writing a symphonic poem. Its descriptive character is reinforced by programmatic notes added by Gomes to the score. The opening bars, for example are marked, 'Rising out of the deep silence of the night is the muffled sound of the sea hitting the rocks on the shore close to Iberê's tent.' Next, the orchestra portrays 'the first light of a Brazilian dawn, in a gradual crescendo of a variety of sounds' including, at intervals, that of 'warlike horns from the camp of the Tamoio Indians', that of a

distant (offstage) trumpet, coming from the 'Portuguese fleet, poised to attack', and that of birdsong. Finally, an orchestral *tutti* depicts the sunrise as it illuminates the entire scene. Gomes ends by quoting the theme sung by Américo in Act I, as he anticipates a 'dawn of freedom', a reference to the liberation of the slaves. The *Alvorada* soon established itself as one of the most famous and well-loved orchestral works of the 19th-century Brazilian repertoire.

In 1892, Gomes composed the 'symphonic vocal poem' *Colombo*, one of several works he wrote for the stage which are not classified as operas. His eighth and final work in the genre, therefore, was *Condor*, premiered at La Scala in 1891. Its *Prelude* has certain features that may derive not only from the oriental setting (the action takes place in Samarkand), but also from the fact the opera is an example of the composer's mature style. The chamber sonorities of the harps and horns in the introduction, the light, flowing figurations for *divisi* strings and the use of whole-tone scales are reminiscent of French orchestral music. Contrast is provided when the brass play the theme in unison. The purpose of the *Notturmo* that precedes the third act of *Condor* is to set the scene for the final part of the drama. This is a typical 19th-century operatic device – one Italian precedent would be the fourth-act prelude of Verdi's *La traviata*, while other contemporary examples include the intermezzos of Catalani's *La Wally*, Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* and Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*. The *Nocturne* opens with a nostalgic, recitative-like oboe solo, responded to by clarinet and bassoons. After the theme is restated by the horn, the strings take the melodic lead, with a sweeping, sentimental phrase that leads to the climax of the piece. A brief coda sees the oboe reprise the theme once more, with interventions from the strings in the upper register.

André Cardoso

English translation: Susannah Howe

Carlos Gomes (1836–1896)

Préluídos e aberturas

Antônio Carlos Gomes é o principal compositor brasileiro de óperas, que ocupou também um lugar especial no panorama da ópera italiana na segunda metade do século XIX. Sua obra preparou o caminho para o surgimento do verismo, movimento que renovou a estética do romantismo e vigorou até as primeiras décadas do século XX, na produção de compositores como Catalani, Leoncavallo, Puccini, Mascagni, Cilea e Giordano.

Nascido em Campinas, em 1836, iniciou sua formação musical na tradição da música sacra e das bandas de música, com repertório que incluía as transcrições de trechos de óperas, tendo a música italiana como referência estilística. Após um breve período em São Paulo, Carlos Gomes se mudou para o Rio de Janeiro em 1859 e ingressou no Conservatório de Música, onde foi orientado pelo italiano Gioacchino Giannini. Na Academia de Música e Ópera Nacional estreou as óperas *A noite do castelo* e *Joana de Flandres*, que lhe valeram uma bolsa para estudar na Itália com Lauro Rossi, professor do Conservatório de Milão. Seus primeiros trabalhos naquele país foram as revistas teatrais *Se sa minga* (1867) e *Nella luna* (1868), cujo sucesso abriu as portas do *Teatro Alla Scala*, onde estrearia *Il Guarany*, seu maior triunfo artístico, e *Fosca*. Segue-se as óperas *Salvator Rosa*, seu título mais encaenado no século XIX, e *Maria Tudor*, com libreto escrito em colaboração entre Emilio Praga e Arrigo Boito, que aproximou Carlos Gomes da *Scapigliatura*, movimento artístico que buscava a renovação das artes na Itália. Uma década se passou até a estreia de *Lo Schiavo*, *Condor* e *Colombo*, seus últimos trabalhos para o palco. Os anos finais de sua vida foram marcados pela doença, por uma crise financeira e pela criação de sua obra instrumental mais importante fora do gênero lírico, a *Sonata para cordas* (1894) (Naxos 8.574405). Em 1896, aceitou convite para voltar ao Brasil e assumir a direção do Conservatório de Belém do Pará, mas faleceu em 16 de setembro daquele ano, pouco tempo depois de sua chegada à cidade.

O préluído de sua primeira ópera, *A noite do castelo* (1861), revela um compositor ainda apegado a fórmulas, mas já com uma preocupação em experimentar sonoridades e em dar à música um conteúdo dramático, com o rufo de tímpanos desacompanhado, que vai se incorporando com a adição de outros instrumentos, ou com a utilização do oficleide na instrumentação, que remete ao universo das bandas de música. O préluído de *Joana de Flandres* (1863), por sua vez, é menos rico em timbres em relação à obra anterior, mas ganha uma sonoridade mais homogênea e uma distribuição melhor equilibrada do material musical pelos diferentes naipes.

A ópera *Il Guarany* (1870) revela o quanto os estudos com Rossi e o contato direto com a ópera italiana em Milão foram importantes para o desenvolvimento de Carlos Gomes como compositor. A versão original continha um breve préluído que se conectava com a primeira cena; em 1871, o compositor o substituiu por aquela que vem a ser a mais longa e a mais executada dentre suas aberturas, estruturada a partir de alguns dos principais temas da ópera. Gomes, no entanto, não utiliza os temas como mera citação que prepara o ouvinte para o decorrer da trama, mas como um discurso musical orgânico derivado de um motivo que caracteriza o personagem Peri.

O mesmo processo de substituição do préluído original por uma abertura de maior porte se deu com a *Fosca* (1873), a ópera de Gomes que passou pelo mais radical processo de revisão após sua estreia. Na abertura é possível identificar a relação que o compositor estabelece entre os diferentes temas a partir da transformação motivica, assim como uma mais acentuada textura polifônica. A orquestração é mais sutil e variada, com destaque para o segundo tema, derivado do primeiro, apresentado em andamento lento pelas cordas em *divisi* e *con sordina*, no registro agudo.

Em *Salvator Rosa* (1874), sua ópera seguinte, o compositor procura criar, nos primeiros compassos da abertura, o ambiente tenso dos embates entre o exército

do vice-rei de Nápoles e os revoltosos italianos, que se rebelam contra o domínio espanhol na região. O primeiro tema se caracteriza por seu caráter rítmico e incisivo, com notas em *stacatto* em forma de fanfarras pelos metais, seguido de uma intervenção forte do bombo e dos tímpanos, que simulam um tiro de canhão. O segundo tema cria o necessário contraste, com frase expressiva em legato associada ao personagem principal da ópera.

A ópera *Maria Tudor* (1879) tem libreto de Emílio Praga, baseado em drama de Victor Hugo. O Prelúdio é estruturado a partir de dois temas. O primeiro é retirado do *concertato* do terceiro ato, no qual a protagonista expressa sua vontade de vingança. É um tema incisivo, de forte conteúdo dramático. O segundo tema corresponde ao da Marcha dos Condenados, no quarto ato, que oferece o devido contraste, não só pelo lirismo como também pela mudança métrica.

Após um longo período sem apresentar uma nova obra para o palco, Carlos Gomes compôs *Lo Schiavo*, um trabalho de difícil gestação, marcado pelo conflito com o libretista Rodolfo Paravicini, o que inviabilizou sua estreia na Itália – a ópera viria a ser estrada no Rio de Janeiro, em 1889, poucas semanas antes da Proclamação da República no país. O tema da ópera se relaciona diretamente com a abolição da escravidão no Brasil, em 1888 (muito embora a ação da ópera transcorra no século XVI e os escravos sejam indígenas, e não negros). O prelúdio do ato I é uma breve introdução que cria o ambiente para a primeira cena, com sua ambiguidade tonal e harmonias estáticas, sobre as quais flutua um pungente solo de oboé e, após um trecho mais dramático pelo *tutti* orquestral, também pela flauta. Já o prelúdio do ato IV, a “Alvorada”, assume outra dimensão, não só na ópera, mas no conjunto da obra do compositor, sendo o mais próximo a que ele chegou da forma do poema sinfônico. Seu caráter descritivo é reforçado pela indicação, na partitura, do significado programático do conteúdo musical de cada seção. Nos compassos iniciais, Carlos Gomes indica: “No silêncio profundo da noite ouve-se o abafado murmúrio do mar que bate nas rochas vizinhas à tenda de Iberê”. A música segue

descrevendo “o despontar da aurora brasileira e intensificando-se sempre com variedades de sons”, dentre os quais estão “o som rouco da inúbia guerreira no campo dos Tamoios”, o toque de um trompete interno, como vindo à distância de uma “frota portuguesa perfilada em posição de ataque”, cantos de pássaros e, finalmente, o nascer do sol que a tudo ilumina através do *tutti* orquestral. Carlos Gomes finaliza a peça citando o tema de Américo no primeiro ato, cuja letra anuncia uma “aurora de liberdade”, uma referência à libertação dos escravos. A “Alvorada” tornou-se rapidamente uma das mais consagradas e apreciadas páginas orquestrais do repertório brasileiro do século XIX.

Em 1892, Carlos Gomes comporia *Colombo*, que, embora tenha todas as características de uma ópera, foi denominada “poema vocal sinfônico”. A oitava e última ópera é, portanto, *Condor*, estrada no Scala de Milão, em 1891. O Prelúdio apresenta algumas características que podem ser decorrentes não só do orientalismo do enredo, mas também do próprio amadurecimento do compositor. As sonoridades camerísticas das harpas e trompas na introdução, as figurações leves e fluentes das cordas em *divisi* e o uso de escala de tons inteiros remetem a sonoridades orquestrais típicas da música francesa. O contraste é dado pelo tema exposto pelos metais em uníssono. Já o “Noturno” que antecede o terceiro ato do *Condor* cumpre a função de criar o ambiente no qual o drama será desenvolvido em sua parte final. É um procedimento típico da ópera do século XIX, que na Itália tem como precedente o Prelúdio do ato IV de *La Traviata*, de Verdi, e como contemporâneos os intermezzos de *La Wally*, de Catalani, da *Manon Lescaut*, de Puccini, e da *Cavalleria Rusticana*, de Mascagni. O *Noturno* de Carlos Gomes abre com um solo de oboé de caráter nostálgico, como um recitativo, respondido pela clarineta e pelos fagotes. Após o tema ser reapresentado pela trompa, as cordas assumem o protagonismo melódico, com uma frase larga e sentimental que leva ao ponto culminante do *Noturno*. Uma breve *coda* retoma o tema pelo oboé, com intervenções das cordas no agudo.

André Cardoso

Fabio Mechetti



Photo: André Fossati

Fabio Mechetti has been artistic director and principal conductor of the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra since its foundation. Under his leadership, the orchestra has received numerous awards, recorded nine albums, including several for Naxos, and undertaken a tour of South America. In 2014, he became the first Brazilian music director of an Asian orchestra when he was appointed principal conductor of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra. In the US, Mechetti conducted the Jacksonville Symphony for 14 years and is now its conductor emeritus. He has also served as music director of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and Spokane Symphony; resident conductor of the San Diego Symphony; and associate conductor, under Mstislav Rostropovich, of the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, D.C. As well as making his Carnegie Hall debut with the New Jersey Symphony, he has worked as guest conductor with a number of other North American and international orchestras. Born in São Paulo, he has a Master's in conducting and composition from The Juilliard School, and won the international Malko Competition for young conductors in Denmark in 1989.

www.fabiomechetti.com

Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra



Photo: Eugenio Savio

Founded in 2008 and based at the Sala Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra has become one of Brazil's most successful cultural organisations, under the helm of artistic director and principal conductor Fabio Mechetti. Its 90 players come from Europe, Asia and the Americas as well as from all regions of Brazil itself. The orchestra has received numerous awards and accolades, including *CONCERTO* magazine's Grand Prize (2015, 2020), the Carlos Gomes Award for the best Brazilian orchestra (2012), and being named classical music ensemble of the year (2010) by the São Paulo Association of Art Critics (APCA). It presents various concert series, educational events and open air performances, as well as undertaking regional, national and international tours, and runs development programmes for young conductors and composers. Its discography includes two previous recordings for The Music of Brazil series on Naxos – albums of music by Nepomuceno (8.574067) and Almeida Prado (8.574225), the latter of which was nominated for a Latin GRAMMY in 2020 (Best Classical Album category). www.filarmonica.art.br

Also available



8.574067



8.573925



8.574404



8.574405

Carlos Gomes was not only Brazil's leading operatic composer, but he also helped pave the way for Italian *verismo* during the latter part of the 19th century. The preludes and overtures from his operas chart a course from early experimentation with orchestral sonority to a new conception of atmosphere and tension in his historically based dramas. In *Alvorada* ('Dawn') from *Lo schiavo* his descriptive writing comes close to the status of a symphonic poem. The music from his greatest artistic triumph, *Il Guarany*, weaves themes into an organic whole, while his final opera, *Condor*, is reminiscent of French orchestral music in its employment of whole-tone scales.



Carlos
GOMES
(1836–1896)

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| 1 | Il Guarany: Overture (1870) | 8:11 |
| 2 | Maria Tudor: Act I – Prelude (1878) | 7:26 |
| | Condor (1890) | 8:22 |
| 3 | Act I – Prelude | 4:35 |
| 4 | Act III – Nocturne | 3:47 |
| 5 | Fosca: Overture (1873) | 5:38 |
| 6 | Joana de Flandres: Act I – Prelude (1862) | 5:02 |
| 7 | Salvator Rosa: Overture (1874) | 6:44 |
| 8 | A noite do castelo: Act I – Prelude (1861) | 4:15 |
| | Lo schiavo (1889) | 11:35 |
| 9 | Act I – Prelude | 4:38 |
| 10 | Act IV – Prelude 'Alvorada' | 6:57 |

Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra • Fabio Mechetti

The series *The Music of Brazil* is an initiative of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Recorded: 20–24 February 2022 at Sala Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Producer, engineer and editor: Ulrich Schneider • Booklet notes: André Cardoso • Publisher: Musica Brasilis

Sponsor: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil

Cover: *Campo degli Aimoré* (1870) by Carlo Ferrario (1833–1907)

(Stage design for the first performance of *Il Guarany* at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan)

Playing Time
58:18



www.naxos.com

© & © 2023 Naxos Rights (Europe) Ltd
Booklet notes in English
Notas de programa do encarte em português
Made in Germany