

NAXOS
THE MUSIC OF
BRAZIL

Heitor
**VILLA-
LOBOS**

Complete
Violin
Sonatas

Emmanuele Baldini,
Violin
Pablo Rossi, Piano



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 and by musicologists working together with the orchestras.



Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)

Complete Violin Sonatas

Heitor Villa-Lobos wrote three violin sonatas, all of which date from the years 1912 to 1920. This was a key period in his career, the moment at which he matured as a composer, establishing his own personal idiom and, with a great deal of hard work, experienced his first professional triumphs.

The young Villa-Lobos welcomed in 1912 by conducting the Marine Band of Rio de Janeiro at a New Year's party. During the next few months he began work on several major compositions, including the opera *Izath* and the *Violin Sonata (Fantasia) No. 1 'Désespérance'* ('Despair'). He then travelled to the north of Brazil, spending six months in the Amazon rainforest cities of Manaus and Belém. On returning to Rio he met his future wife, the pianist Lucília Guimarães, who played a crucial role in his career thereafter.

Far from being a recognised composer, at this stage Villa-Lobos was earning a living as a jobbing cellist, playing symphonic repertoire as an orchestral musician, entertaining customers in cafés and restaurants, and accompanying silent movies. His skill as a string player and the aesthetic influences that were guiding him at this time are reflected in his *First Violin Sonata*.

This is a single-movement work, made up of various interlinked sections which in effect create a concise sonata form, with an introduction (*Moderato*) and three further episodes (fast–slow–fast). Villa-Lobos does not follow this structure too strictly, however, as suggested by the use of the word 'fantasia' in the title. There are more technical explorations for the violin than for the piano, although there is a good dialogue between the two instruments. As well as rapid passages of demisemiquavers, and double and triple stops, the violin has a brief cadenza in the *Adagio* section before the final *Allegro*.

Despite the fact that it is made up of different sections, the sonata does not feature striking contrasts in tempo or atmosphere, and its melancholy lyricism makes it worthy of the subtitle *Désespérance* ('Despair'). This word, incidentally, points to another clear characteristic, common to all three sonatas in varying degrees – the

influence of French late Romanticism, of composers such as Saint-Saëns, Fauré and Franck. An elegant sonority and unstable harmonic vocabulary, although with no disturbance of the tonal polarity, are among the most notable elements in this respect.

Just two years separate the *First Violin Sonata* from the *Second*, but the development in Villa-Lobos's compositional language can be clearly heard in the latter work. After his marriage to Lucília in 1913, not only did he have more time to devote to his craft, he also had the opportunity to learn more about the piano, as both player and composer as, with the help of his wife, he began trying out his musical ideas at the keyboard. By 1914 he had access to the *Cours de composition musicale* of Vincent D'Indy, director of the influential Schola Cantorum in Paris. His studies of this treatise played a key role in his early years of systematic composition – according to Villa-Lobos himself, it was the influence of D'Indy's method that led to the birth of his first symphonies, between 1916 and 1919.

His more skilful handling of technical resources in general and greater understanding of writing for the piano in particular are evident from the opening bars onwards. The *Allegro non troppo* begins with a bright and lively introduction on the piano which references folk material used in pared-down form, without direct quotations or mere harmonisations – something that would also later be heard in the work of another Brazilian composer, Camargo Guarnieri.

The second movement, *Largo – Moderato*, is the longest in the work and includes various changes in tempo (*Lento appassionato*, *Più mosso quase Allegro*, etc.). In the words of musicologist Eurico Nogueira França, the movement as a whole is 'a kind of melodic-harmonic digression that reveals an infinite abundance of musical ideas'. The *Allegro final* is in rondo form, its main theme initially set out by the piano, then taken up by the violin. This theme reappears several times, alternating between the instruments, and the sonata ends with a rapid section in which violin and piano play in virtuosic unison until the climax.

This work too is a 'sonata-fantasia', and therefore treats the form with greater freedom. The French late-Romantic connection can be heard in the endless chain of modulations that make the tonality fluctuate through a subtle use of chromaticism. Compared to the *First Sonata*, the *Second* is more advanced in several respects: its structure is more expansive, now consisting of the conventional three movements; its technical and idiomatic writing for both instruments has moved on, with an observable development in the case of the piano; and it has a wider emotional range, varying from bright to truly dramatic moments.

Villa-Lobos was fully aware of the improved results he had achieved in this work, and made it the opening work in the first concert he organised devoted to his own music, in November 1915 – his way of 'officially' announcing his presence on the Rio music scene. The *Second Violin Sonata* was also one of the pieces chosen for performance during the Modern Art Week held in São Paulo in February 1922.

Rather less well known and less frequently performed than the first two works, his *Violin Sonata No. 3* dates from 1920. During the previous six years, Villa-Lobos had been extremely prolific: in 1914 he was still an ambitious cellist trying to launch a compositional career, but by 1920 he was recognised as Rio's leading young composer. His works were regularly programmed by the city's Sociedade de Concertos Sinfônicos and he was receiving commissions for theatrical works and music for religious ceremonies and official events. Artists of international renown such as the Polish pianist Arthur Rubinstein and Brazilian soprano Vera Janacopulos had hailed the quality of his compositions and were beginning to disseminate them in Europe and South America, while a campaign was already under way to get Villa-Lobos to Europe to promote his music in person.

Like its predecessor, the *Third Sonata* is cast in three movements. The opening *Adagio non troppo* is the longest of the three (accounting for almost half the length of the entire sonata). It begins with a slight air of mystery, with dissonant, dense chords. Then the violin sets out the main theme, in which the *glissando* (an effect achieved by sliding the fingertip rapidly along a string from one note to another) is a constituent element, rather than being used for purely ornamental purposes. As well as giving the theme an almost vocal expressiveness, the violin's *glissandi* also give the movement the *sentido* ('plaintive') quality indicated by the composer in the score.

The *Allegro vivace scherzando* is notable for its rhythmical aspect, as heard both in the main theme, introduced by the violin, and in the piano part. This spirited movement is clearly playful in character. The *Molto animato e final*, full of energy and extremely technically demanding for both players, reveals the sonata's cyclical form by reprising, in the foreground, the opening theme of the first movement (the *glissando* theme). Rather than featuring especially memorable tunes, these three violin sonatas are all characterised by a wealth of melodic invention, a trait that seems to grow with each work in turn.

Slightly shorter than the *Second Sonata*, *Sonata No. 3* is even more sophisticated, from both a musical and a harmonic perspective. According to the scholar Rommel Fernandes, this work is probably less well known because of its unusual technical and musical demands: 'The harmonic, melodic and rhythmic vocabulary of Villa-Lobos's last violin sonata is less conventional and more complicated to assimilate than that of the previous two sonatas.' Still steeped in the influence of French music, that of Debussy in particular, the *Third Sonata* nevertheless anticipates the new directions that the composer's idiom would take in the 1920s – as he engaged in an intense dialogue with the work of Stravinsky – leading to his series of *Choros*.

Camila Fresca

English translation: Susannah Howe

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)

Sonatas para violino e piano

As três sonatas para violino e piano de Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959) foram escritas entre 1912 e 1920. São anos essenciais para o compositor, momento em que ele domina as ferramentas da composição e delineia sua linguagem, ao mesmo tempo em que, com grande esforço, consegue suas primeiras vitórias profissionais. O jovem Villa-Lobos rompeu o ano de 1912 trabalhando como maestro da banda de música do Corpo de Marinheiros do Rio de Janeiro, animando um baile carnavalesco de réveillon. Nos primeiros meses do ano iniciou a composição de peças importantes, como a ópera *Izath* e a *Sonata fantasia n.1, "Désespérance"*. Depois, seguirá para o Norte do país, passando seis meses entre Manaus e Belém, cidades incrustadas na Floresta Amazônica. Ao retornar ao Rio, conhece sua futura esposa, a pianista Lucília Guimarães, que teria um papel fundamental em sua carreira.

Longo de ser um compositor reconhecido, neste momento Villa-Lobos ganha a vida como violoncelista, atuando em diversas frentes: seja em orquestras que tocam repertório sinfônico, distraindo clientes em confeitarias e cafés ou ainda acompanhando fitas de cinema mudo. Sua destreza como instrumentista de cordas e as influências estéticas que o guiavam então estão expressas na *Sonata fantasia n.1*.

É uma obra de movimento único, com várias seções interligadas que, de forma concisa, replicam a estrutura geral de uma sonata, com uma introdução (*Moderato*) e mais três partes (rápido-lento-rápido). Villa-Lobos, no entanto, não leva essa estrutura a ferro e fogo e a liberdade está expressa no termo "fantasia" que acompanha o título da obra. Tecnicamente, o violino é mais explorado do que o piano, embora haja um bom diálogo entre os instrumentos. Além de passagens velozes em fusas, cordas duplas e tríplas, há uma pequena cadência para o instrumento no *Adagio* que antecede o *Allegro* final.

Apesar das diferentes seções, a peça não comporta grandes contrastes de andamento e atmosfera, e seu

lirismo melancólico faz jus ao subtítulo "désespérance". O termo, aliás, nos leva a outra característica evidente e partilhada em diferentes graus pelas três sonatas: a influência do pós-romantismo francês, de autores como Camille Saint-Saëns, Gabriel Fauré e César Franck. A sonoridade elegante e o vocabulário harmônico vago que, no entanto, não chegam a romper com a polaridade tonal são alguns dos elementos mais notáveis nesse sentido.

Dois anos separam a primeira sonata da *Sonata fantasia n.2* e, apesar do tempo relativamente pequeno, o desenvolvimento da linguagem composicional é evidente. O casamento com Lucilia, em 1913, deu-lhe mais tempo para dedicar-se à composição, ao mesmo tempo em que permitiu que Villa-Lobos conhecesse melhor o piano, aprendesse a tocá-lo e passasse a testar suas ideias musicais no instrumento, com o auxílio da esposa. Já em 1914, Villa-Lobos teve acesso ao *Curso de composição musical*, de Vincent D'Indy, professor na influente Schola Cantorum de Paris. O livro do D'Indy será uma ferramenta importante a apoiá-lo nos primeiros anos de composição sistemática. Segundo o próprio Villa-Lobos, foi sob a influência desse método que nasceram suas primeiras sinfonias, entre 1916 e 1919.

O maior domínio de recursos técnicos em geral, bem como da escrita para o piano, fica evidente logo nos primeiros compassos da obra. O *Allegro non troppo* se inicia com uma introdução vigorosa e brilhante ao piano que remete a um material popular utilizado de forma depurada, sem citações diretas ou meras harmonizações – algo que seria comum, no futuro, à obra de outro compositor, Camargo Guarneri.

O segundo movimento, *Largo – Moderato*, é o mais extenso da obra e comporta algumas mudanças de tempo (*Lento appassionato, Più mosso quase Allegro etc.*). Nas palavras do musicólogo Eurico Nogueira França, o movimento é "no conjunto, uma espécie de divagação melódico-harmônica que revela uma fertilidade inexaurível de natureza musical". O *Allegro* final é construído em forma de rondó, cujo tema principal é

exposto logo no início pelo piano, e retomado na sequência pelo violino. O tema reaparece algumas vezes alternado nos instrumentos, e a obra se conclui com um trecho veloz em que violino e piano seguem num uníssono virtuosístico até o clímax.

Essa é também uma "sonata-fantasia", e portanto trata a forma de maneira mais livre. A filiação ao pós-romantismo francês se revela pela incessante cadeia de modulações que tornam a tonalidade flutuante, através do emprego sutil do cromatismo. Sob vários aspectos, a *Sonata-fantasia n.2* apresenta progressos em relação à primeira: seja na estrutura expandida, com os três movimentos habituais; na escrita técnica e idiomática para cada um dos instrumentos, com destaque para o desenvolvimento da escrita pianística; e na gama emocional explorada, indo de momentos solares a verdadeiramente dramáticos.

Villa-Lobos tinha plena consciência do melhor resultado atingido nessa obra, que foi a escolhida para abrir o primeiro concerto que ele organizou só com suas próprias composições, em novembro de 1915, como forma de se apresentar "oficialmente" como compositor no ambiente musical do Rio de Janeiro. A *Sonata-fantasia n.2* foi ainda uma das peças escolhidas para integrar o programa da Semana de Arte Moderna, em São Paulo, em fevereiro de 1922.

Bem menos conhecida e executada que as anteriores, a *Sonata n.3* data de 1920. Os seis anos que a separam da segunda sonata foram extremamente férteis para Villa-Lobos. Se em 1914 ele era apenas um violinista ambicioso procurando iniciar uma carreira como compositor, em 1920 já é reconhecido como o principal jovem compositor do Rio de Janeiro. Suas obras eram programadas com regularidade pela Sociedade de Concertos Sinfônicos, ele era requisitado a escrever para cerimônias religiosas, peças teatrais e eventos oficiais. Artistas de fama internacional como o pianista polonês Arthur Rubinstein e a cantora brasileira Vera Janacopoulos haviam atestado a qualidade de suas obras e começavam a divulgar-las na Europa e América do Sul. E já se iniciava uma campanha para que Villa-Lobos fosse pessoalmente ao velho continente mostrar sua produção.

Tal como sua predecessora, a *Sonata n.3* tem três movimentos. O primeiro e mais longo (praticamente metade da obra) é o *Adagio non troppo*. A peça se inicia um tanto misteriosa, com acordes dissonantes e densos. Logo o violino anuncia o tema principal, que tem no *glissando* (técnica de ir de uma nota a outra através do "deslizamento" do dedo) um elemento constitutivo, e não apenas um ornamento. Além de aproximar o tema de uma expressividade vocal, o *glissando* dá o caráter "sentido" pedido pelo compositor no trecho.

O *Allegro vivace scherzando* é marcado por seu aspecto rítmico, expresso tanto no tema principal, anunciado pelo violino, como no piano. Espíritooso, tem um evidente caráter de jogo ou brincadeira. O *Molto animato e final*, de grande vigor e exigência técnica para ambos os instrumentistas, deixa evidente a forma cíclica da obra, ao retomar, em primeiro plano, o tema de abertura do primeiro movimento (o tema dos *glissandi*). Nenhuma das três sonatas para violino e piano se notabiliza por melodias marcantes para o ouvinte, caracterizando-se mais por sua riqueza de invenção melódica, que parece aumentar a cada obra.

Ligeiramente mais concisa que a anterior, a *Sonata n.3* é uma peça ainda mais sofisticada do que sua predecessora, tanto do ponto de vista musical como harmônico. Segundo o pesquisador Rommel Fernandes, o provável motivo de a *Sonata n.3* ser menos conhecida está relacionado às suas incomuns demandas técnicas e musicais. Para ele, "o vocabulário harmônico, melódico e rítmico da última sonata para violino de Villa-Lobos é menos convencional e mais complicado de assimilar do que o das duas sonatas anteriores". Ainda embalada da influência francesa, e especialmente de Debussy, a peça já refletiria, no entanto, os rumos que a linguagem musical de Villa-Lobos tomaria na década de 1920 – a partir de um diálogo intenso com a obra de Stravinsky – e que resultaria no conjunto dos *Choros*.

Camila Fresca

Emmanuele Baldini

Photo: Fernando Ruz



Emmanuele Baldini was born in Trieste, Italy. After studies in his hometown, he furthered his violin training in Geneva, Salzburg and Berlin, studying conducting with Isaac Karabtchevsky and Frank Shipway. From an early age, Baldini garnered prizes from countless international competitions, and has performed as a soloist or recitalist across the globe. He has performed in all the major European concert halls, in addition to those in Latin America and especially in Brazil, where he has lived since 2005. Following a highly successful career as a violinist, Baldini has embarked on new musical ventures as a conductor. He founded the Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo (OSESP) Quartet, and has collaborated with internationally renowned artists such as María João Pires, Jean-Philippe Collard and Jean-Efflam Bavouzet.

Baldini has been concertmaster of the Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna, the Orquestra del Teatro alla Scala di Milano and the Orquestra del Teatro 'Giuseppe Verdi' di Trieste, and since 2005 has been concertmaster of the OSESP. He has also acted as guest concertmaster of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia. As of 2017, he is the musical director of the Orquesta de Cámara de Valdivia in Chile.

www.emmanuelebaldini.com

Pablo Rossi

Photo: Rudi Bodanese



Brazilian pianist Pablo Rossi won the first Nelson Freire National Competition for New Brazilian Talents in 2003. He has won more than ten competitions and given over 80 recitals as a member of The Keyboard Charitable Trust. Rossi has performed as a soloist with the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin, the Auvergne Chamber Orchestra, the National Philharmonic of Ukraine, Kirov Orchestra and the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, among others. As a recitalist Rossi has performed in important concert halls around the world, such as Carnegie Hall in New York, Parco della Musica in Rome, Laeiszhalle in Hamburg, Sala São Paulo and Sala Cecília Meirelles in Rio de Janeiro.

www.pablrossi.com.br



Nós (Rio, c. 1926 / Óleo/cartão / 45.5 x 37.5 cm) by Ismael Nery (1900–1934)
Courtesy of Coleção Roberto Marinho | Instituto Casa Roberto Marinho • Photograph: Pedro Oswaldo Cruz

Heitor Villa-Lobos's three violin sonatas date from a key period in his career: the moment at which he matured as a composer, established his personal idiom and achieved his first professional triumphs. Each sonata shares some influence from French late Romanticism or Impressionism, as well as revealing Villa-Lobos's skill as a string player. The *First Violin Sonata*'s subtitle of *Désespérance* ('Despair') suits its melancholy lyricism, while the 'infinite abundance of musical ideas' in the *Second Violin Sonata* is characterised by a wide range of emotions. The sophisticated *Third Violin Sonata* is steeped in the influence of Debussy, but also anticipates Villa-Lobos's new directions in the 1920s.



Heitor
VILLA-LOBOS
(1887–1959)

Complete Violin Sonatas

①	Violin Sonata (Fantasia) No. 1 'Désespérance' ('Despair') (1912)	9:25
	Moderato – Adagio – Allegro	
	Violin Sonata (Fantasia) No. 2 (1914)	23:18
②	I. Allegro non troppo	6:20
③	II. Largo – Moderato	9:53
④	III. Rondo: Allegro final	7:05
	Violin Sonata No. 3 (1920)	20:56
⑤	I. Adagio non troppo	9:28
⑥	II. Allegro vivace scherzando	4:56
⑦	III. Molto animato e final	6:30

Emmanuele Baldini, Violin • Pablo Rossi, Piano

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