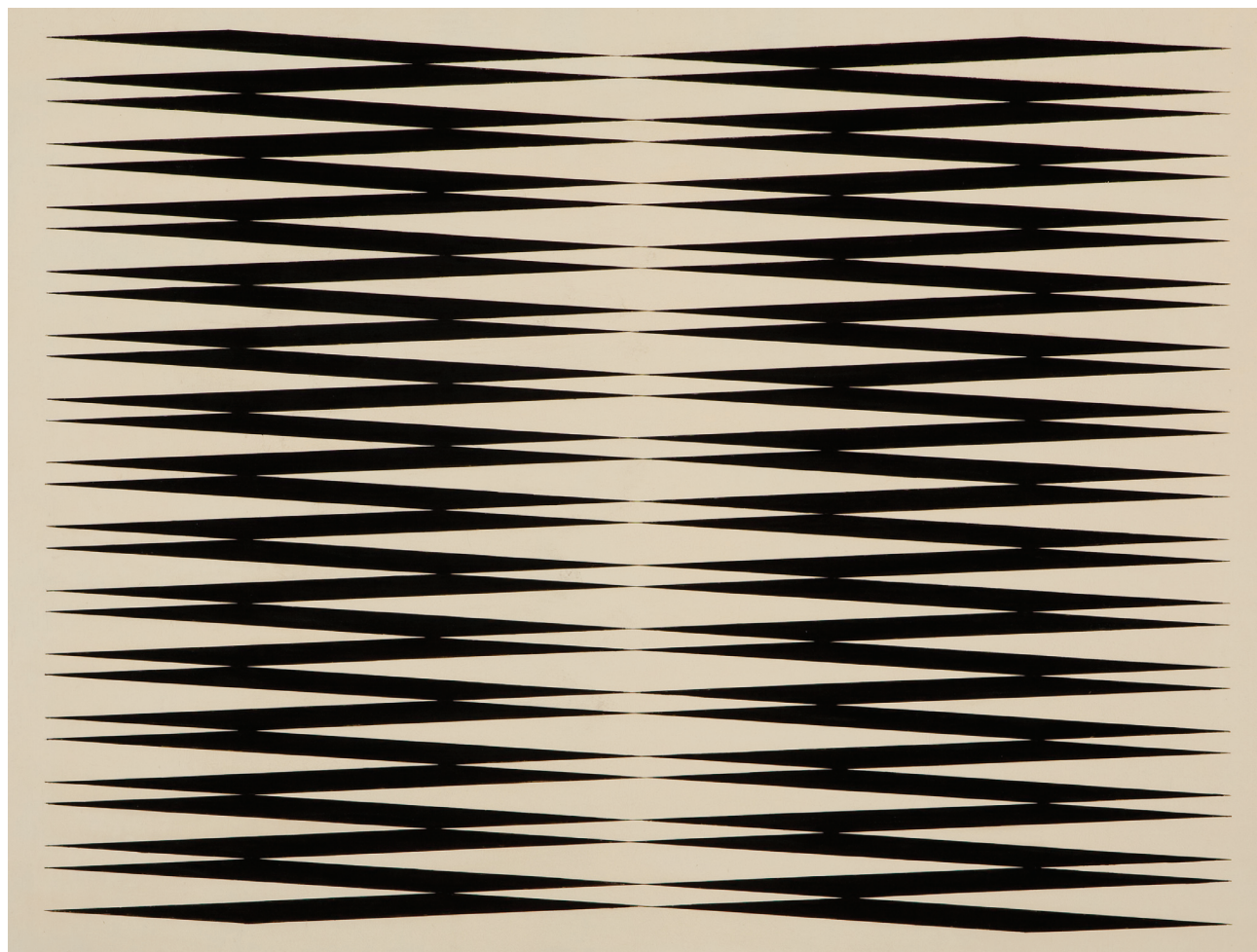




Francisco
MIGNONE
Fantasias Brasileiras Nos. 1–4



Fabio Martino, Piano
São Paulo Symphony Orchestra • Giancarlo Guerrero

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 Brasilis and by musicologists working together with the orchestras.



About The Scores

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Francisco Mignone (1897–1986)

Fantasia Brasileira Nos. 1–4 • Burlesca e Toccata

Born on 3 September 1897 into a family of musicians, Francisco Mignone studied the flute with his father, Alferio, before focusing on piano and composition at the São Paulo Conservatory. He began his career at an early age, working with local bands under the name of Chico Bororó. It was common practice at the time for musicians to adopt a pseudonym, and for Mignone, the decision has been interpreted as a way of disguising his involvement in a kind of music-making that might have been seen as bohemian and indicating that he was not a 'serious' practitioner. If nothing else, however, his experiences in popular music as both pianist and flautist may well have enhanced his facility for improvisation, a lifelong talent and key characteristic of his music.

The nine years he spent studying in Europe (1920–29) – particularly in Italy, with Vincenzo Ferroni – distanced him from the debates about Modernism raging in Brazil at the time among poets, musicians and visual artists such as Luciano Gallet, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Lorenzo Fernandez, Manuel Bandeira, Mário de Andrade, Oswald de Andrade, Tarsila do Amaral and Anita Malfatti. That said, when Mignone was still only 24, he and his work became the subject of much discussion in the São Paulo music world when one of his compositions achieved unexpected fame. The piece in question was a dance based on a *lundu* [a song-dance form of African origin] that had been collected by two 19th-century German biologist-explorers, Johann Baptist von Spix and Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius, and which Mignone incorporated into the second act of his opera *O contratador de diamantes* ('The Diamond Contractor', 1921), using it as the basis for a *congada*. That dance, independently from the opera, would become one of his most popular works. In 1923, as Villa-Lobos was packing his trunk for his first trip to Paris, from which he returned wreathed in European critical acclaim, Mignone had his *Congada* performed by the Vienna Philharmonic, conducted by Richard Strauss, in concerts held in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Having moved back to Brazil in 1929, Mignone spent most of the rest of his life in those same two cities. A number of his most significant works were premiered in São Paulo, while it was in Rio de Janeiro, still the country's capital at this point, that he matured as a composer. Once he had settled in the latter city, he taught conducting at the National School of Music, later taking on key roles at such prestigious institutions as the Brazilian Academy of Music and the Theatro Municipal. A prolific composer, he continued to add to his vast catalogue of works until his death on 19 February 1986.

Mignone's four *Fantasia Brasileira* for piano and orchestra, like his ballet *Maracatu de Chico-Rei* (all five works date from the years between 1929 and 1936), are part of his nationalist phase, influenced by the ideas of his friend Mário de Andrade. The two men had been fellow students at the São Paulo Conservatory and, on his return from Europe, Mignone had discussed with Andrade the territory his musical language should explore. His starting point here, the fantasia, is a genre which emerged as far back as the 16th century. Despite having undergone significant transformations over time, it is still notable for its use of contrasting tempos and a certain improvisatory quality. Mignone was unquestionably inspired by his chosen model, revealing his mastery as both pianist and orchestrator in these four works.

Written in 1929, his *Fantasia Brasileira No. 1* was originally entitled *Concerto Fantasia Brasileira*. It was premiered on 20 March 1931 by soloist João de Souza Lima and the Sociedade Sinfônica de São Paulo under the baton of Lamberto Baldi. According to the programme note produced for that performance, Souza Lima had met Mignone while passing through Milan, and had asked him to write a work of Brazilian flavour for piano and orchestra. Within a fortnight, Mignone had fulfilled the request. The *Fantasia* alternates two main themes – these give rise to others which flow from the piano into the orchestra until, at the conclusion, they all appear, skilfully woven together. The first critic to praise the work was Mário de Andrade, who highlighted the composer's new aesthetic, writing, 'I believe that it is by pursuing this conceptual orientation, in which nationality is not distorted by a concern for the universal, that Francisco Mignone will be able to compose important works and nurture his artistic personality.' The other works Mignone wrote during the 1930s prove that he heeded his friend's advice.

Composed in 1931, *Fantasia Brasileira No. 2* was premiered in Rio de Janeiro in 1934, with Souza Lima again at the keyboard, and this time with Villa-Lobos as conductor. Compared to those of the first *Fantasia*, the themes here are characterised more by their rhythms, described by musicologist Bruno Kiefer as 'musical elements considered to be of African ancestry'.

Mignone composed his *Fantasia Brasileira No. 3* in 1934 and dedicated it to the Spanish pianist Tomás Terán. The work was premiered in São Paulo on 10 May that same year, by Souza Lima and the Orquestra do Centro Musical de São Paulo, conducted by Ernst Mehlich. Five years later, Terán performed it in Rio de Janeiro. He also recorded it with the Orquestra do Sindicato Musical do Rio de Janeiro, conducted by Mignone himself, because it was one of the pieces chosen to represent Brazilian music at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Andrade wrote an article about the recording in which he stressed the significance of the work, while not hiding his preference for its predecessors. Rather strangely, given that *Fantasias Nos. 1* and *2* employ the same device, he criticised Mignone's repeated use of the cadenza, saying it revealed an antiquated view of the concerto. On the other hand, he praised his friend for his 'admirable knowledge of the modern orchestra', adding that 'The different sections are combined with a variety, originality and balance which, since *Maracatu de Chico-Rei*, have made Francisco Mignone our finest symphonist.'

Composed in 1936, *Fantasia Brasileira No. 4* was premiered on 6 November 1937 at São Paulo's Theatro Municipal, with Souza Lima once again at the piano and the composer himself conducting. At this point, the city did not have its own permanent symphony orchestra, but its Department of Culture was making every effort to attract listeners and provide opportunities for new music to be heard. The programme note for Mignone's fantasia gave the following description:

The *Fourth Fantasia* is based on Brazilian themes of African origin. The first and second themes come from the people of Rio and were sung in the streets during the 1936 Carnival. The entire central section is the composer's own invention. At the heart of the piece is a portrait of a Carnival *rancho* [band of musicians], with the kind of rhythmical whistling accompaniment often provided by the children of Rio during the parades. For added colour, the solo piano here plays dissonant chords whose capering leaps seem to imitate those of the *rancho's* leader. In the final section, the piano imitates percussion instruments in runs of splendid virtuosity.

More than 20 years later, Mignone returned to the combination of piano and orchestra in *Burlesca e Toccata* (1958), first performed in Rio de Janeiro, with José Carlos Cocarelli at the piano and Vicente Fittipaldi conducting. *Burlesca*, or burlesque, is derived from the Italian word *burla* ('joke'), and was used in 17th-century Italy to designate parodies – works intended to amuse the listener. As for *toccata*, it originally referred to pieces designed to be played on keyboard instruments, and which, like the fantasia, had no set structure. Both the *burlesca* and the *toccata* were improvisatory in nature.

Mignone's chosen title, then, brings together in an unusual, indeed unique manner, two Italian forms rarely found in the 20th century. The *Burlesca* presents a sequence of atonal melodies in an idiom that provides considerable contrast with the melodies heard in the *Toccata*. In this second part, the flute trills near the beginning form a kind of dialogue with the piano and establish a playful, relaxed feel, with the first theme building to run through every section of the orchestra. When the piano is not performing solos verging on the acrobatic, it behaves like a percussion instrument, fuelling the frenzied ending of the piece.

Mignone has perhaps left us something of an enigma with this work of two contrasting movements. The first alludes to fun and jokiness, but the atonal material heard in its theme and development suggests a composer wedded to the ideas of 'serious', modern music; the other, *Toccata*, seems more like a fantasia, primarily because its festive themes and virtuosic treatment of the solo instrument are reminiscent of the four *Fantasias Brasileiras*. Could it be, then, that in writing the 1958 piece, Mignone was keen to revisit his own musical language of the 1930s, treating atonality as a joke and enhancing the fresh feel of the second part's popular themes by giving it the grandiose title of *Toccata*?

Flávia Camargo Toni

English translation: Susannah Howe

Francisco Mignone (1897–1986)

Fantasia Brasileira Nos. 1–4 • Burlesca e Toccata

Nascido a 3 de setembro de 1897 numa família de músicos, Francisco Mignone estudou flauta com seu pai, Alfério, e composição e piano, particularmente, no Conservatório Dramático e Musical de São Paulo, profissionalizando-se precocemente como músico popular. Acompanhando uma prática comum na década de 1910, adotou o apelido de Chico Bororó para a produção de música popular, o que tem sido interpretado como um suposto disfarce, como se o jovem escondesse o exercício artístico que poderia ser interpretado como boêmia ou falta de “seriedade” para com a música. Fato é que a prática da música popular ao piano e na flauta pode ter contribuído ao menos para a sua facilidade para improvisar, uma das características de sua escrita e marca da vida inteira.

Os nove anos de estudos na Europa (1920-29), sobretudo na Itália, com Vincenzo Ferroni, distanciaram-no das discussões em torno do Modernismo por poetas, músicos e artistas plásticos como Luciano Gallet, Villa-Lobos, Lorenzo Fernandez, Manuel Bandeira, Mário de Andrade, Oswald de Andrade, Tarsila do Amaral e Anita Malfatti. No entanto, seu nome e obra certamente foram assunto de discussão no meio musical paulista quando, aos 24 anos de idade, uma de suas obras ganhou inesperada notoriedade: a dança elaborada sobre um lundu colhido pelos viajantes J. B. von Spix e C. F. P. von Martius, no século XIX, por ele incluída no segundo ato de sua ópera *O Contratador de Diamantes* (1921), empregada para caracterizar uma congada, e que, separada da ópera, viria a tornar-se uma de suas obras mais populares. Em 1923, enquanto Villa-Lobos arrumava as malas para sua primeira viagem a Paris, de onde voltaria consagrado pela crítica europeia, Francisco Mignone teve sua *Congada* executada pela Filarmônica de Viena, regida por Richard Strauss, em concertos realizados em São Paulo e no Rio de Janeiro.

Regressando ao Brasil em 1929, as cidades de São Paulo e do Rio de Janeiro passariam a ser os principais centros da sua vida: a primeira, onde estreou obras que marcaram seu repertório; e a segunda, então capital do Brasil, onde amadureceu e trabalhou em instituições que o consagraram, como a Academia Brasileira de Música ou o Theatro Municipal. Uma vez estabelecido em seu novo endereço, Mignone, já professor de regência da Escola Nacional de Música do Rio de Janeiro, continuou a compor intensamente, produzindo um vasto catálogo de obras até a sua morte, a 19 de fevereiro de 1986.

As quatro fantasias escritas para piano e orquestra, bem como o famoso bailado *Maracatu de Chico-Rei*, todos do período de 1929 a 1936, vincularam a vida e a obra de Mignone à de Mário de Andrade, com quem estudara no Conservatório Dramático e Musical de São Paulo e discutira, no regresso da Europa, os caminhos de sua linguagem musical. A fantasia é um gênero musical praticado desde o século XVI e, embora tenha passado por transformações significativas, conservou por características principais certa proximidade com os improvisos e alternância de andamentos internos à obra. Mignone sem dúvida tirou proveito desse modelo, explorando com sabedoria na composição suas grandes habilidades como pianista e orquestrador.

A *Fantasia Brasileira nº 1* foi composta em 1929, com o título original de *Concerto Fantasia Brasileira*, e foi estreada a 20 de março de 1931, pela Sociedade Sinfônica de São Paulo, tendo Souza Lima ao piano e Lamberto Baldi na regência. Segundo o programa da estreia, Souza Lima, de passagem por Milão, teria pedido a Mignone que lhe escrevesse uma composição para piano e orquestra sobre temas brasileiros, o que o compositor atendeu entregando a nova obra em menos de quinze dias. A obra possui dois temas principais que se alternam, deles derivando outros que passeiam do piano para os demais instrumentos da orquestra até que, no final, todos aparecem juntos e muito bem combinados. O primeiro crítico a saudar a obra, Mário de Andrade, destacou, sobretudo, a nova orientação estética do autor: “Me parece que nessa orientação conceitual, em que a nacionalidade não se desvirtua pela preocupação do universal é que está o lado por onde Francisco Mignone poderá nos dar obras valiosas e fecundar a sua personalidade”. Conselho dado, conselho acatado pelo compositor, como se observará nas demais obras da década de 1930.

Composta em 1931, a *Fantasia Brasileira nº 2* foi estreada em 1934, no Rio de Janeiro, tendo Souza Lima ao piano e Villa-Lobos como regente. Aqui, se comparada à peça anterior, os temas são mais caracterizados ritmicamente, o que o musicólogo Bruno Kiefer chamou de “elementos musicais considerados de ancestralidade africana”.

A *Fantasia Brasileira nº 3*, composta em 1934 e dedicada ao pianista espanhol Tomás Terán, foi estreada, em São Paulo, a 10 de maio do mesmo ano, tendo Souza Lima ao piano e Ernst Mehlich na regência da Orquestra do Centro Musical de São Paulo. Cinco anos mais tarde, Terán apresentou-a no Rio de Janeiro e gravou-a em disco, sob a regência do autor e junto à Orquestra do Sindicato Musical do Rio de Janeiro, como uma das peças escolhidas para representar a música brasileira na Feira Mundial de Nova York, realizada em 1940. No jornal, Mário de Andrade destacou a importância da gravação, embora não tenha escondido sua preferência pelas anteriores, de números 1 e 2. No caso da *Fantasia nº 3*, Mário criticou o emprego reiterado da cadência — fato curioso, uma vez que as “prediletas” também fazem uso do mesmo recurso —, alegando ser, agora, como que uma referência aos concertos antigos. Mas o crítico acrescentou outros elogios ao compositor, como seu “admirável conhecimento da orquestra moderna! Os naipes se conjugam com uma variedade, uma novidade e equilíbrio que, desde o *Maracatu de Chico-Rei*, fizeram de Francisco Mignone o nosso melhor sinfonista”.

Composta em 1936, a *Fantasia Brasileira nº 4* foi estreada a 6 de novembro de 1937, no Theatro Municipal de São Paulo, tendo novamente Souza Lima ao piano e o compositor na regência. Naquela época, a cidade não possuía um grupo sinfônico estável; o Departamento de Cultura esforçava-se tanto para atrair seus ouvintes quanto para gerar oportunidades para as novas criações musicais. A nota de programa descreveu a nova obra assim:

A 4ª *Fantasia* é baseada sobre temas africanos do Brasil. O primeiro e o segundo temas [são] do povo carioca e foram cantados pelas ruas durante o carnaval de 1936. Toda a parte central é de pura invenção do autor. Há, no meio da fantasia, uma descrição de ‘rancho’ carnavalesco. Ouve-se o apito acompanhando ritmicamente o conjunto. Os moleques cariocas são useiros em fazer isso durante os desfiles. Para maior colorido, durante esses trechos, o ‘piano solista’ executa, em saltos acrobáticos, acordes dissonantes como para imitar os saltos caprichosos do baliza do ‘rancho’. Na parte ‘final’, o piano imita instrumentos de percussão, em traços de esplêndida virtuosidade.

Passados mais de vinte anos da última *Fantasia*, Mignone retorna à formação de piano e orquestra com a *Burlesca e Toccata* (1958), estreada no Rio de Janeiro tendo José Carlos Cocarelli, ao piano, e a regência de Vicente Fittipaldi. A palavra *burlesca*, derivada de “burla”, uma brincadeira ou piada, foi empregada na Itália do século XVII para designar as peças em forma de paródia, “brincadeiras”, obras para a diversão. Já o termo *toccata* designava originalmente uma peça tocada em instrumento com teclado e que, assim como a fantasia, não possuía um arcaibouço fixo. Vale dizer, ambas eram próximas ao improviso.

O título *Burlesca e Toccata* representa uma combinação curiosa (e única) de duas expressões musicais em italiano pouco usuais no século XX. Na primeira parte da obra, a *Burlesca*, Mignone apresenta uma sequência de melodias atonais, em linguagem musical que contrasta bastante com as melodias usadas na segunda parte, a *Toccata*. Nessa segunda parte, os trinados da flauta logo nos primeiros compassos, numa espécie de conversa com o piano, estabelecem certo ar brincalhão, descontraído, com o primeiro tema sendo encorpado até percorrer todos os naipes da orquestra. Quando o piano não executa solos quase acrobáticos, comporta-se como um instrumento de percussão, atizando o frenesi do final da peça.

Mignone talvez tenha nos proposto uma charada nesta obra, quando observamos o contraste entre os seus dois movimentos: o primeiro aludindo a uma brincadeira, ou piada, mas cujo tema e seu desenvolvimento apontam para a ideia de um compositor que aderiu à música “séria”, moderna, pelo atonalismo do material; o outro, *Toccata*, já é mais próximo à fantasia, principalmente porque seus temas festivos e tratamento virtuosístico do instrumento solista nos fazem lembrar das quatro *Fantasias Brasileiras*. Será então que, ao escrever a peça de 1958, o compositor quis revisitar sua própria linguagem musical da década de 1930, tratando o atonalismo como uma brincadeira e revigorando o frescor dos temas populares da segunda parte com o pomposo título de *Toccata*?

Flávia Camargo Toni

Fabio Martino



Photo: Peter Adamik

Pianist Fabio Martino has made a name for himself on the international music scene through interpretations that are beloved by audiences and highly praised by specialist critics. His open-mindedness and versatility are evident not only in his discography but also in his choice of concert repertoire. As a soloist, Fabio Martino performs worldwide in major concert halls, playing piano concertos by composers such as Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Beethoven, Mozart, Gershwin, Tchaikovsky, Ravel and Bartók. He also captivates audiences with lesser-known works by Villa-Lobos, Medtner, Guarnieri, Bortkiewicz and Mignone, among others. Martino has demonstrated his skill and distinctive stage presence in various theatre, film and television productions, as well as in live recordings for SWR, BR, NDR, TV Globo and the BBC. In 2020, he recorded the music for the silent film *Beethoven* on behalf of ARTE and ZDF.

www.fabiomartino.de

São Paulo Symphony Orchestra



Photo: Mario Daiota

Since its first concert in 1954, the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo – Osesp) has become an essential part of São Paulo and Brazilian culture, promoting cultural and social transformation. Each season, Osesp performs over a hundred concerts at its home venue, Sala São Paulo, reaching nearly 150,000 people. Thierry Fischer has served as music director since 2020, succeeding Marin Alsop, Yan Pascal Tortelier, John Neschling, Eleazar de Carvalho, Bruno Roccella and João de Souza Lima. The orchestra has undertaken four national tours and fifteen international tours, performing in the United States and China, as well as various countries across Latin America and Europe. Osesp has released over 100 albums, earning critical acclaim from publications such as *Gramophone* and prestigious awards, including the Latin GRAMMY for Best Classical Music Album (2007) and the Diapason d'Or (2008, 2009, 2010). The São Paulo Symphony Orchestra runs a large educational and outreach programme for over 25,000 children and teenagers every season. It has its own children, youth and symphonic choirs, as well as a Music Academy, offering professional guidance to young orchestral musicians, singers and conductors. www.osesp.art.br

Giancarlo Guerrero



Photo: Matthew Holler

Giancarlo Guerrero has been a frequent guest conductor in North America, performing with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and the orchestras of Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Seattle, among others. Internationally, he has led orchestras across Europe, New Zealand and Australia. The 2024/25 season marks Guerrero's sixteenth and final season as music director of the Nashville Symphony, with whom he released 21 commercial recordings, garnering 13 GRAMMY nominations and 6 GRAMMY Awards. Guerrero served as music director designate of Sarasota Orchestra in 2024/25, and became music director in the 2025/26 season. Guerrero made several recordings with the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic – where he served as music director for six seasons – including the Billboard chart-topping *Bomsori: Violin on Stage* (Deutsche Grammophon). He has also held posts as principal guest conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra (Miami Residency) and the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon, music director of the Eugene Symphony, and associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra. Born in Nicaragua, Guerrero immigrated during his childhood to Costa Rica. He studied percussion and conducting at Baylor University, and earned his Master's degree in conducting at Northwestern University. www.giancarlo-guerrero.com

Francisco Mignone became a leading figure in the Brazilian music scene after his return in 1929 following lengthy studies in Europe. His four *Fantasia Brasileira* for piano and orchestra are part of his nationalist phase, with the first in the cycle initiated by soloist João de Souza Lima, who asked Mignone for a work with Brazilian flavour. These works share a festive and exuberant style to which the composer would return in his *Burlesca e Toccata*, which requires acrobatic virtuosity from the soloist in music that surprises by juxtaposing atonality with popular themes.



Francisco
MIGNONE
(1897–1986)

- | | | |
|----------|---|--------------|
| 1 | Fantasia Brasileira No. 1 (1929) | 10:05 |
| 2 | Fantasia Brasileira No. 2 (1931) | 9:58 |
| 3 | Fantasia Brasileira No. 3 (1934) | 11:19 |
| 4 | Fantasia Brasileira No. 4 (1936) | 12:11 |
| 5 | Burlesca e Toccata (1958) | 14:13 |

Fabio Martino, Piano

São Paulo Symphony Orchestra • Giancarlo Guerrero

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

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