

The Brazilian Arrangements of Radamés Gnattali

1. INTRODUCTION

Even though music has rarely been studied from the perspective of the emergence and consolidation of the national community, it has received the attention of some “Nationalities Watch” scholars who have sought to delineate Brazilian characteristics, using the conceptual foundations of renown theorists of nationalism as their starting point.

What guides our reflections is the conviction that national sentiment, the principal pillar of nationality, arises out of complex and permanent processes, distinguished by the clash as well as the combination of multiple internal and external interests. Therefore, the nation is not the simple manifestation of a gregarious instinct or the *natural* fruit of socio-economic development and State decision-making.

We begin this article with a biography of maestro Radamés Gnattali, paying particular attention to the confluence of popular and sophisticated rhythms in his compositions. After having been under North American influence, his arrangements of Brazilian music began to be executed on a “typically national” basis. In the program, *Um milhão de melodias*, Radamés had his first experiences with new genres of music, especially the samba. The biographical section is followed by a brief history of Rádio Nacional, which became one of the five major world broadcasters. We show how, during the New State period (1937-1945), it created a musical model in Brazil, with major impact upon national integration.

Even though it examines the music promoted by the Rádio Nacional, this article is not a work of musicology. We propose to throw light upon a theme of nationalism which has not, in general, been sufficiently explored: that of musical arrangements.

2. THE MUSICAL ITINERARY OF RADAMÉS GNATTALI

Three of the five children of Alessandro Gnattali and Adélia Fossati were named in homage to the opera composer, Giuseppe Verdi: Aída, Ernani and Radamés. In this musical environment we find the origins of composer, pianist, arranger and conductor, Radamés Gnattali. Descendent of Italian parents who migrated to Argentina, Radamés' mother was a pianist who gave classes in musical education. His father was a worker while in Europe but once he landed in Brazil he studied piano, contrabass and bassoon. He made his career as a bassoonist and maestro of orchestra, besides participating in militant politics as a sympathizer of anarchism. A leader, in the sense of a class representative, he led in 1921 the Union of Porto Alegre Musicians in a strike of the sector.

Born in Porto Alegre, on 27 January 1906 (coinciding with the 150th anniversary of Mozart's birth), Radamés showed a huge musical talent at a very early age. He began piano lessons with his mother at six years of age and also dedicated himself to the violin with his cousin, Olga Fossati. At nine, he was decorated by the Italian Counsel for having conducted a youth orchestra in his own melodic arrangements. Attracted by popular love songs, he learned to play the cavaquinho (a type of lute or ukulele with four wires or gut strings) and the classical guitar and, at fourteen, he decided to study music. He did exams at the Port Alegre Conservatory and was admitted directly into the fifth year of piano, in Professor Guilherme Fontainha's class. His other courses in the conservatory were violin, theory and musical notation. However, in the serestas (song cycles) and blocos (carnival schools), such instruments

were replaced by the classical guitar or by the cavaquinho (kind of guitar that is very popular in Brazil). Radamés took part in the Os exagerados club, organized by Sotero Cosme. Even as an adolescent he played professionally in dance bands and in cinemas, such as the Cine Colombo, where he performed French and Italian songs, operettas, waltzes, and polka to accompany the projection of silent films. Meanwhile, as he deepened his study of the piano, he began to demonstrate signs of a great concert talent.

When he was eighteen, on the advice of his professor, Radamés Gnattali went to Rio de Janeiro where he presented a recital at the National Institute of Music. His interpretations of W.F. Bach's *Organ Concert*, transcribed for piano, and Liszt's, *Sonata in C minor*, *Condoliera* and *Rhapsody n.º 9*, astounded those present, gaining for him not just the applause of the packed gallery but also high critical praise in six Rio newspapers.

Radamés concluded his piano studies and received a gold medal in the competition held at the Porto Alegre Conservatory. With very few resources to follow a concert career, he stayed in this city, giving piano lessons and participating in the Henrique Oswald Quartet as a violinist. He only went to Rio and Sao Paulo when he was invited to give recitals.

In his first concert with a symphony orchestra, the Orquestra Sinfônica of Municipal Theater of Rio de Janeiro, in October 1929, he very successfully performed Tchaikovsky's *First Concerto*. Once again, the critics were favorable but the young pianist did not receive the attention he needed. In Porto Alegre he had already successfully won a fellowship to dedicate himself to music. In the capital, another frustration awaited him when he put himself forward for the public competition, "Lente Catedrático". Getúlio Vargas had announced a reform of federal education and Radamés hoped to become professor at the National Institute of Music. In a confident spirit, he went personally to the President's cabinet with a letter of introduction written

by Raul Pilla, deputy of the “Partido Libertador”, who had broken with Getúlio not long after having actively participated in the “1930 Revolution”. The president assured Radamés that the competition would be held and that he should prepare himself in order to gain a place. During months, the young composer studied assiduously, awaiting the start of the auditions. Much to his disappointment, the government canceled the competition and nominated ten people to teach at the National Institute. Radamés’ dream ended; Vargas had changed his life. The professorial post occupied by Luciano Gallet would have given him financial security and the time necessary to dedicate himself to the piano.

In Rio, in between dates, recitals or concerts, he played for dances, in casinos, in opera companies and in the Lyric Theater, either as a pianist or violinist. These were the activities he accepted in order to survive. In one of these trips, while he was walking near the Cine Odeon, he got to know the famous pianist playing there: Ernesto Nazareth, who became one of his major points of reference.

After the incident with Getúlio, Radamés felt stimulated to take on popular music and he entered the musical market, settling in Rio de Janeiro. In this period, he did arrangements for Pixinguinha, Lamartine Babo, Manuel da Conceição and others; he met the pianists Nonô (the “Chopin of the samba”), Bequinho, Costinha and Cardoso de Meneses, from whom he learned to play dance music; and he began to work for the rádios Mayrink Veiga and Cajuti as a pianist, besides working for Rádio Transmissora as an arranger. For the recording company, Victor Talking Machine Co. of Brazil, he began as the Orquestra Típica Victor’s pianist and became the director of the orchestras, Diabos do Céu e Velha Guarda, and later the arranger of romantic songs along with Pixinguinha, who was more committed to the carnival repertoire. While still with Victor, Radamés recorded various compositions of his own, among which

the *choros*, *Espritado* and *Urbano*.

Even though he did not follow a concert career, Radamés Gnattali did not abandon his erudite beginnings after embracing popular music. Having made his debut with two solo piano pieces in Porto Alegre in 1930, he continued to perfect composition and the major concert halls of Rio de Janeiro opened their doors for his works many times. This was the case of his *Concerto n.º. 1 for piano e orchestra*, the inaugural performance of which was in the Municipal Theatre. In 1931, along with such hallowed composers as Luciano Gallet, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Lorenzo Fernandez, Camargo Guarnieri and Luiz Cosme, he participated in the Fourth Concert of the Official Series of the National Institute of Music. The performance of the *Brazilian Rhapsody* in this event ultimately defined his career as a composer. He was only twenty-five years old, with plans to live with his old flame, Vera, whom he married thereafter and with whom he had two children.

His talent helped him to overcome preconceptions and he continued to act in the two musical genres, each enriching the other. His trajectory as composer took off with the inauguration of the Rádio Nacional. Among the first people contracted for the orchestra PRE-8 in 1936, Radamés did not hesitate to play an important part in that radio station even though he did not take a leadership role. His prestige as an arranger also grew.

Up until then, Brazilian music was played exclusively by *regionais* (traditional instrumental ensembles) on radio stations.¹ It was on the Rádio Nacional that arrangements of Brazilian music played by other kinds of groups arose. Radamés Gnattali, the house maestro, had the responsibility to furnish another musical style of Brazilian songs, other than that of the *regional*. He began to make arrangements of *toadas* and *choros* for small groups, such as trios and quartets, which were played at times by himself on the piano. His intention was to enrich this type of music with more sophisticated arrangements. He, gra-

dually, expanded the smaller groups until they formed an orchestra. Orlando Silva, known as the “the singer of the multitudes”, was one of the first to rely on this new style, as Radamés recalled:

One day, Orlando came to me and asked if it was a good idea to make a record of a samba-song with strings. I said ‘yes’ and we did it. At the time, it was much criticized. Up until then, Brazilian music was only played by *regionais*. I thus began to make arrangements for Orlando Silva, using violins in romantic music and brass in the sambas.²

On the Rádio Nacional, the orchestra did not have many percussionists. Luciano Perrone, the drummer of the orchestra, tried to fill the vacuum caused by the lack of percussion instruments and asked the maestro to transfer the marking of the beat to the wind instruments. From 1937, Radamés listened to his colleague and began to use percussion rhythmic designs in the other instrumental groups of the orchestra. Luciano gives details of the story:

We, Radamés and I, were walking in the Rádio Nacional building, in the direction of the Almirante’s office when I asked him to make a ‘different’ arrangement. Radamés, with his way of asking a question said: ‘Different, how? What is it that you want me to do?’ I explained that, if he would write a samba rhythm for the wind instruments, my life would be easier at the drums. When we reached the Almirante’s office, there were some musical scripts on the desk. Radamés grabbed them and began writing. The next day, at the radio rehearsal, the trumpets, trombones, etc., were playing the samba rhythm. In recordings, however, the first arrangement like this was for ‘Aquarela do Brasil’.³

By creating, in 1939, the famous musical arrangement, *Aquarela do Brasil*, Radamés Gnattali again revolutionized the concept of the orchestra, this time provoking great impact.

During the same year, he had one of his works chosen to represent Brazil at New York's World Fair alongside of the music of Carlos Gomes, Alberto Nepomuceno, Alexandre Levy, Henrique Oswald, Francisco Mignone, Lorenzo Fernandes, Villa-Lobos and Camargo Guarnieri. The next innovation he introduced into Brazilian orchestration happened again at the Rádio Nacional, when, by using 'typically Brazilian' instruments as the foundation, he developed a new formation that began to influence the orchestrators of the time.

The basis of radio orchestras of the time were formed on the North American model: piano, drums, bass and guitar. For his orchestra, Radamés thought of a new formation with popular Brazilian folk instruments. The staff of the Rádio Nacional consisted of excellent and versatile instrumentalists who played viola, tenor viola, *caipira* viola (regional viola), *cavaquinho* and mandolin. Zé Menezes, Garoto and Bola Sete were integrated into the "Brazilian Orchestra of Radamés Gnattali", which had a "typically national base," together with the drums of Luciano Perrone (who also played other percussion instruments), the *caixeta* or "cymbal and knife" of Heitor dos Prazeres, the contrabass of Pedro Vidal, the *ganzá*⁴ of Bide, the tambourine of João da Baiana and, later, the accordion of Chiquinho do Acordeom. In this way,

The objective [of the creation of the orchestra] was nationalist: to give to Brazilian music an orchestral treatment similar to that given to foreign compositions (...) It was a formation to play popular music of whatever country, but linked to the sources of our musical tradition.⁵

Not just a new formation was launched but also a new style of producing Brazilian music. Arrangement was something essential for orchestral musical production and reflected, just as the *conjuntos regionais'* practice of non-arrangement did, distinct musical characteristics, which were gradually stylized.

What distinguished Radamés' type of arrangement was its significant extrapolation from the original composition. Almost all such arrangements were constructed from popular songs in which there was only one melody and a harmonic sequence. It became common for arrangers to reformulate the original composition in order to enrich them and/or adapt them to orchestral instrumentation. According to Valdinha Barbosa and Anne Marie Devos (1984), the practice of creating introductions, secondary melodies, modulations, variations in the formal structures and harmony of pieces, and all the rest that arrangers do, became the rule.

Nevertheless, this new style of music-making caused polemics, principally among the more traditional musicians. The day after the first program, *Um milhão de melodias*, Radamés received various letters, some praising, others complaining vehemently of the musical treatment given to popular songs. Accused of a lack of *brasilidade* (Brazilianness) in his compositions due to his frequent use of the "ninth chord"⁶, which is also characteristic of jazz, he defended himself saying:

[Listeners] like what is good. Orlando Silva, who was the first to record a symphony orchestra playing Brazilian music, sold tons of records, despite the complaints about my arrangements. The American chord, known as the ninth chord, pleased the public a lot and, if it was also used in jazz, it is because jazz composers listened to Ravel and Debussy. Here no one had heard this chord anywhere but in American music and this explains the criticism. But people did not let this influence them and assimilated the novelty very well.⁷

The Rádio Nacional provided the conditions necessary for the maestro to develop his creativity. The program, *Um milhão de melodias*, at first had the idea to produce 'Brazilianized' orchestral arrangements of foreign songs, as a way of competing with such famous orchestras as those of Glen Miller and Benny Goodman. In fact, this opened the door to profound changes in

the way Brazilian music was produced. Radamés Gnattali established a new model for the orchestration of national music!

The peak of his professional career came in the 1950s. In spite of having entered the Columbia recording company at the invitation of its artistic director, João de Barro, and of having been contracted by the Municipal Radio of Buenos Aires to direct the “Brazilian Hour” at the beginning of the 1940s, it was in his daily work at the Rádio Nacional that the maestro found an unending source of creativity. A large part of his compositions were written in this epoch and were given an audience by that broadcaster. Dating from this period were the recordings of the *choros*, *De mansinho*, *Pé ante pé* and *Amigo Pedro*, with instrumental groups of various formations; the orchestration of the *Sinfonia do Rio de Janeiro*; the composition, *Suíte de Dança Popular Brasileira*, for electric viola and piano, dedicated to the violinist, Laurindo de Almeida, and executed by Garoto and Fritz Jank.

Radamés had the habit of writing music for his friends. His admiration for such instrumentalists as Garoto, Chiquinho do Acordeom, Zé Menezes, Laurindo de Almeida, Edu da Gaita and Jacob do Bandolim, among others, was many times expressed in works for them. He loved producing pieces for an instrumentalist he knew well as a way of exploring the capabilities of each interpreter and of translating their personal characteristics musically. For example, he composed a work for cello; it was for Iberê Gomes Grosso to perform. He was also interested in writing for non-conventional instrumental formations and for instruments with little written tradition, such as the case of the Concerto para Acordeão e Orquestra (Concert for Accordion and Orchestra) dedicated to Chiquinho do Acordeom or that of the Concerto para Harmônica de Boca e Orquestra (Concert for Harmonica and Orchestra) presented to Edu da Gaita. In 1953, Garoto inaugurated the work, Concertino para Violão e Orquestra, at the Municipal Theatre of Rio de

Janeiro, a place in which very few violinists had played before.

Besides these cited works, Radamés composed others in the same mode, combining cello, orchestra and two atabaques (capoeira hand drums); piano, conjunto regional and orchestra; electric quintet and symphony orchestra; 7 chord viola and orchestra; mandolin, chords orchestra and conjunto regional; piano, electric contrabass and percussion; orchestra, voice and ten match boxes. Frequently, the interpreters themselves asked him for a work to perform. Even though they were famous soloists, many of them were limited by a repertory that was in the written tradition and gave little scope for technical exploration.

His first trip to Europe came in 1960, where he presented the Radamés Sextet, formed by him and Laércio Freitas (piano), Chiquinho do Acordeom (accordion), José Meneses (guitar), Luciano Perrone (drums) e Pedro Vidal Ramos (contrabass). In 1964, Radamés Gnattali returned to the piano in duet with the cellist, Iberê Gomes Grosso, with whom he toured Brazil and abroad. Also in this year, he composed the *Suíte Retratos* for mandolin, chords orchestra and *conjunto regional*, written especially for Jacob do Bandolim. In this work in each movement, he paid homage to four of the major representatives of Brazilian music: Pixinguinha, Ernesto Nazareth, Anacleto de Medeiros and Chiquinha Gonzaga.

In June 1967, Radamés entered Globo TV and stayed there until the end of the 1970s. Having left the Rádio Nacional and having worked with Excelsior TV, he assumed the position of maestro of musical arrangements for Globo TV. He collaborated on the soundtracks of TV soap operas, among which "Roque Santeiro". Even though he was considered one of the most respected personalities of the national artistic life, Radamés went through a period of scarce musical output, due to the exceptional political regime. The country's cultural environment was suffering from severe repression of artists and their

public, composed above all of intellectuals and students. It suffered as well as from the censure imposed by the Military state on the mass media.

At the beginning of the re-democratization process, Brazilian popular music was taken by surprise by yet another innovation: respecting the suggestion of Joel do Nascimento, Radamés transcribed the *Suíte Retratos* for a *choro* ensemble, which Nascimento performed, with the accompaniment of the Camerata Carioca. In this way, a new style was born and a new orchestration for the *choro*. The maestro bounced back with vigor on the Brazilian musical scene: he recorded various traditional songs with arrangements for solo piano, such as *Chovendo na roseira*, *Ponteio* and *Cochicho*, besides making recordings with partners and friends, Tom Jobim, Dorival Caymmi and Raphael Rabelo. He composed the sound tracks for the films “Bonitinha, mas ordinária” and “Perdoame por me traíres” by Brás Chediak and “Eles não usam black-tie” of Leon Hirszman. By unanimous vote of a specialist jury, on 31 August 1983, he received the Shell prize for Brazilian music in the category of erudite music in Rio’s Municipal Theatre. During the awards ceremony, the Camerata Carioca performed his *Concerto Seresteiro n.º. 3*, for piano, orchestra and *conjunto regional*.

During his lifetime, Radamés Gnattali associated with the great names of music and was an active member of the Brazilian Academy of Music as well as the Academy of Brazilian Popular Music. At 80 years of age, a stroke damaged the right side of his body and he had to undergo a long medical treatment in order to be able to play again. In 1987, a new stroke provoked his death.

3. THE RÁDIO NACIONAL: TUNING INTO BRAZIL

By transmitting such music as the *chorinhos* of Rio’s son, Pixinguinha all the way to the Northeast dance rhythm (*baião*)

of Luiz Gonzaga, the Rádio Nacional brought together different musical styles in its programming and helped to fashion a new wireless language and to merge common cultural traits in a society on its way to industrialization and modernization. Rádio Nacional became the first experience of what is today's model of mass communication.

In his studies on the Twentieth Century, the historian Eric Hobsbawm (1995) highlights the radio as a very powerful instrument of mass communication and interaction among individuals. Literate and semi-literate people have the opportunity to mix through the radio. It is the first means of communication to "talk" individually with people. Each listener was, particularly, touched in some way by the messages received at the same time as millions of others. When meeting, persons unknown to each other, could very probably converse about what each of them had heard the day before. Day-to-day relations were so affected that, as Hobsbawm commented

It is difficult to recognize the cultural innovations of the radio because much of what it started has become part of daily life—sports commentary, news, celebrity interviews, novels and all types of series. The greatest change that it brought was to privatize and structure life simultaneously in accordance with a rigorous schedule, which from that time forward governed not only the work sphere but also leisure time.⁸

Of all the arts, music was, perhaps, the most profoundly affected by the radio. It not only made possible the elimination of acoustical or mechanical barriers to a range of sounds but also made it possible for music to be heard uninterruptedly for more than five minutes by, in theory, an unlimited number of dispersed listeners. In this way, the radio accomplished the function of popularizing non-erudite music. The role of music in contemporary and daily life would have been inconceivable without the radio.

Edgar Roquette Pinto, a doctor and anthropologist, and Henrique Morize, president of the Brazilian Academy of Science, are considered the pioneers of the introduction of radio in Brazil. They saw in this means of communication the exit for what they called “the cultural evils of the country.” Accompanied by some intellectuals who used to give lectures on the radio stations, they tried to “elevate the cultural life of the country.” The radio of the 1920s ended up being listened to by the same group who produced the programs because its programming was intellectualized and radio sets were very costly.

The political context of the 1930s was highly promising for the growth of popular radio stations. The process of industrialization quickened, the popular classes swelled and advertising entered the scene. Legislation allowed for a greater stability for the wireless sector: ten percent of programming was dedicated to publicity, giving rise to consistent financing and the structuring of more lasting programs. Thus, it was not necessary to rely on donations for survival. In the professional area, a group of artists was formed by the radio; on the technical side, improvements were constant.

As it grew in popularity, the radio was severely criticized by Brazilian intellectuals who wanted to maintain it as a vehicle for educational objectives and as a promoter of erudite cultural output. A large part of these criticisms was directed at the musical programs, especially at the sambas, marches and songs that began to dominate the popular air waves.

Radio provoked intense feelings that ranged from rejection to fascination. As a media, it was saturated with stereotypes: it was the place of fame and social mobility but, at the same time, it was not for persons from ‘a good family’.

On 12 September 1936, the Rádio Nacional made its first official broadcast. Situated on the 22nd floor of the building on Praça Mauá, at number 7, the Sociedade Civil Brasileira Rádio Nacional (Brazilian Civil Society National Radio) belonged to

the publishing group which put out the “A Noite” (At Night) newspaper and the magazines, “Carioca”, “A noite” and “Vamos ler”. Moreover, the group owned the S.A. Rio Editora (Rio Publishing Company), which formed part of North American capitalist Percy Farquhar’s enterprises in Brazil.

Officials, artists and other guests participated at the inauguration ceremony, among whom: the Minister of Education, Gustavo Capanema; the President of the Brazilian Confederation of Broadcasting, Nelson Dantas; the representative of the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, Lourival Fontes (who later became director of the Department of Press and Propaganda); the president of the radio station, Cauby de Araújo; and the President of the Brazilian Press Association, Herbert Moses. During this same night, then famous artists such as Aracy de Almeida, Orlando Silva, and Nuno Roland sang at the microphone.

The new radio station, which a few days before had operated as an experiment, ended up re-broadcasting the “Hora do Brasil” (“Hour of Brazil”). The uppermost floor of the “A Noite” building was a party. A gala night, from nine o’clock pmImmediately thereafter, the voice of the announcer, Celso Guimarães: - Alô! Alô! Brasil! Rádio Nacional of Rio de Janeiro speaking! Then, the large orchestra of the Municipal Theatre played the Brazilian national anthem. In the name of the President of the Republic, the President of the Senate, sr. Meireiros Neto spoke .⁹

The Rádio Nacional began its activities with the pretension of becoming the country’s major radio station. After its inauguration, it already had a list of exclusive artists, composed principally of young people who had achieved success in competing radio stations. In the group of singers were Marília Batista, Aracy de Almeida and Orlando Silva. It also had a number of orchestras and among its maestros was the talented Radamés Gnattali.

Other radio stations had a similar profile to that of Rádio

Nacional, but none was as innovative as it was in gathering together noted artists. The majority of them did not have formal artistic training and this allowed them to develop their art in a more spontaneous way that reflected the reality of the various social classes. The Rádio Nacional gave artists of different regions the possibility to express their everyday life as well as allowing members of the popular classes to climb socially.

Haroldo Barbosa, Almirante, Pixinguinha and his conjuncto regional, Radamés Gnattali and some other good musicians were among the premier names that worked with the station. Radio became the “stage for heroes of the commonplace.” Regional artists, even the then unknown, began to shine when they were presented on the radio station. Many passed into Brazilian musical history, such as Herivelto Martins and Orlando Silva.

There was, in that time, a kind of imaginary court of the “Rainhas do Rádio” (“Radio Queens”) and “Reis da Voz” (“Voice Kings”), such as Orlando Silva, always attended by faithful subjects. He was from a very poor family of the Engenho de Dentro, neighborhood in Rio’s northern zone and, without ever having studied singing, developed his talent by himself. Orlando improved his voice as a small boy at home when Pixinguinha and others joined his father to sing. He worked as a bus conductor and sang the hits of the day at the last stop, which delighted the passengers. The “Voice King” started his career after being presented to Francisco Alves in the Café Nice (in the center of Rio) in 1934. He was the first to record the choro *Carinhoso* of Pixinguinha. Besides him, the following singers also became famous Emilinha Borba, Ângela Maria, Dalva de Oliveira and Cauby Peixoto.

When the Vargas government nationalized Rádio Nacional on 8 March 1940, it was already well structured. The decreto-lei nº 2.073 (Law no. 2073) created the Empresas Incorporadas ao Patrimônio da União (Enterprises Incorporated in the Patri-

mony of the Union) in which the Rádio Nacional was placed. The man nominated to be director was Gilberto de Andrade, prosecutor of the Court of National Security, ex-director of the magazines, "Sintonia" and "Voz do Rádio," and organizer of theatre censorship. Nationalization strengthened the station's popular programming because Getúlio's policy was to enhance Brazilian cultural displays.

During the golden age of radio, the Nacional remained the station of major penetration and public all over the country. In 1942, besides its auditorium of 486 places, new studios were launched with the most modern equipment of the time. The building of a 50 kilowatt transmitter and the installations by RCA Victor of nine antennas (two directed at the US, two for Europe and one for Asia) made short wave transmission possible. There were daily broadcasts in four languages in order to project the country's image abroad. With this infrastructure, Rádio Nacional became the most powerful of Brazil and a kind of model followed by other stations in the period, 1945—1955. Although it had been turned into part of the state patrimony, its success was due basically to the fact that it continued to operate as a private company and could count upon the advertising of even foreign corporations. The station's programming presented new shows, not just of music but also dramatizations with adaptations of theatre pieces, comedy and news reporting. These were the four major types of Rádio Nacional programs.

Music always performed a fundamental role in radio broadcasting. During the first three decades of Brazilian radio, the stations worked with live music. The big stations, such as Rádio Nacional, were accustomed to having two or more orchestras, small *conjuntos regionais* and some maestros who were responsible for the musical arrangements of all the programs. In this category, the most well-known group was popular singers who did most of their shows in the auditoriums of the

radio stations. A common practice was the launching of popular music, such as the great sambas and carnival marches, in these programs because each composition could be tested to see if the public accepted it.

Getúlio Vargas also intervened decisively in the area of music, aiming to reach the masses, conquer them and make them believe in the existence of a government concerned about their interests and anxieties: "The objective was the affirmation of national identity, of a promising country, a future economic and cultural power".¹⁰ Vargas' nationalism cannot be understood as separate from the *trabalhismo* (labor movement) that grew with him. As part of the nationalist project, the New State "promoted" an appreciation of labor while many samba compositions exalted delinquency. Some artists were, therefore, induced to write lyrics eulogizing work. The most polemical case was that of Wilson Batista, a typical "scoundrel", who with Ataulfo Alves composed the samba, *Bonde de São Januário*.

As industrialization intensified and the structure of classes became better defined, Getúlio's government stimulated various sambas of exultation, such as, Ary Barroso's *Aquarela do Brasil*. This music was used by Walt Disney in the 1943 film "Alô, amigos", produced in the context of the "Good Neighbor" policy of the United States. *Aquarela do Brasil* became the paradigm of a new genre of samba, played on North American air waves and in cinemas that lent itself to other forms of interpretation similar to jazz interpretations. The country was urbanizing and beginning to have homogeneity of customs. From Rio Grande do Sul to Amazonas, people were listening to the varied programming of the Rádio Nacional.

Its most outstanding program, *Um milhão de melodias*, was broadcast for the first time on 6 January 1943. Sponsored by Coca-Cola, which it served to launch and spread throughout Brazil, the show was weekly and went on air every Wednesday evening at 9:35. It was directed by maestro Radamés Gnattali.

The format included the performance of two contemporary pieces, two traditional pieces and three successful foreign works. Alternately, in presentation of the programs, Aurélio de Andrade, Reinaldo Costa and César Ladeira announced the attractions of the night: from folk songs, marches, sambas do morro to fox trots, often played in North American cinemas, in the national version. A mixture of imported forms with Brazilian rhythms began to be spread.

This model became characteristic of the new tendency that was being created. *Um milhão de melodias* was initially on the air without interruption for seven years. In 1953, the program returned for another run. In the beginning the producers were Haroldo Barbosa and José Mauro and in the second phase, Paulo Tapajós and Lourival Marques. Radamés worked under pressure as he himself records:

Um milhão de melodias stayed on air thirteen years. A kind of musical parade in which music from all over the world was presented. Who chose the repertory were Paulo Tapajós and Haroldo Barbosa—the radio librarian—who were into all that was successful music. I made nine arrangements each week.¹¹

Different interpretations came to be the trademarks of the program principally those of the *Trio Melodía*, the three *Marias* and the *Trio Madrigal*. The program was a pioneer in paying homage to such composers as Ernesto Nazareth (playing almost all of his works), Chiquinha Gonzaga and Zequinha de Abreu. In it the major artists of national radio filed past and the Orquestra Brasileira de Radamés Gnattali divided its numbers between Brazilian and North American hits.

Many times, foreign recordings exhibited high quality orchestral arrangements, which increased the concern of national recording companies to organize their own orchestras. Out of this demand surfaced the use of a new type of formation also in

radio programs. Some radio stations had orchestras of jazz, of tango, of chamber music, and a version of a reduced symphony orchestra, composed of bass and some wind instruments. But their repertory was limited to opera and excerpts and the arrangements were all imported.

The program's success was in good measure due to the confluence of market capitalism and communications technology. The government attempted to popularize radio, through the decreto-lei n°. 21.111, of 1 March 1931, and the decreto n°. 20.047, of 27 May of the same year that regulated the Brazilian Telecommunications. This made it possible for advertising to gain a foothold in this area and this led big foreign companies to invest in programs. New radio stations and recording companies emerged when the possibility of profit-making from the music market became apparent. With favorable legislation the culture industry expanded in Brazil. In her reflections on this theme, the sociologist Maria Barbosa affirms that:

In a process of seduction, persuasion and conquest, the culture industry sells cultural goods to the public. However, in order to please the public, one should not shock it, make it think with new information that would disturb it but rather develop what the public already knows under a new facade. In this way, the culture industry does not create anything new. It appropriates elements of popular culture and/or that of the elite, trivializes them, and gives all this back to the public as something new.¹²

The culture industry was responsible for the transformation of music into a commodity good and for the acceptance of certain musical norms, especially the samba. While the non-arranged regional style was "silenced," the "new" model of Brazilian music—arranged and orchestrated, consolidated its hold. The anthropologist Hermano Vianna grasps that, among other factors, the radio and the market for Brazilian records contributed a lot toward elevating the samba of Rio de Janeiro into a national symbol.

[There was] nothing more propitious for the carioca samba, later thought of as Brazilian, [than] to be defined finally as a musical style. In its own city, there were already radio stations, recording companies and political interest that facilitated (but not determined—that is another problem) its adoption as a new fashion in every Brazilian city. The samba had “everything” at its disposition to transform it into the national music.¹³

Looking into the historical origins of nationalism, Benedict Anderson (2005) emphasizes the convergence of capitalism with a means of communication as the decisive factor in the building of nationalities. The development of print capitalism, which had great success in Europe in the period from 1500 to 1550, induced ties of community identification, later characterized as nationalist feeling. The original market for books having being saturated and restricted to the literary classes who read Latin, the print industry turned to the monoglot masses. In this way, it helped to disseminate, gradually and unequally across the continent, specific “common” dialects allowing them to become unified sites of intercommunication and instruments of centralized administration. By creating them in print form, mechanically reproduced and susceptible to diffusion, print capitalism gave certain fixity to these languages, which helped to consolidate the image of antiquity, essential to the idea of a nation.

(...) the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.¹⁴

In America, the bloody conflicts between elite creoles and colonialists for national independence and recognition by European powers anticipated the emergence of a Western model

of nation-state. Nevertheless, according to Anderson, the arrival of the printing press opened a space conducive for certain groups of readers to begin to believe and act as imaginary communities, in other words, to affirm themselves as nations.¹⁵

In a similar manner, in Brazil during the 40s and 50s, the radio reinforced this imaginary community, giving it a new significance. The outreach of music was far beyond that of books, with both literate and illiterate people having access to it through this powerful medium. Through it, the samba gained the status of Brazilian music, leaving behind its image as a common rhythm and acquiring a certain social prestige. For this to happen, however, a structure and a propitious context were necessary. And here, among other factors, the influence of the Rádio Nacional and the musical arrangements of Radamés Gnattali are evident in the configuration of Brazilian nationality.

4. MUSIC AND THE BRAZILIAN NATION

In the program, *Um milhão de melodias*, maestro Radamés, a convinced internationalist, created arrangements of a musical style sanctified as national and he modified Brazilian music. Sponsored by foreign companies, the Rádio Nacional, the country's most powerful broadcaster, created a new wireless language and defined certain cultural patterns that it spread in every corner of Brazil and abroad. The principal ideological support of the Vargas government had an important role in the integration of the Brazilian territory and in the formation of nationalist sentiment. Radamés Gnattali and the Rádio Nacional were protagonists of a history whose unfolding was not simply dictated by State activity.

It is very true that, with the nationalization of the Rádio Nacional, Getúlio strengthened his influence in society, by promo-

ting the apologia of labor through music, by expanding official news bulletins, and by valuing cultural expressions. Nevertheless, these were times of acute debate over Brazilian hegemony. His government was marked by confrontations between distinct national projects; while the Aliança Nacional Libertadora (National Liberation Alliance) and the Ação Integralista Brasileira (Brazilian Integralist Action) attempted alliances in order to grab power, Vargas modernized the state based on the proposition of making it the “coordinator of national interests”. In the midst of many initiatives, he accomplished certain reforms through sponsoring Brazilian education, adopting a series of national economic measures and investing in infrastructure, which made the industrialization of the country irreversible.

Favoring the emergence of nationalist feeling was the fact that Brazil, in this time, was being transformed into a more urban and developed nation, with a standard educational system and culture, thanks in part to Getúlio’s policies. The affective ties that linked peoples to each other culturally were strengthened and they began to believe that they belonged to the same national community—Brazil—now with a new significance. Such a great change could have only happened through the convergence of capitalism with a means of communication; the organization of a musical market through radio stations, recording companies and foreign companies was necessary so that samba could be imposed as a Brazilian national symbol.

NOTES

¹ According to Henrique Cazes' explanation (1998), the "regional" was an ensemble that did not need written arrangements, had the ability to improvise and the capacity to resolve any problem that arose when accompanying singers. The groups were generally composed of two violin players, a player of the *cavaquinho*, a player of the *pandeiro* (a large frame drum) and a flutist. The name "regional" comes from such groups as the *Turunas Pernambuco*, the *Voz do sertão* and even Pixinguinha's *Os Oito Batutas*. Their sonority was associated with the style of regional music.

² Barbosa e Devos (1984: 45).

³ Cabral (1993: 182).

⁴ Ganzá is a percussion instrument used in the samba and other Brazilian rhythms. It is a kind of cylindrical rattle generally made of metal or plastic filled with grains or small counters.

⁵ Saroldi e Moreira (2005: 61).

⁶ A chord is formed when three or more notes are played at the same time. The note out of which the chord is formed is called the fundamental note. The other notes are called by the interval that they form in relation to the fundamental note (third, fifth, seventh, ninth, for example). A "ninth chord" is formed by adding a ninth to a seventh chord.

⁷ Bresson (1979: 26).

⁸ Hobsbawm (1995: 195).

⁹ Domingues, *apud* Haussen (2001: 53, 54).

¹⁰ Haussen (2001: 67).

¹¹ Barbosa e Devos (1984: 54).

¹² Barbosa (2004: 7).

¹³ Vianna (2002: 110).

¹⁴ Anderson (2003: 46).

¹⁵ Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an "imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (2003: 6).