

## OPINION

on the dissertation study of

**PAULO RICARDO SOARES ZEREU**

(a doctoral candidate conducting independent research in the doctoral program “Music”, NBU, with study supervisor Prof. Dr. Milena Shushulova-Pavlova)

entitled

“CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE BRAZILIAN WALTZ: THE NATIONAL MUSICAL LANGUAGE in the *Valsa de Esquina No.2*, *Valsa de Esquina No.5*, *Valsa de Esquina No.8*, and *Valsa-Chôro No.5* by FRANCISCO MIGNONE”

to obtain the educational and scientific degree Doctor (Major 8.3 Music and Dance Arts)

by **Prof. Dr. Evgeniya Mihaylova Simeonova**,

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I do not know personally the colleague Paulo Zereu, but the presented biography directs me to a well-educated and actively developing musician in Brazil and Europe. He popularized the piano music of Portuguese and Brazilian composers in various parts of the world.

The presented doctoral dissertation on the topic “**CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE BRAZILIAN WALTZ: THE NATIONAL MUSICAL LANGUAGE...**” is structured in a summary, four chapters, conclusion and implications, appendix with musical scores by Francisco Mignone, list of references, bibliography (106 references in Portuguese, Spanish and English languages).

**In the first chapter** the doctoral candidate clearly defines the goals, the object, and the thematic scope; then poses four specific tasks and three major research questions:

1. *What are the socio-cultural factors and the knowledge that can influence the understanding and interpretation of the Brazilian waltz?*
2. *What are the relevant musical features that reflect the cultural factors that determine the specifics of the Brazilian waltz?*

3. *What are the specific piano problems and peculiarities in the interpretation of Brazilian waltzes, especially in the chosen selected waltzes by Francisco Mignone for piano solo?*

Following the historical context, a successful attempt has been made in the first chapter of the dissertation to give a precise definition of the terms used - a key to understanding the great variety of musical styles that are intertwined in the musical culture of Brazil - concepts such as Brazilian waltz, lundu - a song and dance that originated and was introduced to Brazil by Angolan slaves, and modinha that marked the beginning of the Brazilian national identity. The relevance of the study is in the sense of "*better understanding Brazilian music, the Brazilian waltz, which will lead to a new perspective for the interpretation of the Brazilian musical culture.*" In section 1.7, Paulo Zereu comments on a brief history of the solo waltz genre, following the processes that have been developed in European music since the late 18th century.

**CHAPTER II THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WALTZ in BRAZIL** with sections 2.1 *Modinha and Lundu*, 2.2 *Serenade*, 2.3 and 2.3.2. *Chôro* (the "Brazilianization" of the fashionable at period European dances; waltz, polka and schottische), and section 2.5. *The Brazilian waltz* is of "extracted" high information value, especially for foreigners who will be interested in this quite exotic and penetrating music. And as the author originally puts it, "*Rio de Janeiro can be seen as a cultural cauldron for melting various musical influences.*"

**CHAPTER III. FRANCISCO MIGNONE (1897-1986)** examines the creative figure of the composer - one of the brightest representatives of the Brazilian musical national style, called the "King of the Waltz", in the context of the historical review of the Brazilian composers who wrote waltzes. Zereu carefully traces the socio-cultural aspects in Brazil during the 1940s and 1950s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Brazilian classical music, Villa-Lobos, Lorenzo Fernandez, Radames Gnattali, Camargo Guarnieri, Fructuoso Viana, and Francisco Mignone are best known as waltz composers during the twentieth century. And Francisco Mignone, along with Luciano Galette (1893-1931), Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez (1897-1948) and Camargo Guarnieri (1907-1993) are also described as "the great nationalists."

In section 3.4, Paulo Zereu examines *Valsa de Esquina* and *Valsa-Chôro*, influenced by the popular urban music environment. The twelve *Valsa de Esquina*, composed between 1938 and 1943, carry a specific nostalgia and improvisation. Interesting cultural and historical facts are

pointed out by the doctoral candidate in section 3.6 *The Brazilian Musical Language*, specifically about the uniqueness of the Afro-Brazilian style based on European roots.

An emphasis on an author's argumentation is given in **CHAPTER IV, OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF SELECTED WALTZS FOR PIANO SOLO BY FRANCISCO MIGNONE (1897-1986)**. The author examines 3 of the 12 lyrical *Valsas de Esquina* and one *Valsa Chôro* by Francisco Mignone from the 12 waltzes published during the period 1946–1955. All analyses have been performed according to the following scheme: general overview, comments on the musical interpretation, methodical piano practice: recommendation for fingering on selected bars, and instructions for pedalling in piano performance. Many musical examples are given.

Obviously, the *12 Valsa de Esquina* and the *12 Valsa-Chôro* for piano solo by Francisco Mignone are “*very well known to the music community in Brazil*”. They are also “*part of the programs of several educational music institutions in the country*”. Appreciating these positive achievements, I was looking forward and willing to read at least an overview of the two cycles, which would be a plus for dissertation readers, both for musicians in Brazil and for professionals in different parts of the world for a better insight into the issue of interpretation. I was thinking about the fact that the selected 4 waltzes are taken out of the context of 2 cycles of 12 pieces each. I could not answer the question: Do the selected 4 Waltzes have a connection with the other 24?

The doctoral candidate has allowed an unnecessary repetition of the same introductory text (copy/paste) when commenting on the use of a pedal: see 4.1.3/p. 98, 4.2.3/p. 109, 4.3.4/p. 122 and 4.4.4/p. 136. There is also a partial repetition of the fingering comments. I accept the proposals for novel fingering, but I found out only from the appendix exactly which edition is corrected by the doctoral candidate.

I am impressed by the bibliography (106 titles). It struck me that Paulo Zereu was acquainted with serious research in the field of the Brazilian music, which is a solid foundation for his argumentation.

I paid a special attention to his *performing activity*. Apparently, in the described documentation presented he announces the required 6 concerts (performing activities) for piano solo and duo, but in none of them is indicated, and it is not clear, which are the works and, respectively, the performed programs?! Only the mentioned of the recital in November 2015 in Bangkok points to Argentine-Brazilian music, without mentioning specific authors and

compositions. I note this fact as a significant omission and I cannot comment on this important aspect of his work. I receive partial information about his creative activity through the listed master classes and seminars.

The *abstract* (consisting of 22 pages) is a conscientious quintessence of a doctoral dissertation.

The required three *publications* published in 2017 are also attached.

I accept the *contributing moments* and the significance of the research in six points as formulated by the doctoral candidate.

In view of the above assessments for the dissertation “CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE BRAZILIAN WALTZ: THE NATIONAL MUSICAL LANGUAGE in the *Valsa de Esquina No.2, Valsa de Esquina No.5, Valsa de Esquina No.8, and Valsa-Chôro No.5* by FRANCISCO MIGNONE”, I suggest the esteemed study committee to award Paulo Zereu the educational and scientific degree Doctor.

30.10.2020.

Signature: