

THE MUSICAL LANGUAGE OF MARLOS NOBRE
THROUGH HIS ORCHESTRAL WORKS

By

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To Aleksa and Isabella,
for everything they mean to me.

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Marlos Nobre (b. 1939) has achieved enormous respect over the years among the public and musicians all over Brazil and abroad; in fact, in the late 1960s, he had already occupied a prominent position among Brazil's most promising composers.

The development of the musical language of Marlos Nobre combines a series of influences from different periods and styles of music. In his concept, the greatest formal structures are those of eighteenth- and nineteenth- century classical works, which he combines with modern techniques. The multifaceted music of this composer, who has Debussy, Bartók, Stravinsky, and Lutosławski as major influences, displays a vigorous, distinguished rhythmic vitality, colored with elements drawn from Brazilian folklore and nature, striking sound combinations, and spontaneity.

Marlos Nobre's orchestral works belong to his last three style periods. They display a much more mature approach, and represent Nobre's strongest characteristics. Unfortunately these works had not been studied and analyzed within and outside academia until now. The orchestral works have been the medium in which Nobre has had the widest possibilities to

express his musical ideas and thoughts. The works discussed in the present study summarize all his compositional development; they cover the year 1968 through 2004.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Among contemporary composers in Brazil, Marlos Nobre has come to occupy a prominent position within the Brazilian avant-garde. He is widely considered by Brazilian musical establishments and the world community to be the successor of Villa-Lobos.¹

On November 29, 2005 in Spain, Nobre won the Tomás Luis de Victoria Prize. Earning the sixth edition of the prize, he was the first Brazilian composer to achieve such prestige. Judges voted unanimously for the first time in history, selecting Nobre from among 57 nominated composers from 17 countries. The international jurors said they were impressed by "the excellent trajectory of Nobre, the projection and importance of his works, and the originality of his aesthetic thinking."²

Essentially a Latin American composer and, more specifically, a Brazilian composer, Nobre maintains the unique personal qualities that connect him with his origins while entering the world stage as a universal composer. His musical language speaks profound sentences of western art music, with a Brazilian accent.

The development of Marlos Nobre's musical language combines a series of influences from different periods and styles of music. Nobre combines the greatest formal structures of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century classical works with modern techniques. The result is powerful music which displays a vigorous, distinguished rhythmic vitality, colored by elements from Brazilian folklore and nature, striking sound combinations, and spontaneity.

¹ The comparison between Marlos Nobre and Villa-Lobos has come from a long tradition. Besides occupying Villa-Lobos' chair at the Brazilian Academy of Music since 1959, Nobre has achieved a significant position that no other Brazilian composer has since Villa-Lobos. Nobre's music has reached a similar impact in the nation and abroad. Like Villa-Lobos' music, Nobre's has power, impact, brilliance, and conveys some of the most important features of the culture of Brazil and Latin America in general.

² Nobre, Marlos. *Personal Website*. http://marlosnobre.sites.uol.com.br/index1_i.html, accessed on November 2006.

Although Marlos Nobre is considered one of the most prominent composers of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first century, there is very limited literature dealing with his works.³ In the genre of orchestral pieces, in-depth studies are basically non-existent.⁴

The orchestral works of Marlos Nobre represent an important achievement in the composer's output but have been neglected by many within and outside academia. Therefore it is the primary goal of this author to analyze these works from a musicological point of view. The analysis of such works serves to show the path of Nobre's musical language trajectory, which has been a challenge in the hands of scholars in Brazil and abroad.

Each chapter of this document is devoted to a group of orchestral works. The chapters follow a chronological order. A historical background of each work is provided, as well as a formal, rhythmical, melodic and harmonic analysis. The works are organized according to their opus number followed by the year of composition. Important achievements of Nobre's career and important aspects about the composer are addressed in chapter 2. This chapter also provides a certain look into the twentieth-century Brazilian musical scene in order to expose the influences that surround the composer, as well as to position Nobre vis-à-vis his contemporaries.

Chapter 3 discusses four major works composed in the 1970s: *Biosfera*, Op. 35; *Mosaico*, Op. 36, which became one of the most important works written by Nobre in the early 1970s; *In Memoriam*, Op. 39, another important work written in 1973, and, finally, *Convergências*, Op. 28,

³ *Marlos Nobre-El sonido del realismo mágico* by Tomás Marco recently published in 2006 has been the most complete work related to Marlos Nobre and his compositions. Nevertheless as a survey of the composer's general output, the book is not an exhaustive or definite analysis or interpretation of the composer's life and compositional achievements. The chapter related to his orchestral works, for instance, only briefly discusses basic compositional aspects of only a few of the compositions.

⁴ The only previous study related to Nobre's orchestral works is the D.M.A dissertation *An Analytical Study of Marlos Nobre's Saga Marista: Passacaglia for Orchestra, Op. 84* by Jorge Richter (Michigan State University, 2002).

a work that had origins in the late 1960s, but evolved into a more mature creation in the late 1970s. Chapter 4 discusses two important works composed in the 1980s, a time when the composer reached maturity and expressed his most important musical concerns. The pieces are *Concerto II for String Orchestra*, Op. 53 and *Abertura Festiva*, Op. 56bis. Chapter 5 discusses his latest orchestral works, which serve to summarize all of his compositional tendencies. These works were written in the late 1990s and early 2000s. They are *Saga Marista: Passacaglia for Orchestra*, Op. 84 and *Kabballah*, Op. 96.

Finally, chapter 6 closes with the reception of Nobre in today's musical scene and a conclusion detailing important aspects of the composer's compositional language and style as seen throughout his orchestral works. Although eight pieces are discussed in this study, Nobre has several other orchestral compositions still in preparation and, therefore, are not included in this document.⁵

The inclusion of two compositions for string orchestra, *Biofera* and *Concerto II*, was necessary, as opposed to simply including works for full orchestra. Aside from containing great, unique value, this author believes the works for string orchestra that were selected for this study share common characteristics present in the works for full orchestra.

Methodology

Copyrights for the scores and recordings presented in this dissertation belong strictly to Marlos Nobre, who was contacted by the author in the beginning of the research process. Besides bibliographical references, much of the information presented was obtained through conversations between the author and the composer, either in person or through the Internet.

⁵ The pieces are *Desafio XXX*, Op. 31, No. 30, composed in 1968 and revised in 1978, *Football*, Op. 50 (1980) and *Xingu*, Op. 75, composed in 1989.

The author contacted the composer through the University of Florida Library System to purchase all the scores and a few recordings of the works discussed. The author also personally acquired several other recordings and books. It was important to have knowledge of and access to Marlos Nobre's personal website: http://marlosnobre.sites.uol.com.br/index1_i.html, which provided insights and a great deal of information.

The methodology included the analysis and the listening of the orchestral scores, the interpretation of written material, the exchange of compositional ideas with contemporary composers and scholars in the USA and Brazil, and, especially, interviews and personal conversations with the composer.

Several books on music, music encyclopedias and music journals, most of them written in Spanish and Portuguese, along with newspaper and magazine interviews were used as primary and secondary sources. The quotations and sources used in this dissertation that were originally in different languages have been translated into English by the author. Furthermore, the author has analyzed all orchestral works used in this study through a musicological perspective. In order to analyze, understand and compare Nobre's orchestral works with other current compositional trends, the author studied, and consulted several sources. Among those sources are: Robert Morgan's *Twentieth-Century Music* and *Anthology of Twentieth-Century Music*; Allen Forte's *The Structure of Atonal Music* and *Contemporary Tone-Structures*; George Perle's *Twelve-Tone Tonality* and *Serial Composition and Atonality: An Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern*; Gerard Béhague's *Music in Latin America: An Introduction*; Maria Luiza Coker-Nobre's dissertation, *Aspectos Técnicos e Estéticos de Sonâncias III de Marlos Nobre: uma Introdução `a Problemática da Intuição versus Cerebralismo*; Jorge Richter's D.M.A. dissertation *Marlos Nobre: an Analytical Study of Saga Marista: Passacaglia for Orchestra, Op.*

84; José Maria Neves' *Música Contemporânea Brasileira*; and, the most recent, *Marlos Nobre – El sonido del realismo mágico* by Tomás Marco. The need to know other twentieth-century composers' compositional techniques was of great importance in order to understand the influences present in Marlos Nobre's music. Therefore, the author studied compositional styles and works of Bela Bartók, Igor Stravinsky, Charles Ives, the Second Viennese School, John Cage, Earle Brown, Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Alberto Ginastera, Krzysztof Penderecki, Witold Lutosławski, and twentieth-century Brazilian composers such as Heitor Villa-Lobos, Camargo Guarnieri, César Guerra-Peixe, Claudio Santoro, Hans-Joachim Koellreuter, Almeida Prado, Edino Krieger, and Ricardo Tacuchian. It was also important to get familiarized with other works composed by Nobre, especially those which involve chamber or string orchestra, and the concertos.

This author visited Marlos Nobre at his home in Brazil and several libraries in order to collect the necessary data for this document. Among the libraries visited were the National Library in Rio de Janeiro, the Library of the School of Music of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, the Library of the Brazilian Conservatory of Music in Rio de Janeiro, and the Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin.

Need for Study

The international knowledge of Brazilian art music is mostly concentrated on Villa-Lobos. He remains the best known and most representative Brazilian composer of all times. Unfortunately, there are several other important composers whose lives and works have remained virtually unknown outside Brazil. The consequence is that the bulk of Brazilian music to reach international reputation and acclaim has been mostly characterized by its relationship to

nationalism and the figure of Villa-Lobos⁶. This hardly undervalues the achievements of Villa-Lobos as a great composer, but simply extends and amplifies openness to other representative aesthetic tendencies in Brazilian musical since the 1930s. Along with other composers, Marlos Nobre represents progress in the Brazilian musical scene that goes from post-nationalistic works to extremely avant-garde collages, without forgetting the variants between these two categories and the achievements of electronic-music composers.

Nobre has enjoyed an increasingly international reputation over the past 40 years through his achievements and commissions, and through theses and dissertations about him and his compositions, recordings, articles, and performances. Among contemporary Brazilian composers, he has been the most recognized in the past few decades and has been acknowledged as “one of the most creative personalities since the 1960s.”⁷ Sadly, he is still known primarily in countries where either Portuguese or Spanish is the primary language, including South America and parts of Europe. Although he has been to the United States several times, and a few doctoral dissertations about him and his music have been defended in American universities, he is still little-known by the majority of international composers and scholars, especially in the United States.

The need for this study, therefore, is obvious: to bring attention to different aesthetics present in contemporary Brazilian music through the musical language of Marlos Nobre, as represented in his orchestral works and the knowledge of these great late twentieth- and early twenty-first century compositions. Although much has been written about him and his music in

⁶ Even Villa-Lobos got into a dilemma when he found himself immersed in a trend between Modernism and Nationalism in the late 1920s. Nevertheless, Nationalism still became a stronger characteristic in his compositions. In the 1930s, he adhered to nationalistic ideas combined with neoclassical tendencies, which gave him the power of populism and at the same time the political support of government authorities.

⁷ Béhague, Gerard. “*Reminiscências* Op. 83 and *Homenagem a Villa-Lobos*,” in *Latin American Music Review*. Austin: University of Texas Press, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 85-89, 1996.

Portuguese, Spanish, English, German, and French, very little of this literature has focused on his orchestral works and none on their relationship to Nobre's musical language. Most of the literature devoted to Nobre explores his piano works and nationalistic aspects in his music. Very few people have written about his more advanced works. Musical analysis of his orchestral works does not exist, except for Jorge Richter's doctoral dissertation, *Marlos Nobre: an Analytical Study of Saga Marista: Passacaglia for Orchestra, Op. 84*, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. This imposes another need for this study.

It is hoped that this dissertation will not only bring attention to this great composer and some of his finest works, but also will further expand knowledge about Brazilian music and its composers, who follow aesthetic tendencies other than nationalism and neoclassicism.

This author also hopes that the study becomes an additional resource to schools and departments of music, so that it will enhance the study of the history of music and, in particular, composers in Latin America. Furthermore, it is important to note that the works described in this document are of great value and certainly deserve to be considered for performances by orchestras, conductors, and program organizers.

Review of Literature

Much has been written regarding twentieth-century music. Considerable sources deal with art music written after the 1960s. However, textbooks that exclusively dedicate themselves to twentieth-century music are often limited, with only a short examination of the latest major trends in music history and their most prominent representatives. The problem gets more severe when dealing with living composers, especially those who come from countries other than France, Germany and the United States.

Although most of them remain unknown, Latin American composers have contributed a great deal to the development of the history of western art music. In Latin America, Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887 – 1959), Carlos Chávez (1899-1978), and Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) are the composers who usually dominate the field.

Many important composers remain obscure, and even the few studies dedicated to them are not translated into English. This is the case in the history of art music in Brazil. Most literature regarding the subject is in Portuguese and only native Brazilian scholars or scholars dedicated to Latin American studies gain access to the sources. This generates a restricted group with interest in the topic.

Books

Useful sources were used in the research process of the present document. *Music in Latin America: An Introduction*, by Gerard Béhague, is perhaps the most comprehensive source related to art music in Latin America in the English language.⁸ Its only edition was published in 1979, leaving out a great deal of significant updated information. Nevertheless, it contains important information on major figures in Latin America. Several musical examples, with their analysis, make the volume more complete than any other book written on Latin American music and composers, especially Brazilian musicians. The sections related to Brazil are somewhat substantial due to the author's connection to the country. However, the attention is focused primarily on Villa-Lobos. The book is divided into three sections: The Colonial Period; The Rise of Nationalism; and Counter-Currents in the Twentieth Century. Marlos Nobre is described with much respect. However, he is mentioned only on one page in the third section. A short

⁸ It is important to remember Nicolas Slonimsky's *Music of Latin America* published in 1945. Although Slonimsky's volume did not provide substantial information and musical analysis, it was from the publication of his book that interest in and research on the art-music traditions of Latin America increased.

biographical description is provided, along with the listing of seven major works written before 1973. A brief analytical description of *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, a piece for soprano, wind instrument, and piano composed in 1964, and of the 1970 orchestral work *Mosaico* is provided.

The Music of Brazil (1983) by David Appleby is one of the few existing sources about Brazilian art music in the English language. The volume, written in six chapters, ranges from “Music in the Colony” until “After Modernismo.” A glossary of specific Brazilian terms and instruments is provided. However, they are sometimes incomplete and even misleading. For instance, Appleby describes a cavaquinho as a small guitar. The cavaquinho looks like a small guitar but it has only four strings, a different tuning, and it serves primarily for harmonic and rhythmic functions. The book describes the major Brazilian composers along with their works, and some musical examples with detailed analytical information. Marlos Nobre’s section falls in the post-modernismo chapter under post-nationalism. Nobre garners four pages in this book, with three illustrative musical examples. Appleby focuses more on the big names and does not give enough attention to the composers of this new generation. After giving some biographical information, the author describes Nobre’s stylistic compositional characteristics as exemplified by his piano piece *Nazarethiana*, Op. 2 (1960) – a chromatic piece in duple meter with simple syncopation. The piece suggests the style of Nazareth, a composer whom Nobre deeply admired. The book also describes *Beiramar*, Op. 21 (1966), a set of three songs for voice and piano that displays a traditional style and the use of Afro-Brazilian themes, and *Sonâncias I*, Op. 37 (1972), a piece for percussion and piano combining extreme dynamic range, tone clusters and intricate rhythmic techniques. The musical analyses are not very detailed, but the author makes mention of Nobre’s compositional phases.

A number of books have been written in Portuguese by Brazilian scholars who attempt to construct the history of western art music in Brazil, along with its important representatives. Nevertheless, few provide in-depth information about specific composers and compositions, and almost none show detailed analysis and musical examples. Most of the information relies on historical facts and biographical information along with a few lists of compositions.

Música Contemporânea Brasileira by José Maria Neves has been by far the most informative source in the Portuguese language. Although it was written in 1981, the study has never been re-issued and is out of print today. Some libraries dedicated to Latin American Studies hold a copy of the book. Neves elaborates on the evolution of music in Brazil since the beginning of the twentieth century. Although Marlos Nobre is only mentioned later in the book in a short chapter, it is possible to understand his musical language simply following Neves' analysis of evolution and influences present in Brazilian music. It is almost as if, from the beginning to the end, Neves was describing the compositional aspects of Marlos Nobre. His description of Nobre is fairly accurate, especially for being written in the early 1980s. Neves mentions how accomplished Nobre is and how big a future awaits him.

Another important source in Portuguese is Vasco Mariz's *História da Música no Brasil*, first published in 1981 and now in its fifth edition, which was published in 2000. The book is a good source for a panoramic view of the development of music in Brazil. From the Colonial period until the latest generation of composers, Mariz is fair enough to give space to every single composer, independent of how important that composer has been to the development of the compositional trends in Brazil. This is a positive factor, especially in referring to the new, young generation of composers. The book reads more like a novel, and the musical analyses are not very deep. There are no musical excerpts and the few analyses are mostly about vocal works. It

is important to know that Vasco Mariz is a singer himself. Nevertheless, the book does not lose all value. Chapter 22, devoted to the second generation of independent composers, describes the life and works of Marlos Nobre in eight pages. It is a valuable source of knowledge about Nobre's main achievements and a fair description of Nobre's compositions. Very little information is given about the composer's orchestral works. Mariz lists the major works written by Nobre, divided into compositional periods, and gives a brief comment on Nobre's musical compositional style.

Figuras da Música Contemporânea no Brasil (2nd ed. 1970), also by Vasco Mariz, contains some important information. But it is not as updated as the information in the above-mentioned book. This book contains 17 chapters and includes most of the contemporary composers with a succinct biography as well as an aesthetic stylistic position of their most important works. Unfortunately there are no musical examples, which is characteristic of the writer. Another downside to the book is the lack of information about primary sources. However, Mariz provides a list of compositional catalogues of certain composers, followed by their respective publisher's addresses. It is a useful book, but not as complete as his *História da Música no Brasil*.

The most important source for Marlos Nobre is the recently-published *Marlos Nobre-El sonido del realismo mágico*, by Tomás Marco. The book is as complete as possible within its limitations and it is an excellent source for all scholars interested in life and works of Marlos Nobre. An English version would increase its reach to a wider audience and it would consequently provide better knowledge of Marlos Nobre. Marco groups Nobre's compositions by genres and devotes a chapter to each group. There are no musical excerpts and little analytical detail is given. However, Marco's personal insights in attempting to describe Nobre's style and

compositional techniques are of great value. The book also contains photographs that enrich its text. This source also provides an appendix with an updated list of works and a list of Nobre's writings and discography. The book was written for the celebration of Nobre's acquisition of the sixth edition of the Tomás Luís de Victoria prize in Spain in the summer of 2006.

Textbooks

General books on the history of music such as *The Development of Western Music: A History* (third edition), by Marie K. Stolba, or *A History of Western Music* (fifth Edition), by Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, place little emphasis on music since the 1960s. Although they are widely used in colleges and universities, these general histories lack information regarding the development of music in a post-serial period as well as information on other parts of the world, such as Latin America. Palisca's book has one paragraph on music in Latin America, and that refers mostly to nationalism. He mentions Villa-Lobos, Revueltas, Chávez, Ginastera and one of each of their pieces.

General music appreciation textbooks such as, *Music: An Appreciation* (eighth edition), by Roger Kamien, or *Understanding Music* (third edition), by Jeremy Yudkin make no mention of Marlos Nobre. Both textbooks mention music in the twentieth century and briefly cover music after the 1960s. Kamien's book is more informative in that sense, but there is no inclusion of music in South America.

Music in the Modern Age, edited by F. W. Sternfeld (1973), has one chapter devoted to music in Latin America. Written by Robert Stevenson, the chapter mainly describes the major figures of Latin America in the twentieth-century: Chávez, Villa-Lobos, Ginastera. To those, Stevenson adds Castro in Argentina, Revueltas in Mexico, Soro and Allende in Chile, and Castillo and Delgadillo in Central America. In the section covering Brazil, Stevenson mentions a list of other important and promising composers of the twentieth-century. Marlos Nobre receives

more attention than any other composer in this section, with eight lines of biographical description and information on important festivals.

Important books on twentieth-century music such as *Modern Music and After: Directions since 1945* (1995), by Paul Griffiths, and *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America*, by Robert P. Morgan, make no mention of South America.

Nevertheless, they remain excellent, fundamental resources for important stylistic developments in modern and contemporary art music.

Theses and Dissertations

Marlos Nobre and his works have been the topic of several theses and dissertations in Brazil, Austria, Canada, and the United States over the past ten years. Unfortunately, the majority of these writings are not published, so most people have no access to them.⁹ Very few of these works deal with compositions other than piano and topics other than the nationalistic traits in his work. This author was able to find specific dissertations that were very helpful to the development of this document. In order to obtain and study these works, the author had to contact the respective writers and borrow their private copies.

Maria Luiza Corker Cardoso Nobre de Almeida's *Aspectos Técnicos e Estéticos de Sonâncias III de Marlos Nobre: Uma Introdução à Problemática da Intuição versus Cerebralismo*, was written in 1995 for a Master's Degree at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. The thesis contains important and insightful information regarding the composer's compositional process through one of his most valuable compositions, *Sonâncias III*, Op. 49 (1980). The thesis starts with an analysis of intuition versus cerebralism and then follows with technical aspects, notation and aesthetic interpretation. An analysis of the piece along with its

⁹ Ph.D. dissertations are accessed through UMI, however most of these documents are D.M.A. dissertations and they are not always found in the system.

entire score is provided. The analysis, however, focuses more on form, rhythm, and aleatoric content in the work. A harmonic analysis based on pitch material would make the approach more complete. In general, the thesis provides useful information. However, the thesis is not published, but one can get a good glance at its content and information by looking at Corker-Nobre's article "*Sonâncias III*, Op. 49 de Marlos Nobre," published in 1994 in the *Latin American Music Review*. It is important to note that the article is written in Portuguese.

The only available work related to Nobre's orchestral works is *An Analytical Study of Marlos Nobre's Saga Marista: Passacaglia for Orchestra, Op. 84*, by Jorge Richter. This is a D.M.A. dissertation for Michigan State University (2002). Unfortunately, the work is not published. Richter's document contains deep, analytical information on one of Nobre's latest orchestral works. But it does not attempt to present deeper insights into Nobre's music and does not situate the work in relation to Nobre's other works. It also does not contextualize the importance of that specific work to Nobre's musical language and compositional development. Richter divides the chapters into separate aspects of his analytical approach, such as formal, melodic, and harmonic analysis. A list of pitch set material is provided in one of the appendices. The document confirms Richter's knowledge as a theorist and conductor, generating interesting and valuable information.

Articles, Reviews, and Interviews

Articles, interviews and reviews on Marlos Nobre and his works abound. In fact, these are the bulk of references about him. A small portion of this material is related to Nobre's orchestral works and there is some mention of his compositional techniques, especially in interviews.

"Marlos Nobre en Londres," by Luis Merino published in *Revista Musical Chilena* vol. 42, no. 169, 1988, pp. 95-96, describes Nobre's musical creation as a clear combination of several styles from the avant-garde styles of the moment, where he consciously extracts elements that he

needs and, at the same time, unconsciously makes use of other elements from Brazilian national folklore. The author emphasizes the personal and characteristic result of Nobre's music, which is intellectual and at the same time, evocative. He confirms Nobre's use of absolute control over aleatoric passages and how the effects reflect the composer's creative imagination and experience. The article is helpful to understand the creative process of the composer.

Another article by Luis Merino "Marlos Nobre, *Cantata del Chimborazo*, Op. 56 para Tenor, Barítono, Coro y Orquesta sobre un texto de Simon Bolívar," was also published by *Revista Musical Chilena*, vol. 38, no. 162, 1984, pp. 154-158. Merino analyzes the three parts of this great piece, which was commissioned for the bicentennial of Simon Bolívar in 1982. The piece was premiered at the Bellas Artes National Theater in Maracaibo, Venezuela. The article explains some musical ideas the composer uses in this piece. The piece was composed in 1982, a period in which the composer had reached maturity and had better defined his musical language and style. The first part is a passacaglia and the principal theme is a series of 16 chromatic notes, each with its own chord. These chords represent a harmonic structure in expansion. The composer utilizes tonality, atonality, polytonality, and some serial resources, all with the intention of simply expressing the musical ideas behind the work. Interestingly, in the second part the composer uses blocks of tonal chords instead of the usual clusters or ecstatic sound blocks characteristic of the time. The third movement recapitulates the passacaglia idea and the piece ends in E major. This article is helpful in understanding the analytical aspect of this cantata, which is the basis for his orchestral piece *Abertura Festiva*, composed a year later.

"Un discurso de Trascendencia: la ponencia presentada por el compositor brasileño Marlos Nobre en el Festival de Maracaibo en noviembre de 1977," by Francisco Curt Lange, was published in *Revista Musical Chilena*, no. 142-144, 1978, pp. 126-130. This article is based on a

summary of Nobre's lecture "La problemática de la Música Latinoamericana," at the Festival Latinoamericano de Música Contemporanea in 1978. It also makes use of additional information in the first edition of *Colonial Sacred Music of Venezuela*, written by composer and musicologist Juan Bautista Plaza, and an edition of music by contemporary composers from Latin America by Curt Lange. Nobre's lecture addresses the difficulties faced by composers in Latin America to publicize their music. He encourages the organization of more music festivals within Latin America, so that Latin American composers do not need to travel so far – to Europe or the United States – to have their pieces performed. He also supports exchanging pieces and programs so that performers, ensemble groups, and orchestras of different countries can perform one another's works. He pushes for better communication between composers and shows interest in creating research centers of information and divulgation in order to promote international music. Nobre emphasizes a need to help young composers understand national music in their native countries and appreciate their rich folklore, in hopes that they might use, for example, Ginastera and Villa-Lobos as models, instead of Penderecki and Prokofiev. The article demonstrates the kind of work Nobre developed in his administrative positions, which were comparable to his ideas as a composer.

"*Ukrinmakrinkrin* de Marlos Nobre," by María Ester Grebe, published in *Revista Musical Chilena*, vol. 22, no. 148, 1979, pp. 48-57, gives a detailed analysis of *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, Op. 17, which was composed in 1964 for soprano, piano, piccolo, oboe, and French horn. The piece was composed during Nobre's studies at the Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires and it has three movements based on indigenous Brazilian texts using the Xucuru dialect. The work presents logical and strict writing in the first movement, while the second movement is free and indeterminate. The third movement displays a combination of the two ideas and finds a balance

between the strict and aleatoric, in favor of elements of pure expression. The harmonic structure of the piece is based on the interaction of these three instrumental groups: voice, piano and the three wind instruments. Each has their own musical lines, which follow a horizontal structure while simultaneously interacting vertically. Grebe describes Nobre's expression of musical ideas within a Baroque context in this piece, exploring his use of organic development from ornamentations, the effects and glissandi through the exploration of colors and the power of the evocation of the human voice. Grebe compares Nobre with Machaut's *Ma fin est mon commencement et mon commencement ma fin*, a rondeau that utilizes a complex technique with binary structure and retrogradation process. It is important to remember that Nobre had a strong training in vocal polyphonic masses, and that the medieval modes through northeast Brazilian folklore remain a big influence in his works. This piece is one of the most important works composed by Nobre, and it affords insights into his development.

Gerard Béhague's review, entitled "Marlos Nobre: Orchestral Vocal and Chamber Music," published in *Latin American Music Review* vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1996), pp. 85-89, makes the following statement:

No other Brazilian composer of his generation has been able to garner such an extraordinary recognition. Indeed, this is due to the sheer creative power and imagination that Nobre's compositions reveal.

The review describes Nobre's orchestral, vocal, and chamber works, along with an informative summary of his biography and compositional style. Béhague describes the pieces from the Léman Classics Recording, which make up some of Nobre's most characteristic and representative compositions during his second and third periods, from 1963 until 1980. The writer describes Nobre's exuberance through an enormous range of instrumental colors and rhythmic construction. In the musical descriptions, Béhague is more informative when describing *Mosaico*, one of Nobre's first displays of exceptional command over sophisticated

techniques and a deep sense of engineering. He also supplies good information on *Sonâncias III*. In that piece, using powerful, individual, and highly expressive style, Nobre combines several of his previous compositional techniques with rhythm, harmonic and formal aspects revealing the beginning of a subsequent more mature stage.

Paul Earls' "Marlos Nobre: *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, Op. 17 and *Mosaico* para Orquestra, Op. 36," published in *Anuario de Investigación Musical*, vol. 8, 1972, pp. 178-180, is a description of two of Nobre's most accomplished works. Earls gives a brief biographical description and explains how the two works belong to two different stages of Nobre's output. *Ukrinmakrinkrin*'s evident success was fundamental to launching the composer's career internationally. Even though the piece is written in the Brazilian indigenous Xucurú dialect, the vocal idiom of the piece is closer to that of Luciano Berio (*Circles*) and Pierre Boulez (*pli selon pli*), not necessarily more primitive. Nevertheless, the piece successfully occupies a middle position between regional and international traditions. The piece is accessible and communicative and constructed for successful presentation. Earls presents *Mosaico* as a piece of three movements, each derived from a single gestural concept. The piece is much more sophisticated than the previous one, and includes use of temporal blocks measured in terms of 'short' and 'normal' breaths. Earls also comments on how quickly Nobre's music became known internationally, and how that could impact his search for a more personal compositional voice.

"An Interview with Marlos Nobre," by Royal S. Brown, published in *Fanfare*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1994, pp. 60-66, is one of the very few English-language resources regarding this composer. Brown begins with a short introduction, giving a little biographical information and citing a few important works. The interview is very useful because it gives Nobre the chance to explain in his own words how the compositional process happens in his mind, as well as how certain influences

play a role in his musical development. Brown asks Nobre to describe Recife, the place where he was born and grew up, as well as the musical environment of his early years. Nobre says he needed to study sociology and anthropology to please his father. The interview concludes with Nobre's comments on his contracts with Léman Classics, EMI, and Deutsche Grammophon.

Another useful interview is “Músicos de Hoy: Marlos Nobre ‘El advenimiento de la electrónica fue un factor decisivo...,’” by Jacobo Romano, published in *Buenos Aires Musical*, May 1971. The article develops through questions posed to Marlos Nobre about the result of the union of art and technology. Nobre gives insights and describes the importance to the sound when art and science work together. The questions aim to better understand the intercorrelation among art, science, and the desire of mankind to comprehend its own existence. Moreover, Nobre describes his musical ideologies and his aesthetic thought. The second half of the interview exposes ideas about Nobre's musical language and compositional techniques.

“Nueve Preguntas a Marlos Nobre,” published by *Revista Musical Chilena*, vol. 33 no. 148, 1979, is one of the most complete interviews done with the composer. Nobre explains the things that influenced him and details developments within his works. He also classifies the periods of his compositional output, which helps scholars understand and analyze his works. Nobre explains the strong influence that northeastern Brazilian folklore represents to his compositional style. He concentrates on the influence of the Maracatu, a carnival procession accompanied by percussive music that is constructed of polyrhythm, large, dynamic crescendos and irregular accents. Nobre also describes typical Brazilian percussion instruments and how that type of folkloric music became a living memory in his blood and heart.

“De Ouvidos Bem Abertos” by Eduardo Fradkin, published by *O Globo Review* in December 2005, is one of the few interviews published in Brazil that affords Internet access. The

article is written in Portuguese, but it gives a great deal of biographical information along with a series of questions, which Nobre answers, referring to his works and influences. Moreover, Nobre comments on the difficulty of making contemporary composers' recordings available in Brazilian stores. He says he sometimes needs to encourage people to acquire them. Nobre also comments on his then-recent winning of the 6th Edition of the Tomás Luis de Victoria in Spain, and how much more his music is appreciated in Europe than in Brazil. Nobre explains that he embraces all of the available techniques, and remarks that he believes in plurality, which is clearly translated through his works.

Another interview, published in *O Globo Review* in August, 2006, is “A Música Forte de Marlos Nobre,” by Clóvis Marques. Marques describes Nobre's success and trajectory as well as his earning of the most recent Tomás Luis de Victoria Prize in Madrid. Nobre was the first Brazilian composer to receive the prize, placing him alongside composers from other countries, such as Harold Gramatges, from Cuba; Celso Garrido-Lecca, from Peru; Alfredo del Mónaco, from Venezuela; and Xavier Montsalvatge and Juan Guinjoan, from the Catalan region in Spain. Marques asks Nobre to describe his *Piano Sonata on a Theme by Béla Bartók*, which was premiered at the prize ceremony in Spain in the summer of 2006. Nobre comments on his major influences such as Debussy, Bartók, and Lutosławski. He describes a number of contemporary composers he admires, such as Sofia Gubaidulina, Henryk Górecki, Krzysztof Penderecki, Kaija Saariaho among others. Nobre also emphasizes the lack of support and opportunities for young composers in Brazil, and talks about how this situation could be remedied through governmental initiatives.

“Nobre: *3 Canções Negras, Desafio XXXII, Canto a Garcia Lorca, 3 Canções de Beiramar*,” by Marc Mandel, published in *Fanfare* vol. 24, no. 1 (September/October 2000), pp.

303-304, is a review on Nobre's works that involve soprano and cello octet ensembles. Although the review is related to the recording by CHANNEL CCS 15598, Mandel writes a great deal about Nobre's origins and major influences. He also describes the pieces and the musical techniques used by Nobre. He compares Nobre to Villa-Lobos, whose *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1* and *No. 5* are also composed for cello octet, the latter with added soprano recorded on the same CD. Mandel acknowledges the competence of both composers.

"Latin-American Masterworks for the Cello," by Michael Jameson, published in *Fanfare*, vol. 23, no. 3 (November/December 1999), pp. 421-422, contains another review on Nobre's *Desafio*. This time, Nobre is recorded along with several other Latin-American composers such as Chávez, Piazzola, Mignone, Diazmunoz, and Gaito. The version of *Desafio* discussed here is the series for cello and piano from 1976. Jameson comments on the presence and impact of the piece, and how much the work has absorbed the techniques of Messiaen and Penderecki.

A review of one of Nobre's most important recordings was published by Diederick De Jong in *American Record Guide*, vol. 57, no. 5 (September/October 1994), pp. 168-169. The review, "Nobre: *In Memoriam, Mosaico, Convergências, Biofera, O Canto Multiplicado, Ukrinmakrinkrin, Rhythmetron, Divertimento, Concerto Breve, Rhythmic Variations, and Sonâncias I and III*," reveals aspects about Nobre as a composer, conductor, and pianist. De Jong describes peculiar characteristics of Nobre's music such as rhythmic vitality, striking sound combinations, spontaneity and roots in Brazilian folklore and nature. De Jong emphasizes Nobre's position as an heir to Villa-Lobos' mantle.

Robert Carl's "Nobre: Orchestral, Vocal and Chamber Works," published in *Fanfare*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1994, pp. 278-280, is based on the same recording. Carl describes Nobre's influences and how they are reflected in his pieces, especially those recorded in this two-CD set. The set

represents the bulk of Nobre's best works. Carl comments on the energetic drive present in Nobre's music, noting that it results from the use of motoric rhythms along with bright colors in the percussion, which translate into a successful blend of modernistic techniques with folkloristic materials. Carl explains the importance of Nobre's utilization of Brazilian musical influences as opposed to the faceless internationalism that dominated the European avant-garde of the 1960s.

Biographical Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

In addition to being discussed in articles, Marlos Nobre and his works are also discussed in some biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias.

In the *Concise Edition of Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 8th Ed. (1994), Nicholas Slonimsky finds that Nobre succeeded in forming a strong individual manner of musical self-expression despite all the efflux of styles he was exposed to as a student. He believes Nobre is one of the few contemporary Latin-American composers who does not disdain utilizing folkloristic inflections in his music. Slonimsky gives a list of works composed by Nobre and some biographical information.

In *Music Since 1900* (1971), Nicholas Slonimsky lists major events that happened from 1900 until 1985.¹⁰ It is surprising that Nobre is only mentioned once, in a concert at the Fourth Inter-American Music Festival in Washington, D.C. on a program of avant-garde music of Latin America in 1967. Nothing about Nobre is mentioned after that.

In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001), Gerard Béhague provides a great deal of biographical information on Nobre followed by a selective list of works, writings and bibliography. Béhague finds that Nobre holds an important position in the contemporary Brazilian music scene. He says that Nobre's rich, eclectic academic background, mixed with

¹⁰ The book was first published in 1971 containing material up to 1969. Afterwards, Slonimsky wrote a supplement in another smaller volume that covers up to July 13, 1985.

influences from different periods and styles of music, gives special characteristics to his musical language that go from tonal to modal, polytonal, and atonal.

The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music, edited by Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople, makes no mention at all of music in Latin America. However, Villa-Lobos and his *Bachianas Brasileiras* are cited in the chapter titled “Reclaiming national traditions and the idea of ‘-ana’ works,” by Herman Danuser. At the end, there is a small description of each person listed in the book. Some biographical information on Villa-Lobos is provided. Chávez’ “Reinventing Traditions,” by Michaels Walter, also receives a lot of attention, but Ginastera, for instance, is not even listed.

The Thames and Hudson Encyclopedia of 20th-Century Music (1986), by Paul Griffiths, mentions Latin American composers. But in Brazil, only Villa-Lobos gets an entry, offering a biographical description and list of his most significant works.

A Twentieth-Century Musical Chronicle-Events from 1900-1988 (1989), compiled by Charles J. Hall, lists major events around the musical world in the twentieth century. Latin American figures such as Ginastera and Villa-Lobos are included but there is no mention of Marlos Nobre.

CHAPTER 2 MARLOS NOBRE

Among contemporary composers in Brazil, Marlos Nobre has come to occupy a prominent position within the Brazilian avant-garde. He is widely considered by Brazilian musical establishments and the world community to be the successor of Villa-Lobos. Nobre's enormous output and strong, individual style are substantial enough to distinguish him as one of today's greatest composers.

The following chapter contains two sections: the first provides detailed biographical information, and the second describes important influences and specific characteristics of Nobre's compositional style. Most of the biographical information presented in this study is related to the composer's career, with very few details regarding his personal life.

Marlos Nobre: The Man

Marlos Nobre was born in Recife, Pernambuco, on February 18, 1939. His parents were music lovers and amateur musicians; his father played the guitar and his mother played the piano. Two of Nobre's cousins were professional musicians and piano teachers. At age five, Nobre began his musical studies at the Music Conservatory of Pernambuco in Recife, first under his cousin Nysia Nobre and then under his other cousin, Hilda Nobre, the latter being a respected pianist in Brazil. Both cousins gave Nobre his first insights into piano technique, which he later developed on his own by studying the method of Leimer-Giesecking.¹ He graduated from the Conservatory in Piano Performance and Theory in 1955. In 1956, he entered Instituto Ernani Braga in Recife, graduating with distinction in Harmony, Counterpoint, and Composition three years later. He studied there under Padre Jaime Diniz and, one year before his graduation, received a scholarship from the Department of Research and Culture of Recife to participate at

¹ Marco, Tomás. *Marlos Nobre - El sonido del realismo mágico*. Madrid: Fundación Autor, 2006.

the National Course of Sacred Music, where he studied under Padre René Brighenti. In the same year, Nobre won the first prize in the Concerto Competition organized by the Symphonic Orchestra of Recife.²

Nobre composed his *Concertino for Piano and String Orchestra*, which he considers his Opus 1, in 1959 and received an honorable mention in the First National Competition of Music and Musicians of Brazil, organized by the Radio of the Ministry of Culture and Education of Brazil. Nobre's first composition for piano, *Nazarethiana*, Op. 2, composed in 1960, received first prize at the German-Brazilian Society Competition of Recife. Consequently, Nobre received a scholarship to study at the X International Summer Course in Teresópolis (Curso Internacional de Férias in Teresópolis), Brazil, where he took composition lessons under H. J. Koellreuter. In the late 1950s Koellreuter first introduced Nobre to the dodecaphonic technique, which became the focus of Nobre's *Variations for Oboe Solo*, Op. 3. After the advanced variations, Nobre went back to Recife and composed his *Trio*, Op. 4, which received first prize in the second annual National Competition of Musicians and Musical Composition of Brazil. A review published in the *Diário de Notícias* reads: "...Marlos Nobre é como uma estrela de intensa luminosidade a quem Villa-Lobos parece haver entregue o cetro da criação musical brasileira."³ With his *First Ciclo Nordestino for Piano*, Op. 5, Nobre won second prize at the National Composition Competition of the State Commission of São Paulo in the same year.

In 1961, as a soloist in his own *Concertino for Piano and String Orchestra*, Nobre received another scholarship to study under Camargo Guarnieri in São Paulo. Among the works composed under Guarnieri's guidance are Nobre's *Theme and Variations for Piano*, Op. 7,

² Ibid., p. 28

³ "...Marlos Nobre is like a star of intense luminosity to whom Villa-Lobos seems to have passed the power of Brazilian musical creation."

which received First Prize at the Young Composer's Award of BMI in New York; *16 Variations on a theme by Fructuoso Vianna*, also for Piano, Op. 8, No. 1, which received First prize at the International Competition of New Music of Brazil; and *Três Canções for Voice and Piano*, Op. 9, which obtained First Prize at the Second Brazilian Song Competition. Along with Guarneri's other students, Nobre founded the Brazilian Society Pro-Music (Sociedade pro Música Brasileira) with the objective of promoting the New Music of Brazil. Nobre became the group's first secretary. He also obtained an administrative position at the Radio of the Ministry of Culture and Education (Rádio do Ministério de Educação e Cultura - Rádio MEC), a position through which he continues to administer and present programs, although there have been some interruptions in this job throughout the years. Nobre also founded and led the Music Renovation Movement in Brazil (Movimento Musical Renovador), which promoted contemporary Brazilian music.

With a scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation, Nobre began his studies as a graduate student at the Latin American Center of the Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires in 1963. While at the Institute, he studied advanced compositional techniques with Alberto Ginastera, the director of the center, Olivier Messiaen, Riccardo Malipiero, Aaron Copland, Luigi Dallapiccola and Bruno Maderna. Nobre also received electronic music lessons from Bozarello and José Vicente Asuar.

This period became very important to Nobre as he defined a more personal style. This style is demonstrated in works he composed in 1963 and 1964, such as *Divertimento for Piano and Orchestra*, Op. 14, and *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, Op. 17, for soprano, piano, piccolo, oboe and French horn. *Divertimento* received First Prize at the Ernesto Nazareth Competition organized by

Brazilian Academy of Music. *Ukrinmakrinkin* became one of the most important works in Nobre's catalogue. He dedicated it to Ginastera.

Returning to Brazil in 1965, Nobre was invited to participate at the First Latin American Composition Seminar at Indiana University. With financial support from the Brazilian government, Nobre traveled to the United States and presented an essay on avant-garde musical notation: "A Problemática da Notação na Música Contemporânea."⁴ In the same year, his *Variações Rítmicas*, Op. 15, and *Ukrinmakrinkin*, were chosen to represent Brazilian avant-garde music at the Fourth Biennale in Paris.

In 1966, Nobre went to Europe on a cultural mission, representing Brazilian music for the government (Itamarati – Department of State/Foreign Affairs). He audited the Spring Festival in Prague and, with *Ukrinmakrinkin*, he officially represented Brazil at UNESCO's International Composition Tribune in Paris. In the same year, Nobre received First Prize in the National Composition Competition of the City of Santos with his piece *Dengues da Mulata Desinteressada*, Op. 20, for voice and piano. He was also declared Best Composer of the Year by the Radio Jornal do Brasil.⁵

The young composer participated at the First Inter-American Festival in Rio de Janeiro in 1967. He performed as the soloist of his *Divertimento for Piano and Orchestra* under the direction of Eleazar de Carvalho and the Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra. In the same year, he wrote his *String Quartet No. 1*, Op. 26, as a commission from Radio MEC. The piece premiered at the Second Festival of America and Spain in Madrid. He founded the New Music Society of Brazil and formed the New Music Ensemble of Rio de Janeiro, which he conducted.

⁴"Problems in the Notation of Contemporary Music."

⁵ His first recording appeared in 1966.

Two commissions by the Brazilian Ballet Company came in 1968. Nobre wrote two ballets: *Rhythmetron*, Op. 27, for 38 percussion instruments, and *Convergências*, Op. 28, for wind orchestra, piano, and percussion. Both ballets premiered in June of that year at the New Theater of Rio de Janeiro under the choreography of Arthur Mitchell from the New York City Ballet. Later that year, Nobre participated at the Fourth Inter-American Music Festival in Washington, D.C. with his *Canticum Instrumentale*, Op. 25, written in 1967. Nobre also made his debut in film music writing for Glauber Rocha's *O Dragão da Maldade contra o Santo Guerreiro* (*The Evil Dragon and the Warrior-Saint*). He became a member of the Music Council of the Museum of Image and Sound of Rio de Janeiro (Conselho da Música do Museu da Imagem e Som do Rio de Janeiro), directed the First Brazilian Congress of Young Performers in Rio de Janeiro, and organized Alban Berg's *Lulu* premiere in Brazil.⁶

In 1969, Nobre was invited to participate at the Music Festival in Tanglewood, where his *Ludus Instrumentalis*, Op. 34, for chamber orchestra, was premiered on August 18. While at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood, Nobre met Leonard Bernstein and worked with Alexander Goehr and Gunther Schüller. Shortly after the festival, Nobre received an invitation to study electronic music for a month with Vladimir Ussachevsky at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center in New York. His *Variações Rítmicas*, Op. 15, for piano and typical Brazilian percussion, was premiered by the Paul Price Manhattan Percussion Ensemble at the Pan American Week. He also participated at the Avant-garde of Americas in Rio de Janeiro with his piece *Tropicale*, Op. 30. *Tropicale* was also performed at the Shakespeare Festival in New York. Nobre composed *Concerto Breve*, Op. 33, for piano and orchestra, which was first played

⁶ Marco, p. 30.

by the great Brazilian pianist Arnaldo Estrela. The piece received Second Prize at the Guanabara Festival and was performed later in the same year in Paris at the Sixth Biennale.

By the end of the 1960s, the young Brazilian composer had already proved his competence. Support from the Brazilian government enabled Nobre to participate in various important festivals of avant-garde music in the United States and Europe during the 1970s, which exposed him to different compositional techniques.

His orchestral piece *Mosaico*, Op. 36, received Second Prize at the Guanabara Festival in 1970. In Europe, Nobre participated in a debate called “Composer, Performer, Public,” organized by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon and Madrid. He performed as a soloist in his own *Concerto Breve* in the opening of the Second Festival of America and Spain. Later in 1970, Nobre attended the International Seminar of Music and Theater in Berlin. At the end of the year, he went to Buenos Aires to participate at the First Festival of Contemporary Music with *Mosaico*. He also received the Prize *Golfinho de Ouro* (Little Golden Dolphin Prize), given to the best composer of the year in Rio de Janeiro.

In 1971, Nobre went back to the United States and participated with his *Concerto Breve* at the Fifth Inter-American Festival in Washington, D.C. He went to Europe for the annual meeting of the Brazilian Section of the International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM) in London. In Paris, he presented his *Concerto Breve*, conducting the ORTF Philharmonic Orchestra with pianist Susana Frugone. That performance afforded him an official position as the director of the National Symphonic Orchestra in Brazil, a job he held until 1976.

In 1972, Nobre received a series of commissions. Among them were *O Canto Multiplicado*, Op. 38, commissioned by the Goethe Institute in Munich, and *Sonâncias I*, for the Artistic Committee of the Olympic Games in Munich. Some of his pieces were performed at the

Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, and *Mosaico* was chosen for the International Rostrum of Composers of UNESCO in Paris. He participated at a symposium about *Problemática Atual da Grafia Musical* (Current problems in musical notation) and at the Seminar on *Música e Meios Técnicos do Século XX* (Music and technical means of the 20th century) at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon. He directed the International Villa-Lobos Competition in Rio de Janeiro and received a prestigious prize: the Order of Rio Branco.

In 1973, Nobre participated of the Tenth Diorama of Contemporary Music in Geneva, Switzerland, with his orchestral work *Biosfera*, Op. 35, and was nominated to become a member of the International Committee of the Arthur Rubinstein Piano Master Competition in Tel Aviv. His *O Canto Multiplicado*, Op. 38, was performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., for the 25th anniversary of the Organization of the Americas. He was awarded the title of Global Personality of Music by the Brazilian newspaper O Globo, and Citizen of the State by the Estado da Guanabara newspaper.

In 1974, *Biosfera*, for string orchestra, was selected by the International Rostrum of Composers of UNESCO and *Mosaico* was presented at the Sixth Inter-American Festival of Washington, D.C. Nobre organized a meeting with the Executive Committee of the International Music Council of UNESCO in Rio de Janeiro while the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra went on a brilliant tour around Europe, performing *Mosaico*. At the same time, some of Nobre's works were presented in important festivals. For example, *Ludus Instrumentalis* was performed at Musik Protokoll in Graz, and *Biosfera* was performed at the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico.

In 1975, *O Canto Multiplicado* was presented at the Campos do Jordão International Festival in São Paulo, *Sonâncias I*, Op. 37, and *Biosfera* was performed at the Festival Tibor Varga in Switzerland. *Ukrinmakrinkrin* was performed at the Cervantino Festival in Mexico, and

the *String Quartet I* was performed at both the Nineteenth Festival Autumn in Warsaw and the Biennial of Brazilian Contemporary Music. Nominated by Yehudi Menuhin, UNESCO chose Nobre as an individual member of the International Music Council during its assembly held in Toronto. Film director Carlos Frederico made the movie *Ukrinmakrinkrin, the Music of Marlos Nobre*, which was awarded best short movie at the Cine Festival of Brasília. In the same year, Nobre established an editorial contract with Max Eschig of Paris and arranged a new contract with the publisher Tonos Verlag of Darmstadt.⁷

In 1976, Nobre's *In Memoriam*, Op 39, was premiered by the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra. From then until 1980, Nobre was a member of the State Council of Culture in Rio de Janeiro. Until 1979, he served as the director of FUNARTE (National Foundation of Art). Through the latter position, Nobre was able to promote several events and concerts in order to generally develop music in Brazil. Through several projects, he aimed to improve performances and bands, cultivate the making of instruments, augment courses in general, and improve choirs. The foundation also supported symphonic orchestras and popular-music groups, and promoted incentives for composition and musical research. Moreover, Nobre participated as a member of the jury at the 50th ISCM Festival in New York and organized the Committee for Latin American Cultural Politics for UNESCO in Panama. One of his recordings under Philips, containing pieces for piano and orchestra, received the award of Best Disc of the Year. Alongside concerts all over the world, Nobre also participated at the New Music Festival in Santos with *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, the Festival in Brasília with his *String Quartet I*, and the Kultur Forum in Bonn with his *Trio*.

Nobre continued a very active agenda in 1977, participating in several music festivals. He presented his orchestral work, *Convergências*, Op. 28a, at the First Latin American Festival of

⁷ Ibid., p. 35.

Contemporary Music of Maracaibo, Venezuela, and *Momentos I*, Op. 41, No. 1, at World Music Week in Bratislava. He also participated in a tour of the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra around the United States with his *In Memoriam*. While in Bratislava, Nobre was elected member of the Executive Committee of the International Music Council of UNESCO. In Brazil, *Convergências* was performed at the Second Biennial of Brazilian Contemporary Music in Rio de Janeiro. The *Quinteto de sopros*, Op. 29, was performed at the National Conference of Composers in Brasília, and *Desafio V*, Op. 31, No. 5, for six cellos, was performed at the First International Violoncellos Festival at Paraíba. Nobre also prepared a lecture-recital on his own piano pieces in Porto Alegre and repeated the program in several other places such as Rio Grande, Pelotas, Bagé, Recife, João Pessoa, Natal, and Florianópolis.

In Memoriam was chosen to be performed at the 52nd ISCM (International Society of Contemporary Music) Festival in Helsinki in 1978. Nobre presented his lecture-recital on his piano pieces in Milan at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory and in other places in Brazil such as Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro, Fortaleza, Natal, and João Pessoa. The Juan March Foundation in Madrid organized a full concert dedicated to Marlos Nobre in which *O Canto Multiplicado*, *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, *Três Canções*, *Quatro Momentos*, Op. 44, and *Sonata sobre um Tema de Béla Bartók* were performed. Nobre was also awarded the Cultural Merit Gold Medal of Pernambuco.

In 1979, Nobre participated in the International Congress of the Musicological Society in Adelaide, Australia. He also took part in the Assembly of the International Council of Music in Melbourne, and the Congress of Music of the 1980s, The New Horizons, in Sydney. In the same year, he became member of the International Jury of Guitar at the France Radio in Paris. Nobre's *Homenagem a Villa-Lobos*, Op. 46, was mandatory piece in the final round of the competition. The Musiculture Festival of Holland in Amsterdam, sponsored by the Beinum Foundation,

performed Nobre's *Rhythmetron* and invited him to lecture on Afro-Brazilian music. Several pieces were recorded there under EMI and OEA. *In Memoriam* was selected by the National Public Radio System Project in the United States to be broadcast over 230 channels. That piece also received several prizes, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Several events occurred in 1980. Nominated by the International Music Center of Südwestfunk of Baden-Baden and the Heinrich Strobel Foundation, Nobre was elected Member of the Selection Committee of the Cine International Tribune. He participated in a Symposium on Latin American Baroque in Rome, where he lectured on the Sacred Music of Minas Gerais. Several programs were exclusively dedicated to his works in 1980. Among them were the International Festival of Contemporary Music in Turin, where they performed *Canticum Instrumentale*, *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, *Quatro Momentos*, and *O Canto Multiplicado*, and the Suisse Romande, a program of three hours dedicated entirely to Nobre. During the Suisse Romande, Nobre premiered *Sonâncias III*, Op. 49. He gave a series of masterclasses at the Real Conservatory in Brussels. *In Memoriam* was performed at the Piestansky Festival in the former Czechoslovakia, and *Três Canções* was performed at the Nordic Music Festival in Stockholm. Nobre was Member of the Jury of the International Competition of Ancona and of the International Guitar Competition at Radio Francia in Paris. He also organized the Second Latin American and the Caribbean Tribune (Trimalca) and the Symposium on Musical Traditions of Latin America in São Paulo. Nobre's *Desafio VII*, Op. 31, No. 7, premiered in Switzerland under his direction with the Young Orchestra of Friburg and pianist Maria Luiza Corker.⁸ Alberto and Aurora Ginastera were among the spectators during this occasion. Nobre participated in the

⁸ Maria Luiza has been considered one of the greatest pianists in Brazil. She has premiered several of Nobre's works for piano solo, with orchestra, and chamber works.

Atelier of Latin American Composers in Buenos Aires and was invited by the Brahms Gesellschaft in Baden-Baden to be a Composer in Residence.

While in Baden-Baden in 1981, Nobre finished his *Concerto for String Orchestra II*, Op. 53, as a commission from the University of Indiana. The piece premiered at the University of Indiana as the opening for the Music of Our Time Festival. At the event, Nobre participated in the Composers' Forum along with Lukas Foss and Milton Babbitt. He also took part in other activities in Europe, such as the premiere of his *Yanomani*, Op. 47, in Friburg, and a full concert of the Suisse Romande Orchestra in which he conducted his own works. This concert featured *Convergências*, *Musicamera*, Op. 8, *Desafio VII*, and *Concertino*, featuring Maria Luiza Corker as a soloist. Nobre also participated at the celebrated congress in Budapest on "The Composer of the 20th Century," and was elected as Vice-president by the Executive Committee of the International Music Council of UNESCO for the years 1981-1982. His *In Memoriam* was performed in France by the Padeloup Orchestra under Dimitri Chorafas at the Champs-Élysées Theater.

In the following year, Nobre married pianist Maria Luiza Corker.⁹ Several of his pieces were performed in Europe and he participated at the Workshop of the Gaudeamus Foundation, teaching a masterclass. His *Ciclos Nordestinos I, II, and III* were selected for the gala concert of the United Nations Day in Paris. Nobre also participated at the Inter-American Music Festival in Washington D.C., with *Sonâncias I*. He was member of the International Jury of the Simón Bolívar Composition Competition in Caracas, along with Ginastera and Penderecki. Nobre also participated of the Contemporary Art Festival in Buenos Aires with *Desafio VII* and received a

⁹ The couple lives currently in Rio de Janeiro with their daughter Karina, born in 1992.

commission by Embratel (Brazilian Company of Communications) to write *Abertura Festiva*, Op. 56bis, for the opening of the Fifteenth National Congress of Technological Communications in Rio de Janeiro. He was later chosen by DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst) to be a composer in residence in Berlin.

In 1983, Nobre wrote *Cantata de Chimborazo*, Op. 56, with texts by Simón Bolívar, as a commission. The piece was premiered in October in Caracas. Nobre participated in some activities in Europe, such as the Assembly of the International Music Council of UNESCO in Stockholm, where he became, once again, an elected member of the institution. He held a position as a member of the International Jury of the Ancona Prize in Italy and wrote two essays: “Problemática da Música Latino Americana” (The problem of Latin American music), and “Technology and the Composer in Today’s World.” The first was presented in Caracas at a Symposium of Latin American Composers. The second was presented at a congress in Rome, sponsored by UNESCO, with the theme “Technology and Culture.”

In 1984, Nobre received a commission from FUNARTE to write a flute piece for the National Competition of Interpretation. He also went to Spain and Luxemburg for the International General Assembly of Young Musicians. There, he founded the Young Musicians of Brazil Institute, becoming its director. Nobre participated in the Latin Intercultural Festival at the University of California in San Diego with *Sonâncias III* and at the International Forum of New Music in Mexico City with *Momentos I*, Op. 41, No. 1. He also participated in the First International Festival of Contemporary Music in Havana, Cuba with *In Memoriam* and *Desafio III*, Op. 31, No. 3, and at the International Festival of ISCM in Toronto with *Tango*, Op. 61. A concert dedicated to music from Brazil presented *Convergências* and *Concerto for Piano and String Orchestra*, Op. 64, in Niza. Also, the Association of Critics of São Paulo selected *Cantata*

do Chimborazo as Best Chorale-Symphonic Piece, and Nobre participated at the Forum on Brazilian Music at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth with *Sonâncias I*.

From 1985 until 1989, Nobre held several administrative positions and traveled many places performing his works. He was so busy that he was unable to compose new works. Nevertheless, those years were equally active and successful for him.

In 1985, Nobre received a Guggenheim Fellowship to be Composer in Residence in New York. He was also elected president of the International Music Council Assembly of UNESCO in Dresden for the years 1986-1987. He participated in the International Festival of the ISCM in Amsterdam with *Sonâncias I*, and at the Inter-American Festival in Washington, D.C., with *Sonâncias III*. He organized the Trimalca in Rio de Janeiro, participated in the International Guitar Encounter in Sevilla with *Prólogo e Toccata*, Op. 65, and participated in the International Music and Dance Festival in Granada with *Desafio III*. He was also elected president of the Brazilian Academy of Music, taking the first chair, which used to belong to Heitor Villa-Lobos.

In 1986, Nobre was elected to become a member of the Brazilian Academy of Art, taking the place of Francisco Mignone (1897-1986). The Brazilian president chose Nobre to be President of the Villa-Lobos Centenary. A variety of Nobre's pieces were performed at several events, such as *Variações Rítmicas*, at the Contemporary Music Festival of McGill University in Montreal; *Prólogo e Toccata*, at the International Guitar Festival in Havana; *Desafio II*, Op. 31, No. 2, and *Quinteto de Sopra*, at the Inter-American Music Festival in Washington, D.C.; *Sonâncias I*, at the International Forum of New Music in Mexico City, and *Concerto Breve*, Op. 33, at the New Music Festival in Santos. Nobre also moderated the Symposium on New International Means for the Presentation of Contemporary Music at the MIDEM in Cannes. He presented his article, "The Role and Situation of the Composer Today," at the International

Society of Music Education in Innsbruck, and put on a masterclass for the Gaudeamus Foundation of Holland at the General International Assembly of Young Musicians in Krakow.

In 1987, Nobre was named member of the International Honor Committee by the MIDEM of Cannes. He presided there over a symposium on musical commission, the Tribune on Dance Video, and a symposium on “Traditional Music-Professional Music.” Along with Graham Green, Luciano Berio, Mauricio Pollini, Michel Legrand, and Yoko Ono, Nobre was selected by Gorbachev to be a member of the Cultural Commission of the Nuclear Disarmament International Forum through the Union of Soviet Composers. He was Member of the Jury and Vice-President for the International Piano Competition in Santander, Spain, and presented an essay entitled, “The Music in Brazil after Villa-Lobos,” at Menéndez Pelayo University and at the Superior Conservatoy in Madrid. In Brazil, he organized the International Assembly of the International Music Council of UNESCO and the International Conference for the Celebration of the Centenary of Villa-Lobos. Afterward, he was elected Executive Director of the Cultural Foundation in Brazil.

In 1988, Nobre was awarded the Great Official of the Order of Merit of Brasília. Festival Marlos Nobre was held in London. For that occasion, the following pieces were performed: *String Quartet I*, *Quinteto de sopros*, *4 Momentos*, *Desafio VII*, *O Canto Multiplicado*, and *Ukrinmakrinkrin*. *The Musical Opinion*, a magazine, published Marlos Nobre’s picture on the cover as Brazil’s leading composer. Nobre participated in several Festivals, such as The Festival of the Americas in Buenos Aires, with *In Memoriam*; the International Festival of Campos do Jordão, with *Convergências*, and the Festival of Bahia, with *Variações Rítmicas*. He was also Jury Member of the Paraíba Competition.

To celebrate Nobre's fiftieth birthday, several events took place in Brazil and the United States. He was also awarded the Official Order of Rio Branco of Itamaraty in Brazil and received a homage by Senator Marco Maciel at the National Congress of Brazil. The Porto Alegre Orchestra organized a concert dedicated to Nobre with his own pieces. Sala Cecília Meireles commissioned him to write *Concertante do Imaginário*, Op. 74, which was performed on its re-inauguration along with these other pieces: *Convergências*, *In Memoriam*, and *Cantata do Chimborazo*. Nobre became a member of the International Jury of the Arthur Rubinstein Master Piano Competition in Israel. He was also a member of the Assessor Committee of the International Competition of Santander and a member of the Jury of the Pilar Bayona de Zaragoza International Competition. Nobre was commissioned by the Bolzano Festival in Italy and the Neuchâtel Chamber Orchestra, for whom he wrote *Concerto for Trumpet and String Orchestra*, Op. 73, and *Quatro Danças Latino-Americanas*, Op. 72.

In 1990, the Autonomous University Radio in Mexico dedicated two hours each day for a month to play Nobre's music. He and his wife were invited to perform *Desafio VII* in honor of Mexican composer Blas Galindo's eightieth birthday at the Second Festival of Mexico City. While in Mexico, Nobre also participated at the Morelia Festival, presenting *Concertante do Imaginário*. He presented his essay, "The Situation of the Latin American Composer Today," at the Latin American Music Encounter. Nobre became then the first Brazilian conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London. The concert he conducted was held at the Purcell Room and was dedicated exclusively to his works: *Biosfera*, *Concerto for String Orchestra II*, *Desafio VII* and *Concertante do Imaginário*, featuring Maria Luiza as pianist.

In 1991, the University of Akron organized the Brazilian Fest 91 and performed *Rhythmetron*. Nobre's work, *Solo I*, Op. 60, for solo flute, was included in the program New Musicians at the New York New School. *Canticum Instrumentale* was performed at the Inter-American Conference of Music Education in Washington, D.C. Nobre's *Tango* was performed at the International Forum of New Music in Mexico. *Concerto for String Orchestra II* was performed at the Inter-American Festival of New Music in Caracas, and *Ciclo Nordestino I* was performed at the Butte Montmartre Festival in Paris. *Beiramar*, Op. 21, was performed at the Unerhörte Musik Festival in Berlin. Several other performances took place in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo that year. *Desafio III* was presented in Rio de Janeiro at the Biennial of Brazilian Contemporary Music, while *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, *Rhythmetron*, *Desafio III*, and *Sonâncias I* were performed in São Paulo during a concert dedicated to Nobre.

Nobre went to Yale in 1992, invited as a visiting Professor of Composition. There, he taught a composition seminar at the New Haven Festival, where his works *Sonâncias I* and *Concerto for String Orchestra II* were performed. Nobre was also part of the jury of the Composition Competition of Yale. His *Tango* was performed at the Piano Marathon of McGill University at Montreal and *Solo I* was included at both the New Music Festival for the New World at the Illinois Wesleyan University and at the Brazilian Serenade at Carnegie Hall in New York. Nobre participated at the International Encounter of Contemporary Music in Montevideo with *Ukimakrinkrin*, and at the International Guitar Seminar with *Momentos I*. He also participated in several festivals in Europe, including Junifestwochen Zurich 92 and Aspekte Festival in Salzburg, both with *Desafio III*. He participated in the International Festival of Contemporary Music in Alicante, Spain, with *Concerto for String Orchestra II*. He was recognized as Man of the Year in the music field by the Biographical Centre in London. In

Spain, he presented his oratorio, *Columbus*, Op. 77. The work, consisting of Nobre's translations of nineteenth-century Mexican poetry, was a commission by the Ministry of Culture in Spain for the 500th Anniversary of the Discovery of America. He presented *Columbus* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Symphony Chorus.

In 1993, Nobre composed *Amazônia*, Op. 85a, as a commission from the Paula Duo. The piece was premiered at the Carnegie Hall in New York. He participated as member of the jury of the first edition of the Alberto Ginastera International Composition Competition. He also participated at the International Forum of New Music in Mexico with *Ciclo Nordestino III*, and at the Summer Garden Festival of the Juilliard School held at the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) with *Sonâncias III*. The magazine, *Classical Guitar*, dedicated its November issue to Nobre.

In 1994, Nobre became an official of the Order of Arts and Letters of France. He participated at the Iberian American Music Congress and at the Society of the 1990s, where he presented the essay, "Tendencies of the Creation of Contemporary Music." He also participated in the International Festival in Espinhos, Portugal, with *Sonâncias III* and *Rhythmtron*, and presented *Desafio II* in Berlin. A series of recordings appeared around that time, followed by reviews in specialized magazines all over the world.

In 1995, Nobre composed *Concerto Duplo*, Op. 82, and participated in another series of recordings. He participated in the Mayo Musical of Murcia in Spain with his *Solo II*, premiered by Dutch clarinetist Henri Bok. The same piece was performed in Alexandria, Italy, along with *Desafio XXIII*, Op. 31, No. 23. Nobre participated in the International Guitar Festival in Erding and in Weikersheim, Germany, both with *Reminiscências*, Op. 78. That piece was chosen as mandatory for the International Competition of Musical Interpretation in Geneva. He also presented *Concerto for String Orchestra II* at the Lincoln Center in New York. Nobre became

president of the International Guitar Seminar in Porto Alegre. He also became president of the Brazilian Olympic Arts Committee at the General Olympic Arts Assembly, which was held in Paris in 1996.

In 1996, Nobre decided to cancel his contract with his publisher, the German company Tonos Verlag. According to Nobre, the company was going through a difficult period of time because of the death of its founder. Therefore, Nobre decided to pass everything edited by that publisher to the Marlos Nobre Edition in Brazil, which functioned primarily online. Nobre returned to New York to participate in the Sounds of Americas Festival, which was dedicated to Brazil. At Carnegie Hall, Dennis Russel Davies conducted the American Composers Orchestra in the performance of *In Memoriam*. A New York Times review called the piece, "the most powerful work of the program."¹⁰ The same concert presented pieces by Brazilian composers Camargo Guarnieri (1907-1993) and Villa-Lobos. Nobre became engaged in a series of master classes at the Juilliard School and Yale, where he also participated at the Brazilian Music Today Symposium. He became a member of the jury of the Colcultura Composition Competition in Bogotá, a place where later he presented *In Memoriam*. Nobre participated in the Music Festival of Vila Seca in Portugal with *Desafio XXXII*, Op. 31, No. 32, and in London at the Eclectic Fusion Festival at the Guildhall School with *Desafio XXXI*, Op. 31, No. 31. At the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, Nobre conducted his *Concertante Imaginário* for piano and orchestra with the London Royal Philharmonic orchestra and his wife, pianist Maria Luiza. Great critical and public acceptance confirmed Nobre's high position in the musical world. *Music and Musician* and *The Music Opinion*, two English magazines, published Nobre's picture on their

¹⁰ Program Notes for *In Memoriam*, Op. 39, by Marlos Nobre.

covers with the title: "The Brazilian leading composer: Marlos Nobre."¹¹ Invited by the Iberian American Music Council, Nobre also participated in the Iberian American Encounter of Composers.

In 1997, Nobre was chosen to become a member of honor of the Werther Benzi Counterbass Competition in Alexandria, where his *Desafio IV*, Op. 31, No. 4, was a mandatory piece. He also became a member of the jury of the International Guitar Competition in the same city. Nobre was a visiting professor at the University of Arizona and the University of Oklahoma. Throughout the year, several theses and dissertations were written about Marlos Nobre in Brazil and abroad. These works are listed in the bibliography section of this study.

In 1998, *Rhythmetron* was performed in Paris and Montreal for the first time. Nobre presented a lecture "Artistic Teaching" at the Latin America and Caribbean Encounter in Havana. His ballet, *Saga Marista*, which was composed the year before, was performed in Recife. Its orchestral version was presented in Oklahoma under Jorge Richter. Nobre participated at the International Guitar Festival in Zarauz, Spain, with *Reminiscências*, and at the Twenty-second International Gulbenkian Festival of Contemporary Music in Lisbon, with *Sonâncias III*. His *Concerto Duplo*, for two guitars, was premiered in São Paulo. *Amazônia II*, Op. 85, for big jazz orchestra, was commissioned by the Carlos Gomes Foundation. The piece premiered at the Festival of Pará in Belém. Nobre appeared as a soloist in his *Concerto Breve* in El Salvador. *Sonâncias III* was performed at the Antidogma Festival of Turin in Italy.

In 1999, the composer turned sixty, celebrating forty years of artistic dedication. Several events across the globe memorialized his birthday. Among them were the performance of *Desafio XXXII*, with Teresa Berganza and the Iberian Cello Ensemble in Amsterdam, and the

¹¹ Program Notes for *Concertante do Imaginário*, Op. 74, by Marlos Nobre.

performance of *Divertimento for piano and orchestra*, with the Philharmonic of Berlin in Paris. The latter was performed at the Development and Culture Forum, sponsored by the Inter-American Bank of Development. Nobre participated in the Close Encounters series in New York, with *String Quartet I*. He was also awarded the Gold Medal of Merit of the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation of Pernambuco, where *Amazônia* was performed. The Conservatory of Pernambuco promoted the Marlos Nobre Festival with his expositions, conferences, competitions, and concerts. There, *Rhythmetron*, *Sonâncias I*, *Variações Rítmicas*, *Desafio III*, *Concertino for piano and strings*, and *Concertante do Imaginário* were performed. The University of São Paulo celebrated Nobre's sixtieth birthday at the University Encounter of Contemporary Music, where *Rhythmetron* was performed. Nobre's complete works for piano were performed in Maceió, Alagoas. The Latin American and Iberian Music Society offered a concert consisting exclusively of Nobre's works in London, where *Concertante do Imaginário* and *Concerto for String Orchestra II* were performed. *Sonâncias I* was performed at both the Ninth International Festival of Contemporary Music in Bucharest, Romania, and the *Musique du XX^eme Siècle* in Paris.

In 2000, Nobre's *Musicamera* was performed by the National Orchestra of Porto at the 500th Anniversary of the Discovery of Brazil, in Portugal. In Geneva, the 500 years were celebrated with *Variações Rítmicas*, and in Rome with the premiere of *Concerto for percussion and orchestra*, Op. 89. Nobre was awarded the Thomas Hart Benton Medallion from Indiana University. He was a guest composer at Texas Christian University, where he was awarded the Cecil and Ida Green Honors Professor. He participated in the Second Latin American Music Festival held at TCU in Fort Worth, where his *Trio*, *Convergências*, and *Divertimento* for piano and orchestra were performed. A guest composer at the University of Georgia in Athens, Nobre

participated in the International Conference on Latin American Musical Globalization and Preservation. For the occasion, he presented an essay, “Tradition and Innovation of Latin American Music: the Point of View of a Composer.” The University of Georgia also held a Symposium on Brazil’s 500th anniversary.

In 2001, *Desafio III* was performed in Warsaw at the Chopin Academy with Nada Myesscouhg at the violin and Larisa Giro at the piano. *Sonâncias III* was performed at the Odessa Festival in Ukraine and Clélia Iruzun performed *Sonata Breve* in London. He composed *Amazônia III*, Op. 91, as a commission for the Apollon Foundation in Bremen. The piece was premiered at the Bayreuth Festival of New Music at the Markgräfliches Opernhaus, featuring baritone Renato Mismeti and pianist Maximiliano Brito. The piece toured Europe, appearing in places like Lucerne, Salzburg, Munich, and Leipzig, among others. The Iberian Cello Ensemble, along with soprano Pilar Jurado, toured Holland, Belgium, Germany, and Poland, performing several of Nobre’s compositions. In the United States, pianist Michele Adler performed *Ciclo Nordeste I*, *Ciclo Nordeste III*, and *Homage to Arthur Rubinstein*, Op. 40, at Carnegie Hall. Several other pieces were performed in Brazil and Latin America. Among them was *Convergências*, performed at the opening of the Contemporary Music Festival in Havana by the Cuban National Symphonic Orchestra under the direction of Jorge de Elías.

In 2002, the Apollon Foundation in Bremen celebrated the centennial of Brazilian poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade with the performance of *O Canto Multiplicado* in Bayreuth, Vienna, Berlin, and London. The piece contains texts written by the poet. *Concerto Duplo* was performed in a tour of the United States by the Assad Brothers and the Symphonic Orchestra of the State of São Paulo, under the direction of John Neschlin. Nobre participated at the Oulo Music Festival in Finland with *Tango*, and at the Selhleswig-Holstein Festival in Germany with

Sonâncias I. He also performed as a soloist in his *Divertimento* with the El Salvador Symphony Orchestra in El Salvador under the direction of Germán Cáceres. He premiered *Desafio VI*, Op. 31, No. 6, for string orchestra, with the Städtische Musikschule Erlenbach Orchestra in Erlenbach, Germany.

In 2003, the Bremen Foundation in Germany commissioned Nobre to write *Amazônia Ignota*, Op. 95, for 4 flutes, piano, percussion, and baritone. The piece premiered at the Margrave of Bayreuth Opera Theater and toured several cities in Germany, Austria, England and France. Nobre participated at the Guanajuato Festival with *O Canto Multiplicado*, and at the Contemporary Music Festival in Buenos Aires with *Rhythmetron*. He was the principal composer of the 2003 Percussion Day in São Paulo with *Concerto for percussion and orchestra* and *Rhythmetron*. A prestigious concert was held in Nobre's honor at the International Festival of Chamber Music in Recife with *Partita Latina*, Op. 92, *Desafio I*, *Concerto for String Orchestra II*, and *Concertante do Imaginário*.

In 2004, the Guggenheim Museum in New York organized a series of events in February, during which *Canto a Garcia Lorca*, Op. 87, was performed by soprano Serena Benedetti and the New York Philharmonic orchestra under the direction of Roberto Minczuk. Nobre was composer in residence – the first in the history of the festival – at the Campos do Jordão International Winter Festival. He had been invited by the director of the festival, Roberto Minczuk, for whom Nobre wrote his orchestral work *Kabbalah*, Op. 96. That piece was premiered and recorded at the festival in July of that year along with his *Fanfarra Campos do Jordão*, Op. 97. Several of Nobre's works were performed in Goiânia, including *Concertino* for piano and orchestra, *Nazarethiana*, *16 Variações sobre um Tema de Frutuoso Vianna*, *Toccatina*, *Ponteio e Final*, Op. 12, and *Tema e Variações*, Op. 7. He participated at the Havana

Festival with *In Memoriam* and *Passacaglia*, conducting the Cuba National Symphony Orchestra. For that occasion, he also gave a series of masterclasses and was awarded the Honor Diploma of the Art Institute of the University of Havana. Nobre participated in the Guanajuato Festival, presenting *Partita Latina* with cellist Carlos Pietro and pianist Edison Quintana. He conducted masterclasses at the Simón Bolívar University in Caracas. Also that year, Nobre wrote *Concerto Armorial II*, Op. 98, for flute and orchestra, commissioned by the Brazilian Bach Association. *Lamento e Toccata*, Op. 99, was also composed that year as a commission from the guitar duo Joaquim Freire and Susana Mebes.

In 2005, Nobre participated in the Festival de l'Île de France in Paris, presenting *Três Canções de Beiramar*, Op. 21a, *Três Canções Negras*, Op. 88, *Canto a Garcia Lorca*, and *Desafio XXXII* with the Iberian Cello Octet. Nobre was elected to become a member of the Honors Committee of the World Philharmonic Orchestra along with personalities such as Maurice Béjart, Henri Dutilleux, Barbara Hendricks, Seiji Osawa, Lorin Maazel, and Ravi Shankar. He dedicated most of his time to working on *Cantorias I*, Op. 100, and *Cantorias II*, Op. 101, for solo cello. The first piece was commissioned by the Brazilian Antônio Menezes and the second by the Mexican Carlos Prieto. *Cantoria I* references Bach's Suite in D minor for solo cello. *Cantoria II* is based on Bach's Cello Suite in C Major. Nobre plans to write a series of Six Cantorias based on Bach's Six Cello Suites. Seven CD's were recorded featuring Nobre's works. On November 29, Nobre was declared the winner of the sixth edition of the Tomás Luis de Victoria Prize, in Spain. The decision was achieved unanimously for the first time in the prize's history. Nobre was selected among 57 composers from 17 countries to win the prize. The

international jury wrote that its members were impressed by "the excellent trajectory of Nobre, the projection and importance of his works and the originality of his aesthetic thinking".¹²

In 2006, Nobre participated in the School of Art-Music Composers Festival, where his *Sonata Breve* was performed by pianist Edison Quintana, and his *Momentos I and II* were performed by guitarist Juan Carlos Laguna both at Manuel Ponce Hall in Mexico. In the United States he participated in the East Carolina University New Music Festival where his piece *Passacaglia for orchestra* was performed by the University Symphony Orchestra under Jorge Richter. Antonio Meneses performed Nobre's *Cantoria I* for solo cello at the Society of Americas Auditorium in New York. Nobre was awarded the prize "Cultural Roots" by the Cultural State Council of Pernambuco. The Music Festival of Caracas was dedicated to Nobre, with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra performing *Kabbalah* at the opening concert under the direction of Alfredo Rúgeles. Later in the Festival his *Sonante I* for solo marimba was performed by Gustavo Olivar. The composer participated in the 2006 Ginastera Festival with his *Desafio VII* for piano and string orchestra performed by pianist Alberto Portugheis and the Southbank Symphony under Matilda Hofman. Also at the occasion, his *Concertante do Imaginário* was performed by the same pianist with the London Schubert Players under Daniel Mazza. Fabio Zanon performed *Momentos I* and *Rememórias* for solo guitar. The performances took place at the St. John's Smith Square in London. The Hollands Vocal Ensemble conducted by Fokko Oldnhuis performed Nobre's *Agô-Lonã* for mixed choir in Utrecht and Amsterdam. In the same year, Nobre received the VI Edition of the Thomás Luis de Victoria prize in Madrid and a concert of his pieces presented *Três Canções Negras*, *Canto a Garcia Lorca* both by

¹²Nobre, *Personal Website*. Accessed on November 2006.

soprano Pilar Jurado and pianist Horacio Lavandera along with the world premiere of Nobre's *Sonata for Piano on a Theme by Bartók*.

Nobre currently holds many important titles, such as president of the National Music Committee of IMC/UNESCO, director of Contemporary Music Programs at Radio MEC-FM of Brazil, president of Jeunesses Musicales of Brazil, and president of the Marlos Nobre Editions of Brazil. Since 1986, he has directed two radio programs entitled "Contemporary Music," dedicated to contemporary music with commentary, and "Musical Language," where he presents music from the Baroque period to the present, exhibiting their important composers and compositions. Both programs are broadcast once a week at Radio MEC FM 98.9 MHz. The former plays on Saturdays at 10 p.m., and the latter on Fridays at 10 p.m. He is constantly composing and receiving commissions from all over the world. As a composition professor, Nobre receives about fifteen students in his home to discuss their composition works on the last Saturday of each month.

Marlos Nobre: The Composer

Marlos Nobre has earned enormous respect over the years among the public and musicians all over Brazil and abroad. In the late 1960s, he already occupied a prominent position among Brazil's most promising composers. In order to understand Marlos Nobre's position in the Brazilian musical scene, it is important to note some of the aspects of the musical division in Brazil and in Latin America during the twentieth century.¹³

It was not until 1922, with the advent of the *Semana de Arte Moderna* (Week of Modern Art), that the artistic scene in Brazil began criticizing the prevailing academicism and rejecting

¹³ Even though Brazil developed similar trends as most of the other important musical centers in Latin America, a generalization of all these countries has always been a mistake from a scholastic point of view. Each country or at least area should be treated separately allowing scholars to be able to study each case in a deeper perspective. Therefore the author of the present document will only briefly mention the most important facts that occurred in other Latin American countries in order to illustrate their relation to Brazil.

strict obedience to traditional aesthetic schools. Several factors led to the modernist movement in Brazil. The most direct and influential aspects were put forth in poet Oswald de Andrade's¹⁴ (1890-1954) futuristic ideas, the premieres of painter Anita Malfatti¹⁵ (1889-1964) and sculptor Victor Brecheret (1894-1955), and – especially – through the poetry of Mário de Andrade¹⁶ (1893-1945). Mário de Andrade became the most influential figure of the modernist movement in the musical life of the country. The practical results of the modernist movement in Brazil put more emphasis on arts and literature. The most important composer of the movement was Villa-Lobos,¹⁷ who had already established a great deal of his compositional vocabulary by 1922 after composing works such as *A Prole do Bebê*, vols. 1 and 2, some of the *Chôros*, and the ballets *Amazonas* and *Uirapuru*. Thus, the movement had a minimal influence on music and affected only generations of musicians who came after Villa-Lobos.

In his, *Música Contemporânea Brasileira*, musicologist José Maria Neves exposes the goals of the modernist movement and its leader, Mário de Andrade, in reassuring and promoting the work of young Brazilian artists connected to the movement. The movement declared “direito permanente `a pesquisa estética, atualização da inteligência brasileira, estabelecimento de uma consciência criadora nacional, pela unânime vontade de cantar a natureza, a alma e as tradições

¹⁴ Oswald de Andrade was one of the founders of Brazilian modernism along with Mário de Andrade, Anita Malfatti, Tarsila do Amaral and Menotti del Picchia. They formed the so-called Group of Five. Oswald de Andrade's famous “Manifesto Antropófago” (Cannibalist Manifesto) was published in 1928. Its iconic line is “Tupi or not Tupi: that is the question.” It describes the cultural strength of Brazil by “cannibalizing” other cultures. Cannibalism became a way for Brazil to assert itself against the cultural domination of Europe in a post-colonial period.

¹⁵ The first exhibition of Malfatti was on December 12 of 1917. The artist with her ideas close to cubism shocked the public and received several years of rage and criticism from the most conservative specialists.

¹⁶ From the twenty volumes that comprise the complete writings of Mário de Andrade, eight substantial volumes are related to music. The other volumes are dedicated to essays on arts and literature as well as original poems, novels, short stories, and literary criticism.

¹⁷ Even though Villa-Lobos only presented his quasi-post romantic works at the first concert of the Semana de Arte Moderna, he suffered the same negative reaction from the traditional public, who was neither prepared nor open to modern ideas.

brasileiras, e daí, banir para sempre os “postiches” da idéia européia.”¹⁸ (... establishment of a permanent rights to aesthetic research, updating of the Brazilian intelligentsia, establishment of a creative national conscience based on the unanimous desire to sing nature, the soul, and Brazilian traditions, and from there, abolish the “clichés” of European art definitively).

It is important to note that Mário de Andrade’s main point was to awaken national consciousness. Because of this idea, the Brazilian musical scene benefited and suffered dramatic consequences. Unlike other nationalistic figures in Latin America, Mário de Andrade did not completely reject European techniques. He believed that the use of European techniques would be the only way to integrate Brazil’s own race and culture. He believed that it was important to use sophisticated European techniques to deal with what he called “barbarian mentality.” In a verse of his *Paulicéia Desvairada*, he defines himself: “Sou um tupi tangendo um alaúde.” “I am an Amerindian, who herds a lute.” Andrade affirmed

Brasil sem Europa não é Brasil não, é uma vaga assombração ameríndia, sem entidade nacional, sem psicologia técnica, sem razão de ser.¹⁹

(Brazil without Europe is not Brazil, it is only a vague Amerindian ghost, without national entity, without technical psychology, without a reason to be.)

At the same time, Andrade did not believe in international music and believed less in universal music. He says

Não há música internacional muito menos música universal; o que existe são gênios que se universalizam por demasiado fundamentais, Palestrina, Bach, Beethoven, ou mulheres que se internacionalizam por demasiado fáceis, a “Traviata”, a “Carmem”, “Butterfly”. Porém, mesmo dentro desta internacionalidade e daquela universalidade, tais músicos e tais mulheres não deixam nunca de ser funcionalmente nacionais.²⁰

¹⁸ Neves, José Maria. *Música Contemporânea Brasileira*. São Paulo: Ricordi, 1981.

¹⁹ Azevedo, Luiz Heitor Corrêa de. *Músicos do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1950, p. 312.

²⁰ Andrade, Mário de. *Aspectos da Música Brasileira*. São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editora, 1965, pp. 28-29.

(There is no international music or even universal music; what exists is a small group of geniuses who become universal for being overly fundamental, as Palestrina, Bach, Beethoven, or women who become international for being overly easy, “Traviata,” “Carmen,” “Butterfly.” Nevertheless, even within the internationalization of the latter and the universalism of the former, such musicians and such female figures never stop being functionally national.)

Andrade believed in using European compositional techniques in a reformed way. That could lead to the birth of a real Brazilian style of music, which could become universal at some point. He explains

...partindo do particular para o geral, da raça para a humanidade, conservando aquelas características, que são o contingente com que enriquece a consciência humana.²¹

...([one goes] from the particular to the general, from race to humanity, preserving all the characteristics that enrich the human conscience.)

The music composed in Brazil during the first two decades of the twentieth century was dominated by European influences. Although pre-nationalist Brazilian composers searched for a national identity, their styles represented a result from traditional dominating forces from Italy, France, and Germany, with their Romantic and somewhat Impressionistic influences. In the eyes of Andrade, the only true Brazilian composer was Villa-Lobos, whom Andrade defended from the attacks of conservatives and traditionalists. Although aware of Villa-Lobos’ positive and negative qualities, Andrade believed in and advertised the brilliant future career of the young composer.

As observed by José Maria Neves, Andrade’s musical nationalism movement contained similar reforming characteristics to those of modernism in general, with the same principle of reaffirming Brazilian nationality and carrying the same anti-elitist ideology. These ideas, along with the urge to disassociate Brazilian art from post-romantic techniques and adopt contemporary techniques, placed Brazil’s ideas among the trends of other reformation groups in

²¹ Andrade, Mário de. *Música, doce Música*. São Paulo: Livraria Martins Ed., 1963, p. 115.

Latin America, especially the so-called *Renovación Musical* (Musical renovation) groups in Argentina (1930s) and in Cuba (1940s). These movements' supporters were believed to be influenced by the Brazilian movement of the 1920s. Nevertheless, the other Latin American movements differed from Brazil's because they remained extremely connected with the Neo-movements in Europe, with particular influence from neoclassicism.²²

In his, *História da Música no Brasil*, Vasco Mariz provides a long list that separates composers and classifies them according to their compositional tendencies. This classification, however, presents composers in a chronological order, rather than properly by the compositional aesthetics they followed and their accomplishments. This study's author does not intend to list and classify those composers. However, some composers who directly or indirectly influence Nobre's music need to be addressed.

From the first generation of nationalist composers who studied under Mário de Andrade, Mozart Camargo Guarnieri (1907-1993) remains one of the most important figures in the twentieth-century Brazilian musical scene. Guarnieri became the most conscious composer in the nationalism movement. His nationalist ideas, although anachronically focused on modalism and polyphony, influenced many other composers. These composers studied under Guarnieri and followed the ideas of the so-called Guarnieri school, one of the most important in the country. Influenced by Mário de Andrade, many composers tried to follow their own ways in order to remain connected to the aesthetics related to the search for national identity. After the 1940s, nationalism began to diminish slightly in Brazil, and some composers became more influenced

²² Neoclassicism became a strong compositional tool used by several Brazilian Nationalistic composers after the 1930s. Several examples are found in Villa-Lobos's output from the 1930s as well as a new trend followed by several of Mário de Andrade's students.

by European dodecaphonic techniques, which were brought to Brazil by Hans-Joachim Koellreuter²³ (1915-2005). Nobre studied with Koellreuter in 1959.

The nationalist school and Koellreuter each played important roles in dividing compositional tendencies in Brazil. Two currents emerged from the 1930s and 1940s. Some composers adhered to the importance of tonality and nationalist features, and others broke from traditional rules and opened doors for the future.

Some nationalist composers in Brazil adopted the techniques of certain twentieth-century European composers such as Debussy, Bartók, and Stravinsky. But more avant-garde compositional techniques, such as those found in the music of Schoenberg, would be less compatible with the Brazilian nationalist aesthetic of adopting its folk music, which is rich in modalism and complex, intricate rhythms.²⁴

The Second International Congress of Composers and Music Critics, held in Prague in 1948, was an important influence on Brazilian composers, who found themselves between the nationalist school of Guarnieri and the most advanced ideas spread by Koellreuter and the group *Música Viva*.

The final document published after the Prague Congress urged composers to adhere to their national musical cultures and avoid the failing trends of internationalism. This document was widely debated in Brazil by both nationalists and the *Música Viva* group. It is important to remember that, although the latter group was the only alternative to late nationalism in Brazil, its members never intended to criticize or threaten the aesthetic of nationalism. Koellreuter and his

²³ The arrival of Koellreuter in Brazil caused a great impact in the musical scene. He became the leader of the group *Música Viva*, which first appeared in 1931. In 1946, the group issued a manifesto against folkloristic nationalism, which led many composers to see it as a strong disruption of national values and a foreign intrusion in the country's musical scene.

²⁴ Bezerra, Márcio. *A Unique Brazilian Composer – A Study of the Music of Gilberto Mendes through Selected Piano Pieces*. Brussels: Alain van Kerckhoven Éditeur, 2000, p. 15.

group wanted composers to understand that folkloric material held great value, and that its elements should be used only when assimilated into each composer's personal musical language.²⁵

The resolutions of the Prague Congress resulted in several composers of the Música Viva group deciding to review their aesthetic positions. Important names such as Cláudio Santoro (1919-1989) and César Guerra-Peixe (1914-1993) abandoned the twelve-tone technique in favor of Guarnieri's style.²⁶

On November 7, 1950, Guarnieri published a direct attack on Koellreutter and the twelve-tone system in Brazil's major newspapers. His "Carta Aberta aos Músicos e Críticos do Brasil," (Open letter to the musicians and music critics of Brazil) combines earlier writings of Mário de Andrade with ideas from the Prague Congress. Guarnieri also sent the letter to many composers, performers, music critics, conservatories and schools of music in many parts of the country.

Koellreutter replied to Guarnieri's letter with another open letter under the same title on December 28, 1950. Several prominent Brazilian intellectuals, such as Menotti del Picchia (1892-1988), Eurico Nogueira França (b. 1913), Edino Krieger (b. 1928), and Patrícia Galvão (1910-1962) defended Koellreutter in public. However, the rift was formed and a strong polarity emerged between the two schools as Brazilian composers were forced to choose between nationalism and internationalism.²⁷

²⁵ Neves, p. 19.

²⁶ Cláudio Santoro confessed to have abandoned Koellreutter due to his political convictions. Santoro believed he had to follow the decisions of the Prague Congress due to his link with the Communist Party. Guerra-Peixe, on the other hand, had personal convictions to adhere to nationalism once he discovered the folklore of Northeast Brazil and published his book *Maracatus do Recife* in 1955.

²⁷ The duality remained active for many decades even in popular music, where Bossa Nova, and, later on, the movement known as Tropicália were dismissed by many as bourgeois and antinational popular styles. (Bezerra, p. 19)

Nevertheless, some of the most prolific composers fell within both traditions, having some inclination to one or another compositional aesthetic. According to Vasco Mariz's classification in his *História da Música no Brasil*, these composers belonged to a post-nationalist or independent generation. Marlos Nobre fits into the latter classification.

In the early 1960s, the situation changed. With the death of Villa-Lobos in 1959, the aesthetic of nationalism seemed to have reached an end. Other important nationalist composers such as Camargo Guarnieri, Francisco Mignone (1897-1986), and Radamés Gnattali (1906-1988) had already composed the best of their nationalistic works, and there was no further reason to insist on such an aesthetic once its best leaders had exhausted the style.

It became vital to discover alternative compositional techniques. It was no longer possible to exclude Brazilian composers and their music from international innovations and advances. The generation of the 1960s was free to produce a creative symbiosis between serialism and national tradition. The results can be seen in the works of the group of composers from Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Bahia.²⁸ It is important to note that the result was so necessary that it happened naturally, without the need of any manifesto or imposition.²⁹

The development of Nobre's musical language combines a series of influences from different periods and styles of music. In his concept, the greatest formal structures are those of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century classical works, which he combines with modern techniques. Nobre's multifaceted music represents the influence of Debussy, Bartók, Stravinsky, and Lutosławski and displays a vigorous, distinguished rhythmic vitality, colored by elements

²⁸ All these distinct groups of composers were formed through Koellreutter. He is responsible and takes the credit for the dissemination and formation of these schools in Brazil.

²⁹ Corker-Nobre, Maria Luiza. *Aspectos Técnicos e Estéticos de Sonâncias III de Marlos Nobre: uma Introdução à Problemática da Intuição versus Cerebralismo*. Dissertação de Mestrado. Rio de Janeiro: Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1995.

from Brazilian folklore and nature, striking sound combinations, and spontaneity. Nobre's music ranges from tonal to freely-atonal, and is chromatic and dissonant at times. It makes use of serial and sonoristic techniques, yet has references to tonal centers.³⁰

According to Nobre, the composers he counts as influences were capable of innovation in music without necessarily breaking with tradition. The influence of Bartók and Lutosławski can be seen in Nobre's juxtaposition of diatonic folk material with dissonant harmonies, polyrhythmic structures, rhythmic drive, textural effects and the use of non-traditional scales. A national identity is evident in all of Nobre's works, but because he does not rely on patterns from folk and popular idioms, his music cannot be seen as nationalistic.³¹ Afro-Brazilian rhythms from Nobre's home town, Recife, highly influenced the regular pulse and metrical points of reference in his works and can be associated with their strong rhythmic freedom. His home town exposed him to all sorts of rhythms derived from traditions, such as those of *Maracatu*,³² *Frevo*,³³ *Caboclinhos*,³⁴ *Bumba-meu-boi*,³⁵ *Candomblé*,³⁶ and *Cirandas*.³⁷ The composer explains

³⁰ De Jong, "Nobre," in *American Record Guide*, vol. 57, no. 5 (Sept/Oct. 1994), p. 168-169.

³¹ Béhague, Gerard, "Nobre, Marlos," in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. (2001), vol. 18, p. 566.

³² Maracatu – popular music inspired by a dance characteristic of a popular carnival parade. The parade follows a woman carrying in her hand a richly adorned doll. The members of the group dance to the rhythm played by percussion instruments.

³³ Frevo – a carnival dance highly rhythmic and performed by brass, wind, and percussion instruments. It is popular on the streets and in salons.

³⁴ Caboclinhos – also known as cabocolinhos is a carnival procession. Most of their parades are represented by dancers who dress like popular native indigenous figures taken from literature.

³⁵ Bumba-meu-boi – comic-dramatic dance in which people along with fantastic animals participate. The whole plot is developed around the death and resurrection of the ox (boi).

³⁶ Candomblé – Afro-Brazilian religion.

³⁷ Cirandas – Circle dance songs based on simple tunes which are traditional and passed down orally from generation to generation.

En mi infancia escuché, danced y vibré con los Maracatus, los Frevos, los Caboclinhos, los Bumba-meu-boi, la Nau Catarineta. Pero, sobre todo, eran los Maracatus y su percusión alucinante y mística los que desarrollaron en mí un sentido rítmico profundo e inconsciente que luego alimentaron, hoy y siempre, mi creación musical. La polirritmia, los grandes crescendi sonoros, los contrastes dinámicos, los acentos irregulares, sometidos siempre a una poderosa pulsación métrica constante, los profundos toques graves de enormes ganzás, agogôs, bombos, atabaques, son impresiones sobresalientes de mi infancia que están vivas en mi sangre y en mi corazón, más que en mi cabeza.³⁸

(Throughout my childhood, I listened to, danced to, and cheered with Maracatus, Frevos, Caboclinhos, Bumba-meu-boi, and the Nau Catarineta.³⁹ But it was the Maracatu and its incredible and mystic percussion that developed in me this profound and unconscious rhythmic sense that has always been fundamental in my musical creation. The polyrhythm, the big crescendos, the dynamic contrasts, the irregular accents within a powerful constant pulse, the deep low sounds generated from ganzás [maracas], agogôs [African iron bells], bombos [low drums], atabaques [afro-Brazilian conical-shaped, single-headed hand drum similar to a conga drum], are the strongest impressions I have from my childhood. They are very much alive in my blood and my heart, much more than in my head.

The development of Nobre's musical language went through several phases, from tonal to modal, polytonal, atonal, serial, and aleatoric until he defined his own musical language and style, which became a combination of everything he had learned and filtered. Nobre's output can be divided into five periods:

- First Period (1959-1963) – Heavy influenced by Villa-Lobos and Ernesto Nazareth.
- Second Period (1963-1968) – Combination of serial and aleatoric features with Brazilian traditional rhythms.
- Third Period (1969-1977) – Search for an identity
- Fourth Period (1980-1985)⁴⁰ – Early Mature Style

³⁸ Marlos Nobre in an interview. "Nueve Preguntas a Marlos Nobre" in *Revista Musical Chilena*, vol. 33, no. 148, 1979, pp. 37-47.

³⁹ Nau Catarineta – epic episodes like the odyssey of a romantic story of a ship that leaves Recife to go to Lisbon. The story is performed through balls of intricate choreography and dramatic effects.

⁴⁰ This author believes that Nobre's fourth and fifth periods share similar characteristics. Therefore, they are both called Mature Style. However, because of slight differences later mentioned in this study, the Mature Style can be divided into two parts: the first years and the later years.

- Fifth Period (1990-present)⁴¹ – Later Mature Style

The first period clearly spans from his *Concertino for piano and orchestra*, Op. 1⁴² until *Divertimento for piano and orchestra*, Op. 14, during the years 1959 through 1963. All of the pieces from this period display the direct influence of Villa-Lobos and Ernesto Nazareth (1863-1934).⁴³ Nobre explains his respect for Nazareth:

Ernesto Nazareth es el compositor popular brasileño más importante, el que cristalizó y dejó en el papel nuestras mejores características populares.⁴⁴

(Ernesto Nazareth is the most important popular Brazilian composer. He materialized and registered on paper our best popular characteristics.)

From *Concertino* until *Divertimento*, one can see the evolutionary line that Nobre followed. While the *Concertino* is tonal, with some amplification on its harmonic field through a progressive tonal expansion, the *Divertimento* is clearly polytonal with some dodecaphonic treatment.⁴⁵ This evolution follows a clear line according to the composer: tonal-modal-polytonal-atonal. This progressive line is continuous; however, the composer does not disregard his previous experiences. According to Nobre, his compositional taste and style is a clear mix that results from an evolutionary process. He explains

...no siento la música dentro de un sistema predeterminado, dentro de un esquema teórico fijo, intelectualmente estudiado. A medida que mi campo de información musical-estética y técnicamente- se fue ampliando, mediante la incorporación de nuevos elementos, éstos fueron sumergiéndose en mi subconsciente, y allí permanecieron expandiéndose,

⁴¹ Even though the characteristics from the later part of the fourth period remain the same up to the present, this dissertation will just focus on characteristics up to 2004, the date of the latest orchestral work included in this study.

⁴² Marlos Nobre composed many pieces before his formal opus 1. He destroyed all those pieces, however, believing they were immature. Even though he believes his opus 1 represents a work of a young, immature composer, he kept it in his catalogue because he likes the piece.

⁴³ Nazareth was a Brazilian pianist and composer who, according to Villa-Lobos, represented the true incarnation of the Brazilian musical soul.

⁴⁴ Marlos Nobre in an interview. "Nueve Preguntas a Marlos Nobre," pp. 37-47.

⁴⁵ Even though the *Divertimento* falls in a more atonal language, the dodecaphonic section is built on six notes taken from the *Tenebroso* tango by Nazareth.

moviéndose hasta tomar cuerpo en nuevas ideas, una confusión geral, estallando aquí y allí en obras, según las circunstancias.⁴⁶

(...I don't feel the music into a pre-determined system within an intellectually studied fixed theoretical system. As my musical field of information-technically and aesthetically-got amplified, through the incorporation of new elements, they got immersed in my subconscious expanding and moving until they got transformed into new ideas, a general confusion, exploding in works here and there, according to the circumstances.)

This continuous line evolves from the *Concertino* and is followed by *Trio*, Op. 4, composed a year later with the presence of dodecaphonic ideas within an atonal center. Afterwards, there are works such as *Três Canções*, Op. 9, where the melody of the third song is completely atonal. The line finally culminates in *Divertimento*, which is polytonal and atonal, with some serial moments.

The second phase goes from *Variações Rítmicas*, Op. 15, until *Dia da Graça*, Op. 32bis. It starts in 1963, when Nobre is in Buenos Aires studying at the Torcuato di Tella Institute, and lasts until 1968. Although Nobre learned a great deal of dodecaphonic technique under Koellreutter, it was at the Torcuato Di Tella that he got more involved with the technique. The seeds had been planted earlier, but Nobre needed some time to mature the idea. At the same time, his compositional process had bent more in the direction of polytonality rather than tonality from the beginning. Nobre explains that it is important to know that there are two time lines in composition: a historical time line and the composer's own time line. The composer needs to go through some experiences until he finds his own voice or ponders some ideas to maturity. According to Nobre, if a composer pushes certain things too early in the process, he will not be a good composer and his pieces will sound forced, somehow. He said a composer must be patient

⁴⁶ Marlos Nobre in an interview. "Nueve Preguntas a Marlos Nobre," pp. 37-47.

and wait for the right time to incorporate certain techniques, otherwise the compositional process cannot be natural.⁴⁷

This explains why Nobre did not follow directly to dodecaphony or serial techniques after his lessons with Koellreutter. The techniques only matured when he was at the Torcuato Di Tella. According to Nobre, his natural direction after the evolution he achieved in his first phase was toward dodecaphony and serialism. Nevertheless, he followed a slightly different path. His evolutionary line did culminate in dodecaphony, but not the German type of dodecaphony exhausted by Schoenberg, Berg and Webern. Nobre was never convinced that the only way out for a contemporary composer of that time was multi-serialism or total serialism.⁴⁸ Nobre followed the so-called Latin dodecaphony, such as the one seen in Italy, Argentina, and Brazil, which was represented by composers such as Luigi Dallapiccola and Alberto Ginastera. This type of dodecaphony differs from the German version in that it is freer and without extremes, wherein musical expression becomes more important than theory.

Variações Rítmicas is the first work in which Nobre combines dodecaphonic or serial techniques along with the use of typical Brazilian rhythms. His next works also follow that evolutionary line: dodecaphony, serialism, multi-serialism, then indeterminacy. Nevertheless, none of these techniques are followed strictly, but simply used as a means for possibilities. In *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, Op. 17 (1964), Nobre uses serial techniques with even more freedom than in *Variações Rítmicas*. He also uses aleatoric procedures in *Ukrinmakrinkrin* for the first time.

⁴⁷ Conversations with Marlos Nobre – Interview by the author. Rio de Janeiro, December 12, 2006.

⁴⁸ In fact, *Polyphonie X* by Pierre Boulez has been the maximum stage of this type of evolution. The piece has just been performed twice. After the performance of the work in Baden-Baden in 1951, Boulez declared his disappointment with the piece and explained that although exclusively governed by theoretical rules and those being efficiently explored, the result was not effective and too much artificial. The piece remains unpublished, however there are two recordings of *Polyphonie*: one of the premiere by the Sinfonieorchester in Baden-Baden conducted by Hans Hosbaud, another one of the first movement only by the symphony orchestra of the RAI conducted by Bruno Maderna. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyphonie_X, accessed on January 31, 2007).

Subsequently, he makes extensive use of serialism in works such as *Canticum Instrumentale*, Op. 25 (1967), and *String Quartet I*, Op. 26 (1967). *String Quartet I* later serves as the basis for his orchestral work, *Biosfera*, Op. 35. Although Nobre never planned to strictly follow any aesthetic school, it is interesting to note that his 1968 piece, *Tropical*, Op. 30, for piccolo, clarinet, piano, and percussion is completely aleatoric.

Nobre's third phase is the synthesis and integration of all processes assimilated by the composer. The result of a combination of serialism, indeterminacy, and eventual polytonal techniques culminates in a creative process that allows the composer to use all means available without distinction or discrimination in order to fulfill his musical expression. While several other composers were fighting to discover something new – different theories or new ideas – without necessarily paying attention to the musical result, Nobre understood the real need for a composer to find the appropriate means to express his own musical ideas. He then realized that the means were all there ready to be used. He explains

Mi ideología musical es no tener ninguna ideología o estética preestablecida. Sin procurar definir muy claramente mi posición, lo que pienso es muy difícil o imposible. Me siento como una antena estimulada continuamente por las sollicitaciones del mundo exterior, ese mundo ambiente cada vez más complejo, más amplio, más sorprendente. Me siento tironeado por múltiples excitaciones sensoriales tal cual una esponja, yo absorbo y abarco campos sensoriales cada vez más vastos. El Arte es permanentemente mutable. Cada época tiene sus límites propios hasta que llegue un artista que descubre el manto y encuentra nuevos caminos. Yo ejercito mi actividad como si estuviera siempre a punto de levantar el manto que cubre nuestra época. No me preocupo en ser “innovador”, lo que sería ridículo como actitud previa.⁴⁹

My musical ideology is to not have any pre-established ideology or aesthetic. I try to define my position very clearly but I believe it to be very difficult and perhaps impossible. I feel like an antenna, continuously stimulated by the sollicitations of the exterior world, this world each day more complex, wider, and overwhelming. I feel surrounded by multiple sensorial excitements and, just like a sponge, I absorb and embrace these growing sensorial stimulations. Art is constantly changing. It faces its own limitations every time

⁴⁹ Romano, Jacobo. “Marlos Nobre: El advenimiento de la electrónica fue un factor decisivo... Musicos de Hoy” in *Buenos Aires Musical*, May, 1979.

until the next artist lifts the blanket and finds new ways. I exercise my activity as if I were always on the verge of lifting that blanket. However, it is not my goal to be an “innovator,” which would be a ridiculous attitude.

Nobre’s third period contains pieces that range from his *Concerto Breve*, Op. 33, up to *Homenagem a Villa-Lobos*, Op. 46, respectively from 1969 until 1977. It is during this phase that Nobre develops his interest in simultaneously using a fixed notation along with a more flexible notation. His process of using a more flexible notation is found through the use of proportional notation and aleatoric notation. It is important to note that even when he uses aleatoric notation, Nobre writes down every single note, and determines the duration of the sequence. This characteristic becomes an important tool for the composer, who is able to combine his musical thought with basic rhythmic memories of his childhood, extracted from the Maracatus of Recife: rhythmic liberty and polyrhythmic structure within a fixed, rigorous pulse. This trend is notable in every piece written during the third phase until his latest works.

On the other hand, works such as *Concerto Breve*, *Ludus Instrumentalis*, Op. 34, then *Mosaico*, Op. 36, *Sonoridades*, Op. 37, *O Canto Multiplicado*, Op. 38, and *In Memoriam*, Op. 39, all present a mixture of combinations extracted from the Nobre’s special use of serial and aleatoric techniques alongside static blocks of sound. Still, each work is individually developed and, at the same time, connected through Nobre’s particular rhythmic impulse. The above mentioned works are those that follow the composer’s evolutionary line most specifically. Consequently, they become the most significant translation of Nobre’s personal style of the 1970s.

It was not until the 1980s, though, that Nobre assured himself of a more determined posture related to what the real outcome of his personal and individual musical language and style would be. He began his fourth period having matured after a two-year period of silence.

Even though he previously explored all of the characteristics of his more mature period, Nobre was able to develop and extend his musical language and compositional process.

From *Yanomani*, Op. 47 (1980) forward, Nobre emerged with a more defined aesthetic thought. In her 1994 article, “*Sonâncias III*, Op. 49 de Marlos Nobre,” Brazilian pianist and scholar Maria Luiza Corker-Nobre, the composer’s wife, emphasizes how three aspects of Nobre’s music – rhythm, harmony, and form – evident in his music as early as the 1970s, gain stronger character in the works that date after 1980. By the 1990s, Nobre began to rely more frequently on tonal formal structures and a combination of traditional and contemporary elements, as one can see in later works such as *Passacaglia for Orchestra*, Op. 84, and *Kabbalah*, Op. 96. The direct use of Nobre’s serialism and the presence of the twelve tones are almost inexistent in his fifth period.

Nobre extended his previous compositional ideas and entered his fourth and fifth periods as a continuation of his earlier development. However, he did so with more focus on important traditional features such as melody, form, and tonality, which were completely abolished by the most experimental aesthetic. From the beginning of the 1980s on, rhythm becomes a stronger characteristic in his works through Brazilian rhythmic manifestations, especially those connected with Northeast Brazil. His harmony becomes more dense and compact, with a complex texture where tonal elements are not completely excluded. The composer shows preference for polytonal clusters that cannot be defined by traditional harmonic analysis. His polyphonic writing has also grown stronger. Free harmonies resulting from the independent lines create a certain conflict that makes perfect sense in the compositional context. Beyond any use of traditional forms, the composer emphasizes the importance of formal structure, making it a strong characteristic of his works. Each piece has its own formal structure, which represents the search for a new structural

conception as a means of realizing new ideas. The principle of development and organic variation of the motives and initial ideas has become the strongest obsession of the composer.

It is important to note that, although Nobre makes use of certain traditional compositional tools, his music should not be seen as neoclassical because he does not follow the same tradition as Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Hindemith, and other neoclassical composers who followed the classical model more closely. According to Nobre, he studies the great classical composers, “and through deep attention to their works he extracts the formal, structural, and creative impulses that lie underneath the great masterpieces of the past.”⁵⁰

Nobre’s compositional trajectory has followed a continuous evolutionary line. However, it is necessary to point out that while the composer developed works to follow a logical and progressive evolution, he also composed works that were completely outside his main stylistic focus. Some of these works, composed in different time periods, can fit within the aesthetic perspective and compositional style of his first period. When asked about this, the composer said:

The stylistic exceptions of my progressive, creative process are many, and they belong mostly to ideas that were born earlier but that had no time to grow and mature because I was being exposed to new ideas all the time, which moved me to write something else. However, those early ideas that were left on the side still in their embryonic stage never died, and they reappeared in those works.⁵¹

Some of the works that can be classified as stylistic exceptions are: *Agô-Lonã*, Op. 16, *Praianas*, Op. 18, *Três Coros de Natal*, Op. 19, *Dengues da Mulata Desinteressada*, Op. 20, *Beiramar*, Op. 21, *Modinha*, Op. 23, *Sonata Breve*, Op. 24, *Rhythmtron*, Op. 27, *Convergências*, Op. 28, *Quinteto de Sopros*, Op. 29, the whole series of *Desafios*, Op. 31, and

⁵⁰ Corker-Nobre, Maria Luiza. “*Sonâncias III*, Op. 49 de Marlos Nobre” in *Latin American Music Review*, 1994.

⁵¹ Conversations with Marlos Nobre.

Dia da Graça, Op. 32. Most of these compositions were based on folkloric motives from northeastern Brazil and harmonically belong to Nobre's first stylistic period. Nevertheless, the composer affirms that he never worried about being faithful to any stylistic aesthetic. His main objective as a composer is to express his musical ideas. Writing those pieces allowed his mind to rest. Otherwise, he would have been mentally tortured.⁵²

Other pieces ended up being written anachronistically, and this has become another feature of the composer: writing pieces based on past ideas or rewriting them in a different context. The composer brings ideas from the past and makes them part of the present as if there were no time separations, thereby making the past a feature of the present. Examples of this include: *Homage to Rubinstein*, Op.40, the basic idea of which is based on the Presto variation of *Concerto Breve* for piano and orchestra; *Momentos I, II, and III*, Op. 41, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, for guitar; *Quarto Ciclo Nordeste*, Op. 43, which follows the same idea as the previous three, written eleven years earlier and based on the folklore of northeast Brazil; *Quatro Momentos*, Op. 44; *Variações sobre um tema de Béla Bartók*, Op. 45, and *Homenagem a Villa-Lobos*, Op. 46, which takes the initial idea of the series of *Desafios* but develops it differently. Two pieces analyzed later in this study, *Biosfera*, Op.35, and *Concerto II for String Orchestra*, Op. 53, also deserve mention in this section. *Biosfera* is an extension of Nobre's *String Quartet I*, and *Concerto II for String Orchestra* contains material from the *String Quartet I* in its third movement. The *String Quartet* belongs to the second period, while the other two pieces belong to Nobre's third and fourth phases respectively.

Nobre's orchestral works belong to his third, fourth, and fifth phases. They display a mature approach and represent Nobre's strongest characteristics. Unfortunately, these works had

⁵² Ibid.

not been studied and analyzed until now. The orchestral works have been the medium through which Nobre has had the widest possibilities to express his musical ideas and thoughts. The works discussed in this study summarize all of his compositional development, ranging from 1968 to 2004.

CHAPTER 3 SEARCH FOR AN IDENTITY

This chapter discusses Marlos Nobre's orchestral pieces that were composed in the late 1960s and the 1970s. They demonstrate how Nobre developed his compositional techniques. These pieces represent the composer's increasing involvement with advanced techniques. The pieces discussed below belong to the third period and were composed after the composer had developed a more personal and definite musical language. All of the characteristics present in these works remain part of his writing style even when he reaches a more mature age in his fourth phase.

Unlike the original catalogue, this author decided to put *Convergências*, Op. 28, after *In Memoriam*, Op. 39. Although *Convergências* was written based on a ballet of 1968, the ideas explored by the composer represent developments used more often in the late 1970s, rather than the late 1960s. Thus, there is a discrepancy in the opus number sequence.

***Biosfera*, Op. 35 (1970)**

In 1967, Nobre wrote his *String Quartet No. 1*, Op. 26, named *Biosfera*. The work has three movements: I – *Variantes*, II – *Interlúdio*, III – *Postlúdio*. It was commissioned by the Broadcasting Music Service of Brazil and premiered on October 23, 1967 by the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro String Quartet. The performance took place at Sala del Instituto de Cultura Hispânica (Hispanic Cultural Institute Hall) in Madrid at the II Festival de Música de América y España (Second Festival of Music from America and Spain).

In 1968, Nobre was commissioned by Teatro Novo to compose a ballet, and he decided to explore ideas from the first and second movements of his *String Quartet no. 1*. The result was the ballet *Biosfera (Pas-de-deux)*, Op. 26a, in one act and two scenes: I – *Variantes*, II – *Nocturnal*. It was premiered on October 16, 1968 at Teatro Novo in Rio de Janeiro by the

Brazilian Ballet Company, with choreography by Arthur Michell and Nobre conducting the Música Nova String Orchestra.

Biosfera, Op. 35, for String Orchestra was written in 1970. Nobre used the score from the first and second movements of his *String Quartet No. 1* and added a double bass line. It was premiered on January 27, 1971, at the Auditorium of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, performed by the Gulbenkian Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Carlos Eduardo Prates. In 1974, the piece received the International Rostrum of Composers Prize/IMC/UNESCO in Paris.

Although it used the same music as the *String Quartet I*, the orchestral version of the piece presents some differences. For instance, the tempo markings for the first two movements in the string quartet are quarter note equals 80 and quarter note equals 50, respectively, while in the orchestral version the first movement is played slower with quarter note equals 72, and the second movement is slightly faster with quarter note equals 52. Other changes are found when comparing both scores; there are slight modifications in the measure numbers with some addition and subtraction of notes and rhythmic figures. This gives the orchestral version of *Biosfera* a completely new feeling.

Unlike the *String Quartet I*, *Biosfera for String Orchestra* has two movements: I – *Variantes*, II – *Postlúdio*.¹ The composer decided to end the piece on the second movement of the original string quartet, which makes it a completely different piece. According to the composer, the title comes from the Greek *bios* (life) and *sphaira* (sphere), which means life on earth. The main idea in the piece is to represent the birth, development and death of life on earth. This process generates a cyclical idea, where death completes a circle of reintegration into

¹ Although the second movement of the string quartet is named “Interlúdio,” the second movement of *Biosfera for String Orchestra* is named “Postlúdio.”

nature. It is not a surprise that the composer writes a piece thinking of more abstract philosophical allusion even though the piece is far from descriptive. Nobre has always been a devoted student who is proud of his humanistic formation. He explains

...fui sempre um leitor compulsivo, lendo na biblioteca do meu pai, em Recife, todo Dostoevsky nos meus 14 anos, e Roger Martin du Gard "Os Thibaud", em francês, ou "Narciso e Goldmundo", de Herman Hesse, que eram meus livros de cabeceira no período de formação, ao lado de Mário de Andrade, muito Mário de Andrade, cujas cartas a Manuel Bandeira eram minha fascinação. Estudei e me formei em Sociologia e Economia Política com professores como Gilberto Freyre e Pinto Ferreira na Universidade de Recife, e convivi em minha juventude com Ascenço Ferreira e Ariano Suassuna, permanentemente. Como vê, sou essencialmente músico e compositor, mas não somente isto. Orgulho-me de minha ampla formação humanística². . .

...I have always been a compulsive reader. When I was 14 I read everything by Dostoevsky from my father's study in Recife. *Les Thibault* by Roger Martin du Gard in French and *Narcissus and Goldmund* by Herman Hesse used to be my night stand books along with Mário de Andrade during my growing days. I read much of Mário de Andrade and I was fascinated by his letters to Manuel Bandeira. I studied and got a degree in Sociology and Political Economy under professors such as Gilberto Freyre and Pinto Ferreira at the University of Recife and spent a great deal of my youth together with Ascenço Ferreira and Ariano Suassuna. As you see, I am essentially a musician and a composer, but that is not it all. I am very proud of my wide humanistic education. . .

The piece was composed from four notes that come from the name BACH, in German (Bb, A, C, B natural). (Figure 3-1) In a dramatic way, the first movement depicts mankind's spiritual vocation in confrontation with the harsh realities of life, such as oppression, suffering, and death. It presents transformations on the series derived from the BACH theme and has a strong character in its harmony and rhythm.³

The second movement presents a more positive attitude of hope through a more melodious, polyphonic context, where the dramatic climax explores the theme in a polyphonic complexity.

This represents the hope carried by mankind that love will prevail over brutality.⁴

² Marques, Clóvis. *A Música Forte de Marlos Nobre*, Rio de Janeiro: O Globo, August 21, 2006.

³ Program Notes for *Biosfera*, Op. 35, by Marlos Nobre.

⁴ Program Notes for *Biosfera*, Op. 35, by Romain Goldron, Léman Classics.

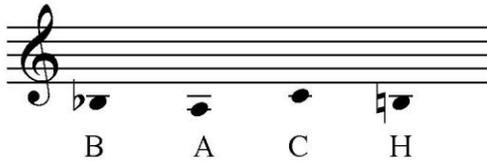


Figure 3-1 BACH motive used by Marlos Nobre in several of his pieces

Although the composer gives two subtitles for the continuous movements in the piece, the work is actually one big movement.⁵ (Table 3-1)

Table 3-1 *Biosfera*, Op. 35: formal structure

1. <i>Variantes</i>					2. <i>Postlúdio</i>	
	m.25	m.61	m.106	m. 161	m. 189	m. 222
Intro.	Var. I	Var.II	Var. III	Var. IV	Var. V	
A.....						B

The first movement is written in variation form. It begins with 24 measures of vertical accented chords that first spell Bb, C, A, B natural, Bb from low to high. This BACH motive is addressed by the composer in several different pieces, as one can see in some of the following works presented in this study. It becomes a personal signature. When asked about this, the composer replied

...Não sei exatamente quando e por quê surgiu o meu interesse pelo tema BACH e sua utilização em minhas obras. Tenho lembranças claras de, por volta de meus 16 anos, ter caído em minhas mãos uma publicação da *Revue Musicale de Paris*, que publicava um anexo de partituras de compositores vivos. E o que li, especificamente, era uma Hommage a Bach, tendo vários compositores escrito peças para diversos instrumentos sobre o nome BACH. Lembro-me especificamente de uma peça de Francis Poulenc, para piano, e outra de Alfredo Casella também para piano, que na época me interessaram muito. Depois estudando a *Arte da Fuga* de Bach, impressionou-me quando na última e inacabada Fuga, o próprio Bach cita o tema do seu nome. Bem, a partir daí, a semente estava plantada e começou a germinar em meu subconsciente. A primeira obra em que utilizo o tema BACH foi no *Divertimento para piano e orquestra* de 1963, escrito em Buenos Aires, sobretudo no 2º movimento. Posteriormente foram seguindo outras obras, onde o tema era utilizado ocasionalmente no meio da composição, às vezes como ligação temática de seções distintas.

⁵ The same division cannot be used for the *String Quartet I*. There, the first movement is really separated from the second one. The orchestral version contains a held note in the double bass provides continuity.

No *Quarteto de Cordas n° 1* de 1967 entretanto é a primeira vez em que o tema é utilizado como germe, como fonte fundamental, como idéia germinal de toda a obra. O 1° movimento é portanto uma série de variantes sobre o tema BACH e o 3° movimento é inteiramente baseado nele.

Depois veio *Biosfera*, que como você sabe, é uma extensão do *Quarteto de Cordas* (1° e 2° movimentos) escrita em 1970.

Depois em 1981, escrevi o *Concerto para Cordas II* cujo 1° movimento é inteiramente baseado no tema BACH. O motivo BACH entretanto seria usado esporadicamente em outras obras, como citação de uma fonte, para mim, importante de constante inspiração.⁶

...I don't know exactly when and why I developed the interest in the BACH motive and the use of it in my works. I remember well that when I was around 16 years old, I got acquainted with a publication from *Revue Musicale of Paris* which published an appendix of scores of living composers. I remember reading specifically some type of Homage to Bach, where several composers wrote pieces for many different media using the BACH motive. I remember specifically two pieces that caught my attention at the time: a piano piece by Francis Poulenc and another one, also for piano, by Alfredo Casella. Moreover, studying the *Art of Fugue* I became really impressed when Bach used his own name's theme on the unfinished last Fugue.

From that point on, the seed was planted and started germinating in my subconscious. I first used the BACH theme in my *Divertimento for Piano and Orchestra*, especially in the second movement, written in Buenos Aires in 1963. Later, I used it in some other pieces too, but just occasionally in the middle of the composition or sometimes as a thematic connection between two different sections.

The *String Quartet* of 1967, however, is the first piece in which I use the theme as the basic foundation source for the whole composition; the first movement is, therefore, a series of variations on the name BACH and the third movement is entirely based on it.

Then, in 1970, came *Biosfera*, which is an extension of the *String Quartet No.1*. In 1981, I wrote the *Concerto for String Orchestra II*, in which the first movement is entirely based on the BACH theme. The motive appears in some other works as a source of constant inspiration.

Although the structure on the first page is mainly vertical, each instrument plays the twelve tones of the chromatic scale without repetition. The double bass line always doubles another instrumental line and the tone cluster formed by the down bow is always a four-note chromatic pitch set. (Figure 3-2)

⁶ Conversations with Marlos Nobre.

BIOSFERA

1. VARIANTES

Marcel Nohre

Violento $\text{♩} = 72$

1. Viol.
2. Viol.
Viola.
Vcl.
Ch.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cs.

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Ch.

Figure 3-2 Opening page for *Biosfera*, Op. 35, measures 1 through 24

This introduction part is followed by five variations. Although the first 24 measures state the motive and material to be explored in the variations, it is difficult to call it a theme because the variations do not follow a similar melodic or harmonic structure. They make use of Nobre's own serialism, which in this case explores the use of all twelve tones in a chromatic result from the intervals present in the BACH motive.

Variation I (mm. 25-60) develops the twelve-note line in a clearly horizontal way, independently creating a counterpoint. Nobre proves he has mastered polyphonic writing by paying attention to important contrapuntal rules. For instance, while one voice skips in a certain direction, the others either remain on the same notes or move a step in an opposite direction. The composer explores all possibilities of motion: parallel, similar, contrary and oblique. At the end of this section there is rhythmic diminution. This also accelerates the presentation of the twelve pitches in all voices. While it takes about fourteen measures to introduce all pitches in the beginning of the variation, it takes only two bars toward the end of it. This section demonstrates the use of pitch prolongation, a strong characteristic in Nobre's writing. Nobre uses this technique to create tension in the score, emphasizing the dissonant, uneasy harmonies. The composer continues to use the twelve-note motive, each time with more freedom. (Figure 3-3)

Variation II (mm. 60-105) continues the polyphonic idea with the inclusion of canonic gestures. The lines develop different rhythmic figures and play nearly independently. The instruments now play a five-note chromatic pitch set, which connects it to the first page. The canonic gestures are intercepted by tremolos and glissandi that explore the BACH motive transposed to different pitches. (Figure 3-4)

15 Tranquillo

Marcato

Figure 3-3 Horizontal twelve-tone development of Variation I mm. 25-41 (left). Rhythmic diminution at the end of Variation I and beginning of Variation II mm. 53-64 (right)

80

87

Figure 3-4 Tremolos and Glissandi around BACH motive of Variation II, mm. 80-91

Variation III⁷ (mm. 106-160) displays the composer's knowledge of advanced instrumental techniques. Strings play pizzicato glissandi, as indicated in the score. (Figure 3-5) Measures 117 through 120 present the five-note chromatic pitch set in the eighth notes played pizzicato, which anticipates the idea to be developed. The score indicates that the strings should play in pizzicato as mandolins. This creates some special effects that add to the idea of advanced instrumental technique explored earlier in the variation. Then the instruments play chord tremolos. Each instrument, except double bass, gets three notes to play in a chord, forming all together twelve pitches. The section ends with instruments playing "col legno." This effect, produced by performers striking the strings with the wooden part of the bow, contains a dry, muffled type of sound that prevents one from hearing any definite pitches. (Figure 3-6)

Variation IV (mm. 161-188) presents twelve tones played in blocks by the instruments, completing all the pitches either vertically or horizontally. Then they play a five-note chromatic pitch set again with tremolo, sul ponticello in measures 167 and 168. This technique of playing at the bridge of the instrument produces a type of eerie sound. When one adds tremolo to it, one gets the most effective sound result. The tremolos use the notes E (Vc), Eb (Vla), D (Vn2), F (Vn1), and F# (Cb), starting in this order, this time moving the five-note chromatic pitch set in a parallel direction. In measure 172, there is a change of pitch set to C-C#-F-F#G [01256], going back to [01234] in Eb-E-F-F#-G in m.182.

Variation V (m. 189-221) begins with the climax of the movement. The twelve notes are played within one measure (m. 189). After the climatic moment, the piece follows a continuous diminuendo. The chords change, but preserve the twelve-note idea until measure 217, when a set of repeating chords displays the twelve notes again, finalizing the movement. (Figure 3-7)

⁷ Variation III begins one measure earlier in the *String Quartet I*, Op. 26 (1967).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Variation III, measures 101-114. The first system (measures 101-110) is marked 'L'istesso tempo' and 'senza vibr.'. It features a melodic line in the viola and cello parts, characterized by pizzicato glissandi (pizz. gliss.) and accents. The dynamics range from mezzo-piano (mp) to fortissimo (ff). The second system (measures 110-114) continues the melodic line with various articulations such as 'IV C pizz.', 'IV C.', and 'pizz. ribattente'. The dynamics remain at fortissimo (ff).

Figure 3-5 Pizzicato Glissandi from Variation III mm. 106-114

The first movement merges into the second movement, *Postlúdio*, which comes in one section. The strings play in harmonics and set the atmosphere for the movement, which, as described earlier, represents a more positive attitude of the hope carried by mankind that good will prevail over evil. The atmosphere is slow and peaceful, and it gives birth to a melodic line first played by the viola and then imitated by the cello. This melody is built using the twelve tones through four-note chromatic sets derived from the BACH motive. (Figure 3-8)

III - IV G.
 piano, marcato
 mf.

VI.I
 VI.II
 Vla.
 Vc.
 Ch.

VI.I
 VI.II
 Vla.
 Vc.
 Ch.

Violento - Mezzo Mosso

VI.I
 VI.II
 Vla.
 Vc.
 Ch.

Figure 3-6 Variation III mm. 115 through 131 with [01234] motive from measures 117-120 followed by mandolin-like section mm. 121-124, followed by string chordal tremolos

rit. . . . Pesante - meno mosso

217

VI. I
VI. II
Vie.
Vc.
Cb.

2. POSTLUDIO

222 Estatico (♩=52)

VI. I
VI. II
Vie. Tutti
Vie. Solo
Vc.
Cb.

Figure 3-7 End of first movement and beginning of second movement, mm. 217-227

Viola

Figure 3-8 Viola solo line of the second movement, mm. 228-239

After the melody is transposed and played by the cello, the movement enters in a passage of effects where the instruments play an extension of the harmonics displayed in the beginning of the movement. The composer uses both “natural harmonics” and “artificial harmonics.” The so-called artificial harmonics are produced two octaves higher than the actual note. This effect is noted with a small diamond shape note on the perfect fourth above the real note. Performers then lightly touch these higher perfect fourth notes in order to produce the harmonics. (Figure 3-9)

The image displays a musical score for an artificial harmonics passage, spanning measures 245 to 256. The score is arranged in a system with five staves: Violin I (Vl. I), Violin II (Vl. II), Viola (Vla.), Cello/Double Bass (C.Vc./Vcl.), and Cello (Cb.).

- Measure 245:** The Cello part begins with a melodic line marked *pp*. Above the main notes, small diamond-shaped notes indicate artificial harmonics. The Violin I and II parts also feature these diamond-shaped notes, with the Violin I part marked *pp* and the Violin II part marked *pp*. The Viola part is marked *pp*. The Cello/Double Bass part is marked *pp*. The Cello part is marked *pp*.
- Measure 251:** The tempo is marked *Poco Meno* (♩ = 50). The Violin I and II parts are marked *pp senza rigore*. The Viola part is marked *pp*. The Cello/Double Bass part is marked *pp*. The Cello part is marked *pp*. The instruction *simile armonicos* is written above the Violin I and II parts.
- Measure 254:** The instruction *TUTTI* is written above the Cello/Double Bass part. The Violin I and II parts are marked *pp*. The Viola part is marked *pp*. The Cello/Double Bass part is marked *pp*. The Cello part is marked *pp*. The instruction *simile armonicos* is written above the Violin I and II parts.

Figure 3-9 Artificial harmonics passage mm. 245-256

The melody comes back again. This time it is more developed and in a contrapuntal format, having all instruments play the melody in a canonic imitation. The counterpoint gets more intense each time until it reaches the climax of the movement in measure 274, when instruments play the BACH motive again in a frenetic, intensive way using tremolos. (Figure 3-10)

The piece decreases gradually and the melody comes one more time in the end, played by the viola, the cello, and again by the viola. The piece ends in a slow, static way.

The image displays a musical score for measures 269 to 283. It is divided into three systems of staves for Violin I (Vl. I), Violin II (Vl. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.).

- System 1 (Measures 269-271):** Shows the beginning of the section. Dynamics include *cresc.* and *f cresc.*. A *div.* (divisi) marking is present above the Violin I staff.
- System 2 (Measures 272-277):** The section reaches its peak. The tempo is marked *stringendo* and *Marcato - veemente (♩ = 76)*. The strings play a dense texture of tremolos. Dynamics are *ff* and *fff*. Performance instructions include *frenetico*, *non div.*, and *sim. possib.*.
- System 3 (Measures 278-283):** The section concludes with a gradual deceleration. The tempo is marked *poco a poco rit.*. Dynamics decrease from *fff* to *ppp*. Performance instructions include *viol. subd.*, *dim.*, and *ppp*.

Figure 3-10 Climax section of the second movement, mm. 269-283

Mosaico, Op. 36 (1970)

Composed in February of 1970, *Mosaico*, Op. 36, won second prize at the Second Guanabara Music Festival in Rio de Janeiro in May of that year. The work was first played during the festival by the Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra under the direction of Armando Krieger.

A year later, on October 22, 1971, a ballet in one act and three scenes based on the music of the three movements of *Mosaico* was premiered at the Municipal Theater of Rio de Janeiro by the Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Henrique Morelenbaum with choreography by Hector Zaraspe. Although it used *Mosaico*'s music, the ballet is named *Autópsia para minha sombra* (*Autopsy for my shadow*), Op. 36a, and it was also written in 1970. The ballet is about ten minutes longer than the orchestral piece.

Mosaico for orchestra has been under the attention of music critics and musicologists as an early display of Nobre's command of sophisticated techniques in the beginning of the 1970s.⁸ In this work, Nobre proves his admiration for the new techniques explored by twentieth-century Polish composers. Nevertheless, Nobre's use of textural music and sound mass involves such a sense of engineering that its sophistication takes more from the composer than from the performers.⁹

This work is perhaps one of the most avant-garde that he composed. However, Nobre's attachment to tradition and Brazilian roots are still present. He uses a traditional staged format and includes typical Brazilian instruments, such as *chocalhos* (maracas), bongos, congas, and *agogôs* (cow-bells) in the percussion section.

⁸ The composer writes one page with instructions for the appropriate interpretation of symbols.

⁹ Earls, Paul. "Marlos Nobre: *Ukrimakrinkrin* and *Mosaico*." *Yearbook for International Musical Research*, vol. 8, Austin: University of Texas at Austin, Institute of Latin American Studies, pp. 178-180. (*Anuario Interamericano de Investigación Musical*) 1972.

Nobre’s complex and brilliant orchestration puts him in a special position. His way of conveying musical ideas may not be completely new, but it is certainly worthy of observation. As in most of his works, Nobre concentrates on bigger gestures, as opposed to small intellectual problems and difficulties.¹⁰

The work is written for full orchestra, including three percussionists plus timpani. It contains three highly contrasting movements played without breaks. (Table 3-2)

Table 3-2 *Mosaico*, Op. 36: formal structure

1-Densidades		2-Ciclos			3-Jogos	
	m. 46	m.76	m. 102	m. 118	m. 133	m. 173
1-A.....	1-B.....	2-A.....	2-B.....	2-A’.....	3-A.....	3-B.....

The first movement, *Densidades* (Densities), explores texture and sound mass from the various instrumental sections in the orchestra. The use of a large number of instruments contributes to a heavy texture, while the absence of certain instruments generates a thinner layer. Sometimes the composer uses the contrast between different weight instruments, such as woodwinds and brass, making them attack successively in sonorous blocks¹¹.

The movement has two sections, and is built over the twelve notes of the chromatic scale. The initial chord and gesture display all twelve pitches that will later be developed. It is important to note that, while playing all twelve tones spread through the orchestra, the vibraphone plays a three-note chromatic motive in the first measure, which is important material for the unification of the whole piece. In the third bar, the composer divides the twelve-note structure into three groups of four notes each. The instruments determined for each group play a certain rhythmic structure in a free way for a certain amount of time. The composer selects the pitches to be used by each instrumental group, and they play the rhythmic figures almost in an

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Program Notes for *Mosaico*, Op. 36, by Marlos Nobre.

improvisational way. Nobre creates three such groups. The first is played by the oboes and the English horn; the second by the clarinets and bass clarinet. The initial group then moves to the piccolo and flutes and the second group moves to the bassoons and counter bassoon. Later, a third group appears in the trumpets. Afterward, some pitches are played individually by certain instruments. It sounds aleatoric, as if it were played randomly. However, every note is written and controlled by the composer, except for some of the rhythms. (Figures 3-11 and 3-12)



Figure 3.11. Three-note initial motive in *Mosaico*, Op. 36

1. DENSIDADES

MARLOS NOBRE
(Rio, 1970)

The figure displays a musical score for the piece '1. DENSIDADES' by Marlos Nobre. The left page shows the first three measures of the score, featuring a variety of instruments including Piccolo, Flute, Clarinet (C1, C2, C3), Bass Clarinet (Cl. B), Trumpet (T), Vibraphone (Vibr.), and Piano (Piano). The right page shows three specific aleatoric boxes: Box 1 (measure 3), Box 2 (measures 4-5), and Box 3 (measures 14-15). These boxes contain dense, complex musical notation with various dynamics and articulations, including 'pp', 'mf', 'ppp', 'legato-stacc.', and 'simile'. The score is written in a complex, multi-staff format, reflecting the aleatoric nature of the piece.

Figure 3-12 Full score mm. 1-3 (left). Aleatoric box 1 m. 3 (right top); aleatoric box 2 mm. 4-5 (right middle); and aleatoric box 3 m. 14-15 (right bottom)

A

B

Figure 3-13 Second section of *Mosaico*, mm. 46-47 with beginning of chromatic motive in the strings (A). Extension of chromatic motives through descending chromatic lines on the strings (B)

The second section of this movement begins at the climatic point and presents the strings playing a controlled improvisatory part over the twelve notes. The composer divides the strings into groups, and each has a group of notes to play in a certain order. Afterward, Nobre gives a chromatic descending line to each group of instruments and they play continuously. While the first part (section A) focuses more on a horizontal sonority through sustained chords, this part (section B) adds some vertical effects. Above the strings, the other instruments are organized into groups of woodwinds, brass, piano, harp, and percussion. They alternate clusters and rhythmic

sections until the end of the movement, which connects to the second one through a held note on the first flute. (Figure 3-13)

The second movement, *Ciclos* (Cycles), is based on an initial sound and rhythmic structures, which repeats with slight modifications after a certain number of events in the music. This movement presents a more lyrical section. The cyclical idea also applies to the way the solo instruments expose their particular melodies, where Nobre uses a certain number of sounds that surround each other continuously.¹²

The movement has three sections: A, B (starting on measure 102) and A' (starting on measure 118). It presents the same initial three-note chromatic motive [012] in the harp. In fact, this movement explores this short motive instead of dividing the twelve notes of the chromatic scale into fragments as the first movement does. It is interesting to note that although the first movement has only two sections (A and B), the contrasting ideas developed there are carried through the second movement. In other words, while the A section in the first movement carries a more horizontal development through a mass of sustained chords, the A section in the second movement keeps this linear idea through melodic motives that pass from one instrument to another. The melodic motives are constructed from the initial pitch material [012]. (Figure 3-14)

Similar to the B section of the first movement, the middle section of the second movement presents a more vertical development through accents in the xylophone, piano, piccolo, flute, and percussion. The twelve tones are slowly introduced in this middle section and Nobre increases the tension in the movement when he presents them subtly in measures 107 through 109 until all twelve tones finally meet in the same measure (m. 119), where the third section begins. (Figure 3-15)

¹² Ibid.



Figure 3-14 Melodic lines: Oboe mm. 88-91 (top), trumpet mm. 93-95 (bottom)

The third section of the second movement comes immediately after the climatic moment (measures 114-118). It brings back the initial atmosphere of the movement, this time displaying the twelve-note motive twice, played by the vibraphone, harp, and celesta. The three-note chromatic motive [012] first presented by the harp in this movement gradually adds a note to its structure each time it comes back: First in measure 78 (D, Eb, Db), then in m. 92 (D, Eb, Db, E), and finally in m. 119, with its repetition in m. 129 (D, Eb, Db, E, C), when the composer displays the twelve-note gesture. (Figure 3-16)

According to the composer, the third part – *Jogos* (Games) – is a divertimento for the orchestra. The conductor basically plays around with instrumental combinations, which here appear in a fixed way. The composer uses clearly written sections together with sections of controlled aleatoric passages.

This movement has three sections, which proves Nobre's affinity for formal structures even while writing an abstract indeterminate atonal piece with some serial characteristics. In measure 135, trumpets play the intervallic gesture [012] in a chord format, which helps to connect the whole piece. Notes are added little by little along with an increase in tension and dynamics. From measures 154 through 159, the twelve notes are presented in a horizontal line.

Just as the first sections of movements one and two had horizontal lines contrasted by more vertical second sections, this movement follows a similar design. (Figure 3-17)

Figure 3-15 Gradual presentation of twelve tones, mm. 107-109

After the twelve notes are exposed, the tempo marking indicates “furoso,” and the percussion develops the important role of bringing the movement, as well as the whole piece, to

a chaotic climax, which here is an expansion of an earlier idea presented in measure 45 of the first movement. (Figure 3-18)

After the climatic moment comes, the B section explores a more vertical attack through clusters and rhythmic accents, similar to previous movements. The composer then divides the orchestra, giving each instrumental group has its own aleatoric box, alternated by broken chords played by the xylophone, the piano and the harp in the form of a complementary dialogue. These broken chords originate a new motivic idea that intercalates with the aleatoric boxes and, little by little, adds pitches until the twelve pitches come in measure 188. (Figures 3-19 and 3-20)

The image displays a handwritten musical score for several instruments. On the left, two circular callouts highlight specific passages for the Arpa (harp). The top callout shows a three-note initial motive in measure 78, marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a 'table' instruction. The bottom callout shows a four-note development in measure 92, marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a 'rit...' instruction. On the right, a larger section of the score for measures 119-120 shows the complete twelve-note motive. This section includes parts for Vibr., W.B.I. acuto, Arpa, Celesta, and strings (Vi. I, Vi. II, Vla., Cello). The Arpa part in this section is circled and shows the full twelve-note sequence. The strings are marked with 'arco' and 'Solo' instructions. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (mp, mf, f), articulation (accents), and performance instructions (rit., Molt.).

Figure 3-16 Gradual presentation of twelve notes: Three-note initial motive m. 78 (top left), four-note development m. 92 (bottom left), and complete twelve-note motive m. 119 (right)

The piece ends with the diminution of the timpani motive, alternated with clusters in the other instruments. The composer shows an exploration of materials that later become an integral part of his more mature musical language, such as free use of chromaticism, rhythmic impulse, a great deal of attention on the percussion, knowledge of instrumentation, and knowledge of how to get the best out of each instrument in the orchestra. He displays specific forms, use of sound clusters and sound mass, and – most important here – a personal approach to serialism and indeterminacy. Nobre uses a strict compositional style, such as serialism, but uses it in a special way, free from any aesthetic rule. At the same time, he uses a free, indeterminate style of composition, such as indeterminacy, and uses it in a strict way, by writing down every pitch and determining their duration and dynamic through the use of structured and controlled improvisatory passages. The composer proves to be completely against any kind of restrictive aesthetic school and simply uses the available material to convey his musical ideas in the way that best serves him, the performers and the audience.

The image displays a musical score for an orchestral section. On the left, measures 134 and 135 are shown. Measure 135 features a 2/4 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The instruments listed are Tuba (Tbc.), Cymbals (C. sord.), Timpani (Temp.), C. Ch. 2 T. Toars, and G.C. The Tuba part has a circled motif. On the right, measures 154 through 158 are shown. Measure 154 is in 2/4 time, while measures 155, 156, 157, and 158 are in 3/8, 2/4, 3/8, and 3/8 time signatures respectively. The instruments listed include Flute I (Fl. I), Oboe I (Ob. I), Clarinet I (Cl. I), Clarinet II (Cl. II), Bassoon I (Fg. I), Bassoon II (Fg. II), C. Ch. 2 T. Toars, and G.C. The score shows a gradual introduction of new pitches across these measures.

Figure 3-17 Initial [012] motive m. 135 (left). Gradual appearance of twelve tones mm. 154-158 (right)

The image displays two musical excerpts. The top excerpt features a timpani part with a series of notes and rests, marked *f rapidissimo* and *cresc. molto*. Below it are woodwind parts (C, Fl., W. Bl., Clarinet, Bassoon) with a *cresc. molto* marking. The bottom excerpt is titled **FURIOSO** and contains four parts: Timpani, Clarinet, Tom-toms, and Cymbals. Each part is marked *fff violento e rapidissimo*.

Figure 3-18 Climax of first movement m. 45 (top) and climax of third movement m. 162 (bottom)

The image displays a handwritten musical score for a symphony orchestra, divided into two systems. The left system covers measures 173-177, and the right system covers measures 181-182. The instruments listed include Percussion, Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons, Cor Anglais, Trumpets, Trombones, Tuba, Violins, Violas, Celli, Bassi, and Strings. The score features various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'sf' and 'ad lib.'.

Left System (mm. 173-177):

- Measures 173-174:** Marked with a $\pm 2^{\text{nd}}$ and $\frac{2}{4}$ time signature. Includes a sf marking.
- Measure 175:** Marked with a sf marking.
- Measures 176-177:** Marked with a sf marking and a 3 triplet.

Right System (mm. 181-182):

- Measure 181:** Marked with a sf marking and a 3 triplet.
- Measure 182:** Marked with a sf marking and a 3 triplet.

Aleatoric Box (mm. 181-182):

The aleatoric box is located in the Cor Anglais section. It contains the following instructions:

- p *ad lib.* e *staccatissimo*.

Figure 3-19 Vertical clusters mm. 173-176 (left), and aleatoric box mm. 181-182 (right)

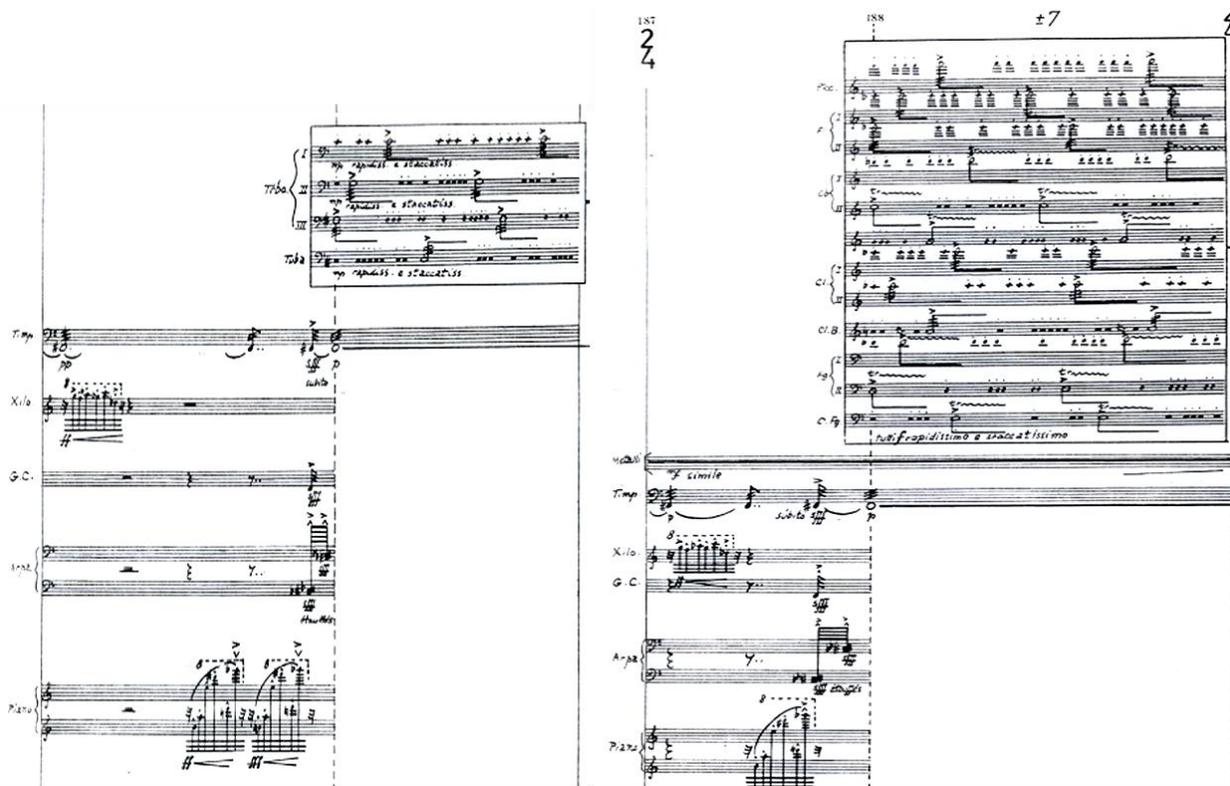


Figure 3-20 Broken chord motivic idea and aleatoric boxes, mm. 183-184 (left), mm. 187-188 (right)

In Memoriam, Op. 39 (1973/76)

In Memoriam, Op. 39, was commissioned by the Cultural Federal Council (Conselho Federal de Cultura) through the Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra in 1973. The work was composed that same year. Nobre asked the Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra to refrain from performing it until he was completely finished with compositional details. The work was released for performance three years later, and the premiere took place on December 18, 1976 at Sala Cecília Meireles in Rio de Janeiro by the Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra under the direction of David Machado.

In 1979, *In Memoriam* received first prize at the First Latin American and Caribbean Music Rostrum (TRIMALCA), International Music Council of UNESCO, in Bogotá, Colombia, and it was recommended at the International Rostrum of Composers of the International Music

Council, where it won the Unesco Prize of the “Tribute Internationale des Compositeurs” in Paris.¹³ It was considered by the international jury to be one of the most important and creative compositions for orchestra from the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁴

Dedicated to the memory of Carlos Nobre, the composer’s father, the work is based on the first six melodic notes of *Adelita*, a little waltz (mazurka) for guitar by Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909). According to Nobre, his father, an amateur guitar player, loved to play the piece at night.

Nobre took the first six melodic notes of *Adelita* as the basic material for *In Memoriam* (E, D sharp, B, D natural, C, F sharp)¹⁵. These notes are not clearly heard within the complex sonority of the work’s construction. However, the haunting tritone originating from the last two notes – C and F sharp – plays an almost obsessive role throughout the piece. Another obsessive interval is the minor second, originating from the first two notes, E and D sharp. This interval provides a basis for the whole harmonic sonority present in the first section. Nevertheless, the work demonstrates a strong tonal center on the note E. It is important to know that Tárrega’s piece, *Adelita*, is indeed in E minor, with a middle section in the parallel E major; it is in ternary form A-B-A.

In Memoriam has five major sections, which can be divided into seven subsections. (Table 3-3)

Table 3-3 *In Memoriam*, Op. 39: formal structure

A.....	A’ (Tempo I).....	B (Piú lento).....	A’’.....	Coda
.....m.25.....	m.31.....	m.46.....	m.62.....	m.79.....
m.113.....	m.177	a.....	bridge.....	b (Lento).....
a’.....	b’ (Lento).....	B.....	(a’’).....	Coda

¹³Nobre, *Personal Website*. Accessed October, 2006.

¹⁴Millarch, Aramis Millarch, “Marlos Nobre.” *Veículo: Estado do Paraná*, 1990.

¹⁵ The notes C, D, D sharp, E, and F sharp are present in the piece. Nevertheless the B is basically replaced by Bb, which is the most important tonal center of the second theme of the first section.

The first section contains two subsections: the first goes up to measure 25, using tremolos in the strings as the foundation for the colorful intervallic explorations played by the woodwinds, piano, and percussion. The tremolos are basically present throughout the piece and the elements in this part derive from the basic six-note motive mentioned above. The minor second motives in the tremolos follow a descending chromatic line from D natural, to D flat (C sharp), to C natural, resolving on D natural. The dramatic character of the piece is set in the first few measures. This dramatic process, emphasized by crescendo in dynamics, culminates in the presentation of the tritone first announced in measure 16. (Figure 3-21)

The composer uses an *ad libitum* section where the strings play their minor second gestures with intensifying speed. They dynamically overlap each other in order to form a stretto. The next bars form a bridge to connect the first subsection to the second one. This section uses the *ad libitum* idea originated a measure earlier in the piece and separates the orchestra into groups of woodwinds, brass, and percussion – each one with their own aleatoric sequence. Even when using aleatoric procedures, the composer keeps complete control of the work. These techniques, as well as the quasi-improvised sense one gets from the strings part, were explored in Nobre's *Mosaico*, discussed earlier in this chapter. (Figure 3-22)

The second subsection presents a melodic line on the first trombone in dialogue with the first clarinet. Both instruments play the same melody, which is constructed first on the Dorian mode transposed to G in the trombone and then on the Dorian mode transposed to Bb on the clarinet. This setting also emphasizes the use of minor thirds within the section. The solo instruments play in a polyphonic way, characteristic of Nobre's writing. The composer explains his intimacy with contrapuntal writing:

In Memoriam
para orquesta
Marlos Nobre

Figure 3-21 Descending minor second motives (left), and tritone (right)

Figure 3-22 Aleatoric boxes in *In Memoriam* mm. 27-28

...eu sempre fui um estudioso compulsivo. Trabalhei com o pe. Jaime Diniz o contraponto, a polifonia de Palestrina, os modos, muito mais que a tonalidade. Escrevi uma centena de missas modais dos 14 aos 19 anos, estreadas pelo coro da Igreja de São José, do padre Jaime. A polifonia sempre foi meu mundo, e não a homofonia, e daí vem a riqueza de minha linguagem orquestral.¹⁶

...I have always been a compulsive student. I have studied counterpoint, the polyphony of Palestrina, and the modes much more than tonality under Father Jaime Diniz.¹⁷ I wrote about one hundred modal masses from ages 14 to 19, and they were all performed by the Choir of São José Church conducted by Father Jaime. Polyphony, not homophony, has always been my world, and that is where the richness of my orchestral language comes from.

The modal melodic line is supported by glissandi in the harmonics of the strings, which gives an atonal character for the piece and explores Nobre's knowledge of advanced instrumental technique. The aleatoric passages briefly used in this subsection add mystery to the second exposition of the modal melody. Although it is constructed with modal melodies and atonal passages, this section presents a strong sense of tonal center on Bb. This emphasizes the tritone harmonic relationship that is so strong in the work: the first subsection with emphasis on E¹⁸ and the second subsection with emphasis on Bb. (Figure 3-23)

The second section is a short re-exposition of the first section, this time with the melodic line of the second subsection transposed to C Dorian and G Dorian, and played by a solo cello and the English horn, respectively, above tremolos in the strings instead of glissandi. This short section helps to establish the dramatic character of the piece.¹⁹

¹⁶Marques, 2006.

¹⁷ Born Jayme Cavalcanti Diniz in Água Preta, Pernambuco in 1924, Father Diniz was a conductor, composer, and musicologist. He was the founder of the Music Department at the Federal University of Recife and the National Competition of Sacred Music. He was professor of Music History and Harmony at the Federal University of Recife. He was also professor of Sacred Music, Gregorian Chant, and the conductor of the Seminários de Olinda Choir. He suffered a heart attack and died in Natal, Rio Grande do Norte in 1989.

¹⁸ Even though the piece starts on D, the tonal center is gradually shifted to E on the second page of the music.

¹⁹ Program notes for *In Memoriam*, Op. 39.

The third section is the most important and it brings the piece to its climax. The composer develops the motives used in the first two sections and introduces new elements, such as an open string arpeggio played by the guitar. The section explores great tension caused by the prolongation of dissonant harmonies, strong intercalation of the timpani along with the gradual dynamic crescendo that is so characteristic in the writing of the composer. (Figure 3-24)

The image displays a musical score for measures 34-41. It features a full orchestral arrangement with staves for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Trumpet (Tbn.), Trombone (Tmb.), Violin (Vl.), Viola (Vla.), Cello (C.), and Bass (B.). The score is characterized by dense polyphonic textures in the string section, with many notes beamed together, creating a shimmering effect. Above the string staves, there are markings for 'mp cantabile, rubato, senza rigore' and 'mp espressivo, senza rigore'. The woodwind parts have more melodic lines. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 41.

Figure 3-23 Polyphonic modal lines accompanied by harmonic glissandi in the strings, mm. 34-41

After a long pause in the midst of enormous tension, elements from the initial section come back, this time emphasizing the minor second interval. The dramatic tension played by the strings is emphasized by the timpani interference until the string tremolos join in, creating a strong chaotic yet organized moment of great tension in the score. This tension is increased still by two big pauses (measures 142 and 175). The tritone, originated by C and F sharp in the

beginning of the piece, increases the tension whenever it is intercepted by another obsessive interval of a minor second, which originates from the first two notes of the six-note sequence used in the first section: E and D sharp. (Figure 3-25)

The image shows a handwritten musical score for an orchestra, titled "GRAVE (♩ = 42)". The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves for each instrument. The instruments listed include Flutes I & II, Clarinets I & II, Bassoon, Trumpets I & II, Trombones I & II, Tuba, Snare Drum, Cymbals, Timpani, and Piano. The piano part is particularly prominent, featuring an "open-string-guitar" motive. The score shows a progression of notes with various dynamics and articulations, including slurs and accents. The tempo is marked as "GRAVE" with a quarter note equal to 42 beats per minute.

Figure 3-24 Beginning of middle section with open-string-guitar motive and prolongation of pitches, mm. 84-89

This section A'' projects a sense of agony lived by the composer unconsciously for the loss of his father. (Figure 3-26) The piece is an important example of the sense of drama that the composer incorporates in his scores. Nobre explains

The image shows a page of a musical score for a symphony. The score is divided into four measures with time signatures of 3/4, 3/4, 4/8 (marked with a tempo of quarter note = 5), and 3/4. The instruments listed on the left are Fl. I & II, Ob. I & II, Cl. I & II, Tbn. I & II, Timp. I & II, Vl. I & II, Vle, C., and B. The score features a prominent minor second interval across several instruments, particularly in the strings and woodwinds. The marking 'P.G.' is written vertically on the left side of the score. The word 'sempre' appears at the bottom of the first and fourth measures. The right side of the image shows a continuation of the score with instruments Fl. II, Ob. II, Cl. II, Fl. I, Tbn. I, and Tuba.

Figure 3-25 Minor second pervasive interval adding to the tension after long pause, mm. 113-118

Uma obra como *'In Memoriam'*, foi escrita, como muitas minhas, nesse estado de percepção de um drama interno, de uma narrativa abstrata, sem querer com isso aludir a nada especial. No caso de *'In Memoriam'*, eu só me dei conta do 'assunto' específico depois de tê-la quase completado. Ou seja, a morte do meu pai. A peça é fundamentalmente um reflexo do choque profundo, em minha formação mental e física, desse fato fundamental. A partir de umas poucas notas, que meu pai insistentemente tocava nas madrugadas em seu violão (a pecinha *'Adelita'*), eu construí toda a estrutura dramática da obra. E o drama que se desenvolveu em minha mente, internamente, leva ao ponto culminante do desfecho. Mas nada disso tem caráter descritivo. Eu não sigo uma linha clara, mas é um fato obsessivo, interno, permanente e intransferível.²⁰

²⁰ Marques, 2006.

Like many of my works, a composition such as *In Memoriam* was written under this status of perception of an internal drama, an abstract narrative without any specific allusion. I only noticed the allusion of my father's death in *In Memoriam* after I had already completed it. The work is essentially a reflexion on this profound shock mentally and physically. I constructed the whole dramatic structure of the piece based on a few notes that my father obsessively played in his guitar (the little piece "Adelita") late at night. This drama that was developed in my mind takes the piece to its climax and resolution. However, there is not a descriptive character in the piece because I do not follow an obvious line, but the drama in it is an internal, permanent and obsessive fact.



Figure 3-26 Sense of agony presented by composer through chaotic timpani interference mm. 108-112

The fourth and last section brings back the modal theme of the second subsection of the first part, this time played by the bassoon, G Dorian, in its higher range, in a dialogue with the French horn, which plays the melody in Bb Dorian. Sustained notes in the strings and the presence of the open string guitar arpeggio give the work a peaceful ending, which follows into an even slower coda and on to a static calm. (Figure 3-27)

poco a poco rit.

180

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. At the top, the tempo marking 'poco a poco rit.' and the number '180' are centered. The Flute I part has a solo section with the instruction 'Solo' and 'p cantabile senza rigore'. The Trumpets and Trombones parts have dynamic markings such as 'mp dim.' and 'p dim. sempre'. The Violins and Viola parts have dynamic markings like 'mf' and 'pp'. The Cello and Double Bass parts have dynamic markings like 'pp' and 'p'. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

Figure 3-27 Final section of *In Memoriam* mm. 179-183

***Convergências*, Op. 28 (1968/1977)**

Convergências, Op. 28, was first written as a ballet in one act and three scenes in 1968. It was commissioned by the Brazilian Ballet Company of Teatro Novo in Rio de Janeiro. Under the baton of the composer, with choreography by Arthur Mitchell, the first performance of the piece as a ballet took place at Teatro Novo in Rio de Janeiro on June 11, 1968. *Convergências*, Op.

28a,²¹ as a ballet, is for wind symphony, piano, and percussion. Unlike the orchestral piece, it contains three distinctive movements.

In 1977, the First Latin-American Festival of Contemporary Music of the City of Maracaibo in Venezuela commissioned Nobre to write a symphonic work for the festival. The composer decided to use some material from the ballet to compose a new orchestral piece. The material is mostly taken from the third movement of the ballet, which presents great rhythmic energy. The first performance of this new work, which carried the same name as the ballet, was presented on November 20, 1977, by the Symphony Orchestra of Maracaibo, to whom the score was dedicated. It was performed under the direction of Eduardo Rahn at the Teatro Bella Artes in Maracaibo.²²

The one-movement piece contains seven sections followed by a coda. The piece follows a determined rhythmic impulse, and the sections do not have interruption, except for a grand pause between the sixth and seventh sections. The seven sections can later be seen as a big A – B – A’ followed by a coda. For analytical purposes, the formal structure of seven sections plus coda will be used. (Table 3-4)

Table 3-4 *Convergências*, Op. 28: formal structure

A (lento) – B (vivo) – C (lento) – D (veemente) – A’ (a tempo) – B’ (vivo) – Coda						
Intro	m.30	m.115	m.140	m.183	m.202	m.251
A	B.....	A’	Coda			

Convergências, Op. 28, begins with an introduction (A), presenting a short melodic phrase of eight notes that progresses and accelerates until the second section (B). This short melodic phrase is presented in a canonic arrangement, which builds up from lower registers to higher

²¹ Several performances of the ballet by Teatro Novo Brazilian Ballet Company occurred between 1969 and 1971. Since the extinction of the theater and its ballet company the work has not been performed as a ballet.

²² Program Notes for *Convergências*, Op. 28, by Marlos Nobre.

ones in the orchestra. It begins with the low strings and tuba and adds instruments little by little until it reaches the piccolo. The phrase gets transposed and it is played with variations throughout the different voices; however, the basic idea is constructed using the intervals of m2, M2, m3, and M3. At the same time, the addition of the voices in the canonic organization generates vertical intervals of quartal/quintal harmonies. (Figure 3-28)

The image shows a musical score for strings from the piece 'Convergências'. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes Violini (Violins), Viola, Violoncelli (Violoncellos), and Contrabassi (Double Basses). The second system includes Vi. (Violins), Vie. (Viola), Celli (Cellists), and Bassi (Basses). The music is written in a 4/4 time signature. Dynamics include *pp cresc.*, *p cresc.*, *mp cresc.*, *mf cresc.*, and *f cresc.*. There are also markings for *uniso* (unison) and *div* (divisi). A tempo marking at the bottom right reads 'toco a poco accelerando e cresc sempre'. A rehearsal mark '10' is visible in the Bassi part.

Figure 3-28 Strings part only from *Convergências*' initial motive mm. 1-12

When the motive reaches the piccolo, it is repeated over and over in a process of diminution until the eight-note phrase becomes two notes that repeat insistently, creating tension to connect into the second section (B). Although still in embryonic use, the idea of subtracting and also adding becomes an important characteristic in Nobre's more mature works, as one can see in his *Sonâncias III* for two pianos and two percussionists composed in 1980. The idea was first used by Messiaen. Nobre unconsciously integrated the technique into some of his compositions. In *Convergências*, the idea is used briefly with pitches. In *Sonâncias III*, the composer adds and subtracts rhythmic values. (Table 3-5)

Table 3-5 Pitch diminution in *Convergências*

When it reaches the piccolo the phrase goes as follows: B-C-Ab-Bb-Gb-F-D-Eb (initial phrase) B-C-Ab-Bb-Gb-F B-C-Ab-Bb B-C (repeats constantly under <i>accelerando</i>)
--

This next section is faster and essentially rhythmic. It is well elaborated and shows the composer's preference for the use of small motivic ideas developed under a continuous process of repetition. The section is based on major second intervals that are transposed to different pitches. The section becomes more intense as the pitches are transposed. The section is built initially from ascending eighth notes using M2 and M3 intervals (C-D, C-D, C-E-D-F#-E) accompanied by M7 intervals in the low strings and bassoon. (Figure 3-29)

While the vertical idea of the first section presented quartal/quintal harmonies, this second section emphasizes a more triadic development. For instance, in measure 34, the horns, trombones, and the strings play the motive starting on the notes F-A-C in a vertical position (C [Hrn1/Vn1] – A [Hrn2/Trb1/Vn2] – F [Hrn3/Trb2/Vln]). The motive that initially began on the note C (Hrn2/Vn1) in measure 30 gets transposed to Eb (Hrn2) in measure 38, and then to Gb (Hrn1/Vln1) in measure 42.

A new melodic motive appears in the trumpets in measure 50 followed by an ascending chromatic scale idea in the strings and clarinet, which begins in measure 58 and goes up to measure 114. This new idea functions as a bridge to the next measures, which present the same M2 intervallic idea, this time in a descending sequence. (Figure 3-30) The piccolo plays a different rhythmic gesture of a quarter note followed by eighth note: E (m. 62-65) – D (m.74-77) – C (m.82-85).

The image shows a page of a musical score for Section B of 'Convergências', measures 31-36. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are: Fl. 1, Fl. 2, Cor., Tr. 1, Tr. 2, Tr. 3, Tr. 4, Tr. 5, Tuba, Imp., Ch., Mil., G.C., Xil., Vi. 1, Vi. 2, Celi., and Contri. The music is written in a complex rhythmic style with many accents and dynamic markings. Notable markings include 'sf' (sforzando) and 'f rudo' (forzando rude) in the strings and woodwinds. The percussion part includes various rhythmic patterns and accents.

Figure 3-29 Section B of *Convergências*, mm. 31-36

A third new rhythmic idea appears in the trumpet on measure 98. This idea emphasizes the chromatic scale once again with chromatic notes under sforzando (sf) signs in the horn and percussion, adding tension and preparing the piece for the next big section (C). (Figure 3-31)

The image displays a page of a musical score, specifically measures 50 through 54. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left include Piccolo, Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Cor Anglais (Cor.), Trumpet (Trbo.), Trombone (Trbo.), Tuba, Timpani (Timp.), Cymbals (C. Ch.), Triangle (T. Mil.), Gong (G. C.), Xylophone (Xyl.), Violin (Vl.), Viola (Vle.), Cello (Celli), and Double Bass (Bassi). The trumpet part is highlighted as the primary focus, showing a melodic line with various dynamics and articulations. The score includes a rehearsal mark '50' at the beginning of the first measure. The music is written in a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The trumpet part features a melodic line with various dynamics and articulations, including accents and slurs. The other instruments provide accompaniment and support for the trumpet's melodic line.

Figure 3-30 Trumpet melodic motive mm. 50-54

The third section is slower and presents a melodic line in the oboe constructed of m2 and M7 intervals. The flute and violin repeat the same melodic line, each starting with a different pitch but using a similar intervallic relationship. The chromatic idea continues in an ascending line in the horns (mm.128-132), followed by a descending line in the brass (mm.136-139). At the same time, cello and double bass play the same melody, also constructed from ascending M7 and descending m2 taken from the initial oboe melody. (Figure 3-32)

This musical score features a brass and percussion section. The instruments listed on the left are Cor. (Coronet), Trba. (Trumpet), Tuba, Timp. (Timpani), C.Ch. (Cymbal), T.Mil. (Tom-tom), G.C. (Gong/Cymbal), and Xil. (Xylophone). The score consists of ten staves. The trumpet parts (Trba.) are the most active, featuring a rhythmic motif of eighth notes with chromatic movement. The other instruments provide harmonic support and rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics such as *sfz* (sforzando) and *stacc.* (staccato) are used throughout the piece.

Figure 3-31 New rhythmic motive in trumpets with chromatic notes on horns and percussion, mm. 97-102

This musical score features a woodwind and string section. The instruments listed on the left are Fl. (Flute), Ob. (Oboe), Cl. (Clarinet), Fg. (Fagotto/Bassoon), Vi. (Violin), Vcl. (Violoncello/Cello), Cello, and Bassi (Bass). The score consists of eight staves. The woodwinds play melodic lines, with the oboe (m. 116) and flute (m. 119) being the primary melodic instruments. The strings provide a harmonic and rhythmic foundation. Dynamics such as *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), and *mf* (mezzo-forte) are used. Performance instructions like *I. Solo*, *mp apr.*, *div.* (divisi), and *unissa.* (unisono) are present.

Figure 3-32 Slow melodic section mm. 116-127: first on the oboe (m. 116), then flute (m. 119), and finally first violin (m. 123)

The fourth section (D) takes the melodic material first presented by the oboe in the third section and develops it in the strings. This is imitated by the woodwinds two beats later as a canon. The canonic idea comes from the very beginning of the piece, when the composer presented the eight-note phrase canon. In this section, the canonic melody is also atonal, using different notes of the chromatic scale almost without repetition. This generates great tension. Between each end and beginning of a phrase the timpani plays loud eighth notes, adding to the tension and also connecting this slow section to the rhythmic eighth-note motive of the second section. (Figure 3-33)

The image shows a musical score for Figure 3-33, illustrating a canon in winds and strings. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The second system includes Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The score features a canon where the strings play a melodic line that is imitated by the woodwinds two beats later. The tempo is marked 'Veemente (d. esi)' and the dynamics include 'cresc.' and 'Precipitando'.

Figure 3-33 Canon in winds and strings, mm. 140-147

The fifth section is brief. It is perhaps not even necessary to separate it in the analysis, but since it brings back the initial idea of the piece, it is worth mentioning it. This initial motivic idea appears with a different melodic line that is almost unrecognizable. It accelerates gradually and connects into the sixth section, which contains a similar rhythmic idea to that presented earlier in the second section. This time all the ideas come together. While Nobre separates and introduces new ideas little by little in the second section, here he simply combines everything, except for the

use of tremolo in the strings. That is a new idea used significantly in the coda. After a grand pause (m. 250), the seventh section begins. It presents materials explored earlier and connects the piece to a grandioso and faster coda. (Figure 3-34)

The image displays a page of a musical score for the grand finale of *Convergências*. The score is marked "Furioso" and covers measures 294 to 299. It is a full orchestral score with parts for Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Cor Anglais, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Cymbals, Triangle, Gong, Xylophone, Arpeggiator, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The notation is dense, featuring complex rhythmic patterns, including tremolos in the strings, and dynamic markings such as *p* and *fff*. The score concludes with a grand finale. At the bottom right of the page, the text "RIO DE JANEIRO, 1968 / 1977" is visible.

Figure 3-34 Grand finale of *Convergências* with a sense of resolution in E, mm. 294-299.

Convergências presents and summarizes the interest of the composer in writing based on intervals, especially seconds, sometimes replaced by sevenths, and thirds. These can basically be seen in almost all his compositions. The seconds are a result of the chromaticism so much explored in his writing.

Conclusion

The pieces composed during 1970 and 1977 give a clear idea of the type of composer Nobre became. Although still young, he received acclaim and recognition – the promise of a brilliant future. The search for an identity was finally materialized. These works clearly demonstrate his use of a combination of serialism, indeterminacy, polytonal techniques, polyphonic writing, and the use of traditional Brazilian influences. These influences are registered through the use of Brazilian percussion instruments along with the polyrhythm, dynamic contrasts, big crescendos, and irregular accents derived from the Maracatu. Nobre also combines the use of a fixed notation with a more flexible notation and aleatoric notation. His pieces are atonal, but already show tendencies toward harmonic centers. Nobre's knowledge of instrumentation is well explored in these first works and energy is always a present factor. All of these characteristics intensify in Nobre's later pieces, which come from a more mature composer.

CHAPTER 4 EARLY MATURE STYLE (1980-1985)

After a two-year period of silence, Nobre emerged in 1980 with more defined aesthetic thought. Even though all of his compositional characteristics were well formed in the 1960s and 1970s, the composer received a few remarks from critics who were not sure his compositional style had matured. In a 1972 review of *Ukrinmakrinkrin* and *Mosaico*, Paul Earls ends with the following thought:

...In the case of Marlos Nobre it is too early to predict whether he will develop his own voice independently of the international/nationalistic culture. That will require critical self-examination difficult to achieve when one's career is going as well as his. If he does so, he could well be a composer seriously to reckon with.¹

It is important to stress that, by the 1970s, the composer's style was already formed and affirmed independently of any other aesthetic school, as shown in the second and third chapters of this study. It has always been Nobre's decision to incorporate and absorb the many available influences around him and select from them what is useful for his process of musical communication. Nobre took a break in the late 1970s to rethink his compositional aesthetics, but the result was a reaffirmation of what he had already developed and incorporated at an early age.

The pieces that follow this period emphasize three of the most important ideas in his compositions. Rhythm becomes a strong characteristic in his works. He explores Brazilian rhythmic manifestations, especially those connected with Northeast Brazil. Harmony becomes more dense and compact, with a complex texture where tonal elements are not completely excluded. The composer shows preferences for polytonal clusters that cannot be defined by traditional harmonic analysis. His polyphonic writing also takes on stronger and more independent harmonies, resulting from the independent lines that create a certain conflict, which,

¹ Earls, pp. 178-180.

at the same time, makes perfect sense in the compositional context. Beyond any use of traditional forms, the composer emphasizes the importance of formal structure, which becomes a strong characteristic in his works. Each piece has its own formal structure, which represents the search for a new structural conception as a means of realization of new ideas. The composer's most prominent obsession becomes the principle of development and organic variation of the motives and initial ideas.²

This chapter discusses two important works written in the 1980s. These works summarize Nobre's mature style and combine all of the sources he explored in the previous years.

Concerto II for String Orchestra, Op. 53 (1981)

Commissioned by the Festival of Music of Our Time at Indiana University, *Concerto II for String Orchestra* was written in 1981. It was premiered at the Musical Arts Center in Bloomington, Indiana, on August 6, 1981, by the Indiana University Festival Orchestra under Leon Fleisher.

Nobre finished the piece while in residence at the Brahms Haus in Baden-Baden during January and February of 1981. The piece has three movements: *Decidido*, *Affettuosamente*, and *Vivo*.

Following the same idea as the *First String Quartet* and *Biosfera for String Orchestra*, the composer explores the BACH theme one more time. The four notes of the name BACH (Bb, A, C, B natural) become the basic material for all three movements of the piece.

Although clearly written in three separate movements, the work is constructed based on intervals of m2 and m3 derived from the BACH motive, a four-note chromatic set. The first and third movements are well connected through the use of sixteenth notes in a motoric and virtuosic

² Corker-Nobre, "*Sonâncias III*," 1994.

driving rhythm, and the BACH intervallic motive. The first movement explores it more horizontally, while the third does so more vertically. Nevertheless, the second movement presents contrasting materials. (Table 4-1)

Table 4-1 *Concerto II for String Orchestra, Op. 53*: formal structure

I – Decidido A	II – Affetuosamente B	III – Vivo A'
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The first movement, *Decidido*, has the flexible character of a prelude. However, it explores one of the composer’s favorite forms: variation. According to the composer, the movement begins with an introduction, followed by twelve variations of the initial idea. At the same time, the composer adds innovation to the form and presents these variations in retrograde. The twelve variations can be seen as in table 4-2:

Table 4-2 Formal Structure of the first movement.

Intro	A	B	C	D	E	F	<u>G</u>	F'	E'	D'	C'	B'	A'	Intro
measure: 31	49	55	65	76	88	114	140	166	171	177	189	193	212	

The variations are continuous. The introduction presents the theme originating from the BACH motive, m2 down, m3 up, and m2 down, in four voices in a canonic form: First on the cello, then viola, and finally second and first violin in *stretto*. (Figure 4-1)

The first variation (A) presents the four notes of the BACH motive in all five voices, beginning each voice in a different pitch and one after another in a contrapuntal way. The composer uses diminution of rhythm of the motive, going from quarter note to sixteenth-note in different points of the meter, creating a repetitive effect. (Figure 4-2)

Variation II (B) explores an inversion of the BACH motive- m2 up, m3 down and m2 up- in descending and ascending sixteenth notes in a virtuosic way, until it gets to the next variation. Variation III (C) presents a new motive that is explored in the following variations. This motive is based on the minor third interval from the BACH motive. The variation develops this interval

by repeating it constantly and insistently. The composer develops the phrase, switching the direction of the intervals. (Figure 4-3)

CONCERTO PARA CORDAS II
Opus 53
I
Marlos Nobre

Deciso - Tpo. Giusto (♩ = 132)

© Copyright 1981 by Marlos Nobre

Figure 4-1 *Concerto II for String Orchestra*, Op. 53, pp. 1-2, mm. 1-29. Theme based on BACH motive presented polyphonically in four voices

Variations IV and V (D and E) develop the minor third interval using chromatic ascending virtuosic passages intercepted by repeating minor thirds. Variation VI (F) starts with *molto marcato* in eighth-notes, which grow into virtuosic ascending chromatic sixteenth-notes, creating more tension through abrupt pauses until the next variation.

The image displays a musical score for Variation I, measures 31-42. It consists of five staves labeled I, VI, Vla, C, and B. The score begins at measure 30 with a 6/8 time signature and the tempo marking 'Impetuoso'. At measure 31, the time signature changes to 4/4 and the tempo is marked 'Marcatissimo - 3-'. The score features various dynamic markings such as 'mp stacc.', 'cresc.', 'mf', 'f', and 'ppp stacc. dim.'. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns, slurs, and accents across all staves.

Figure 4-2 Variation I: Repetitive development of the BACH motive mm. 31-42

The composer creates a gradual crescendo in sound and tension from the introduction up to variation VII (G). The seventh variation, which serves as the center of the first movement, has a slow character. From there, the composer creates the remaining variations using retrograde with some octave displacement.³

It is important to mention that on measure 126 of variation VII the tied B natural serves as the mid-point of the whole movement. From that note on, every note is repeated backwards in its integrity, forming the second half of the first movement. (Figure 4-4)

³ Program Notes for *Concerto II for String Orchestra* by Marlos Nobre.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Variation III. The first system is marked "Giubiloso ed energico" and includes a rehearsal mark "5-60". It features five staves: I (Violin I), II (Violin II), Vc (Violoncello), C (Cello), and B (Bass). The second system is marked "Tempo I (Alleg.)" and continues the five-staff arrangement. The third system is marked "Leggerissimo" and also continues the five-staff arrangement. Various performance instructions such as "p", "f", "cresc.", "deciso", "ruidoso", "arco sul Pont.", and "leggeriss." are present throughout the score.

Figure 4-3 Variation III: New motive constructed of minor thirds mm. 58-69

The movement ends with the BACH motive. However, instead of finishing on Bb on the cello as the piece started, it finishes with a B natural, which emphasizes an intervallic relationship of perfect fourth/fifth between the first and second movements, instead of augmented fourth/diminished fifth, which would be preferable by the composer in his previous period. (Figure 4-5)

-10-

Calmo - Espressivo (L'istesso Tpo) e Flessibile (♩=66)

movendo 120

Poco a poco Più Agitato

MID-POINT
MEASURE
126 Calmando poco

a poco

Poco Rit. Meno Mosso

Figure 4-4 Variation VII: Mid-point at measure 126 on B natural, mm. 114-132.

A tempo
Serenamente

2+3

Rit.

A tempo

mp serenamente

p

pp perdendosi

Dura. 1.°

Figure 4-5 End of first movement in a B natural.

The second movement, *Affetuosamente*, is more lyrical but, at the same time, intercepted by moments of dramatic and serious character. It is built with four sections plus a coda. (Table 4-3)

Table 4-3 Formal Structure of the second movement.

A	B m. 21(22)	A' m. 60	B' m. 93	Coda (A'') m. 124
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The movement reflects Nobre's own type of serialism, which was explored in earlier pieces, as mentioned in the previous chapter. He uses the technique in the movement, similar to the way he previously applied it to other pieces like *Mosaico*. The second movement presents connections to the first movement through the use of minor second as the main interval and repeating thirds. However, this movement brings a strong contrast by adding intervals of P4/A4/P5, using repeating notes in the second violin and viola in section A, and using pedal tone in section B.

The second and fourth sections (B and B') resemble Madrigals over the counter bass sustaining pedals. At the same time, sections A, A', and A'' intercept the polyphonic sections, presenting a more melodic character. This melodic character was not explored thoroughly in earlier works and it shows a change in the composer's more mature approach.

The first section (A) begins with a lyrical melodic line in the first violin, accompanied by the rest of the orchestra: repeated eighth notes on the second violin and viola and pizzicato quarter notes on the cello and double bass. All instrumental lines follow a similar pitch relationship. The composer uses all twelve tones in a horizontal way. When the 12 notes are completed, they start again transposed. The end of the melody on measure nine features an interesting passage of repeating notes forming a major third interval. This feature connects the

second movement to the first, recalling the use of the repeating minor thirds, here replaced by major thirds. (Figures 4-6, 4-7 and 4-8)



Figure 4-6 First violin twelve-tone melody of the second movement, mm. 1-4

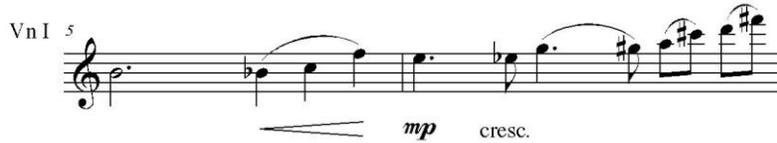


Figure 4-7 Second presentation of twelve-tone melody on the first violin, second movement, mm. 5-6. Here the melody is transposed with some of the intervals reversed

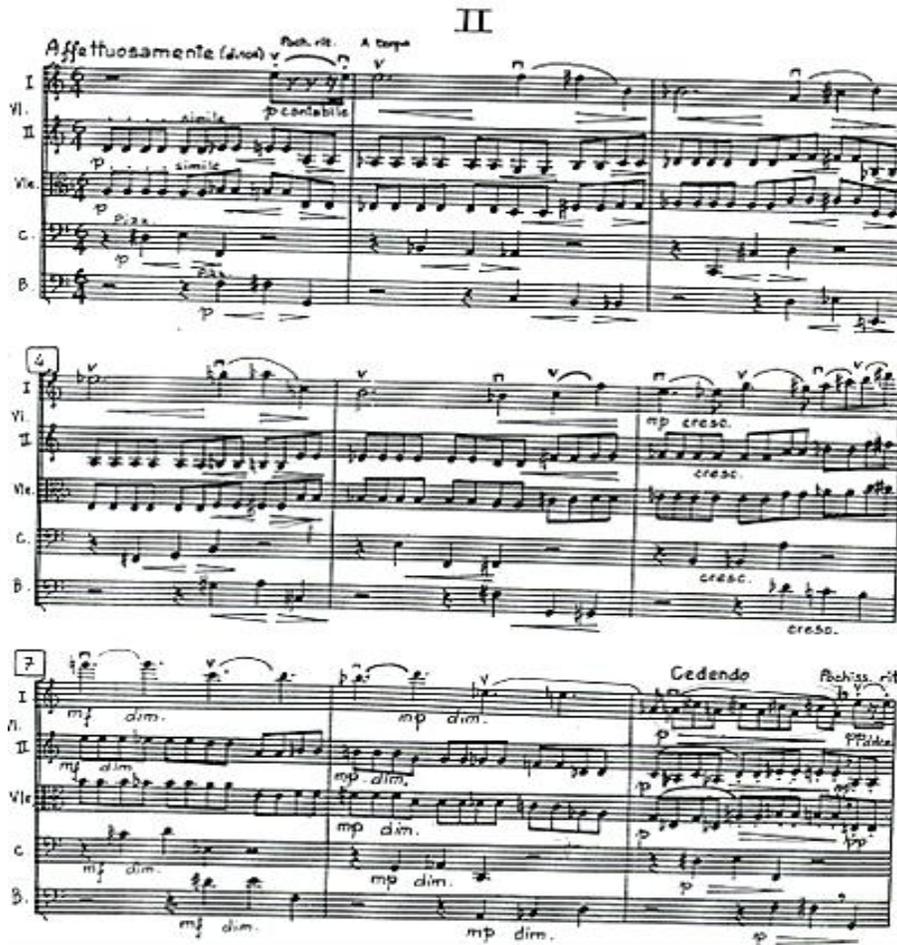


Figure 4-8 Second Movement mm. 1-9: three presentations of twelve-tone melody on the first violin

The B section continues the use of the twelve tones in each horizontal line. However, this movement is much slower, *adagio*, and displays notes with long duration. For example, it takes the cello twelve bars to complete the twelve-note display. The melodic line presented first by the cello in the B section moves to the other voices in a canonic gesture. (Figure 4-9)

Figure 4-9 B section of second movement mm. 27-45.

Each voice presents the melodic line in a different transposition. The line is constructed in minor seconds or major sevenths. The canon is presented twice: first it goes to viola and second violin while the second time includes the first violin. After presenting the melody in all voices, the section climaxes in measure 51 when all voices present the 12 notes. The chord at the climatic point spells F, Db, Ab, Eb, B, D. After that point, the next section gets diminished and

ends with the first six notes of the melodic line from the cello, now on the double bass. (Figure 4-10)

Figure 4-10 End of B section with bass line preparation for A' section, mm. 46-63

Instead of using the repeated eighth notes from the previous section, the composer uses a pedal tone on the double bass that moves from C sharp down to F, generating tension.

The following section (A') is similar to the previous one (A), with some slight modifications. (Figure 4-11) It changes octaves and elongates at the end of the section, which brings the movement to its climax (mm. 80 – 87). There, Nobre emphasizes the use of the twelve notes through dynamics and *Esaltato* tempo marking.

The B' section is a little shorter than the previous B section and the pedal point moves from D to G, forming a P4/P5 interval. The piece ends with a coda, using the motive of the first

section (A). This motive is presented using octaves, an interesting interval avoided by serial composers. Nobre repeats the use of the interval twice in the first violin. The ending note is E, the same note with which the melodic line began on the violin. As mentioned earlier, this emphasizes the key relationship of a perfect fourth/fifth between the first and second movements. This is interesting for a composer who wants to break from tradition but at the same time refrains from all ruptures brought by avant-garde movements. It would be natural for the composer to finish the first movement on Bb because that was the first note of the movement, which was composed in retrograde version. Nevertheless, the composer chooses to add an intriguing B natural at the end of the movement, avoiding the augmented fourth/diminished fifth relationship between movements. It is as if ideas of tonality are strong in his mind, but he does not really embrace completely tonal resolutions. (Figure 4-12)

The third movement, *Vivo*, brings back the initial idea of the BACH theme, using the notes Bb, A, C, and B natural. The movement is continuous and constant in a certain Rondo form. As demonstrated in the previous movements, this is a virtuosic passage for the strings.

An important fact is that this movement presents the same kind of material earlier explored by the composer in his *First String Quartet*. The composer took the third movement of the quartet, written in 1967, and used it as the third movement of the *Concerto II for String Orchestra*. He added the double bass line and the addition of more instruments – a string orchestra as opposed to the string quartet. This gives the piece a different atmosphere. When asked about this, the composer replied

... I was planning to write something else, but when I noticed that the movement was a perfect complement to the Concerto, I decided to put it there. It is amazing how they complement each other and it was an incredible coincidence that both used the BACH motive and I feel it as a completely different piece...⁴

⁴ Conversations with Marlos Nobre.

Figure 4-11 Section A' of the second movement; use of inverted chromatic notes, mm. 64-75

The composer said he likes to use other composers' themes or motives that he finds interesting and feels were not well-explored by their original composers. An example of this is Nobre's *Sonata for Piano on a Theme by Bartók*, taken from the bassoon line in Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*. The same way, Nobre also keeps records of residues of his own compositions in order to explore them in the future. According to the composer, the ideas continue to grow in his mind until they surface with such strength that it seems they are asking to be written. Then he needs to expel them, otherwise he feels like exploding.⁵

⁵ Ibid.

Figure 4-12 End of second movement emphasizing tonal center in E, mm. 117-139

The third movement is similar to the first movement. Unlike the horizontal display of the first movement, this movement opens with a vertical version of the BACH motive, just like the first movement of *Biosfera* (also derived from the *First String Quartet*).

Similar to the first movement, the third is developed on variations and motivic development of the initial idea without a contrasting section. The motivic development can be seen as in table 4-4:

Table 4-4 Formal Structure of the third movement.

A	B	A'	B'	C	B''	A''	C'	Coda
	m. 41	m. 60	m. 69	m. 81	m. 91	m. 99	m. 115	m. 130
A (a-b)	-	A' (a'-b')	-	A'' (c-b''-a''-c')	-			Coda

this time does so vertically within all instruments. The cello, viola, and both violins display the twelve notes, each instrument playing four notes at a time. The double bass doubles some notes from the other instruments. This is not a surprise, since the movement was originally written as a string quartet. The double bass does not alter the structure first planned by the composer 14 years earlier. (Figure 4-14)

Scherzando

The image displays a musical score for a section titled "Scherzando" (mm. 43-54). The score is arranged in three systems, each containing staves for Violin I (Vl. I), Violin II (Vl. II), Viola (Vla.), Cello (C.), and Double Bass (B.). The notation is dense, with many notes beamed together, illustrating a vertical presentation of twelve tones. Dynamic markings such as *f*, *cresc.*, *mp*, *subito*, and *mf* are present throughout. A circled number "50" is visible above the Cello staff in the second system. The overall texture is complex and rhythmic, characteristic of a Scherzando movement.

Figure 4-14 Vertical presentation of Twelve Tones, mm. 43-54

Sections A' and B' present similar ideas to the previous material in a more condensed form and prepare the new harmonic motive to be explored in the following section (C). In this section, the composer combines the use of m2 with open quartal/quintal intervals (P4/P5/A4). (Figure 4-15)

The image displays two pages of musical notation for a piece titled "Ruvido". The top page shows measures 81-87, characterized by a dense texture of quartal and quintal harmonies. The notation includes staves for Violin I (VI.), Violin II (V.), Viola (V.), Cello (C.), and Bass (B.). The bottom page shows measures 88-94, featuring more complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as "Pizz." (pizzicato) and "arco" (arco). The notation continues with the same instrumentation and includes various performance instructions and dynamic markings.

Figure 4-15 Section C with quartal/quintal harmonies, mm. 81-87

The next sections display previously used material with slight modifications. The sequence presents B'', followed by A'', and another presentation of the middle section with some variation (C'). The movement finishes with a coda, presenting a combination of all previously explored motives. It finishes in a frenetic and furious way that resembles Stravinsky and concludes with a chord consisting of the following notes: C, D, E, F#, G, A, B, as in the Lydian mode. (Figure 4-16)

The composer tries with this work to break the prejudices that the international avant-garde school provoked in the contemporary music scene of the early 1980s. He decides to go back to elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, the principle of repetition, and the form of variation. These are the most essential points in the piece, along with the use of a constant polyphonic

writing. That is not to deny the moments of tonal centers that are clearly present in the whole composition.

Figure 4-16 End of *Concerto II* for String Orchestra, mm. 137-155

Abertura Festiva, Op. 56 bis (Festival Overture) (1983)

Commissioned by EMBRATEL (*Empresa Brasileira de Telecomunicação*)⁶ for the inauguration of the XV Congresso Brasileiro de Informática (Fifteenth National Congress of Technological Communications) in 1983, the piece was premiered at *Centro de Convenções do*

⁶ Brazilian Company of Communications.

Rio Centro (Convention Center of Rio Center) in Rio de Janeiro by the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Isaac Karabtchevsky.

Based on the music of *Cantata do Chimborazo*, Op. 56, composed earlier that year, the *Overture* unites a chromatic and polytonal language with moments of tonal explosions. This process solidifies Nobre’s aesthetic language, in which he utilizes all available means to reach a desired level of sound and expression without forcing or imposing any aesthetic view or sectarianism.⁷

The piece contains five subsections that form a big A – B – A’. (Table 4-5)

Table 4-5 *Abertura Festiva*, Op. 56bis: formal structure

A		B	A’	
a	a’ (Piú lento)	B (Grave)	a (Giubiloso)	a’ (Piú lento)
Aa	Aa’	B	A’a	A’a’
	m. 41	m. 64	m. 86	m. 110

The piece is constructed with a tonal center on E. It begins on E and finishes on an E major chord anticipated by a B major chord. Nevertheless, the piece presents a strong atonal/polytonal character. It is based on a sequence of sixteen chords that move chromatically, starting from a perfect fifth and reaching a more complex chord. It moves in an ascendant motion on the higher pitches and a descendent motion on the lower pitches – from E to high G on top, forming 16 notes, and from A to low G on the bass. (Figure 4-17)

The first part (A) is divided into two subsections (a and a’). The first subsection (Aa) is built by exploring chromaticism and emphasizing chords that move chromatically but carry a quartal/quintal harmonic character. Measures 32 through 40 present a melodic line that serves as the main melody for the B section. This melody is played by woodwinds and also includes French horns, brass, and strings. They play polyphonically with imitation and each group of

⁷ Program Notes to *Abertura Festiva* by Marlos Nobre.

instruments begins four beats after the last group. This melody of eleven notes, based on minor seconds and perfect fifths, begins on F sharp and ends the first subsection on E. It is interesting to notice that the only note left out in the eleven-note melody is the Bb. This note represents a tritone from the tonal center E. (Figure 4-18)

Figure 4-17 Chromatic ascending chords in *Abertura Festiva*, Op. 56 bis, mm. 1-8, woodwind and brass sections only

The second subsection (Aa') presents material and motivic development similar to the previous subsection. However, the composer uses different rhythm and dynamics: while the motive is played at first with accented loud eighth notes, the next time it comes in pianissimo and in half notes.

The B section brings more contrast to the piece. It begins with the eleven-note melody from the A section. This time the melody is presented in a more polyphonic context, in four

voices with imitation on the strings alone. It begins on E and is first played by the cello, followed by the viola, second violin, and first violin. (Figure 4-19)

The image displays a musical score for a symphony, specifically focusing on measures 30 through 38. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Trumpet 1 (Tpt 1), Trumpet 2 & 3 (Tpt 2/3), Trombone 1 (Tbn 1), Trombone 2 & 3 (Tbn 2/3), Violin 1 (Vln I), Violin 2 (Vln II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The music features a polyphonic statement of an eleven-note melody. This melody is first introduced by the cello (Vc.) and then imitated successively by the viola (Vla.), the second violin (Vln II), and the first violin (Vln I). The woodwinds and brass sections also play parts of this melody, with dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *dim.* (diminuendo) indicating the intensity of the sound. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature.

Figure 4-18 Eleven-note-melody polyphonic statement on strings, woodwinds and brass, respectively, mm. 30-38

A. The motive is used in small, repetitive gestures until it reaches the return of the A section. (Figure 4-20)

The return of the A section (A') begins with the chromatic line on F instead of E. This gives an intervallic difference of a minor second. It goes chromatically from F to C #, while the bass goes chromatically from Bb (a half step from the original A in the beginning of the piece) down to Bb. Measures 92 through 94 present the BACH motive again; xylophone and violins play the motive transposed to Db, C, Eb, D, while viola, cello and bass play the motive with its original pitches. Nevertheless, this motive here is not long enough to change the structural form of the piece, which remains A, B, A'. (Figure 4-21)

The image contains two musical score excerpts. The left excerpt, labeled Figure 4-20, shows measures 75-81 for Xylophone, Harp, Violin I, and Violin II. The right excerpt, labeled Figure 4-21, shows measures 75-81 for Oboe, Clarinet, Cello, Trumpet, Xylophone, Violin I, and Violin II. Both excerpts feature the BACH motive in various transpositions and dynamics.

Figure 4-20 BACH motive on xylophone and strings mm. 75-81

This section (A') contains two subsections, as does section A (a and a'). While the melodic line at the end of (Aa) begins on F sharp, here (A'a) it begins on C sharp. This gives an interval relationship of perfect fourth/fifth. The section ends on C instead of E as in the first section (Aa).

A Tempo

The image shows a musical score for measures 91-95, titled "A Tempo". It features six staves: Xilo (Xylophone), VI.I (Violin I), VI.II (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), Vc. (Violoncello), and Ch. (Contrabasso). The Xylophone part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The string parts feature a chromatic ascending and descending pattern, with dynamics like "cresc.", "ff", and "pizzicato".

Figure 4-21 BACH motive transposed on xylophone and strings, mm. 91-95

On measure 110, the (A'a') section begins in D instead of E (Aa') with the bass on G instead of A. The chromatic chords that ascend in the high pitches and descend in the low pitches complete the sixteen-chord series from the piece, which ends on E. (Figure 4-22)

Conclusion

The 1980s was a crucial period in the development of Marlos Nobre's musical language. *Concerto II for String Orchestra* and *Abertura Festiva*, composed in the first half of the 1980s, represent an important decision regarding Nobre's approach as a composer and summarize ideas that will later be preserved and followed. The works demonstrate more focus on traditional traits such as melody, form, and the search for tonal centers. The harmony shows more density within a complex texture of polytonal clusters, use of the twelve tones, free harmonies resulting from a complex polyphonic writing, and the inclusion of tonal elements. The composer emphasizes the importance of the use of traditional forms without limiting them to tonality, and rhythm becomes

an even more important tool for his compositional unification. Unfortunately, due to the many administrative positions the composer assumed from 1985 until 1989, he did not compose during this time. When he returned to composition again in the 1990s, he explored only compositional techniques already initiated in his previous years, and added his more mature voice to them. The next period remains a continuation of the previous one with slight modifications and will be explored in the next chapter.

Figure 4-22. Dominant-Tonic cadence in the end of *Abertura Festiva*, mm. 126-130.

CHAPTER 5
LATER MATURE STYLE (1990-2004)

The pieces analyzed in this chapter belong to the most recent stage of Nobre's compositional approach. They belong to the composer's fifth period and summarize the main ideas developed in the previous chapters, confirming the composer's approach to tonality and simplicity, economy of means with respect to form, and use of available techniques in order to achieve a desired musical result.

Saga Marista: Passacaglia for Orchestra, Op. 84 (1997)

Passacaglia for Orchestra, Op. 84, subtitled *Saga Marista*, was written in 1997 as a commission for the Marist Brothers of Brazil to celebrate the centenary of their arrival in the city of Congonhas do Campo, Minas Gerais, Brazil. The work was premiered on October 20, 1997, played by the Philharmonic of North/Northeast of Brazil under Nobre's direction at the Teatro Guararapes of Recife.

The Marist Brothers group is a Roman Catholic religious institute that evangelizes through education from elementary school through university across the world. The group is also called Little Brothers of Mary to highlight the qualities of humility, simplicity, family spirit and affection for Mary, who is their inspiration and guide. Marcellin Joseph Benoît Champagnat (1789-1840) founded the school in La Valla, France, in 1817, a time when France was facing crises in the educational system as a result of the Napoleonic wars. St. Marcellin Champagnat wanted Brothers to respond to the spiritual and social needs of the young and poor, especially through education. Thus, he and other brothers spread education throughout the rural areas of France.¹ In 1863, the Marist Brothers institute received approval of the Holy See – the territory

¹ Marist Brothers' website. www.catholicovocations.org.au/directory/religious/maristbrothers.html, accessed on April 7, 2006

over which the Pope exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction – and began their expansion worldwide. Today they exist in more than 74 countries. The Marist Brothers are not clerics; they are devoted solely to educational work.²

Passacaglia for Orchestra embodies a great deal of symbolic significance relating to the journey undertaken by the Marist Brothers, who emigrated from France to Brazil at the end of the nineteenth century. Throughout their journey, one can observe the mixing, assimilation, and final transformation of cultures in Brazil. The work not only represents the culmination of a journey through time, but the unique capability of the Brazilian people to assimilate and combine foreign cultures and traditions.

There is a version of the piece as a ballet in one act and ten scenes, based on a plot written by the composer. The first performance of the ballet was on April 2, 1998, at the Teatro Guararapes in Recife. Under Nobre's baton, the piece was played by the Recife Symphony Orchestra and danced by the Ballet Group of the Marist Brothers Centenary with choreography by Gilano Andrade. (Table 5-1)

The *Saga*³ represents the transformation of the Marist Brothers' European culture and its assimilation into the Brazilian culture, a common phenomenon in Brazil. The composer describes this:

Brazil is one of the few examples in the world that shows the interpenetration of intercultural influences, like the African and European traditions, in music, in food, in the whole culture. It was in Brazil that the rhythmic traditions of Africa integrated with the

² Marist Brothers in Brazil website. <http://www.maristbr.com>, accessed on April 7, 2006.

³ The word *saga* designates Icelandic prose narratives written between 1120 and 1400, telling heroic stories about the families that first settled Iceland and their descendants. It also describes the histories of the kings of Norway, the myths, and the legends of early Germanic gods and heroes. Today, the term is simply used to refer to any modern prose narrative that resembles a *saga*. (American Heritage Dictionaries on line)

melodic and tonal traditions of Europe, in one of the richest examples of inter-cultural-fertilization.⁴

Table 5-1 Ballet plot of *Saga Marista*.

<p><i>Saga Marista</i> Ballet in One act and Ten Scenes – plot by Marlos Nobre: Departure from France Transatlantic Arrival in Brazil – m.60⁵ Nostalgia and Reflection – m. 68 Procession of the Dead people – m. 80 Popular Dances- Profane Ritual – m. 91 Education and Mastership – m. 140 Circle of Fortune – m. 155 Glory, Glory – m. 183 Final Apotheosis – m. 204</p>

This assimilation of European culture into Brazilian culture is represented in several ways. The composer chose a traditional European musical form – the passacaglia. In a special way, the work combines the form of the passacaglia and the form of a one-movement symphony with fifty variations. This is also a strong characteristic in Nobre’s compositions: the assimilation and transformation of traditional musical forms. The work has a slow introduction followed by the principal section at a faster tempo. The recapitulation brings back the initial slow material and ends with a brilliant coda. As a genuine passacaglia, the composition is based on a bass-motive, which is initially played by the second trombone. This motive is repeated in the following fifty variations. Nobre explains

My principal idea was to use the form of Passacaglia. First of all, because I think that the variation form is, for me, the most appropriate way to express my musical ideas, more [so] than “development.” Of course, I integrate into my variation technique the procedure of developing variation, the amplification of the variation idea, introduced mainly by Brahms. But I never use to integrate into my music the development of motifs, like Beethoven did. I think that, in my case, it is due to the fact that my music exists in a certain static way, not really a developing way.

⁴ Marlos Nobre, E-mail conversation from Rio de Janeiro,, Brazil to Jorge Richter, Knoxville, U.S.A., Answering your questions on the Passacaglia.

⁵ The measure numbers here correspond to the score of the orchestral version.

The static form itself is also a characteristic of Brazilian music, which means that here they love to repeat, repeat and repeat. The repetition was forbidden in the so-called avant-garde music, since the principle of non-repetition becomes the golden principle. In my way of thinking, the principle of repetition is against the very intrinsic existence of musical thinking [sic]. Without repetition there is no possibility of formal structure. And this is the reason why most dodecaphonic music and serial composers used a text, to help them to construct a work. In this way, we can say that in dodecaphonic and serial music, the best works are vocal, because the text helps to create the fluency, the coherence and logic that were made default in the pure instrumental serial and dodecaphonic works. So they are not really pure music, abstract musical constructions, but music sustained by poetry, by the words.

To create music itself, without repetition, became impossible to the dodecaphonic and serial composers; and this explains why Webern was obligated to write his miniatures, since his vocabulary, based on non-repetition, could not help him to create big forms. So the form of passacaglia has always fascinated me, ever since the big example of the great Passacaglia for organ by Bach. It was completely a matter of coincidence that this form was, finally in my Passacaglia, combined with the form of symphony in one movement, which is clear by analyzing the work. I could say that the form of symphony in one movement was a natural consequence of the construction of the *Passacaglia*.⁶

The Passacaglia for orchestra continues a long and truly universal tradition: here, the contrast between mystery, violence, and lyrical idioms dictates the instrumental style.⁷

The piece is composed for large orchestra, including some typical Brazilian percussion instruments such as *atabaques* (Afro-Brazilian conical-shaped, single-headed hand drum similar to a conga drum), *reco-reco* (Brazilian scraper made of bamboo, wood, or metal), and *tamborim* (small single-headed Brazilian frame drum played with a stick). It contains four sections compressed into a one-movement symphonic structure. Each section is a separate kind of “ritual,” as mentioned by the composer. The gradual transformation of the musical material can be seen going from a light score in the first section to a heavy orchestration and almost sumptuous style in the subsequent sections, especially towards the end.

⁶ Answering your questions on the Passacaglia.

⁷ Program Notes by Marlos Nobre for *Passacaglia for Orchestra*, Op. 84.

As mentioned in chapter III, Nobre’s works usually give special attention to individual lines. Here, the texture of the Passacaglia is mostly polyphonic, with each instrument receiving special attention. When asked about this, the composer replied:

This is a consequence of my efforts, when I write, not only for the orchestra, but for any ensemble, to write the best individual part for each player. In my opinion, each musician must be happy to play his individual part, rich in ideas, rhythmic fluency, and variation motifs, giving the musician a musical pleasure to play.⁸

As mentioned above, *Passacaglia for Orchestra* presents a very special form. It uses theme and variation, a formal aspect present in a passacaglia, combined with the larger symphonic form. The piece has four major sections, which are clearly identified through abrupt breaks in the normal flow of the music. Each section contains smaller sets of variations, which are connected either by melodic or rhythmic material. (Table 5-2)

Table 5-2 *Passacaglia for Orchestra*, Op. 84: formal structure

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4
Variations I – XIII	Variations XIV - XXXI	Variations XXXII-XXXIX	Variations XL – L

The piece is based on two themes: the ostinato theme, which constructs the passacaglia, and the main theme. Nobre’s ostinato bass line is the basic foundation for the fifty variations of the work and it consists of a chromatic descending line beginning on the note D. The ostinato theme appears in the third measure of the piece, accompanied by a basic rhythmic/harmonic figure using the notes D and A. This first section is dissonant with a combination of quartal/quintal harmonies and sonorities generated from the ostinato theme along with the main theme. (Figure 5-1)

⁸ Answering your questions on the Passacaglia.

The main theme is based on the French National Anthem, *La Marseillaise*⁹, and it is transformed into the Brazilian National Anthem¹⁰ at the end of the work. The main theme appears in measure eight and adds a certain rhythmic richness and texture to the existing harmonic pattern created by the counterpoint. As observed by Jorge Richter in his *An Analytical Study of Marlos Nobre's Saga Marista: Passacaglia for Orchestra, Op. 84*, this new rhythmic pattern becomes a rhythmic ostinato that accompanies the main theme throughout the *Passacaglia*. Nobre comments

This work was written by commission of the Marist Brothers of Brazil to commemorate their centenary of arrival in Brazil. They were French educators, and I used naturally the first notes of the “*La Marseillaise*,” which by incredible coincidence, are the same notes of the Brazilian National Anthem. So, the note D is central to both melodies, and it was a happy coincidence to discover that this note was my first idea for this piece. In fact, the passacaglia was born from the note D.¹¹

Figure 5-1 Ostinato Theme, mm. 3-7, followed by Main Theme over Ostinato Theme, mm. 8-12

⁹ French National Anthem composed by Claude-Joseph Rouget de Lisle on April 24 and re-orchestrated by Hector Berlioz in 1830. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/marseill.html>, accessed on September 21, 2006.

¹⁰ *Pátria Amada, Brasil!*— Brazilian National Anthem composed by Francisco Manuel da Silva with words by Joaquim Osório Duque Estrada in 1822. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hino_Nacional_Brasileiro, accessed on September 25, 2006.

¹¹ Ibid.

At this point in Variation II, one can hear a great deal of harmonic tension because of the dissonances created at such short length into the music. The strongest sensation of release occurs at the beginning of each variation and thereafter through short cadences, resolving on the notes D and A.

Each variation lasts about five measures, changing then to three measures each from Variation VIII until the end of this section. The composer coordinates a clear speed in the metronome markings by shortening the number of measures and increasing the melodic activity. The addition of new instruments, along with the passing of the main theme from the strings and woodwinds to the brass and percussion, contributes to a sense of perpetual motion and gradual crescendo in the orchestra. The basic tempo mark initially found at half-note equals 42 ends up at half-note equals 92 by the time the piece gets to Variation XIII. (Figure 5-2)

After a long fermata followed by glissando in the orchestra, the second major section of the piece begins at measure 60 with Variations XIV and XV. These variations serve as preparation for the next section, where the composer uses new melodic motives characteristic of Brazilian music. The section symbolizes the arrival of the Marist Brothers in Brazil. The score indicates *marcato*, and the percussion section in these variations present patterns and instruments associated with some types of music of African-descent. Here, one can hear a rhythmic pattern especially associated with samba: a simple phrase structure of four measures with isometric rhythmic figures and a great deal of syncopation in the accompaniment. This samba-like rhythm is introduced over the basic rhythmic/harmonic figure already present in the piece, forming a strong connection between sections one and two. (Figure 5-3)

The next variations, XVI, XVII, and XVIII, each contain a pair of phrases associated with folk melodies found in the northeast region of Brazil, where the composer was born. These

melodies have a modal sound that resembles European medieval scales and they represent one of the strongest traits of music from Northeast Brazil. These modal structures, though, do not follow literally their European models. A variety of seven-note scales together with six modes created in Northeast Brazil were identified and registered by composer and scholar Guerra-Peixe¹² (1914-1993). He spent several years dedicated to learning and absorbing the characteristics present in the music of that region. These scales are called Northeastern Modes (*Modos nordestinos*).



Figure 5-2 Gradual increase of speed and activity, mm. 25-28.

¹² Guerra-Peixe, César. "A Influência Africana na Música do Brasil." In *Afro-brasileiros*, ed. Roberto Mota, Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco-Editora Massangana, pp. 89-104, 1985.

The image shows a handwritten musical score. The top part is for percussion and piano. It includes staves for Tuba, Timp., long (high), Tans (high), G. Cassa, and Pno. The bottom part is for strings, with staves for I, II, Vle., C., and B. The score contains various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'ff marcato' and 'p dim.'.

Figure 5-3 Samba-like rhythm first in the piano and percussion (top), then on the strings (bottom).

Nobre explains

The *Modos Nordestinos* are a consequence of the Gregorian Modes the Jesuit teachers tried to impose on people, in order to introduce them to church. The people, or Mulattoes (mixing of black and white, that is between Africans and Europeans) took those Gregorian modes and by singing them over the time they transformed them by altering the notes in the scale. This tradition, by oral transmission, became what we call now the “*Modos Nordestinos*,” which I used in the melodic ideas of the *Passacaglia*. The original Gregorian modes are Dorian and Hypomixolydian modes, that in the northeastern tradition had their third, fourth, and seventh notes altered. This is very typical of the northeastern melodies; most of all characteristic are the natural seventh and the augmented fourth of the scale. It is clear that this new northeastern mode that I used in this melody is derived from the Dorian and the Hypomixolydian modes. Of course the most interesting thing about this is that the people sing their melodies in different modes, altering the original modes, without knowing anything about their original forms. It is completely unconscious and completely natural for them. As I have assimilated those forms since I was a child, I use them also in the *Passacaglia*, half conscious half unconscious.¹³

¹³ Answering your questions on the *Passacaglia*.

In *Passacaglia for Orchestra*, Nobre uses original northeastern melodies, which are of mixed-mode origin: the Mixolydian mode transposed to D and the Lydian mode, also transposed to D. The resulting northeastern theme appears accompanied by a chromatic counter melody, formed by a descending chromatic scale with a rhythmic counterpoint found in the clarinet and English horn. Under this melodic activity there is an accompaniment in the strings, which is not harmonically related to the modes of the theme. The accompaniment uses all chromatic pitches freely and – in contrast to the counter melody – forms chromatic ascending triads. As Jorge Richter points out in his analysis, this fact reinforces the importance of the note D, with its resolution and repetition, as the tonal center of the passage. (Figure 5-4)

Variation XIX presents a new folk melody, this time from Southeast Brazil. The eight-measure folk melody, known as “*Peixe Vivo*” (Living fish), appears under a slow tempo mark, *Funebre*. Nobre connects variations XX through XXII with an eight-voice canon based on this folk melody. Although the work is mainly centered on the note D, the composer manages to hide the sense of tonality. This folk melody is played in D major. But the basic harmonic sonority, which harkens back to the beginning of the piece and is based on the open fifth D and A, is here replaced with an F-sharp pedal point. (Figure 5-5)

And the journey continues with a folk song from south Brazil. The melody from “*Prenda Minha*” (My Love) is introduced by the piano and xylophone during variation XXI in the middle of the complex canonic counterpoint previously set by the “*Peixe Vivo*” melody. (Figure 5-6)

The dense polyphonic texture then abruptly shifts to a *molto marcato* section played by the percussion instruments followed by the strings. They play the Afro-descent rhythm of *Carimbó*, characteristic of the coastal Amazon region in Northern Brazil. The following set of variations

united by the *carimbó* is homophonic and more harmonic. This means that, for the first time, the piece can be analyzed using conventional roman numerals. (D: I - v7 -vi7 - ivdim7). (Figure 5-7)

Meno Mosso $\text{♩} = 72$

The image displays a musical score for a section titled "Meno Mosso" with a tempo marking of a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The score is organized into two systems of staves. The first system includes parts for Fl. 1-2, Ob. 1-2, B. Horn, Cl. 1-2, Bass Cl., and Fig. 1-2. The second system includes parts for Fl. 1-2, Ob. 1-2, B. Horn, Cl. 1-2, Bass Cl., and Fig. 1-2. The music features a variety of notes, including chromatic lines and quartal/quintal harmonies, with dynamic markings like "p dolce" and "dolce".

Figure 5-4 Northeast melody accompanied by chromatic notes and quartal/quintal harmonies, mm. 76-79

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Peixe Vivo" from measures 84 to 87. The score is arranged in a multi-staff format. The instruments and parts are: Bass Cl., Fg. 1-2, C. Fg., Cor. 1-3, Cor. 2-4, Timp., Toms (high/low), Cassa, Toms (low), and Snare Tom. Low. The music is characterized by a homophonic texture and a strong rhythmic drive. The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *ppp*, and *pp*. Performance instructions include "pp senza cresc.", "pp ritard.", and "(staccato colla mano)". The score is divided into four measures, with a first ending marked "1. Solo" and a second ending marked "2." in the Cor. 1-3 and Cor. 2-4 parts.

Figure 5-5 “*Peixe Vivo*” melody, mm 84-87

The homophonic texture, with its intense rhythmic drive, here presents alternation of different combinations of the “ostinato,” “main,” and “northeastern” themes. The alternation between these three themes expresses a strong symbolic figuration in the work, which relates to the Marist Brothers as French educators developing their work in Brazil. The northeastern melodies have a strong religious connection with Gregorian modes that were taken to Brazil by Jesuits, and now the situation is repeated by the Marist Brothers. Nobre clearly emphasizes this in this section.

Figure 5-6 “*Prenda Minha*” melody, xylophone, piano and strings section, mm. 108-111

The final major section of the piece begins on Variation XL. After a long fermata, the slow initial idea comes back followed by gradual tempo and dynamic changes. Some of the melodic motives previously presented in the second section are explored here. Then there is a clear gradual transformation of the main theme, based on the French National Anthem, into the Brazilian National Anthem. This transformation happens in Variation XLVI, when the main theme is announced for the last time and finally transformed into the Brazilian National Anthem, which is played by the brass in Variation XLVII. (Figure 5-8)



Figure 5-7 “Carimbó” rhythm plus strings, mm. 118-121.

The next three variations form the coda in a majestic presentation of a Grand Finale. Jorge Richter points out the fact that this Grand Finale presents similar characteristics as Dmitri Shostakovich’s finale of Symphony No.5: the majestic theme also in the brass section accompanied by the timpani and in D major, with the same beginning notes and shape of the Brazilian National Anthem.



Figure 5-8 Transformation of Main Theme on the Brazilian National Anthem, brass and timpani sections, mm. 204-207

***Kabbalah*, Op. 96 (2004)**

Written in June and July of 2004, *Kabbalah*, Op. 96, was commissioned for the 35th International Music Festival of Campos do Jordão, which took place in July in Campos do Jordão, São Paulo, Brazil. The piece was dedicated to Roberto Minczuk,¹⁴ who premiered the piece, directing the Academic Orchestra of the Festival on July 23, 2004. Nobre was invited by Mr. Minczuk to participate as the first composer in residence in the history of the Festival.

Two performances of *Kabbalah* by the same orchestra and conductor followed the premiere: one on July 24 of the same year on Capivari Square in Campos do Jordão and another one on July 25 at Sala São Paulo.

Successful performances of the work led to more recent performances. One such performance was presented by the Texas Christian University Orchestra under the direction of Germán Cáceres at TCU's Latin American Music Festival on April 27, 2006. Another was performed by the Simón Bolívar Orchestra under Alfredo Rugeles at the opening concert for the International Music Festival of Caracas, dedicated to Nobre, on May 19, 2006. The Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra also played the piece, under the direction of Mr. Minczuk at the Municipal Theater of Rio de Janeiro on May 27, 2006.

The piece was inspired by fundamental rules of the kabbala, which in Hebrew means “that which is received.”¹⁵ This was not the first time the composer wrote a piece based on a Jewish motif. When Nobre was 14 and 15 years old, he composed a piece named “*Shadai*.” He considered the piece immature and destroyed it. Although not Jewish, Nobre developed admiration and respect for the Jewish people. Nobre acquired strong connections with Jewish

¹⁴ Roberto Minczuk is a grandson of Russian immigrants in Brazil. He is currently Director of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

¹⁵ Program Notes for *Kabbalah* by Marlos Nobre from performance of May 27, 2006 by the Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra under Roberto Minczuk at the Municipal Theater at Rio de Janeiro.

musicians, especially pianists and violinists, as a young composer in Recife. Later in his life, the composer developed friendships with Yehudi Menuhin, who wrote the introduction in Nobre's Catalogue of Works, and the pianist Arthur Rubinstein, who cited Nobre briefly in his own book of memories: *My Many Years*.¹⁶ Nobre reveals a deep respect and admiration for the high intellectual and artistic level of the Jewish people. The attraction to Judaism led him to read and study everything about the science of the kabbala and he used a combination of kabbalistic numbers together with the Hebrew alphabet to compose *Kabbalah*.¹⁷

For many years, the kabbala was thought of as the dark side of the Jewish faith. However, this concept faded, and studious people had recently devoted themselves to study the profound wisdom behind it.¹⁸ Even though the kabbala can be considered more mystical than religious, it contains philosophic elements. Nobre found an interesting way to absorb that knowledge and transform it into music. He explains

The wisdom of the kabbala teaches a practical method to attain the upper world and the source of our existence. By realizing our true purpose in life, man attains perfection, tranquility, unbounded enjoyment and the ability to transcend the limitations of time and space while still living in this world.¹⁹

According to studies, the kabbala is the source of energy and knowledge and unveils the ways to superior knowledge. Based on this, the work was conceived with its origin in kabbalistic numbers, which defined its rhythmic, formal and melodic structure. In the kabbala, the number three is essential. It is the number of the form: the body cannot exist without its three dimensions

¹⁶ Nobre composed his piece *Homenagem a Arthur Rubinstein* in 1973 for the First Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Israel and then performed the piece himself to Rubinstein in Paris.

¹⁷ E-mail Conversations with Marlos Nobre. Interview by the author, August 2006.

¹⁸ Rav Michael Laitman, Ph.D, On kabbala, <http://www.kabbalaonline.org/>. accessed on July 15, August 20, and September 21, 2006.

¹⁹ E-mail Conversations with Marlos Nobre.

– length, width and depth. The composer alludes to the trinity as the idea of perfection cultivated by all nations and most religions throughout time.²⁰

According to the kabbala, humans use only three to four percent of their brain capacity while the other 96 or 97 percent remains unused. The five senses prevent one from seeing through the illusion of time, and one is not conscious that past and present are always combined, and the idea of repetition needs to be assimilated.²¹ Nobre explains

According to the kabbalistic science, everything we want is light and energy. But for me, as a composer, the most important concept is that imagination and inspiration represent the basic truths and unlock the unseen wonders of the universe.²²

Kabbalah was conceived in two levels: one rigorously mathematical to organize the micron and macron structure of the piece, and another level of complete freedom, based on intuition, which allowed the composer to explore his own compositional “mistakes” away from any conscious control.²³

Apart from these two levels, the piece consists of two sections: the first one, *Light*, is essentially chromatic, using dynamic and timbre contrasts. The second one, *Energy*, is essentially rhythmic.²⁴ The work is guided by two fundamental elements: lyricism and rhythm, the latter being predominant. Nobre explains

I am always concerned with continuity of the discourse and, in my conception, light is the way from darkness to clarity, from drama to solvency. What I really care about is the work finding its own pace, its own internal logic, which will underwrite the absolute continuity of the work and the intelligibility of its musical language.

²⁰ Program Notes for *Kabbalah*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

I believe that the chromatic scale has not yet been totally explored and exhausted. It is still possible to discover new and different means of linking and binding harmonies together that lie outside dodecaphonic and serial structures. The practical result of my explorations can be found in this first section “light” of *Kabbalah*.²⁵

Both sections explore the number three in various ways. The piece is in triple meter and the quarter notes are strongly emphasized by cow bells and wood blocks throughout the piece.²⁶ Although the piece is constructed on two sections, it is in ternary form, which can be represented as A (up to measure 24), B (m. 25 – 121), and B' (m.122-173). (Table 5-3) This third section, B', is actually a combination of material from sections A and B. Nobre's use of few motives is a strong example of his idea of simplicity and economy of means. He explains

I am constantly exploring the simplest means of expressing my ideas and musical thought, convinced as I am that setting out deliberately and voluntarily to write music where difficulty and complexity are ends in themselves is not a good solution.²⁷

Table 5-3 *Kabbalah*, Op. 96: formal structure

A	B m. 25	B' = (A + B) m. 122	Coda (after repetition) m. 174
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Section A represents light, and the composer uses the glockenspiel and the vibraphone to open the pitch set that develops through the piece. The set is presented through a small gesture that is repeated three times before its development. The set consists of intervals [0124], [013], and [0125] in the glockenspiel and [012], [024], and [012] in the vibraphone. At the same time, a harmonic line is played by the bassoon, exploring the same intervals presented by the melodic lines. The bassoon phrase is D-Bb-A-Ab-G-D, which makes [01237] pitch set. The piece becomes basically a development of these introductory intervals, especially M2, m3, M3, and P4. (Figures 5-9 and 5-10)

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The only times the quarter notes disappear will be on the second and third climaxes.

²⁷ Nobre, *Personal Website*. Accessed on Oct. 24, 2006.

Figure 5-9 Triple meter set by percussion and second pitch set from glockenspiel and vibraphone in the opening of *Kabbalah*, mm. 5-8

Figure 5-10 Initial pitch sets along with bassoon line, mm. 1-15

Section B, “energy,” is based on major seconds and minor thirds that ascend chromatically. The intervals come from a subset present in the bassoon line of the first section [02] and [03]. (Figure 5-11)

The ascension continues through this more rhythmic part, including the B’ section, in which the intervals of minor thirds follow a crescendo. This creates constant tension until it reaches three culminating points²⁸: the first one in measures 81 through 93, the second one in measures 114 through 119, and the third one in measures 167 and 168. These culminating moments present the main theme, created and named by composer as the kabbala theme. The kabbala theme is prepared by a melody in the horn that is constructed with the same intervals used earlier, M2, M3, and the use of an A4 now replacing the P4 present throughout the A section. The chordal accompaniment in the orchestra also expands chromatically from a minor second to a major seventh, the latter interval being used for the first time in the piece and creating more dramatic tension. (Figure 5-12)

Figure 5-11 Section B, “energy,” mm. 13-20

²⁸ Before these three culminating points, the piece has an important climatic point in measure 23 as section A prepares for section B.

The following measures bring a rhythmic part that resembles Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. This is not a surprise, since the composer talked about how much Stravinsky's music influenced him. The rhythmic chords are followed by the kabbala theme played by the trumpet. The theme is built from M2 and m3 intervals that were explored in the beginning of the B section. (Figures 5-13 and 5-14)

The B' section is a combination of sections A and B (A' + B'). The motives are the same. However, in the A' portion of this section, the composer inverts the rhythmic gestures within the instruments. The sixteenth notes played earlier by the woodwind instruments now are played by the strings and the piano, while the eighth notes from the strings and piano are now played by the winds. That is another characteristic of the composer, shifting the instrumentation of the same motivic ideas in order to find new sounds and colors.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Horn and Trumpet. The Horn part is on the top staff, marked with 'a3' and 'ff'. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. The Trumpet part is on the bottom staff, marked with 'a2' and 'ff'. It features a chromatic chordal expansion with sixteenth-note chords. The score is in 2/4 time and has a key signature of one flat.

Figure 5-12 Horn melody accompanied by chromatic chordal expansion mm. 83-90

After the third climax, the piece returns to its beginning, with the use of a *Da Capo* symbol, where the composer alludes to the precise kabbalistic idea that the past is a present factor in one's life. The piece continues and leads to the *Coda*, which presents all elements used in the composition, with the elements of section A more prevalent.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for rhythmic preparation, measures 102-105. The score is arranged in a multi-staff format. The instruments listed on the left are: Cor (1, 2, 3, 6), Tpt. (1, 2, 3, 4), Tuba (1, 2, 3), SD & c. Bell, 4 T. Tom, Xilo, and Piano & Arpe. The music is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 8/8. The score includes various rhythmic notations, including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *sf* (sforzando) and *ff* (fortissimo). A section of the score is marked "2. Solo" and "ff". The score concludes with a double bar line and a final chord.

Figure 5-13 Rhythmic preparation for the kabbala theme, mm. 102-105

Conclusion

As observed above, one can visualize the direction of Nobre's musical language. Nobre's latest orchestral compositions summarize the personal voice of the composer, who has constantly searched for better musical expressions without denying ideas developed by past composers and without following any specific aesthetic school.

Nobre's compositions emphasize use of a clear form, motives built predominantly from seconds and thirds, some tonal centers emphasized by quartal/quintal harmonies, strong rhythmic impulse, use of effects through dynamics and advanced instrumental techniques, and exploration of possibilities in orchestration. All these characteristics can be clearly found in past works, which prove that Nobre's musical language and explorations have always been grounded in the same roots while maturing along with the composer.

CHAPTER 6
RECEPTION AND CONCLUSION

Marlos Nobre's Reception among Contemporaries

Composer, conductor, pianist and educator most renowned around this world, Marlos Nobre stands high in the echelons of seminal contemporary music makers.¹

As confirmed by the above testimonial, Marlos Nobre has an enormous advantage over many composers because he is a pianist and a conductor of great respect. He was able to direct the premieres of most of his works, and made a strong effort to have his pieces played all over the world. A hard working artist, Nobre has been an example of extreme professionalism among contemporary composers and the younger generation. He owes many of his accomplishments to his own efforts, interest, and determination, as one can see in the following testimony:

I am familiar with the music of Marlos Nobre and last year invited him to be on a program of new music as part of my series "Cutting Edge Concerts" in New York City. I am very impressed with his work, and believe that he is a passionate advocate of the music of Brazil, being an eloquent spokesman and composer. He is tireless in his efforts to compose, to conduct and to promote new music.²

Nobre's reception has always been a positive one and several important figures have had the opportunity to speak on his behalf. In 1981, Yehudi Menuhin wrote the following on the occasion of the publication of Nobre's Catalogue:

It gives me particular pleasure and even a remote sense of undeserved pride to introduce this catalogue of Marlos Nobre's works. It is because three of Marlos Nobre's works won prizes at the IMC/UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers with which I was so closely associated that I allow myself such indulgence.

May I say however that any pride would be far greater if I had a work of violin of Marlos Nobre which were [sic] my own!

¹ George Gaber, Distinguished Professor of Music, Indiana University, USA, July 23, 2000.

² Victoria Bond, Composer and conductor, New York, USA, July 26, 2000.

May this catalogue, and through it his music reach the wide audience and the critical acclaim it merit[sic].³

Nobre's orchestral pieces represent a significant portion of the contemporary orchestral repertoire and they have been played all over the world, either under his baton or that of other conductors. Because most of his works have been performed, it is possible to know how they have been received throughout the years. Nobre is an extremely well organized man who collects and files almost everything related to his music and his achievements. Therefore, it was possible to include in this study some of the reviews and testimonies regarding his music.

In 1970, *Mosaico* had great impact. Positive reviews appeared from everywhere. Argentine Alberto Jimenéz published in *La Nación*

Bastaron los momentos iniciales de *Mosaico* de Marlos Nobre para que la densidad musical se elevara poderosamente. Quien, avezado conocedor de los recursos instrumentales, ha escrito una obra tan sólida y fascinante tiene ante sí perspectivas realmente grandes. En Marlos Nobre hay temperamento, imaginación y materia suficientes como para considerar que el lugar de excepción de Villa-Lobos puede tener al artista singular capaz de llenarlo en un futuro no muy lejano.⁴

It was just necessary to hear the initial moments of Marlos Nobre's *Mosaico* to sense the powerful musical density. Those who know the instrumental resources and are capable of writing something so solid and fascinating have great perspectives. In Marlos Nobre, one finds temperament, imagination, and sufficient material in order to consider that he will be able to fill in the exceptional place now held by Villa Lobos in a not too distant future.

The same piece caused reactions in several different places. In 1978, *The Milwaukee Journal* published the following review by Louise Kenngott:

Nobre is a rising and major force on the compositional scene today. He's Brazilian, and his music comes filled with a sense of South American rhythmic drive and a primitive and bold use of color. *Mosaico* was a bombastic delight of a program opener. It is a stunning work -bold and challenging.⁵

³ Nobre, *Personal Website*. Accessed on February 03, 2007.

⁴ Alberto Jimenéz, *La Nación*, November 11, 1970.

⁵ Louise Kenngott, *The Milwaukee Journal*, October 15, 1978.

On the following day, the Lawrence Johnson stated at the *Milwaukee Sentinel*

Nobre figures as the leading exponent of contemporary Brazilian music. His *Mosaico*, an imaginative and brilliantly scored triptych in one movement, goes far to explain why. The 15 minute piece reveals not only a virtuoso command of the orchestra but confident and purposeful control of avant-garde techniques. High powered and compressed, with its surging brassy and crashing timpani strokes, *Mosaico* makes an explosive impact. But it also abounds in strands of fragile beauty, delicate weavings of winds and strings.⁶

Biosfera also garnered positive reception in different parts of the world. In 1972 it received the following review after its performance in Berlin:

Das interessanteste Stück des abends was eine zweisätzliche Komposition für Streichorchester von Marlos Nobre (*Biosfera*). Das Klanggewebe bleibtstets durchsichtig und lä die mathematische kopfarbeit vergessen.⁷

The most interesting piece of this evening's concert was the two-movement composition for String Orchestra by Marlos Nobre (*Biosfera*). The movement of the sound is so transparent that there is no need to think of any mental Mathematics.

The same piece got good reception in Switzerland the following year:

D'entrée, Marlos Nobre nous introduit dans le mystère de la création: c'est un Maître! "Biosfera" nous le prouve gardant toujours intacte cette inspiration génératrice de l'oeuvre d'art véritable.⁸

From the outset, Marlos Nobre situates us within the mystery of the creation: he is a Master! "*Biosfera*" gives us the proof and the certainty of the inspiration source of a true piece of art.

A few years later, *In Memoriam* caused sensation in Canada. According to Lorne Betts:

Nobre's "*In Memoriam*" was the show-piece of the evening. The style shows a complete control of orchestral resources, as well as a deeply felt emotionalism. Melodic fragments are of great beauty. Nobre built his work into an impressive and highly dramatic entity.⁹

The piece also caused great excitement in New York nineteen years later:

⁶ Lawrence B. Johnson, *Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 16, 1978.

⁷ Horst Feige, *Berliner Morgenpost*, Berlin, March 11, 1972.

⁸ Paul Druey, *Tribune de Genève*, May 22, 1973.

⁹ Lorne Betts, *The Spectator*, Ottawa, November 22, 1977.

Indeed the most powerful work on the program, Marlos Nobre's "*In Memoriam*", was also the only piece that kept clear of tropicalism. Using tremolando strings, punctuated first by percussive double-bass attacks, then more vehemently by percussion bursts, Mr. Nobre created an intensely ominous atmosphere, against which he set more lyrical elements, including a lovely solo cello melody. A memorial to the composer's father, the piece sometimes wore its heart on its sleeve, but it was consistently gripping.¹⁰

A later work, Nobre's *Passacaglia for Orchestra*, also received favorable reviews and a number of testimonials, such as the following one by Jorge Richter:

Mr. Nobre's extraordinary talent as a composer is well known throughout the world. Performing Mr. Nobre's compositions is always an inspiring and unforgettable experience for everyone, musicians and audience alike. I also had the pleasure of having Mr. Nobre present during rehearsals in the U.S. premiere of his "*Passacaglia for Orchestra, Opus 84*", and I find him to be one of the finest composers I have had the opportunity to collaborate. Marlos Nobre's composition technique is perfect in every aspect, and his music always achieves the highest level of performance from any group of musicians.¹¹

The reception of Marlos Nobre's aesthetics and style has been strongly received by many artists and scholars all over the world. His unique characteristics have been respected in the most diverse musical centers and his brilliant capacity for absorbing and filtering ideas and techniques has afforded him considerable recognition among his contemporaries.

Slonimsky stated the following in the *Baker's Biographical Dictionary*:

Marlos Nobre succeeded in forming a strongly individual manner of musical self-expression, in which sonorous and structural elements are effectively combined with impressionistic, pointillistic, and serial techniques, supplemented by restrained aleatoric procedures.

He is one of the few contemporary Latin-American composers who do not disdain to make use of native melorhythmic inflections, resulting in ingratiating harmoniousness.¹²

According to composer Robin Heifetz, Nobre's musical language and compositional artistry offer a strong sense of active and dynamic listening for listeners from all over the world:

¹⁰ Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, April 18, 1996.

¹¹ Jorge Richter, Conductor of the University of Tennessee Symphony Orchestra, USA, August 4, 2000.

¹² Nicolas Slonimsky, *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 8th Edition, 1994

Marlos Nobre is unquestionably one of today's important compositional talents of the Americas whose pieces are characterized by extraordinary sonic arrays and consistently demonstrate a powerful aesthetic ideal which requires an active and dynamic composer-listener relationship. His creative originality is such that it involves listeners regardless of their cultural conditioning or degree of inherent musicality. The fact that a work is peaceful and contemplative one moment and suddenly explosive, while keeping listeners attentive and on the edge of their seats, clearly demonstrates the intrinsic value and universality of his musical language.¹³

Musicologists have also been able to leave their testimonies. David Appleby is a renowned scholar in the music of Brazil. He explains

Marlos Nobre is unquestionably Brazil's foremost contemporary composer. His works represent not only craftsmanship of the highest level but are the product of a highly original creative composer. He recently was invited to come to our university as Composer in Residence for the year 2000 Latin American Music Festival. The performance of Marlos Nobre's *Convergências* Op. 28 and *Divertimento for piano and orchestra*, Op. 14 were enthusiastically acclaimed by the public and critics and his music stir the imagination.¹⁴

Robert Stevenson also states:

Marlos Nobre ranks not only as front ranking Brazilian composer, but resides among the elite few creative geniuses in the hemisphere.¹⁵

Nobre's capacity to absorb and filter a fusion of styles is well documented by Mathew-Walker in the following review:

Nobre's music is a remarkable fusion of a variety of styles. The result is surprisingly individual and distinctive: heady, evocative, sensual at times, yet always controlled within a finely imaginative and experienced framework by a fastidious creative mind.¹⁶

Even though Nobre continues to work for UNESCO, he has already made positive impressions and contributions, as registered in the following statement:

The achievements of Marlos Nobre are well known to me and I regard it as a considerable privilege to have been able to regard him as a close personal colleague. Mr. Nobre is one

¹³ Robin Julian Heifetz, composer, California, USA, July 24, 2000.

¹⁴ David P. Appleby, Adjunct Professor, Texas Christian University, Musicologist, Fort Worth, Texas, July 3, 2000.

¹⁵ Robert Stevenson, Musicologist, Director Department of Musicology, University of California, July 20, 2000.

¹⁶ Robert Matthew-Walker, *Music and Musicians International*, London, April 1988

of my successors as President of the International Music Council of UNESCO. In his office Mr. Nobre became a prominent musical figure worldwide. For persons in many countries he represents music and musical life of Brazil. As a composer he is certainly seen as a respected successor to the great Villa-Lobos and Ginastera.¹⁷

Although Nobre got involved in some controversies in Brazil in the early 1990s because of his strong ideas and desire to continue promoting his music among other contemporary composers, his reception in Brazil continues to be as strong as it is abroad. Nevertheless, due to lingering resentment from a certain number of composers – especially in Rio de Janeiro, where he lives – the composer has enjoyed much better reception in other parts of the country, such as the Northeast, South, and in São Paulo. The following statement by Brazilian composer Amaral Vieira justifies Nobre’s place and stature in Brazilian contemporary music:

Marlos Nobre é um dos mais destacados compositores do Brasil e suas obras têm sido executadas sempre com grande êxito nas mais importantes salas de concertos internacionais e estão sendo gravadas, cada vez mais, por intérpretes da mais alta qualificação.

Este brilhante músico brasileiro vem se dedicando ininterruptamente há mais de 40 anos à arte da composição e é considerado por muitos como o legítimo sucessor de Heitor Villa-Lobos no contexto da História da Música Brasileira.

Pelo notável conjunto de seu trabalho e infatigável dedicação à arte da Música, Marlos Nobre ocupa um lugar de destaque no cenário da música contemporânea.¹⁸

Marlos Nobre is one of the most distinguished composers in Brazil and his works have been performed with great success in the most important concert halls of the world. These works have also been recorded by artists of the highest caliber.

This brilliant Brazilian musician has dedicated more than 40 years non-stop to the art of composing and it is still considered by many as the well-deserved heir of Villa-Lobos within the context of the history of the music in Brazil.

Marlos Nobre occupies a special place in the contemporary music scene for his noticeable work and restless dedication to the art of music.

¹⁷ Sir Frank Callaway, Emeritus Professor, Honorable President International Society for Music Education, 26 September 2000.

¹⁸ Amaral Vieira, Brazilian Composer and President of the Brazilian Society of Contemporary Music, and Member of the International Society for Contemporary Music, Brazilian Section, June 17, 2000.

More recent performances in the United States confirmed the opinion of Nobre's position and respect within the contemporary music scene. The following statement is from Stanley

DeRusha:

I had the opportunity to be with Maestro Nobre in Texas this past May and to hear his music and to hear him perform his own music. I find words inadequate to describe the artistry and brilliance of his music and his performance. It was an electrifying experience for me and the large audience who heard the concerts. It is my intention to perform Marlos Nobre's music!

In addition, Maestro Nobre is an emotional, articulate, knowledgeable speaker who can relate the history of the music of South America and Spain with verve and deep understanding.

Marlos Nobre is a complete artist, a great composer and an exciting performer.¹⁹

Finally a testimony by Aurora Nátola-Ginastera, who confirms Nobre's place and stature among contemporary Latin American composers:

Es un hecho concreto en la opinión de musicólogos, intérpretes, directores de orquesta y organizaciones musicales Internacionales, que Marlos NOBRE es hoy, uno de los más notables compositores vivientes en América Latina. Se cumple así, la premonición de mi esposo Alberto Ginastera de quien NOBRE fue discípulo y que expresó y afirmó la extraordinaria vocación de compositor de Nobre destancándole como una gran promesa de la música en América Latina de la generación posterior a la suya.

Creo sinceramente, que Marlos Nobre es un digno continuador de la línea de talentos creadores de nuestro Continente y de Iberoamérica, junto a sus antecesores Villa-Lobos, Chávez, Revueltas y Ginastera.²⁰

It is a concrete fact in the opinion of musicologists, performers, orchestra directors, and international music organizers that Marlos Nobre is today one of the most notable composers living in Latin America. The premonition of my husband Alberto Ginastera, from whom Nobre took lessons, was right. Ginastera expressed and affirmed the extraordinary talent of Nobre as a great promise for the music of Latin America for the following generation. I believe that Nobre deserves the position of follower of the line of such creative talents of our continent and Iberoamerica along with Villa-Lobos, Chávez, Revueltas, and Ginastera.

¹⁹ Maestro Stanley DeRusha, resident Conductor, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, August 15, 2000.

²⁰ Aurora Nátola-Ginastera, violoncellist, Geneva, July 6, 2000.

Conclusion

It is difficult to determine a composer's musical language and aesthetic without analyzing his complete works. In this study, the author could assume a defined compositional language and aesthetic because the composer acknowledged the importance of his musical beliefs and explorations in his orchestral works. The author felt it essential to also familiarize herself with Nobre's other works, even though they were not presented and explored in the present document.

The musical language is what distinguishes one composer from another. It is a combination of choices and characteristics that remain particular and individual to each composer. Two composers may share common ideas and belong to the same aesthetic group, but their personal musical language will make them distinguishable. The musical language involves a combination of several aspects revolving a musical composition such as harmony, melody, rhythm, structure, instrumentation, "color," and the presence of specific features that characterize the influences of a certain place or region, among others.

As mentioned earlier in this study, Nobre's early musical language focused on the tonal system, highlighting influences from Ernesto Nazareth and Villa-Lobos. Modal inflections and rhythmic effects from the folklore of Northeast Brazil also contributed to his compositional development. In the mid 1960s, after studying in Argentina at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, Nobre better defined his style and demonstrated a strong tendency toward the avant-garde techniques of the time. Those techniques emphasized the influence of the Polish school in advanced instrumental techniques as well as the use of serial techniques and indeterminacy.

In the mid-1960s, Nobre developed the ideas that he later probes in his orchestral works. He explores those ideas in the 1970s, translating them into brilliant works and continuing to use all available material in order to keep up with the music of his time. After investigating the techniques of the avant-garde and post-serial styles, Nobre chose the techniques most significant

to his musical expression and continued using them. In the 1980s, he reached maturity as a composer, solidifying his compositional views through a combination of avant-garde techniques and important traditional elements, without copying the model of the great Classical and Romantic composers. After a long break from composing, Nobre's tendencies culminate in a synthesis of his previous techniques.

Nobre's orchestral compositions are among his most significant works as they best translate his powerful trajectory. All of his music deserves further investigation. This study presents not an end, but a beginning of research and discovery regarding Nobre's music.

It is necessary to mention again that Nobre never used integral serialism. Rather, his serialism is more personal. He uses it to find different ways to express himself musically. His use of indeterminacy relates much more to the use of a controlled aleatoric technique, which sometimes he mixes with proportional notation as showed in *Mosaico* and *In Memoriam*. Most of his pieces contain a combination of formal and aleatoric writing. Even when he chooses aleatoric procedures, every note is written down and almost entirely controlled by the composer. Moreover, Nobre's compositions exhibit a clear atonal character with tonal centers and a chordal structure that varies from consonant to dissonant, as well as the use of clusters. The formal aspect of Nobre's music is also clear, but not as a result of harmonic language as in the music of the great Classical and Romantic composers. His harmonic language, with its tonal and atonal nuances, serves exclusively to express musical ideas, as opposed to determining a particular structural form.

In his *Marlos Nobre: El sonido del realismo mágico*, Tomás Marco defines Nobre's musical language as "metatonal."²¹ This term is perhaps one of the ways to describe a musical language that contains tonal centers while going beyond tonality. He also calls Nobre's style "meta avant-garde," explaining that Nobre's style does not go against avant-garde, but is, rather, a synthesis of it. Nobre's style goes from modernity to post-modernity, Marco writes. And after dominating post-modernity, Nobre surpasses even that, resulting in what Marco calls meta-avant-garde.

It is clear that Nobre's manner of style construction surpasses what has been achieved by other composers. According to Nobre, music should be expressed through simple means, even though the intrinsic ideas remain complex. It is not his objective to restrict the spectator but to clearly communicate his ideas. He uses established techniques, but subjects them to his own process of selection and filtration.

It is challenging to define Nobre musically. Some consider him an eclectic composer, while Nobre himself does not; in fact, his music represents carefully constructed synthesis and filtration. This process defines his personal musical expression, making it more fit for pluralism. Nobre's music speaks several languages and spans several time lines. Robert Morgan mentions in the final chapters of his *Twentieth-Century Music* that the music of our time cannot be defined as a certain kind of music, but as a type of "total music," which embraces all forms of music that ever existed.²² He also explains that music from the past is as much a factor as music from the present, resulting in an "eclectic mix" that influences the music of our time. Morgan writes that

²¹ The term "metatonal" has not yet been used in academia. The term comes from Randy Sandke and his jazz band. In his *Harmony for a New Millennium: An Introduction to Metatonal Music* (2002), Sandke identifies and organizes four-note chords which lie beyond tonality and which cannot be represented by chord symbols. He uses those chords as basis for form and melodic improvisation.

²² Morgan, Robert. *Twentieth-Century Music*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991, p. 486.

the pluralism of contemporary music is not only “esthetic (encompassing different styles of music), and geographical (music from different parts of the world), it is also historical (different chronological epochs).”²³ Therefore, today’s composers cannot see tradition represented as a simple, unidirectional corridor. “It has become more like a very large house with innumerable separate rooms,” Morgan writes, “Each containing some available component of the past. Although composers do not seem to have any single assigned room of their own in this house, the building is so designed that they have more or less immediate access to all rooms...Composers simply walk into the room of choice and sift through its contents for whatever they want. Once they have what they want, they can then leave the room, shutting the door behind them until they should decide to return again...”²⁴

Marlos Nobre, certainly prefers specific rooms in that building. Nevertheless, Nobre is a pluralist who imprints his own voice onto his music. Nobre says his music results from all influences registered in his subconscious world of creativity. He writes

I [would] compare the composer to a sponge absorbing all kinds of influences throughout the different periods of his/her life. No composer will have exactly the same auditory experience as any other musician, precisely because those experiences, in the case of the real creator, are being absorbed into the formation of an authentically personal style. My music is therefore a product of my subconscious absorbing and archiving, filtering and selecting a whole series of very different influences.²⁵

...My music finds its inspiration in the source of my unconscious by way of allusions, quotations and impressions from the past of present which, at any given moment, have fascinated me. They touch my consciousness in an almost somnambulistic way and inspire me to create.²⁶

²³ Ibid, p. 485

²⁴ Ibid, p. 488

²⁵ Nobre, *Personal Website*. Accessed on Feb. 2007.

²⁶ Ibid.

I am an inventor of music motivated by the desire to create my own language, synthesis of my auditory and intellectual experiences organized in such a way as to achieve written compositions of the outmost rigor. I prefer an "impure" but living language to a "pure" dead language. I [would] like to give permanent life to my visions and dreams, my nightmares even. I want them all to become comprehensible, as soon as I think they are worth being exposed and that they have enough energy and emotion in them to enable them to bring something of value to the lives of those who listen to them.²⁷

As mentioned throughout this study, Marlos Nobre is an active composer who constantly searches for better ways to express his musical thoughts. He believes that it would be possible to discover new harmonic alternatives outside of dodecaphonism, tonality, and traditional consonances, because he is convinced that the western chromatic scale has not been exhaustively explored. Nobre asserts that there are other means of linking and binding harmonies together that lie outside traditional tonal and serial structures. He is an intellectual, studious man, who is keenly aware of his surroundings. As a performer and conductor, he has been exposed to several musical environments that enriched his views as a composer. His compositions are clearly Brazilian, although he does not intend to use his music as a means of projecting his national identity. His style, therefore, fuses these aspects, translating the power of his energetic music and a vocabulary that represents his most profound musical thoughts.

²⁷ Ibid.

APPENDIX
MARLOS NOBRE'S WORKS (1959-2004)

It is important to know that Marlos Nobre has worked several different times on the same pieces and sometimes re-arranging them for different media. The catalogue should identify these pieces by their opus numbers and respective years. Most of the times they bear the same title and only change letters in their opuses numbers, for instance: Op. 9, Op. 9a, Op. 9b, corresponding to the same piece but arranged for different media.

The following list classifies works by media. Nobre has two other published catalogues, however, not always up-to-date because Nobre remains active as a composer. The remaining catalogues published on Nobre's website and by Tomás Marco in his recent book on Marlos Nobre classify the works in a chronological order and by alphabetical order. Therefore, it is the main goal of this author to list the works by media so that they become of easy comprehension to its readers.

Orchestral works:

Convergências, Op. 28 (1968/1977)

Desafio XXX, Op. 31, No. 30 (1968/1978)

Mosaico, Op. 36 (1970)

In Memoriam, Op. 39 (1973/1976)

Football, Op. 50 (1980)

Abertura Festiva, Op 56 bis (1982)

Xingu, Op. 75 (1989)

Saga Marista: Passacaglia para orquestra, Op. 84 (1997)

Kabbalah, Op. 96 (2004)

String Orchestra

Biosfera, Op. 35 (1970)

Desafio VI, Op. 31, No. 6 (1968/2002)

Concerto I for String Orchestra, Op. 42 (1976/2004)

Concerto II for String Orchestra, Op. 53 (1981)

Elegia for String Orchestra, Op. 53a (1981)

Student String Orchestra

Suíte Nordestina No. 1, Op. 5c (1960)

Suíte Nordestina No. 2, Op. 13b (1963)

Suíte Nordestina No. 3, Op. 22b (1966)

Suíte Nordestina No. 4, Op. 43b (1977/2004)

Chamber Orchestra

Musicamera, Op. 8, No. 2 (1962)

Desafio XXIX, Op. 31, No. 29 (1968)

Ludus Instrumentalis, Op. 34 (1969)

Four Latin American Dances, Op. 72 (1989)

Chorus and Orchestra

Cantata do Chimborazo, Op. 56 (1982)

Columbus, Op. 77 (1990)

Piano and Orchestra

Concertino for Piano and String Orchestra, Op. 1 (1959)

Divertimento for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 14 (1963)

Desafio VII for Piano and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 7 (1968)

Concerto Breve for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 33 (1969)

Concerto for Piano and String Orchestra, Op. 64 (1984)

Concertante do Imaginário for Piano and String Orchestra, Op. 74 (1989)

Solo Instruments and Orchestra

Desafio I for Viola and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 1 (1968)

Desafio II for Violoncello and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 2 (1968)

Desafio III for Violin and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 3 (1968)

Desafio IV for Double Bass and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 4 (1968)

Desafio VIII for Alto Saxophone and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 3 (1968)

Desafio IX for Flute and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 9 (1968)

Desafio X for Clarinet and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 10 (1968)

Desafio XI for Bassoon and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 12 (1968)

Desafio XIII for French Horn and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 13 (1968)

Desafio XIV for Trumpet and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 14 (1968)

Desafio XV for Trombone and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 15 (1968)

Desafio XVI for Tuba and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 16 (1968)

Desafio XVII for Bass Clarinet and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 17 (1968)

Desafio XXIII for Two Guitars and String Orchestra, Op. 31, No. 23 (1968)

Concerto Armorial No. 1 for Flute and Orchestra, Op. 43a (1977/2004)

Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra, Op. 51 (1980/2004)

Double Concerto for Two Guitars and Orchestra, Op. 82 (1995)

Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra, Op. 89 (2000)

Concerto Armorial No. 2 for Flute and String Orchestra, Op. 98 (2004)

Voice and Orchestra

O Canto Multiplicado for Voice and String Orchestra, Op. 38 (1972)

Três Trovas for Soprano and Orchestra, Op. 6a (1961)
Três Canções for Soprano and Orchestra, Op. 9a (1962)
Poemas da Negra for Soprano and Orchestra, Op. 10a (1962)
Praianas for Soprano and Orchestra, Op. 18a (1965)
Dengues da Mulata Desinteressada for Soprano and Orchestra, Op. 20b (1966)
Beiramar for Baritone and Orchestra, Op. 21c (1966)
Modinha for Soprano and Orchestra, Op. 23b (1966)
Dia da Graça for Soprano and Orchestra, Op. 32b (1968)
Desafio XVIII (Amazônia II) for Voice and String Orchestra, Opus 31, No. 18 (1968/1994)
O Canto Multiplicado for Voice and String Orchestra, Op. 38 (1972)
Monólogo do Tempo for Baritone and Orchestra, Op. 56b (1982)

Ballets

Rhythmetron, Op. 27a (1968)
Convergências, Op. 28a (1968)
Sequência, Op. 29a (1968)
Biosfera (Pas-de-deux), Op. 26a (1968)
Autópsia para Minha Sombra, Op. 36a (1970)
Saga Marista, Op. 84a (1997)

Voice and Ensemble

Ukrinmakrinkrin for Soprano, Wind Instruments and Piano, Op. 17 (1964)
Três Canções de Beiramar for Soprano and Cello Octet, Op. 21a (1966/1988)
Canto a Garcia Lorca for Soprano and Cello Octet, Op. 87 (1998)
Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejitas for Baritone Wind and Brass Instruments, Op. 93 (2001)
Amazônia Ignota for Baritone, Flutes, Piano and Percussion, Op. 95 (2003)

Chamber music

- Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello*, Op. 4 (1960)
- Variações Rítmicas for Piano and Typical Brazilian Percussion*, Op. 15 (1963)
- Modinha for Voice, Flute and Guitar*, Op. 23 (1966)
- Canticum Instrumentale for Flute, Piccolo, Harp, Piano and Timpani*, Op. 25 (1967)
- String Quartet I*, Op. 26 (1967)
- Rhythmetron for Percussion Ensemble*, Op. 27 (1968)
- Wind Quintet*, Op. 29 (1968)
- Tropicale for Piccolo, Clarinet, Piano and Percussion*, Op. 30 (1968)
- Sonâncias I for Piano and Percussion*, Op. 37 (1972)
- Desafio V for Cello Sextet*, Op. 31, No. 5 (1968/1977)
- Sonâncias II for Flute, Guitar, Piano and Percussion*, Op. 48 (1980)
- Sonâncias III for Two Pianos and Two Percussions*, Op. 49 (1980)
- Desafio XIX for Violin, Guitar and Cello*, Op. 31, No. 19 (1968/1984)
- Desafio XX for Flute, Guitar and Cello*, Op. 31, No. 20 (1968/1984)
- Desafio XXV for String Quartet*, Op. 31, No. 25 (1968/1984)
- Desafio XXVI for Wind Quintet*, Op. 31, No. 26 (1968/1984)
- Desafio XXVII for Brass Quintet*, Op. 31, No. 27 (1968/1984)
- String Quartet II*, Op. 68 (1985)
- Fandango for Guitar Ensemble*, Op. 69 (1989)
- Desafio XVII for Bass Clarinet and Marimba*, Op. 31, No. 17 (1968/1993)
- Desafio XXXI for Violin and Marimba*, Op. 31, No. 31 (1968/1994)
- Desafio XXXII for Cello Octet*, Op. 31, No. 32 (1995)
- Desafio XXIV for Guitar Ensemble*, Op. 31, No. 24 (1968/2000)

Trio for Piano, Violin, and Viola, Op. 4a (2001)

Guitar

Ciclo Nordestino No. 1, Op. 5b (1960/1982)

Momentos I, Op. 41, No. 1 (1974)

Momentos II, Op. 41, No. 2 (1975)

Momentos III, Op. 41, No. 3 (1976)

Homenagem a Villa-Lobos, Op. 46 (1977)

Momentos IV, Op. 54 (1982)

Momentos V, Op. 55 (1982)

Momentos VI, Op. 62 (1984)

Momentos VII, Op. 63 (1984)

Prólogo e Toccata, Op. 54 (1984)

Entrada e Tango, Op. 67 (1985)

Reminiscências, Op. 78 (1991)

Relembrando, Op. 78a (1993)

Rememórias, Op. 79 (1993)

Voice and Guitar

Dia da Graça for Soprano and Guitar, Op. 32 (1968)

Desafio XVIII (Amazônia I) for Soprano and Guitar, Op. 31, No. 18 (1968/1994)

Três Trovas for Tenor and Guitar, Op. 6b (1961/1998)

Três Canções for Voice and Guitar, Op. 9b (1962/1998)

Poemas da Negra for Voice and Guitar, Op. 10b (1962/1998)

Praianas for Tenor and Guitar, Op. 18b (1965/1998)

Dengues da Mulata Desinteressada for Tenor and Guitar, Op. 20b (1966/1998)

Beiramar for Voice and Guitar, Op. 21d (1966/1998)

Modinha for Voice and Guitar, Op. 23c (1966/1998)

Poema V for Voice and Guitar, Op. 94, No. 4a (2002)

Two Guitars

Ciclo Nordestino No. 1 for Two Guitars, Op. 5a (1960/1982)

Ciclo Nordestino No. 2 for Two Guitars, Op. 13a (1963/1982)

Ciclo Nordestino No. 3 for Two Guitars, Op. 22a (1966/1982)

Três Danças Brasileiras for Two Guitars, Op. 57 (1983)

Desafio XXII for Two Guitars, Op. 31, No. 22 (1968/2003)

Sonatina for Two Guitars, Op. 76 (1989/2004)

Lamento and Toccata for Two Guitars, Op. 99 (2004)

Piano

Homenagem a Ernesto Nazareth, Op. 1a (1959)

Nazarethiana, Op. 2 (1960)

Ciclo Nordestino I, Op. 5 (1960)

Theme and Variations, Op. 7 (1961)

16 Variations of a Theme by Fructuoso Vianna, Op. 8, No. 1 (1962)

Tocatina, Ponteio e Final, Op. 12 (1963)

Ciclo Nordestino No. 2, Op. 13 (1963)

Ciclo Nordestino No. 3, Op. 22 (1966)

Sonata Breve, Op. 24 (1966/2000)

Homenagem a Arthur Rubinstein, Op. 40 (1973)

Ciclo Nordestino IV, Op. 43 (1977)

Four Moments, Op. 44 (1977)

Sonata on a Theme of Béla Bartók, Op. 45 (1977)

Tango, Op. 61 (1984)

Sonatina, Op. 66 (1984/2003)

Monólogos, Op. 37a (1997)

Variantes e Toccata, Op. 15a (1997)

Voice and Piano

Três Trovas for Soprano and Piano, Op. 6 (1961)

Três Canções for Soprano and Piano, Op. 9 (1962)

Poemas da Negra para Soprano and Piano, Op. 10 (1962)

Praianas for Soprano and Piano, Op. 18 (1965)

Dengues da Mulata Desinteressada for Soprano and Piano, Op. 20 (1966)

Beiramar for Bass/Baritone and Piano, Op. 21 (1966)

Modinha for Soprano and Piano, Op. 23a (1966)

Dia da Graça for Soprano and Piano, Op. 32a (1968)

O Canto Multiplicado for Soprano and Piano, Op. 38a (1972/2003)

O Canto Multiplicado for Baritone and Piano, Op. 38b (1972/2002)

Monólogo do Tempo for Baritone and Piano, Op. 56c (1982)

Kleine Gedichte for Baritone and Piano, Op. 90 (2000)

Amazônia III for Baritone and Piano, Op. 91 (2002)

Llanto por Ignacio Sanchez Mejías for Baritone and Piano, Op. 93a (2002)

Poema V (Raio de Luz) for Soprano and Piano, Op. 94, No. 5 (2002)

Poema XIII (Raio de Luz) for Baritone and Piano, Op. 94, No. 13 (2002)

Instrumental Music

Variações for Solo Oboe, Op. 3 (1960)

Sonata for Solo Viola, Op. 11 (1963)

Desafio I for Viola and Piano, Op. 31, No. 1a (1968)

Desafio II for Cello and Piano, Op. 31, No. 2a (1968)

Desafio III for Violin and Piano, Op. 31, No. 3a (1968)

Desafio IV for Double Bass and Piano, Op. 31, No. 4a (1968)

Desafio VIII for Alto Saxophone, Op. 31, No. 8a (1968/1982)

Desafio IX for Flute and Piano, Op. 31, No. 9a (1968/1983)

Desafio X for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 31, No. 10a (1968/1984)

Desafio XI for Oboe and Piano, Op. 31, No. 11a (1968/1984)

Desafio XII for Bassoon and Piano, Op. 31, No. 12a (1968/1984)

Desafio XIII for French Horn and Piano, Op. 31, No. 13a (1968/1984)

Desafio XIV for Trumpet and Piano, Op. 31, No. 14a (1968/1984)

Desafio XV for Trombone and Piano, Op. 31, No. 15a (1968/1984)

Desafio XVI for Tuba and Piano, Op. 31, No. 16a (1968/1984)

Desafio XVII for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 31, No. 17a (1968/1992)

Desafio XXI for Guitar and Harp, Op. 31, No. 21 (1968/1992)

Desafio XXIII for Guitar and Piano, Op. 31, No. 23a (1968.1992)

Solo I for Solo Flute, Op. 60 (1984)

Círculos Mágicos for Bass Clarinet and Percussion, Op. 70 (1989)

Duo for Guitar and Percussion, Op. 71 (1989)

Sonante I for Solo Marimba, Op. 80 (1994)

Solo II for Solo Bass Clarinet, Op. 81 (1994)

Solo III for Solo Vibraphone, Op. 83 (1994)

Desafio XXXI for Violin and Marimba, Op. 31, No. 31 (1994)
Desafio XXXI for Flute and Marimba, Op. 31, No. 31a (1994)
Desafio XXXIII for Flute and Guitar, Op. 31, No. 33 (1997)
Poema I for Violin and Piano, Op. 94, No. 1 (2002)
Partita Latina for Cello and Piano, Op. 92 (2002)
Poema II for Viola and Piano, Op. 94, No. 2 (2002)
Poema III for Cello and Piano, Op. 94, No. 3 (2002)
Poema IV for Double Bass and Piano, Op. 94, No. 4 (2002)
Poema VI for Flute and Piano, Op. 94, No. 6 (2002)
Poema VII for Oboe and Piano, Op. 94, No. 7 (2002)
Poema VIII for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 94, No. 8 (2002)
Poema IX for Bassoon and Piano, Op. 94, No. 9 (2002)
Poema X for French Horn and Piano, Op. 94, No. 10 (2002)
Poema XI for Trumpet and Piano, Op. 94, No. 11 (2002)
Poema XII for Trombone and Piano, Op. 94, No. 12 (2002)
Poema XIV for Alto Saxophone and Piano, Op. 94, No. 14 (2002)
Poema XV for Harmonica and Piano, Op. 94, No. 15 (2002)

Choral Music (A Cappella)

Agô-Lonã for Mixed Choir, Op. 16 (1964)
Jogo for Men's Choir, Op. 16a (1964/1970)
Três Coros de Natal for Mixed Choir, Op. 19 (1966)
Desafio XXVIII for Mixed Choir, Op. 31, No. 28 (1968)
Cancioneiro de Lampião, Op. 52 (1980)
Cancioneiro Natalino for Mixed Choir, Op. 58 (1983)

Cancioneiro Junino for Mixed Choir, Op. 59 (1984)

Choral Music and Guitar

Yanomani for Mixed Choir, Solo Tenor and Guitar, Op. 47 (1980)

Band

Chacona Amazônica for Symphonic Band, Op. 86 (1998)

Amazônia II for Jazz Ensemble, Op. 85 (1998)

Fanfarra Campos do Jordão for Brass, Timpani and Percussion, Op. 97 (2004)

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She has been featured at several broadcast programs in Brazil such as *Isto É*, the second most important magazine in the country, *Programa do Jô*, a Public National TV Broadcast at TV Globo, University of Fortaleza Radio, TV Verdes Mares, TV Cultura, and TV Jangadeiro among others. Ilka is the winner of first prize in the 2004 *Alec Courtelis International Student Competition*, a prestige prize given to the best international student at the University of Florida.