



NAXOS

THE MUSIC OF
BRAZIL

Oscar
**LORENZO
FERNANDEZ**

Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2

Reisado do Pastoreio

Minas Gerais
Philharmonic Orchestra
Fabio Mechetti



About This Series

The series The Music of Brazil is part of the project *Brasil em Concerto*, developed by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to promote music by Brazilian composers dating back to the 18th century. Around 100 orchestral works from the 19th and 20th centuries will be recorded by the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra, the Goiás Philharmonic Orchestra and the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra. Further recordings of chamber and vocal music will gradually be added to this collection.

The works were selected according to their historical importance for Brazilian music and the existence of recordings. Most of the works recorded for the series have never had recordings available outside Brazil; many others will have their world premiere recordings. An important part of the project is the preparation of new or even first editions of the works to be recorded, many of which, despite their relevance, have only been available in the composer's manuscript. This work will be carried out by the Brazilian Academy of Music, by the Instituto Musica Brasilis and by musicologists working together with the orchestras.



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
BRAZIL

About The Scores

All scores published by Academia Brasileira de Música
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Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez (1897–1948)

Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2 ‘O Caçador de Esmeraldas’ • Reisado do Pastoreio

Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez (Rio de Janeiro, 1897–1948) was a first-generation Brazilian of Spanish descent. He enjoyed a very successful career, but died when he was just 50, at the peak of his fame as a composer, conductor and teacher. Despite his premature death, he left a relatively large and varied body of work to posterity, from songs (48 in all) to operas, and from chamber music to tone poems and concertos (for piano and for violin). Restless and dynamic by nature, Lorenzo Fernandez was also one of the key figures in the cultural life of Rio de Janeiro more generally: he spearheaded various initiatives, including the foundation of the Sociedade de Cultura Artística, the music journal *Ilustração Musical* and the Conservatório Brasileiro de Música, whose work took place in a number of different places both in the city and elsewhere in Brazil, as well as supporting Villa-Lobos in the establishment of the Academia Brasileira de Música.

Until he was 25, Lorenzo Fernandez wrote music in a neo-Romantic style, with some Impressionist influences. In 1922, however, the festival known as the Semana de Arte Moderna (‘Modern Art Week’) took place in São Paulo, heralding a significant change in direction for Brazilian art. The intellectuals and artists who led this new movement championed work that drew on the country’s own cultural traditions. In this context, ‘modern’ first and foremost meant ‘authentically Brazilian’ art. Lorenzo Fernandez embraced this new aesthetic, imbuing his output with a strong sense of musical nationalism. Unlike his rebellious contemporary and friend Villa-Lobos, however, he reconciled his new nationalist colours with the Classical-Romantic tradition.

His first great success was the tone poem *Imbapara* of 1929, a work that evokes the culture of the native peoples of Brazil through the use of indigenous themes collected by anthropologist Edgar Roquette-Pinto. Encouraged by its warm reception, Lorenzo Fernandez decided in 1930 to explore Afro-Brazilian elements in another orchestral work, *Reisado do Pastoreio* (‘A Pastoral Epiphany’). This three-movement symphonic suite was premiered in Rio de Janeiro under the baton of the then doyen of Brazilian music, Francisco Braga. The first movement, *Reisado*¹ (‘Epiphany’), has a rustic character, with the rhythm of a horse trotting through the countryside represented by the bass instruments and used as the basis for solos from the different sections that build to a climax. All this is preceded by a short introduction that features the pastoral sound of the flute, followed by ascending scales. The coda returns to the ambience of the introduction, giving the first movement a formal balance that was a consistent trait of Lorenzo Fernandez’s music. In the second movement, *Toada* (‘Song’), the pizzicato strings serve as a rhythmic base for the syncopated motifs played by woodwind and brass. The composer continues to evoke the atmosphere of a rural Brazilian landscape throughout. The third and final movement, *Batuque* (a dance), is often played as a standalone piece and has been programmed by such renowned conductors as Toscanini, Koussevitzky, Bernstein and Chávez. Its dance-like character, Afro-Brazilian air and hypnotic rhythmic intensity, together with its extreme melodic concision, all contribute to the success of this finale. Its origins as an African dance (as indicated by its subtitle) explain its primordial power. The rhythmic motion is introduced by low strings and percussion, with five rising notes alternating with repeated notes, like drumbeats. This first motif is followed by a second, in contrary motion. Above this, the winds and, above all, the brass play melodies in long note values. The percussion have a key role, helping create an ecstatic character that builds to a climax. After this, the opening atmosphere returns, but at an ever-accelerating pace and with greater participation from the percussion (snare drum, bass drum, cymbal, tam-tam and piano) as the music reaches its frenzied conclusion.

Lorenzo Fernandez’s *Symphony No. 1* was written in 1945 and is representative of his third phase, in which he abandoned an explicitly nationalist idiom. Attentive listeners will, however, make out unconscious reminiscences of his Brazilian roots. In the year of its premiere, Brazil was coming out of the long centralised political period known as the Estado Novo, and the world in general was moving into the post-war period. Lorenzo Fernandez too was looking for new directions, and was also influenced, if tenuously, by Bartók, who died in 1945. Without altogether letting go of homegrown inspiration, therefore, he switched to a more universalist idiom. His orchestration is dense and his themes are vigorous. The opening movement begins with a slow introduction from solo horn, with a response from the strings. It follows sonata-form pattern, its first theme swift-moving, its second more moderate in pace. In the second movement, headed *Allegro vivo e scherzoso*, a lively ostinato rhythm becomes ever denser as it develops, with a few more rarefied moments. Here we sense the composer of *Batuque*, but operating in a more universal dimension. By contrast, the following *Lentamente* conjures an atmosphere that oscillates between mystery and tragedy. The *Allegro energico* finale begins with a majestic introduction from the horns in unison, answered by solo cor anglais. This is followed by the movement proper, the most vibrant of the four, with a rhapsodic character and a dense orchestration with brass and percussion. It gives the impression that the composer was keen to announce a new age for Brazil and the wider world.

Lorenzo Fernandez's *Symphony No. 2* of 1947 was inspired by the exploits of the 17th-century Brazilian explorer Fernão Dias Paes Leme (1608–1681), as recounted in 276 Alexandrines (12-syllable lines) by the great Brazilian poet Olavo Bilac (1865–1918). His poem *O Caçador de Esmeraldas* – 'The Emerald Hunter' – provides *Symphony No. 2* with its subtitle and tells of the legendary frontiersman's quest to discover emerald mines in Brazil's interior, and the challenges he faced from the weather, Indian attacks and defiance from members of his own party as the expedition advanced into 'the dark forest, in whose impenetrable depths only the fleet tapir ran and the fierce jaguar roared'. Here is just one of the 46 six-line stanzas that make up Bilac's poem:

*Seven years! Fighting Indians, fevers, malaria,
wild beasts, reptiles – holding off the men of the mountains,
overcoming the fury of his mutinous companions...
Seven years! And here he is, returned at last, with his treasure!
How lovingly he clutches the open leather bag overflowing with
green stones against his chest! – he has returned...*

However, seven years into his expedition, the ambitious explorer was struck down by fever and died in the jungle, still clutching his bagful of emeralds. Lorenzo Fernandez used the plot of Bilac's poem as a basis for his four-movement symphony, making it a programmatic work rather than a tone poem. As the music progresses he conjures atmospheres of hope, heroism, struggle, discovery, delirium and death.

Echoing the story of Fernão Dias Paes Leme, in 1948 Lorenzo Fernandez died clutching – figuratively speaking – this final score to his breast, having not lived long enough to hear its premiere. His death left a huge void in Brazil's classical music scene.

Ricardo Tacuchian
Academia Brasileira de Música

English translation: Susannah Howe

¹ A traditional Brazilian celebration of the feast of Epiphany.

Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez (1897–1948)

Sinfonias nº 1 e nº 2 ‘O Caçador de Esmeraldas’ • Reisado do Pastoreio

Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez (Rio de Janeiro, 1897-1948), de primeira geração brasileira de pais espanhóis, teve uma carreira meteórica, apesar de sua morte prematura aos 50 anos de idade, no auge de suas atividades como compositor, regente, professor e animador cultural. Não obstante sua vida interrompida precocemente, deixou para a posteridade uma obra relativamente extensa, do Lied (ao todo 48 canções) à ópera e da música de câmara e do poema sinfônico ao concerto (para piano e para violino). Irrequieto e dinâmico, Lorenzo Fernandez também foi um ativo animador cultural de sua época, estando à frente de várias iniciativas como a fundação da Sociedade de Cultura Artística, da Revista Ilustração Musical e do Conservatório Brasileiro de Música, este último com várias filiais espalhadas em diferentes pontos da cidade e, mesmo, do país, além de seu intenso ativismo na recém criada Academia Brasileira de Música, liderada por Villa-Lobos.

Até os 25 anos de idade, Fernandez apresentou, em sua música, uma atmosfera neorromântica, com algumas influências impressionistas. Entretanto, em 1922, eclode, em São Paulo, o movimento de artistas e intelectuais que ficou conhecido como a Semana de Arte Moderna e que representou uma mudança de rumo na arte brasileira. Seus líderes defendiam uma arte que fosse gerada a partir das tradições culturais do país. Aqui, Arte Moderna significava, antes de tudo, uma arte autenticamente brasileira. Lorenzo Fernandez abraçou esta nova estética, imprimindo forte cor nacional em toda sua produção. Entretanto, ao contrário de um rebelde como seu contemporâneo e amigo Villa-Lobos, ele conciliava os novos rumos nacionalistas com a tradição clássico-romântica.

O primeiro grande êxito de Lorenzo Fernandez foi o poema sinfônico *Imbapara*, obra de 1929, com uma atmosfera cultural dos povos originários brasileiros, em que o compositor usou temas indígenas colhidos pelo antropólogo Roquette Pinto. Movido pelo sucesso dessa obra, Fernandez, no ano seguinte, parte para a exploração de elementos afro-brasileiros no *Reisado do Pastoreio*. Trata-se de uma suíte sinfônica, em três movimentos, estreada no Rio de Janeiro, sob a regência do então decano da música brasileira, Francisco Braga. No primeiro movimento, *Reisado*, o compositor escreve uma peça com caráter campesino, ao ritmo de uma cavalgada pelo campo, representada pelos graves da orquestra, servindo de base para solos dos diferentes naipes que se adensam até um clímax. Antes, porém, há uma pequena introdução com toques pastoris de flauta seguidos por escalas ascendentes. A coda retoma o caráter da introdução, dando ao primeiro movimento um equilíbrio formal do qual Lorenzo Fernandez nunca abriu mão. No segundo movimento, *Toada*, as cordas em pizzicato servem de base rítmica para motivos sincopados expostos pelas madeiras e pelos metais. O compositor mantém, todo o tempo, o clima rústico do campo brasileiro. O terceiro movimento desta suíte sinfônica, *Batuque*, é frequentemente tocado como peça isolada, tendo sido dirigida por regentes famosos como Arturo Toscanini, Sergei Koussevitzky, Leonard Bernstein e Carlos Chávez. Seu caráter de dança, seu clima afro-brasileiro, sua intensidade rítmica hipnótica, contrastando com extrema concisão melódica, explicam o sucesso deste movimento sinfônico. Trata-se de uma “dança de negros” (conforme indica o subtítulo na partitura), com toda a força primordial de sua ancestralidade africana. O movimento rítmico é apresentado pelas cordas graves e percussão, com cinco notas ascendentes, alternadas com notas repetidas, como nos toques de um tambor. Em seguida ao primeiro inciso vem um segundo, agora em movimento contrário. Por cima deste clima rítmico, surgem melodias com notas longas, emitidas pelas madeiras e, principalmente, pelos metais. A percussão tem uma ênfase importante, imprimindo um caráter de êxtase, até um ponto culminante. Segue-se, novamente, o mesmo clima da primeira parte, porém cada vez mais acelerado e com maior participação da percussão (caixa clara, bombo, prato, tam-tam e piano). É o delírio final.

A Sinfonia nº 1 foi escrita em 1945 e é representativa da terceira fase do compositor, quando ele abandona uma linguagem explicitamente nacionalista. Entretanto, um ouvinte mais atento pode perceber reminiscências inconscientes de sua brasilidade. No ano de sua estreia, o Brasil saía de um longo período político centralizado, chamado de Estado Novo. Além disso, era o começo do pós-guerra. O compositor procura, assim, novos ares. Podemos apontar, também, uma tênue influência de Béla Bartók, compositor que morreria no mesmo ano da Primeira Sinfonia. Assim, sem perder seu perfil telúrico, Lorenzo Fernandez passa a ter uma linguagem mais universalista, embora com um eventual e sublimado caráter nacional. Sua orquestração é densa e seus temas são vigorosos. O 1º movimento, *Allegro agitato*, abre com uma introdução lenta, com solo de trompa e resposta nas cordas. Segue um esboço da forma Sonata, com a primeira ideia movida e a segunda mais moderada. No 2º movimento, *Allegro vivo e scherzoso*, um ritmo obstinado com grande vitalidade se desenvolve cada vez com maior densidade, mas com alguns momentos de rarefação. Sente-se, aqui, o mesmo compositor do Batuque, mas numa dimensão mais universal. *Lentamente* é o 3º movimento. Ele apresenta uma atmosfera que oscila entre o misterioso e o trágico, em contraste com o movimento anterior. O 4º movimento, *Allegro energico*, começa com uma introdução de pomposa chamada das trompas em uníssono, respondida por um solo de corne-

inglês. Segue-se o movimento propriamente dito, o mais vibrante dentre os três anteriores, com caráter rapsódico e uma densa orquestração com metais e percussão. É como se o autor quisesse anunciar os novos tempos no Brasil e no mundo.

A Sinfonia nº 2 (1947) de Lorenzo Fernandez foi inspirada na epopeia do sertanista brasileiro do século XVII Fernão Dias Paes Leme (1608-1681). Sua história é narrada nos 276 versos alexandrinos do grande poeta brasileiro Olavo Bilac (1865-1918). O poema “O Caçador de Esmeraldas”, que também serve de subtítulo para a Sinfonia nº 2, conta o sonho quimérico do sertanista que pretende descobrir as minas de esmeraldas, enfrentando as intempéries, ataques de índios, insurreição dos expedicionários à medida que a expedição avança na selva adentro. Como canta o poeta “*nos matagais, em cuja horrível espessura, só corria a anta leve e uivava a onça feroz*”. Citamos, em seguida, apenas uma sextilha, entre as 46 de que compõem todo o poema de Bilac:

*Sete anos! Combatendo índios, febres, paludes
Feras, reptéis, – contendo os sertanejos rudes,
Dominando o furor da amotinada escolta...
Sete anos! E ei-lo de volta, enfim, com o seu tesouro!
Com que amor, contra o peito, a sacola de couro
Aperta, a transbordar de pedras verdes! – volta...*

Entretanto, após a epopeia de sete anos, o ambicioso sertanista é acometido pela febre e morre na selva, abraçado à sacola “derramada de esmeraldas”. Lorenzo Fernandez usou o argumento de *O Caçador de Esmeraldas*, aproximando-o à estrutura de uma Sinfonia em quatro movimentos. Não se trata, portanto, de um “Poema Sinfônico”, mas de uma “Sinfonia Programática”. Nos quatro movimentos da obra o compositor cria as atmosferas de esperança, heroísmo, luta, descoberta, delírio e morte.

A epopeia do sertanista se repetiria na vida do compositor que também morre, abraçado à última partitura, sem ouvir a sua estreia. Lorenzo Fernandez faleceu subitamente, no Rio de Janeiro, em 1948, num momento em que desfrutava o clímax de seu reconhecimento como artista e realizador.

Ricardo Tacuchian
Academia Brasileira de Música

Fabio Mechetti



Photo: André Fossati

Fabio Mechetti has been artistic director and principal conductor of the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra since its foundation. Under his leadership, the orchestra has received numerous awards, recorded nine albums, including several for Naxos, and undertaken a tour of South America. In 2014, he became the first Brazilian music director of an Asian orchestra when he was appointed principal conductor of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra. In the US, Mechetti conducted the Jacksonville Symphony for 14 years and is now its conductor emeritus. He has also served as music director of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and Spokane Symphony; resident conductor of the San Diego Symphony; and associate conductor, under Mstislav Rostropovich, of the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, D.C. As well as making his Carnegie Hall debut with the New Jersey Symphony, he has worked as guest conductor with a number of other North American and

international orchestras. Born in São Paulo, he has a Master's in conducting and composition from The Juilliard School, and won the international Malko Competition for young conductors in Denmark in 1989.

www.fabiomechetti.com

Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra



Photo: Eugenio Savio

Founded in 2008 and based at the Sala Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra has become one of Brazil's most successful cultural organisations, under the helm of artistic director and principal conductor Fabio Mechetti. Its 90 players come from Europe, Asia and the Americas as well as from all regions of Brazil itself. The orchestra has received numerous awards and accolades, including *CONCERTO* magazine's Grand Prize (2015, 2020), the Carlos Gomes Award for the best Brazilian orchestra (2012), and being named classical music ensemble of the year (2010) by the São Paulo Association of Art Critics (APCA). It presents various concert series, educational events and open air performances, as well as undertaking regional, national and international tours, and runs development programmes for young conductors and composers. Its discography includes two previous recordings for The Music of Brazil

series on Naxos – albums of music by Nepomuceno (8.574067) and Almeida Prado (8.574225), the latter of which was nominated for a Latin GRAMMY in 2020 (Best Classical Album category).

www.filarmonica.art.br

Restless and dynamic by nature, Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez was a key figure in the cultural life of Rio de Janeiro, founding numerous influential musical institutions both journalistic and educational. He gained international fame for the primordial power of *Batuque*, the final dance movement of his Afro-Brazilian influenced *Reisado do Pastoreio* suite. Without ever abandoning his Brazilian roots, in his later career Lorenzo Fernandez moved away from explicit nationalism towards a more universalist idiom as can be heard in the vigorously themed and atmospheric *First Symphony* of 1945 and the programmatic *Second Symphony*, inspired by the life and death of the heroic 17th-century explorer Fernão Dias Paes Leme.



Oscar
**LORENZO
FERNANDEZ**
(1897–1948)

	Reisado do Pastoreio ('A Pastoral Epiphany') (1930)	13:12
1	I. Reisado ('Epiphany')	6:09
2	II. Toada ('Song')	2:53
3	III. Batuque	4:10
	Symphony No. 1 (1945)*	31:47
4	I. Lento (ad libitum) – Moderato	10:14
5	II. Allegro vivo e scherzoso	6:17
6	III. Lentamente	7:04
7	IV. Allegro energico	8:12
	Symphony No. 2 'O Caçador de Esmeraldas' (‘The Emerald Hunter’) (1946–47)	36:02
8	I. Allegro moderato e pesante (Enérgico)	11:45
9	II. Molto allegro e misterioso	6:56
10	III. Lento e lamentoso	10:17
11	IV. Allegro mosso e agitato	7:04

***WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra • Fabio Mechetti

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