Overture

Brazilian singer and songwriter Anitta has recently drawn international attention by reaching the top of the Spotify Global Chart, shortly before being nominated for the 2023 Grammy Awards. Previously, other artists and musical genres had stood out in the global music industry, such as *bossa nova* and Tom Jobim, *samba* and Carmen Miranda in the cinema, and even *maxixe* in Paris at the beginning of the twentieth century – to name but a few artists and genres made in Brazil, a country with immense musical diversity and a well-structured music industry.

For the Cambridge Elements series, we will be introducing an overview of popular music in Brazil, addressing not only "typically" Brazilian musical genres (such as samba and bossa nova), but also pop-oriented musical genres (such as rock and electronic music) also produced and consumed in the country. Based on analyses of musicology, history, sociology of culture, and cultural studies, we introduce a new reading of the development of popular music made in Brazil from the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. We understand popular music as urban, modern, registered with and distributed by different information technologies (from sheet music to streaming platforms), and, last but not least, consumed by a heterogeneous audience. However, this is a current notion, since the "popular music" category is a historical concept and, thus, subject to continuous change.

In Brazilian Portuguese, the term "popular music" has different meanings that overlap and/or alternate from one period to another and are closely related to the views and discussions of each time and place, especially those concerning national identity issues.

In the early nineteenth century, "popular" meant "popularity" in the sense of being known (recognized) by many. At times, the term referred to anonymous repertoires of songs and dances and, other times, to specific composers, many of whom were linked to the music theater circuits, with the music performed there often known as "light music." From the late nineteenth century until at least the 1940s, the expression "popular music" was used to refer to music of oral tradition, which was usually anonymous. This is how music with a recreational-religious role and local use was classified – far from commercial use and close to the now seldom used concept of "folk music." This understanding of the expression "popular music" in Brazil is similar to what in French, Italian, and German is known respectively as *musique populaire, musica popolare*, or *populäre Musik*, and is also associated with the working class or folk culture (Middleton, 1990; Scott, 2008).

It was only in the mid twentieth century in Brazil that the notion of modern urban popular music – made and broadcast by the mass media – was consolidated. This understanding of the term, which is close to the widely used "pop music,"

is relatively recent. It is a type of mass music, close to Anglo-Saxon "pop," and comparable to commercial French popular music, identified as *variétés françaises*, and to the type of sentimental songs currently called *Schlager* in Germany and other countries in Central and Northern Europe.

However, this currently widely accepted conception has not completely replaced the previous notion, since today the expression "popular music" encompasses not only the notion of traditional music orally transmitted (sometimes still called "folk music"), but also industrialized music, made in mass production for a heterogeneous audience. Emerging as a discursive backdrop for this conundrum is the aesthetic and ideological friction between what is artistic ("authentic") and what is commercial, leading to a new version of the "entertainment music vs. serious music" dichotomy that was typical of the nineteenth century.

Accordingly, when dealing with recent commentary that includes this term, it is essential to be mindful of its polysemy. Sometimes, authors adopt the former meaning and, other times, the latter meaning – not to mention the authors who embrace both connotations simultaneously.

In addition to the term's double (or triple) meaning, there is yet another layer when the topic is "popular music" in Brazil: the expression is almost always imbricated in discussions of national identity. This is not a recent issue though; it has been established since the first works on the subject. In the nineteenth century, the concept of "popular" in relation to music meant "popularity," or "known by many," and could indicate music or composers of any nationality. But soon the term "Brazilian" began to identify music considered autochthonous and well-known, and at the end of the century "Brazilian popular" started to be used in connection with folklore studies including in the field of music. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the historiography of popular music in Brazil has favored narratives associated with identity, gradually developing the idea of a "Brazilian music" lineage based on the so-called "matrices of Brazilian popular music," that is, the *modinha* and *lundu* – genres to which hundreds of studies across the country are dedicated.

During the twentieth century, led by the studies conducted by Mário de Andrade, a large part of music historiography discussed identity issues. Despite the country's immense cultural diversity, the Brazilian popular music historiography has favored the study of musical genres linked to this lineage to the detriment of more comprehensive approaches.

Only recently, since the study of popular music has been disseminated through several areas of knowledge as a result of interdisciplinary dialogues, have musical genres once considered spurious gradually been admitted as a legitimate subject for study. Genres like waltz, polka, *forró* (a lively type of music from the Northeast of Brazil), *brega* (romantic/cheesy music), black

music, *sertanejo* (a type of Brazilian country music), rock, *axé* (Bahian pop music), rap, *manguebeat* (fusion of hard rock with northeastern styles), funk, and rap have gradually emerged. Doors have opened to dances, concerts, and *micaretas* (off-season celebrations of carnival, or "*carnaval"* in Portuguese).

Nonetheless, it is easy to fall into the trap of saying that the (political or aesthetic) boundaries between genres "no longer exist" today, stating that that's how it is now or that the internet has removed the national boundaries of musical genres, for example. In fact, what recent research reveals is that musical flows have always been multicultural. There has always been overlap between musical genres, in addition, of course, to the transatlantic comings and goings of songs made in Brazil. For instance, in the 1960s samba started to be played on drum kits, led by cymbals, something unseen until then; and today's samba includes rhythms (from percussion and singing) from funk, a much younger genre.

While the internet enhances non-territorial musical practices today, this role was once played by television, records, radio, sheet music, instruments, and musicians' tours per se. It was the discourse about such practices, in turn, that often caused – and sometimes still causes – genres to be seen as monolithic and to even be mistaken for being synonymous with national identity. It is easy to notice the international connections between 1960s rock and 1990s manguebeat, when the discussion about music and nationality had already been established as such. However, one can avoid this trap by going back to the nineteenth century, when newspapers and sheet music listings often showed the waltzes-contradances pair, pointing to a transnational approach *avant la lettre*. Although widely considered Brazilian music today, *xote* has its international connection attested by its correlation to *schottisch*, the dance from which it originated.

Avoiding the term "Brazilian music," we wrote this introduction to popular music *in Brazil* without worrying about omitting musical genres just because their origin was attributed to other countries. We sought, as much as possible, to reflect the musical diversity found in Brazil in a narrative structure that highlights how it intertwines with the music industry and the main aesthetic propositions existing in recent centuries.

This Element comprises three main sections, preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion. The Element's subject-matter is developed in a somewhat chronological order, and each section addresses historical and musical aspects related to the various musical genres discussed. The first section deals with how a Brazilian musical identity was built from the country's independence in 1822 to the end of the first two decades of the twentieth century, with relevant comments on music, musicians, instruments, institutions, printing companies, music performance locations, and pioneering music recordings. The second section discusses the consolidation of an idea of popular music

throughout the twentieth century, from the notion of "popular" associated with rural musical performances of oral tradition to the recorded urban musical genres that were established through radio and television. The third section explores the world of mass popular music, the relationships between traditional and modern, and the topics of cultural diversity, multiculturalism, the impact of digitalization, and the musical kaleidoscope of the twenty-first century. The Element ends with a coda about musical genres in the era of digital platforms.

1 Building the Idea of Popular and the Music Market in Brazil

This section introduces the development of popular music in Brazil in two overlapping aspects. On the one hand, we discuss how the very idea of *Brazilian* and, later, *popular* music could emerge among the local intelligentsia, in an intellectual and political effort to build a national identity while this Portuguese colony was amid a transformation first into an empire and then into a republic on the American continent. On the other hand, we reconstruct the history of how the music market was set up, from the printing of sheet music to the consolidation of the first record companies at the beginning of the twentieth century.

1.1 The Concepts of Popular Music in the Long Nineteenth Century

Descriptions of musical performances identified as "popular songs" emerged in reports of foreign scientific expeditions made to Brazil in the early nineteenth century. Those descriptions were appropriated by men who took on the mission of creating a specific aspect of the Brazilian Empire in relation to European culture, introducing what they considered to be "Brazilian" music. The two concepts merged toward the end of the nineteenth century, and the notion of "Brazilian popular" was then synonymous with anonymous and predominantly rural traditional musical performances.

The nineteenth-century reference literature for music in Brazil is limited in scope regarding the "popular" repertoire to be discussed. This key reference material appointed certain musical genres as "Brazilian," such as modinha and lundu, omitting several musical genres equally or more present in the daily life of the urban population, such as waltz, polka, and quadrille, which were considered "foreign." In fact, countless musical genres performed throughout the century were neglected, as it is possible to observe in contemporary periodical sources.

In contrast to this limited representation of the "popular" in nineteenth-century Brazil and in order to identify the scope of entertainment music then, we conducted studies using the periodical collection of Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira (HDB, Brazilian Digital Periodicals Library). First, every decade of the nineteenth century was individually explored in a study using the keywords

"popular music," "classical music," "serious music," and "light music," in addition to another study dedicated to the 1830–1839 decade, considering the significance of the two genres considered Brazilian in the material, a search for the keywords "modinha" and "lundu/lundum."[1]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, reference was made to "non-Brazilian" genres such as waltzes and contradances and, at the end of the century, to other categories associated with entertainment music, such as *cançoneta*, which, together with modinha and lundu, was later added to the pioneering phonography available in *Discografia Brasileira* (Brazilian Discography, in 78 rpm), hosted on the Instituto Moreira Salles website.[2]

1.1.1 The Brazilian versus the Civilized European: The Emergence of "Popular"

This section discusses essays by representatives of two generations of men of letters in the long nineteenth century in Brazil (Veloso & Madeira, 1999), namely: (1) from the 1830 generation, associated with the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute (IHGB, in the acronym in Portuguese), with an article published by Manuel de Araújo Porto-Alegre (1806–1879) in the magazine *Nitheroy*; and (2) from the 1870 generation, associated with the Brazilian Academy of Letters (ABL, in the acronym in Portuguese), with the book *História da literatura brasileira* (Brazilian Literature History), written in 1888, with a second edition in 1902, by Sílvio Romero (1851–1914). Both Porto-Alegre and Romero used the ideas expressed by Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius (1794–1868) in two works, namely *Travels in Brazil*, written in tandem with Johann Baptist von Spix (1781–1826), and his own essay, "How to Write the History of Brazil," published in 1844 (Ulhôa, 2022).

In the memoirs of their extensive expedition in Brazil between 1817 and 1820, Spix and Martius (2017) describe "popular songs," sung accompanied by the guitar. Those include modinhas, lyrical and sentimental in nature, as well as lundu-songs, some considered lascivious. There, the description of dances qualifies those that are usual in cultured society as "delicate" and "graceful," including lundu, while those danced by the lower classes are described as "sensual" and "unrestrained," with "movements and gestures like those of the negroes."

In 1836, the article "Ideias sobre a música" (Ideas on Music) was published by Araújo Porto-Alegre. It was considered the first, albeit very brief, history of music in Brazil (Kühl, 2014). Porto-Alegre inaugurates a long series of research

[1] Search for "Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira." http://memoria.bn.br/hdb/periodico.aspx.
[2] Search for "Discografia Brasileira – Instituto Moreira Salles." Available at: https://discografiabrasileira.com.br/.

on music, involving issues of origins and authenticity vis-à-vis foreign and Brazilian schools. In the aesthetic and ideological perspective, he travels the crossroads of two romantic streams regarding the notion of people: the French, linked to the national, and the German, linked to nature. On the one hand, the character of music composed in Brazil would have been influenced by the environment: lundum, "exceedingly voluptuous, melodic," coming from Bahia in the north of the country, and modinha, "more serious," coming from Minas Gerais in the southern part of the country. On the other hand, in order to underscore the specificity of Brazilian music in comparison with European music, especially Portuguese, and in opposition to theater music (especially Italian opera), Porto-Alegre emphasizes the importance of José Maurício Nunes Garcia (1767–1830), a Brazilian composer of religious and serious music, comparable to Mozart.

Like Spix and Martius, Porto-Alegre identifies social and cultural differences between the types of music performed. At one end were the slaves, playing *marimba*, and, at the other, the masters with their pianos. In the interstices of this social fabric, there was a somewhat marginal urban character, that is, the guitar player.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the "race" category and the positivist view of evolution started to impact the interpretation of music in Brazil, but still in a dialogue with the angle presented by the travelers, including Martius. His historiographic prescription explains that the Brazilian national identity was shaped based on the amalgamation of the three different "races," namely: "the copper-colored or American, the white or Caucasian, and finally the black or Ethiopian." In this triangle, and using a geographical metaphor, "as discoverers, conquerors, and masters, … the powerful river of Portuguese blood ought to absorb the small tributaries of the Indian and Ethiopian races" (Martius, 1844, p. 382).

In the late nineteenth century, Martius's point of view was expanded by Sílvio Romero, who argued that the history of Brazil should be observed from the perspective of miscegenation. This new racial type, the mestizo, would have overshadowed the two "inferior races" (blacks and reds), which, under the "law of adaptation," would have merged into the former, and, in turn, according to what Romero refers to as the "law of vital competition" would tend to become part of the white Portuguese, a superior race that would predominate (1902, v. 1, p. 89). This spells out the so-called "whitening" theory, which allows miscegenation, but still considers it a "stain" that should be blamed for Brazil's late development of its civilization.

Despite focusing on literature, Romero speaks of "Brazilian," "anonymous," and "endangered" music, as traditional orally transmitted music was considered at the time. Thus, he simply alludes to modinhas, square dances (*quadrille*),

marches, sacred music, and fantasia, which he knew firsthand, in Sergipe, his home state (1902, v. 1, p. 321). He distinguishes two types of music: one "with a lyrical, light, fleeting, and mild character, or music of the streets, music of the people; the other more serious and demure, or church music" (p. 374). The few names mentioned in relation to music were the lettered romantic composers, including José Maurício Nunes Garcia, precursor of Henrique Alves de Mesquita (1830–1906), author of operettas and *féeries* (or fairy plays), and Antonio Carlos Gomes (1836–1896), a follower of Verdi and just as "popular" as the Italian opera composer.

1.1.2 Disputes over the Meaning of "Popular"

As previously mentioned, the variety of existing musical genres is not in the scope of studies by the men of letters discussed so far, such is their diligence in distinguishing the element of identity in the face of European culture in the profane music performed in Brazil. In advertisements for sheet music for sale in Rio de Janeiro, next to the label "modinhas" one can see several contradances (quadrille), most of them for piano, but also for flute, in addition to countless waltz collections. This shows that there was a demand for music to be used by amateurs, which demonstrates how the entertainment industry in Brazil started to be built.

In nineteenth-century periodicals in Brazil, the idea of "popular" implied being known or recognized by many, whether referring to anonymous repertoires of songs and dances, or to specific composers, many of whom were linked to musical theater circuits (the "popular Offenbach"). Also, the music performed then was also known as "light music." Perhaps this is why some researchers use the term "light" as synonymous with "popular." However, by reading the periodicals, one may determine that, at least in the nineteenth century, "light music" relates to musical theater (operettas, comic operas, vaudevilles, and féeries) as opposed to classical music.[3]

As for the "Brazilian" music categories, modinha and lundu (or lundum) appear both in theatrical performances, many of which for the benefit of a musician, and in compositions listed for sale. The following advertisement, posted in *Jornal do Commercio*, is representative of this. In addition to showing the search terms, it contextualizes musical performances in the theater. It is a "benefit" performance, that is, the proceeds from the sale of tickets went to the two actors on stage and to the members of *Sociedade do Teatro Imperial* (Imperial Theater Society). Also, the event is identified as "entertainment," pointing to its "lighthearted" character. Finally, note the expression "in black character," a stereotyped characterization of

[3] For example, please refer to: *Semana Ilustrada*, n. 34, p. 2, August 4, 1861. http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/702951/266.