



## A History of Chôro in Context

by Marilyn Mair

Chôro has been called Brazil's first independent national music. Beginning as an unwritten performance style in Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1800's, chôro compositions first appeared in print in the 1870's. Chôro's full development came with the music of Pixinguinha in the 1920's, before its popularity gave way to the new simpler style of samba. The virtuoso instrumentals of chôro were eclipsed by the popularity of vocal styles in the early days of radio and recording, but it experienced a strong revival in the 1940's, sparked by the compositions of Jacob do Bandolim and others. This period gave us most of the standard repertoire performed today, before chôro once again fell from favor, obscured by the new style of bossa nova. Chôro had its second strong revival in the 1970's, a period that saw an increased interest in professional performances and recordings. Recently, sparked by the 100th anniversary of Pixinguinha's birth and a new interest in the music of chôro pioneer Chiquinha Gonzaga, musicians in Brazil and the rest of the world have rediscovered the delights of chôro music, updating its performance style and instrumentation and writing new material to take chôro into its third century. The history of chôro in Brazil shows many parallels to the development of North American national music styles such as blues, ragtime and jazz. This is due to the commingling of musical influences from Europe and Africa throughout the Americas in the 19th century, a mix of diverse styles that engendered new forms of popular music reflecting the origins of the developing nations' inhabitants.

To trace the roots of chôro, a little background on the history of Brazil is needed. Chôro originated in the city of Rio de Janeiro, a cultural center of Brazil since the 18th century. Rio became the capital of Brazil in 1763 while the country was still a colony of Portugal. In 1808, Napoleon invaded Portugal and King João IV fled with his royal court to Rio, making it the center of the entire Portuguese empire and bringing the newest in European art, music, and ideas to Brazil. When King João was able to return to Portugal, he left Brazil to the rule of his son Dom Pedro, who declared Brazil's independence from Portugal in 1822. Under the patronage of these two rulers Rio's musical and artistic life flourished and it became a truly cosmopolitan city, emulating the fashion, elegance, and cultivation of the arts found in the Napoleonic court. Its theaters presented the operas of Rossini and other Italian composers, and its aristocratic salons featured the music and literature of France. As the 19th century progressed and Rio entered its own "Belle Époque," the city became an important performance destination for Europe's virtuoso

performers, its concert season on par with those of the great European capitals.

As Brazil was attaining its independence, music in Europe were undergoing a transformation. Breaking away from the universal style of the Classical Era, which was marked by symmetry, clarity, and formal structures, European composers were turning to their own folk music to create the diverse nationalistic styles of the Romantic Era. Chopin incorporated the polonaise and mazurka of his native Poland, Liszt popularized Hungarian gypsy melodies, Spanish nationalists incorporated the habanera and flamenco rhythms, and Schubert and Brahms created a bittersweet Viennese style based on the ländler and other Austrian folk forms. This European folk-based music was exported to Brazil as part of the highly-esteemed court style, and once established was assimilated into the realm of popular music and transformed by native performance practice to become the roots for Brazil's own national music. Similar devel-



opments in the United States in the late 1800's lead to a variety of national styles including ragtime, blues, and the improvisational beginnings of jazz. The new styles began with European forms, and were transformed by the incorporation of African elements of rhythm, syn-

copation, melody and pitch alteration, like chromatic slides and “bent” notes. Thus, throughout the Americas in the 19th century new styles of national music were developing, not from the indigenous native music of the countries, but from the combined elements of two dissimilar foreign music styles, European and African, brought to the New World by European colonization and the subsequent importation of African slaves.

Particularly important to the development of Brazilian popular music were the European forms of the



Portuguese “modinha,” the Viennese waltz, and the Hungarian polka. The modinha was a sentimental, lyrical art song that moved from Portugal to the salons of 19th-century Rio and then into the realm of Brazilian popular song. Usually written in a simple AB or ABA form, the modinha of the late 19th century was sung in cafés or as outdoor serenades accompanied by flute, guitar, and cavaquinho, European instruments popular in Brazil. As the modinha moved from the salon to the street it was replaced in aristocratic Brazilian society by the waltz, popular for its dignity and elegance, and the polka, introduced in 1845, that became something of a national craze at all social levels. The Brazilianized “polca” influenced most 19th-century music in Rio, and to “polcar” meant leading a carefree bohemian lifestyle centered around Rio’s cafés and their music. The polca became a catalyst for native improvisation on European music forms and led directly to the first original urban

Brazilian dance form, the “maxixe”. It also influenced the development of the early Brazilian tango and the chôro. Many instruments in Brazilian music also traced their roots to European sources. The flute, Spanish guitar, and Portuguese bandolim and cavaquinho found in chôro ensembles were all imported to Brazil from Europe. The bandolim, or Brazilian mandolin, represents a further development of the Neapolitan mandolin in Portugal, and was found in Brazil by the 18th century. (Claus Schreiner, *Música Brasileira*, p. 63). It has a flat top and back similar to the North American mandolin, four pairs of strings tuned like a violin, is played with a plectrum, and is usually the melody instrument in a chôro ensemble. The cavaquinho, that also arrived from Portugal in the 18th century, is a ukulele-like instrument tuned in fourths and played with a plectrum. It is usually used as a rhythm instrument in conjunction with the pandeiro, a small tambourine-like drum.

The music of Africa also played an important role in the development of Brazilian chôro. The Angolan “lundu,” documented in Brazil as early as the 18th century, was a wild and convulsive dance whose rhythms became assimilated into Portuguese court music. In 19th-century Brazilian popular music the lundu metamorphosed from a dance to a song in 2/4 rhythm, accompanied by clapping in the syncopated 2/4 rhythm pattern: short-long-short / long-long. The “polca-lundu” developed as an instrumental style combining elements of both forms, and the term was used rather interchangeably with maxixe, Brazilian tango, and chôro, to describe the fast syncopated instrumental music that began in late 19th century Rio. The end of slavery in Brazil in 1888 and the transition of the monarchy to a republic a year later also changed Brazilian popular music as freed slaves left the plantations and flocked to the cities. Black and mulatto Brazilians became a 2/3 majority in Rio and their input into the music and culture of the city increased proportionately. Ensembles of drums and African-based percussion instruments like the pandeiro, the tamborim, and a variety of scrapers and rattle-type instruments changed the sound of popular music, adding a distinctive rhythmic element to the melody-based European model.

The term “chôro” began to be applied to the performance style of instrumental groups in Rio around 1850. There is some debate as to how the name developed. The most common consensus is that it came from the Portuguese verb chorar, “to cry,” indicating the emotional nature of the music or perhaps bemoaning the lower-class status of its early performers. It could also have come from the “xolo,” an early Afro-Brazilian dance, or the “chormeiros,” Brazilian wind ensembles popular in Rio in the 1830’s. The chôro ensembles themselves evolved from the “musica de barbeiros,” or barbers’ musical groups. The tradition of musicians earning their living as barbers traces its roots to Italy and was exported to the United States as well

as Brazil. The barber's profession protected the hands, to some extent, from the rigors of manual labor, and left musicians free in the evenings to play social music in informal groups at cafés and parties. In Italy, the barbers' groups included local professionals who played folk-based popular music on mandolins and guitars. In Brazil, the barbers' groups were black and mulatto musicians who played modinhas, lundus, and polcas for middle-class white parties, in groups composed of two guitars, cavaquinho, and often a flute. And in the United States, groups developed similar to both of these. The Italian immigrant community had its mandolin-guitar ensembles, and there is documentation of the mandolin in Harlem barber shops in the late 1890's, as an important instrument in black groups playing social music in New York City. (Samuel Charters and Leonard Kunstadt, *Jazz: A History of the New York Scene*, pp. 25-31). The Brazilian mandolin, although not a regular part of "musica de barbeiros" ensembles, was used in popular Brazilian music of the period, leading to the supposition that it was involved in early choro ensembles, a conjecture supported by some musicologists. (Schreiner, p. 95).

The first composer to write pieces called choro's was Joaquim Antonio da Silva Calado (1848-1880), a mulatto born in Rio to a family of former slaves. He was a virtuoso flutist, an immensely popular performer, and the first Brazilian composer to popularize the forms of lundu, polca-lundu, and maxixe. "He is considered one of the first musical nationalists in Brazilian popular music: he recognized the choro as a means by which to pull away from European dominance in the popular arts, leading the movement of the choro from a manner of performance to a genre." (Thomas Garcia, "The Brazilian Choro: Politics and Performance," p. 161). Calado frequently participated in informal "roda de choro," music sessions held in a home or club where players improvised in the new choro style. In 1870, he formed the group "Choro Carioca," the first ensemble named for the choro style, the adjective "Carioca" being a widely used nickname for a resident of Rio. The group was comprised of flute, two guitars, and cavaquinho, an instrumentation similar to earlier modinha or "musica de barbeiros" ensembles. Calado's most famous composition, "A Flór Amorosa," is widely considered the first written choro. Calado is also an interesting link between choro music and a possible North American influence on its development. In 1869 he performed in concert in Rio with the virtuoso American pianist/composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) who was hugely popular in Brazil. The similarities between the Creole syncopations and melodies of the New Orleans native's highly original compositions, like "The Banjo," or "La Bamboula," and those of choro, considered along with Gottschalk's star-status as a performer, suggest that the American flavor of Gottschalk's music may have had an impact on developing choro style, as it

certainly did on the style of American ragtime emerging in the same period.

As choro was beginning in Brazil, North American black musicians were laying the foundations for jazz. In the mid-1800's black pianists in Kansas and Missouri began developing a "ragged time" performing style on their instrument meant to emulate the sound of black marching bands. Keeping the four-part march form but syncopating its rhythm, ragtime pianists were publishing sheet music by the end of the century and, hooked up to a device that punched holes in "piano rolls," recording their music for performance in homes across America on the newly-developed player piano. Ragtime music would become a national craze, but its 19th-century beginnings were largely confined to small bars and clubs of mid-western black communities. At the same time, outside of New Orleans, the style of Dixieland was developing from the improvisations of black musicians playing "hot music" at the Place Congo. In a tradition dating back to the early part of the 19th century, African slaves in New Orleans, forbidden their native music or religion, were allowed to meet once a week at this field outside of the city to sing, dance,



and improvise music, as a sort of safety valve. Verbal documentation of these sessions in the 1890's, particularly the trumpet playing of Buddy Bolden, a black

New Orleans barber, indicates that American jazz was being played in New Orleans long before its formally acknowledged beginnings in the 1920's recordings of the white ensemble, The Original Dixieland Jazz Band. This delay in musical acculturation between black and white communities in the United States prevented



19th-century black innovations from reaching the mainstream of American music until the 20th century. But in Rio, *chôro*, though initiated by black performers, was acknowledged and embraced by white middle-class audiences, and recognized by insightful Brazilian composers as a new national style to be celebrated and developed as a pathway to the country's musical independence.

The earliest classically-trained Brazilian composer to adopt the *chôro* style was Francisca Hedwiges Gonzaga (1847-1935), known as "Chiquinha". Her aristocratic family disapproved of her musical career, even more so when she ventured outside the genteel world of salon music and into the popular styles of marches,

polca and *chôro*. Known for her fiery temper, she cut ties with her family and left her shipbuilder husband to continue her music career. Gonzaga, a pianist, composer and conductor, was attracted to the *chôro* performance style she heard in local street bands, and incorporated its rhythms and harmonic elements into her piano music and songs. In 1877 she wrote "Atrahente," designated as a polca, but clearly attempting to reproduce the improvised performance style of *chôro*. "In the evolution of urban dance in Rio de Janeiro, Francisca Gonzaga played an important role because she blended and recreated the essence of the authentic *chôros* and serenades with the prevailing European dances." (Gérard Béhague, "Popular Music Currents in the Art Music of the Early Nationalistic period in Brazil, circa 1870-1920," p. 129). Gonzaga also succeeded in nationalizing Brazilian musical theater, and is remembered for her operettas, many of which included *chôro* as incidental music. She played a significant role in the fight against slavery in Brazil and collaborated musically with black composers and performers. She is perhaps most famous for writing, in 1899, the first official march of Brazilian Carnival, "Ó Abre Alas!" An innovator in Brazil's national music, and a pioneer for women's autonomy, interest in Gonzaga's music and life has recently been revived in Brazil on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of her birth.

While Chiquinha Gonzaga was translating the sounds of *chôro* to piano, Anacleto Medeiros (1866-1907) was continuing its development and increasing its popularity in the context of the marching band. The son of a freed slave, Medeiros graduated from the Conservatory of Music in Rio and became well-known locally as a composer and performer on flute, clarinet and saxophone. His greatest musical impact, however, came as the founder, in 1896, and conductor of Rio de Janeiro's most famous military band, the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros (Band of the Firemen's Corps). Under Medeiros' baton, the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros became known for its precision and its lavish Carnival spectacles, and it was the first Brazilian group asked to record cylinders and discs for the newly-established recording studio of Casa Edison. Medeiros "was also a regular participant at a 'roda de *chôro*' at the Cavaquinho de Ouro, a music store in downtown Rio de Janeiro, where he played regularly with the young guitarist/composer Heitor Villa-Lobos." (Garcia, p. 177). Medeiros wrote and arranged *chôro* for the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros, notating the music in formal scores, previously unnecessary in the oral tradition of the *roda de chôro*. Many of his *chôro*, including "Iara," and "Imploranda," achieved great popularity at the time, and are still performed by *chôro* groups today. Following Medeiros' death, Albertino Pimentel (1867-1929) took over as the conductor of the Banda do Corpo de Bombeiros, and continued writing and performing *chôro* with the band as well.

Of all the early *chôro* composers, the greatest and most influential was certainly the pianist Ernesto Nazareth (1863-1934), who Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) called, “the true incarnation of the Brazilian musical soul.” Nazareth began writing his solo piano music while he was still a teenager, calling his works “Brazilian tangos,” a designation that became his trademark. In 1920, Nazareth got a job demonstrating sheet



music for a music publisher, playing pieces as requested so people could decide which to purchase, a necessary service since there was no radio and records were rare. Later he began to play solo piano in the lobby of the famous Odeon cinema an hour before the movies began. He wore tails, and his repertoire included Chopin, Liszt, Gottschalk, and Beethoven, as well as his own compositions. He sometimes played with a small orchestra that included Heitor Villa-Lobos on cello. Villa-Lobos, who had already begun composing *chôro*, would go on to become the most famous of Brazil’s classical composers, the influence of Nazareth and *chôro* clearly evident in his work. Nazareth’s own contribution to the development of a Brazil’s national music style cannot be overestimated. His “Brazilian tangos” are not based on the Argentine variety, but are actually Brazilian maxixe or *chôro* in form and style. Nazareth felt, justifiably, that his compositions were more refined than the music of either genre, and so preferred his self-designation. Despite their complexity, the piano pieces of Nazareth achieved great popularity in their day due to his use of authentic popular-style melodies and rhythms. (Béhague, p.140). Nazareth’s works are still widely performed today, the earliest to be considered standards in the contemporary *chôro* repertoire. His composition “Brejeiro” has the distinction of tying with Zequinha Abreu’s well-known “Tico Tico no Fubá”

as the most frequently recorded *chôro* — 27 recordings by 1984! (Ary Vasconcelos, *Carinhoso Etc.: Historia e Inventario do Chôro*, p. 13). It’s also interesting to note that Nazareth was nearly an exact contemporary of the American ragtime composer Scott Joplin (1868-1917), another pianist who successfully incorporated popular music elements into a sophisticated context to create a national style.

A Brazilian friend recently commented that the variety of music in his country was so vast as to defy description, but that you could sum it up with one word — Pixinguinha. Alfredo da Rocha Vianna Jr. (1897-1973), best known by his nickname “Pixinguinha,” is the composer who brought *chôro* to its peak, triumphed with it in Europe, combined it with jazz, began samba, orchestrated Carmen Miranda’s hit recordings, and created some of the most sophisticated counterpoint in Brazilian music through his composition and improvisation.

Pixinguinha was born into the *chôro* tradition; his father was a respected flutist and hosted frequent “roda de *chôro*” at his home. Already performing flute professionally and writing by age 14, in 1919 Pixinguinha formed perhaps the most famous *chôro* group, “Os Oito Batutas” (The 8 Hotshots) The group initially included flute, two guitars, 7-string guitar (used for the bass lines), bandolim, bandola (an alto bandolim), cavaquinho, pandeiro and other percussion. The band was so good and in such demand, that they broke down previous race barriers, playing at the prestigious Cinema Palais in Rio, where Ernesto Nazareth was one of their biggest fans. They performed throughout Brazil, and in 1922 were sent to Paris on a tour designed to showcase new developments in the Brazilian arts. They were a huge success, and Pixinguinha, impressed by American ragtime bands he heard in Paris, began adding saxophone and other brass instruments to the *chôro* band.

Pixinguinha recorded and probably co-wrote the first samba, “Pelo Telefone,” in 1917. He made a good living as an arranger and conductor, and accompanied most of the popular samba singers including Carmen Miranda and Noel Rosa. He continued to record his own music, and in 1932 formed the “Groupa da Velha Guarda,” (Old Guard) a deliberately nationalistic group in opposition to the growing influence of American jazz in Brazil, arguable a trend that he himself had started! He continued to write *chôro* throughout his life, and

tried to avoid Americanization or modernization of the form. His works show remarkable variety, and many are standards of the choro repertoire today, including “Vou Vivendo,” “1 x 0,” “Carinhoso,” and “Naquele Tempo”. Pixinguinha was universally beloved in Brazil as a performer and a composer, and was choro’s defining voice during the period of its greatest commercial success.

As radio boosted the popularity of samba and jazz, demand for choro performances declined. The virtuoso instrumental style lost its public appeal, with the exception of solo guitar choros. The popularity of the guitar was on the rise in the 1930’s, and the Brazilian guitarist-composers like João Pernambuco (1883-1947), Garoto (1915-1955), Laurinda Almeida (1917-1995), and Dilermando Reis (1916-1977) found opportunities to record and publish their solo guitar works. All had performed in choro ensembles, and so the authenticity of the musical style remained intact in their compositions. Even without a significant audience, choro ensembles remained important to the spirit of their communities, and conjuntos continued to meet and play in homes and local clubs. After a period of nearly half a century as the most popular style of Brazilian music, choro had abruptly returned to its amateur roots, but amateur standing didn’t imply lower levels of performance. Choro conjuntos were tough on their initiates and, using techniques similar to those of bebop jazz sessions in the United States in the 1940’s, would test the skill and vocabulary of new players to make sure they were up to the group’s high standards before allowing them to join permanently. These traditions bore fruit as older choroists initiated a new generation of players into the intricacies of choro style. And in 1933, one of these young performers, with little fanfare or expectation of fame, played choro on bandolim for his first radio broadcast. At age 15, Jacob Pick Bittencourt (1918-1969), or “Jacob do Bandolim” as he was known, was sewing the seeds for the choro revival of the 1940’s, and beginning a career that would significantly expand and change choro style.

Jacob do Bandolim’s father was a pharmacist and amateur musician, and his mother was a Polish immigrant. Jacob began playing the violin as a child and switched to bandolim when he was 12. Following his radio debut he and his group, “Jacob e Sua Gente,” won a reputation for themselves in choro competitions and performances. Since choro was not widely played in commercial venues at the time, Jacob and his band maintained day jobs to earn a living. Jacob’s early occupations included pharmacist, insurance agent, salesman of electrical supplies, and clerk, where he developed into a virtuoso typist. Although discouraged by the lack of financial support for choro, he persevered in developing his technique, and arranging and writing new pieces. In 1940, his dedication paid off when he won a music competition that earned him a government pension for life. His first recording, in 1947 was of his

own composition “Treme Treme,” and the well-known choro, “Gloria”. He continued to record prolifically over the next 20 years, producing dozens of 78’s, 45’s, and LP’s. Along with Waldir Azevedo, cavaquinho, and Abel Ferreira, clarinet, Jacob revitalized choro performance and repertoire in the 1940’s, leading choro into a new period of popularity. His compositions updated choro style, and in his conjuntos and others the bandolim became the main solo instrument, replacing the flute. The rhythmic vitality of his performances and his melodic improvisation set him apart from performers of the past, and many of his compositions, such as



“Noites Cariocas,” “Assanhado,” “Doce de Coco,” and “Vibrações,” remain an important part of present-day choro repertoire. Besides performing, composing, and recording, Jacob was an ardent promoter of choro as a musical form, organizing two “Noite dos Choristas” for broadcast in 1955 and ’56, the last featuring 50 guitarists, 25 bandolimists, and other musicians. He also changed the actual design of the bandolim, modifying its shape to alter its tone color.

With the rise of bossa nova in the 1960’s, however,

the popularity of *chôro* once again declined. The new sound of the *bossa nova* was sophisticated and upper-class, reinforcing *chôro*'s lower-class roots and making it appear overly complex and old-fashioned. But by the mid-1970's *chôro* was rebounding, as successful Brazilian musicians from many styles returned to the music of their childhood and began to perform and record the *chôro* classics. The 1970's revival of *chôro* music was spurred by three separate issues. The first was musical, the performers' nostalgia for older acoustic styles combined with an interest in reinvestigating the wealth of literature that first defined Brazilian music. The second was historical, as Brazilians became convinced of the importance of documenting and preserving their rich artistic heritage. And the third was political, during a period of oppressive military dictatorship from 1964-1985, with *chôro* "serving as a basis for reestablishing their Brazilian identity in a politically and socially turbulent period." (Tara Livingston, "Chôro and Music Revivalism in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: 1973-1995," p. iv). In 1973, the renown samba performer Paulinho da Viola was among the first to champion the *chôro* style, performing with the remaining musicians of Jacob's band *Época de Ouro*, which included Paulinho's father, on the TV special "Sarau," a term referring to the *chôro* jam session. Deo Rian, one of Jacob's students, filled in for the master on bandolim on that project and he and Joel Nascimento continued Jacob's new *chôro* traditions for bandolim in their concerts and recordings. In 1975, the Museum of Image and Sound in Rio held a week-long festival celebrating the life and music of Jacob do Bandolim, that featured many of his students, colleagues and admirers in concert. Paulinho da Viola continued his exploration of *chôro* style, recording the LP "Memórias: Chorando" in 1976. Also in the late 1970's, the Brazilian classical guitar virtuoso Turibio Santos released his LP "Chôros do Brasil," a tribute to the music of his youth that brought *chôro* to the attention of guitarists internationally.

The popularity of *chôro* spread throughout Brazil as well, with "Conjunto Atlantico" featuring bandolímist Evandro in São Paulo, and "Os Ingênuos" in Salvador. The first Festival Nacional do Chôro, subtitled "Brasileirinho," was held in 1977, and the second, "Carinhoso," the following year. In 1975, musicologist Jose Mozart de Araújo, established the "Clube do Chôro" to preserve and promote *chôro* performance, especially among young players, and the group sponsored competitions for new *chôro* conjuntos and unpublished *chôro* compositions. In 1976, "Os Carioquinas," with 14-year-old Raphael Rabello (1962-1995) on 7-string guitar, won a competition held for young (under 20) *chôro* groups, and the following year the group released its first recording. Rabello would go on to make some of the most virtuosic *chôro* recordings on both 6 and 7-string guitar with Deo Rian, the jazz/*chôro* clarinetist Paulo Moura, pianist/composer Radamés Gnattali, and

others before his untimely death at age 33. The decade of the 1970's revitalized *chôro*, increased *chôro* repertoire and recordings, educated a new generation of performers, and solidified *chôro*'s historical importance, but in the process it changed *chôro*'s social context forever. *Chôro* musicians had historically been amateurs, earning their living by other means, and eschewing internal competition and modernization to keep *chôro* the musical, almost spiritual, expression of their community. During the 1970's revival, *chôro* moved from the informal setting of a group "sarau" in a home or club to the formality of the concert stage, the spotlight of national competition, and the depersonalization of professional recordings. The shift from community participation to professional presentation changed the relationship between the music and its audience. Where *chôro* had once been an inextricable part of its community, it now existed as an independent style of Brazilian popular music, like samba or *bossa nova*. Disengaged from its social context, *chôro* became less a shared experience and more an icon of a lifestyle from the past, and once the separation of music and community had begun there was no turning back.

The world music boom of the 1990's created a new audience for *chôro*, one that loved the music for its sound but knew little of its cultural heritage. New groups formed in Brazil to record new *chôro*, older groups revived, and early *chôro* recordings were rereleased. For most contemporary Brazilian *chôro*es the original progenitors of *chôro* were merely legends, and the revivalists of the 1940's, at best, distant memories. Some of the players had not even been born before the 1970's revival professionalized *chôro* performance, and many learned their *chôro*, not around their parents' kitchen tables, but from books and recordings. For the first time there were *chôro* groups outside of Brazil, in North America, Europe, and Japan, who knew the music, studied its performance practice, and played it well, even though they had never set foot on the streets of Rio. The Brazilian bandolímist Evandro recorded *chôro* in Japan with an all-Japanese conjunto; the Brazilian jazz pianist Antonio Adolfo reinterpreted the music of Chiquinha Gonzaga with his trio; "No Em Pingo d'Água" transformed Jacob do Bandolim's *chôro* with an eclectic array of instruments and styles, and "Choro Club," a Japanese trio, released a CD of their own original *chôro* pieces. As the globalization of *chôro* has continued, facilitated by internet commerce and the increasing availability of *chôro* CDs worldwide, it has met with some resistance from Brazilians who fear that the national identity of the music is being lost. Some even insist that, because of the music's cultural connections, only Brazilians can play *chôro* properly. These nationalists may regret the pathway that *chôro* has taken in the last quarter century, but they can't undo it. Once *chôro* left its communal roots for the concert stage in the 1970's, it became a free-standing genre, subject to

reinterpretation from performers outside the community that engendered it. Much as Dixieland jazz, when it left New Orleans and moved up the river to Chicago, or American blues, when it left local black bars in the 1920's and moved onto the vaudeville stage, choro had changed its audience, and the music began to adapt to reflect its new broader impact.

As choro moves into the 21st century the music is transcending its original community to reach a larger international audience, passing through a tenuous but inevitable stage in its evolution. The key to maintaining choro's cultural integrity during the process of internationalization is to keep its performance practice a vital part of the music. Choro's characteristic quality of sound, its particular style of improvisation, its traditional tempos and rhythmic variation are all important aspects of the music. Unfortunately, since choro is not widely known by audiences or performers outside of Brazil, there is a real possibility that these crucial unwritten elements will be lost before they're established as part of its identity. Contemporary choro musicians would do well to consider the historical precedent set by jazz, blues and ragtime, styles that have been performed internationally for years but retain their national identity. There are certain performance expectations encoded in the music, expectations that performers are universally obliged to consider. No one expects to hear a blues singer that sounds like Pavarotti, or a Dixieland band that phrases like a classical woodwind quintet, in fact such a performance would be considered a violation of the style. Choro musicians need to ensure that their music carries performance expectations as well, so it doesn't simply become part of an exotic pops repertoire for classical flutists or flashy showpieces for bluegrass mandolinists. The music of choro can and will stand on its own, but its character, shaped by the delightful complexity of a century and a half of performance heritage, is far richer when interpreted in context. When choro performers present the fullness of the music, keeping its history and cultural heritage in view, they continue the work of generations of musicians and composers who created and developed the style before them. To look backward to the traditions, while moving onward with innovation, performers and composers can ensure that choro will continue into its third century as a vital form of Brazilian national music.

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