

# Presenting

The concept of historical and artistic patrimony has taken hold in Brazil at least since the creation, in 1937, of the Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (SPHAN), who defined it as “*a group of movable and immovable goods whose preservation is the object of public interest, whether due to its relation to memorable facts of Brazilian history, or to its exceptional archeological, ethnographic, bibliographic, or artistic worth.*” To this definition was added, at the end of the nineteen-nineties, the concept of “intangible heritage,” which, according to Brazilian legislation, encompasses perceptions, manifestations, places, and forms of expression, as well as, in conformity with the General Conference of the Unesco (2003), oral traditions and expressions, understandings and practices concerning nature and the universe, rites and celebrations, visual and performing arts, and traditional functions.

Thus emerged the idea of “musical patrimony” – a notion associated to that of “intangible heritage” –, which refers to the living musical practices and traditions of a given region or community. The need remained, however, for a concept that would encompass the music written in the past whose conservation, study, and promotion would also be of public interest. With this in mind, the terms “music-historical patrimony” and “music-archival patrimony” were coined. The latter, which was the theme of the VI Encontro de Musicologia Histórica in Juiz de Fora, in 2004, designates musical prints or manuscripts accumulated in museums, archives, and libraries, whose composers have been deceased for at least seventy years, i.e., music that has fallen into public domain according to Brazilian copyright law.

In general, a patrimony is understood as a heritage from past generations, and emphasis is thus placed on its fruition. More difficult to take into consideration is the notion that a patrimony entails, in addition to benefits, inevitable responsibilities. Without ensuring its preservation and its availability, its meaning as a collective heritage is undermined, and its relevance restricted to music archivists and to a small academic circle.

In creating the present editorial series, the Government of Minas Gerais, through its Secretariat of Culture, acknowledges its privilege and responsibility in promoting a music-

archival patrimony of great significance. Each of the first three volumes of scores honors both the music and the birthplace of a Minas Gerais composer. The editions were based on an ample survey of the manuscript sources, carried out in no less than sixteen musical repositories across the states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. This in itself is an important methodological innovation, for previous editions of Brazilian early music largely considered sources from but one or very few archives, and did not always evaluate the variant readings among the various manuscripts of a given work.

The present initiative is not altogether new in Brazil, but this is the first time in which a State Secretariat of Culture publishes an editorial series devoted to the music-archival patrimony of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This contribution is enhanced by its refined methodology and by the importance of the repertoire being published. The first three volumes include works by José Joaquim Emerico Lobo de Mesquita (1746?-1805), Jerônimo de Sousa (fl.1721-1826), and Francisco Valle (1869-1906); the last named has become an object of renewed interest, thanks to the present project. The vast majority of the sixteen works in the first three volumes has never been edited. Only two of them have previously reached print, but in very early publications, and in versions that are quite different from the present ones.

The publication in both printed and CD-ROM form of the complete scores and the respective vocal and instrumental parts is innovative and will make possible their most ample dissemination in Brazil and abroad. This will assure proper recognition of the repertoire and facilitate its academic study, as well as its performance by ensembles all over the world.

It is with great satisfaction that the Cultural Secretariat of the State of Minas Gerais makes available to the public this treasure of our artistic patrimony.

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