

Performing the Imagery of *Seresta*¹ in Francisco Mignone's 7^a *Valsa de Esquina* (Corner Waltz No.7) for Piano

Interpretando o imaginário de seresta na 7^a Valsa de Esquina para piano de Francisco Mignone

Sigridur Malaguti

Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
simalagu@centroin.com.br

Sérgio Barrenechea

Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
sergio.barrenechea@unirio.br

Abstract: The imagery of the Brazilian *seresta* is a prominent trait of Francisco Mignone's 7^a *Valsa de Esquina* (Corner Waltz Nr.7) for piano. It is first evoked by the title of the piece itself but then also by the composer's markings in the score, his idiomatic references to the instruments traditionally played in serenades in Brazil, as well as to musical features easily identifiable as belonging to a specific Brazilian music universe. The tradition of a serenade performance style still prevails in small cities, like Conservatória in the State of Rio de Janeiro. The question arises of how to translate the composer's references to the *seresta* tradition into interpretation. To approach this problem, recordings of different renditions of the piece were analyzed, with a focus on the varied ways in which the interpreters have used 'shaping of tempo' in their performance to achieve the nostalgic and amorous atmosphere of the serenade in Brazil.

Keywords: serenade-imagery; Francisco Mignone; interpretation of 7^a *Valsa de Esquina* (Corner Waltz Nr.7); tempo *rubato*; shaping of tempo.

Resumo: O imaginário de seresta é um aspecto proeminente na 7^a *Valsa de Esquina* para piano de Francisco Mignone: primeiro é indicado no próprio título da peça, que convida para um cenário de rua; em seguida é também evocado pelas indicações na partitura e por referências idiomáticas do compositor a instrumentos tocados em serestas no Brasil; e ainda por fartas referências a feições musicais facilmente identificadas como pertencentes a um universo musical brasileiro. Um estilo específico de tocar música de seresta ainda pode ser encontrado em pequenas cidades como Conservatória/RJ, onde a tradição de seresta se mantém até hoje. Como traduzir essas referências do compositor à tradição de seresta em interpretação? Para abordar este problema, gravações de diferentes interpretações da peça foram analisadas, observando as variadas maneiras com que os intérpretes moldaram o tempo na busca por uma atmosfera saudosa e amorosa, emblemática da seresta no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: imaginário de seresta; Francisco Mignone; interpretação da 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*; tempo *rubato*; moldagem do tempo.

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¹ A Brazilian serenade genre.

1 – Introduction

When the Brazilian composer Francisco Mignone (1897-1986) returned from Italy in 1929, after studying composition for nine years, he was fully equipped as a composer. That moment in Brazil was imbued with nationalist ideology, referred to amongst artists and intellectuals as Brazilian Modernism, and the quest was for a Brazilian national identity. The words of writer, journalist and musicologist Mário de Andrade indicated a formula² to create a Brazilian musical art work: it should be based on musical elements that carried the idiosyncrasies of Brazilian folklore or popular music, which should then be developed into sophisticated art work through compositional techniques acquired from the Western musical tradition. Mignone adhered to the modernist movement and established a strong and productive friendship with Mário de Andrade. Much of Mignone's nationalist production is inspired by his youth in the city of São Paulo when he participated in street-serenades, playing with popular instrumental groups called *chorões*³. This source of inspiration is present in his *12 Valsas de Esquina* (12 Corner Waltzes) for piano, composed between 1938 and 1943. The title of the waltzes is by itself an invitation to the imagination. What impact should the metaphor of a 'corner', indicating the street as a musical scenario, have on the performer's imagination? How do the character descriptive markings in the score such as: *soturno e seresteiro* (grim and serenade-like) or *imitando a flauta seresteira* (imitating the serenading flute), influence the performer's creation of an interpretive concept? And how to perform the idiomatic elements of *choro*⁴ - embodied into serenade music in Brazil by *choro*-musicians - that are quoted by Mignone in the *12 Valsas de Esquina*? With abundant references to the serenade scenery, 7^a *Valsa de Esquina* (Corner Waltz Nr.7), composed in 1940, appears to be a fitting piece to approach these questions.

2 – *Seresta*, the Brazilian serenade

2.1 – Converging with *modinha*⁵ and *choro*

The practice of singing beneath the beloved maiden's window seems to have been present in Western cultures since the Middle Ages. In Brazil, however, the first account of serenades comes from the beginning of the 18th century. The Brazilian song genre *modinha* makes its appearance during the same century and after evolving in both high society salons and popular music practices, it is found as the sentimental-romantic *modinha* in the repertory of the late 19th century serenade singer. The nostalgic and sentimental atmosphere of the Brazilian serenade may be an influence from the expressive features of the *modinha* but these features may also be traced to the cultural inheritance of the colonizing country Portugal. According to the *choro*-

² See ANDRADE (1972).

³ *Chorões*: Musicians who play *choro*.

⁴ *Choro* (weeping): A popular urban music genre from Rio de Janeiro that started to develop around 1870. *Choro* can be looked upon as a style, since it is characterized by a way of playing: by improvisation, by virtuoso instrumental approach, and by melancholic inflexions that justify the name of the genre. The term *regional* (regional) was later on instituted for the group of *choro* musicians.

⁵ *Modinha*: Derived from *moda*, an ancient Portuguese song type. Historically it is the most characteristic and most traditional Brazilian song genre.

specialist CAZES (2010, p.15), nostalgic and sentimental expression can be detected in the music of all countries colonized by Portugal. During the golden age of the serenade in Brazil, in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the instrumental style of *choro* was being molded in the Brazilian capital. This event in the history of Rio de Janeiro is well described by an amateur musician PINTO, who was active in the *choro*-scene of this time. He describes the *chorões* and their serenades:

They composed music full of inspiration and melodies that satisfied the audience of the splendid moonlight serenades, where the guitar arpeggios, the resonant flute notes, and the vibrations of the *cavaquinho*, woke up the habitants of the entire block, windows were opened, as well as the doors of the homes, inviting the *choro*-group to enter (PINTO, 1978, p.97).

The instrumental style of *choro* - the core instrumentation being guitars, *cavaquinhos*⁶ and solo instruments, most often the flute - marks the serenade tradition with its stylistic features. The *chorões* adopted into their style musical genres imported from Europe, such as polka, *schottisch*⁷ and waltz. *Modinha*, on the other hand, acquired “national characterization amongst musicians of popular music, the serenade singers” (ALVARENGA, 1982, p.329) through the output of serenade *modinhas* that these singers produced in partnership with lettered romantic poets (TINHORÃO, 1998). During the Second Brazilian Empire (1840-1889) *modinha* gradually incorporated the meter of the waltz and the binary meter of *tempo de schottisch* that were already being danced in high society balls, abandoning the 2/4 and C previously used in the ‘salon’-*modinha* (*modinha de salão*) of the First Brazilian Empire (1822-1840) (ALVARENGA, 1982, p.329-330). The serenade became popular during the 19th century in the big cities of the country but in smaller cities like Campinas in São Paulo State, it was only with the installation of public street-lights in 1870 that “the youth started the serenade strolls for their beloved ones (TINHORÃO, 1976, p.27). With the arrival of the radio and rapid urbanization after the Second World War, the serenade tradition fell into decline being maintained solely in some smaller cities like Conservatória in Rio de Janeiro State. There, 137 years of serenade tradition have gone by, and today it is the city’s principal source of income: the serenades that take place every Friday and Saturday at 11pm, with the nostalgic waltzes and songs in minor keys, have even become a tourist attraction.

2.2 – A universe of Brazilian music codes

Derived from this evolution in Brazil’s musical scenario is a selection of music codes that the Brazilian researcher PIEDADE (2005) has denominated ‘golden age topics’⁸ (*tópicas época de ouro*). This is a group of topics

⁶ *Cavaquinho*: A characteristic Brazilian four string instrument, of Portuguese origin. It is normally tuned on D-B-G-D.

⁷ *Schottisch*: In Brazil, it appeared around 1850 as a salon dance in binary meter that resembled the polka, even though slightly slower. It does not have any known link with Scotland. It is the origin of the dance *xote* from Northeast-Brazil, traditionally played with accordion at popular balls.

⁸ *Topics*: As denominated by authors of the Topic Theory, like RATNER, AGAWU and HATTEN. Derives from the Greek *topoi* and deals with musical expression and meaning. “The topic theory is a tool for musical analysis that surpasses mere formalism, as it involves both musical knowledge and historical-cultural interpretation, it operates as the access to the meaning and the nexus at work in Brazilian music” (PIEADADE, p.6, authors’ translation).

in which the mannerisms of ancient Brazilian waltzes and serenades reign, where nostalgia of the epoch of simplicity and lyricism, countryside and fairness, rules. A little of the Lusitanian world is present [...], together with evocation of *fado*⁹ and in the naivety of the *modinhas*. As in a myth, a deep Brazil from the past manifests itself through melodic spins and ornaments [...], rhythmic patterns [...] and certain motivic patterns [...] that are strongly present in the world of *choro* and several other repertoires of Brazilian music, not only on the more superficial level but as well in the more profound structures. [In the] *Valsas de Esquina* by Francisco Mignone [...] golden-age topics are present with melodies in the front, in *cantabile* style, always with lyricism and nostalgia (PIEADADE, 2005, p.5, authors' translation).

In the opinion of the Finnish theorist TARASTI topics reside in the communicative structure of music. He identifies two levels of structure in music. Firstly the communicative structure, habited by musical mechanisms that the composer uses to communicate his ideas. This level is a style-breeder since the composer follows certain stylistic norms. In a space generated by the communicative structure lies the other structural level, structure of meaning, and here "... the true aesthetic moment of music is to be found", says TARASTI (1994, p.18).

Let us suppose, as suggested by PIEADADE (2005, p.5), that *cantabile* melodies that sound "with lyricism and nostalgia" in 7^a *Valsa de Esquina* are a golden age topic. This kind of melody, normally assigned to the pianist's right hand, is not simply a melody rich with lyricism. On the contrary, it refers to a specific universe of Brazilian musicality, full of sociocultural significance. Moreover, the markings of character in the musical score, like *soturno e seresteiro*, leave no doubt as to the communicative intentions of the composer. Similarly, we can point *baixaria*¹⁰, a stylistic phenomenon of *choro*, as another golden age topic of 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*. This is a part played by the accompanying acoustic guitar that has the role to keep the beat and provide the harmony, besides creating a bass line that interacts with the main melody in moments of low activity. The left-hand part of 7^a *Valsa de Esquina* frequently makes reference to this practice.

3 – The interpretation of 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*

3.1 – The quest for an interpretive concept

Music exists in the composer's mind before it is translated to the musical score, which is limited in terms of precision in dynamics, tempo and articulation. The performer translates the score into an interpretation of the work (TARASTI, 1994), frequently unaware of the fact that the stylistic conventions of his/her time or geographic region characterize the performance (BOWEN, 1996). The theorist BOWEN comments about first experiences of earlier performance styles:

We realize that many of the 'rules' which we take for granted—like 'Don't speed up when you get louder,' 'Always play with a singing tone,' are conventions which were drilled into us at an early age. (These conventions essentially define our home 'style,'

⁹ *Fado*: A Portuguese song genre, melancholic and fatalistic.

¹⁰ *Baixaria*: A specific kind of improvised bass line played by the *choro* guitar, often a 7 stringed one. Countermelodies are created by the guitar player to enhance the main melodic line, often resulting in a rich dialogue.

and they are invisible, like the rules of grammar, to the native speaker) (BOWEN, 1996, p.32).

According to this author there are two difficulties to be faced when one takes on the task of performing earlier styles: firstly, it is necessary to adopt an interpretive path that offers stylistically adequate options for expressiveness; secondly, it is necessary to become deeply involved with the stylistic conventions of the epoch in question. These criteria can be applied to the interpretation of 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*, in spite of its more recent location in the timeline. In examining musical discourse, the aforementioned author TARASTI reaches the conclusion that there are two different models: ideological and technological discourse. The ideological model is related to concepts and norms that consider music with the parameter of aesthetic values predominant in society. The technological one attends aspects related to the composition and the interpretation of the music. TARASTI believes that

in traditional music cultures, technological knowledge is transmitted orally. Such is the case in our own music tradition with regard to musical interpretation and teaching. The models guiding these activities can be regarded as special means of manipulation or modes of persuasion (TARASTI, 1994, p.17).

In fact, this statement is likely to be true in the area of musical interpretation. Frequently a lineage of performance styles and know-how can be observed descending successively from teacher to pupil. In the words of BOWEN (1996), different features of a given performance can derive from a variety of styles that as a whole establish the general style of the performance. Styles can stem from institutions, instrument-traditions, epochs, places, repertoires and genres. In the process of creating a performance concept of 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*, keeping in mind the piece's reference to communicative structures that refer to a specific Brazilian cultural-musical phenomena, let us now pursue expressive options suitable to the piece and engage with the piece's stylistic conventions. Many authors in the area of theory of performance practice have suggested that a good way to do that is to conduct an aural analysis of a selection of different recordings of the piece. GERLING (2008, p.8) believes that "what interests us in recordings is that, since they are a representation of the musical sound of the work, they can also be used as an additional tool to the actual reading of the score". According to him a comparative analysis of available recordings should not have the objective of imitating any interpretive concept. Instead, this kind of comparison gives the interpreter "greater flexibility in the search for his/her own expression" (GERLING, 2008, p.19, authors' translation).

Francisco Mignone was a skillful pianist and he recorded the whole set of his 12 *Valsas de Esquina*, leaving the legacy of his performance for posterity. Again quoting BOWEN (1996, p.18), "the composer's performance is privileged in some way and this performance adds to our information about the work [...] in the same way as metronome marks or other directions or annotations on the score". In Mignone's recording of 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*, a strong serenade-mood prevails. This is a very subjective statement: How can one measure or evaluate the 'serenade-ness' of a piece of music that is out of any contextual setting of a serenade, and, in addition, wears the garb of concert music? The Brazilian music universe, to which the aforementioned golden age topics belong, hosts a peculiar way of note-grouping inside the phrase. A culturally fluent listener will easily decipher these codes of expression, set off by a

melody sung with rhythmic flexibility. This tempo flexibility transferred to the piano, together with other parameters like timbre, articulation and dynamics, are the agents responsible for the serenade-atmosphere *à la* Mignone.

Visiting a serenade in Conservatória in December 2014, it was possible to confirm that the melodic rendition of the serenade singers 'floats' above the steady rhythmic flow of the accompanying instruments. Moreover, when there are words loaded with sentimental significance, they are often sustained in a *rubato* and the accompanists follow these expressive events accordingly. The songs always end with a very expressive *molto rallentando*. Of course, there is no guarantee, and it is even unlikely, that the serenade played in Conservatória nowadays has the same stylistic characteristics as Mignone experienced in the street serenades in São Paulo city at the beginning of the 20th century. However, the sentimental and nostalgic content, at least partly inherited from the *modinha*, and the expressive devices like the melodic *rubato*, most certainly are common to both epochs. The ethnomusicologist ULHÔA (2006) created the concept "malleable meter" (*métrica derramada*) which accounts for the flexibility and independence of the sung melody in Brazilian popular music, an aspect that is at the root of its expressiveness:

[In] the malleable meter, a superposition of syllable-division and a loose "Brazilianized" synchronization of the Portuguese accentuation with the regular musical meter of the Western tradition, takes place (ULHÔA, 2006, p.2, authors' translation).

Singing is the performance practice analyzed by ULHÔA to demonstrate her concept of 'malleable meter'. However, the concept may be transferred to instrumental music. TARASTI, whilst discussing the ideas of the theorist Roland Barthes concerning the music of Robert Schumann, says:

In music the body starts to 'speak', as suggested by the *quasiparlendo* directive so often used by Schumann. The human voice is referred to as a gesture which, particularly in Romantic music, was internalized into instrumental pieces as well (even Hugo Riemann believed that song was the origin of all music) (TARASTI, 1994, p.13).

In this way, the musical discourse of singing, its gestures, can be, and is often and naturally, transferred to instrumental music.

3.2 – *Seresta*-atmosphere and the shaping of time

The 7ª *Valsa de Esquina* has the structure ABA and coda. In Section A the left hand is assigned the *baixaria* - the idiomatic bass melody played by the *choro* guitar - and the right hand in Section B has a melody addressed with the written description: 'imitating the serenade flute' (*imitando a flauta seresteira*). To investigate the shaping of tempo in a performance that intends to translate the serenade-imagery involved, we observe the first 16 measures of Section A (1st Ending) in the performance of five artists: Francisco Mignone, Arnaldo Estrella, Arthur Moreira Lima, Maria Josephina Mignone and Duo Barrenechea. As may be observed in Figure 1, there

are abundant tempo and dynamic markings for these 16 measures: from m.8-16 there are changes in tempo in every measure.

Compasso	1 a 7	8	9	10	11 a 12	13 a 14	15	16
Tempo	Moderadamente	<i>poco affrett</i>	<i>a tempo</i>	<i>poco affrett</i>	<i>a tempo</i>	<i>poco affrett</i>	<i>a tempo-poco ritard</i>	<i>affrett.-rit</i>
Dinâmica	<i>p</i> <i>cresc. pouco a pouco</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>dim</i>					
Outros	Com sonoridade apagada							

Figure 1: 7ª *Valsa de Esquina* m.1-16: tempo and dynamic indications marked in the score.

In the first 6 measures, on the other hand, no tempo indications other than *moderadamente* (moderately) appear and here the performers' expressive intention to establish a serenade-ambience through tempo shaping becomes more explicit. Spectrograms and graphics were created with the computer software *Sonic Visualizer* that demonstrate the tempo in bpm¹¹ in each measure of m.1-16 in all five performances. To create the graphics, a key on the computer is struck at the start of each measure during the playing of the recording. Thus, the difference of tempo from one measure to the other becomes clear and considerations can be made about what effect this has on the performance. In a *Valsa de Esquina* which has all three beats articulated, this method could be applied to measure the tempo relation between the 3 beats of the triple meter. The 7ª *Valsa de Esquina* has notes with the duration of 2 beats (see m.1-6 in Figure 2) that make this kind of graph difficult to accomplish. Such measurement could provide some information about the performer's concept of the waltz-meter. Moreover, it could possibly shed some light on the metric characteristics of the Brazilian waltz. As may be seen in the musical example in Figure 2, the bass line - or *baixaria* - at the beginning of the 7ª *Valsa de Esquina* presents a motif of an ascending third: a G (dotted minim) ascends to Bb (a minim added up to a double-dotted quaver, followed by an ornamental note that links to the next phrase) in a two measure long phrase. This two-note motif is repeated twice in a sequential reiteration, each starting note - approached from below by an ornamental semitone - being a second higher than the previous one. The ascending third is responded by the right hand, with a kind of inversion of the original motif: a descending third that resolves chromatically into the succeeding chord:

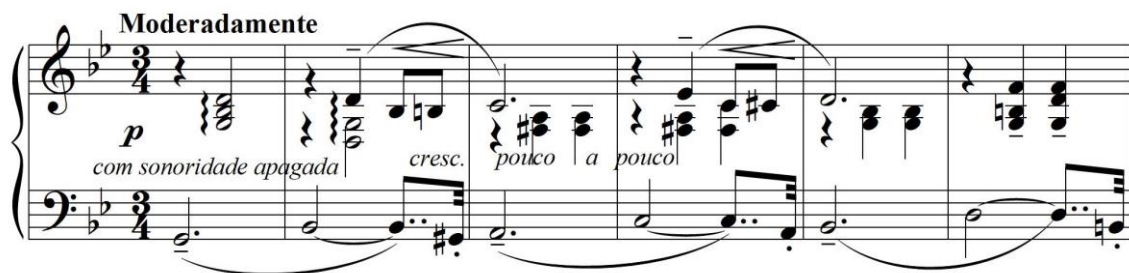


Figure 2: 7ª *Valsa de Esquina*, m.1-6.

¹¹ Bpm: abbreviation for 'beats per minute'.

In his recording (1958), Mignone anticipates the attack of the ascending third (down beat of the second measure of each phrase). This extends the length of the second measure of each of the 2 measure phrases in his performance of m.1-6, as may be seen in the graph of Figure 3 (m.1-2: 37 and 29 bpm; m.3-4:61 and 46 bpm; m.5-6:-64 and 49 bpm).

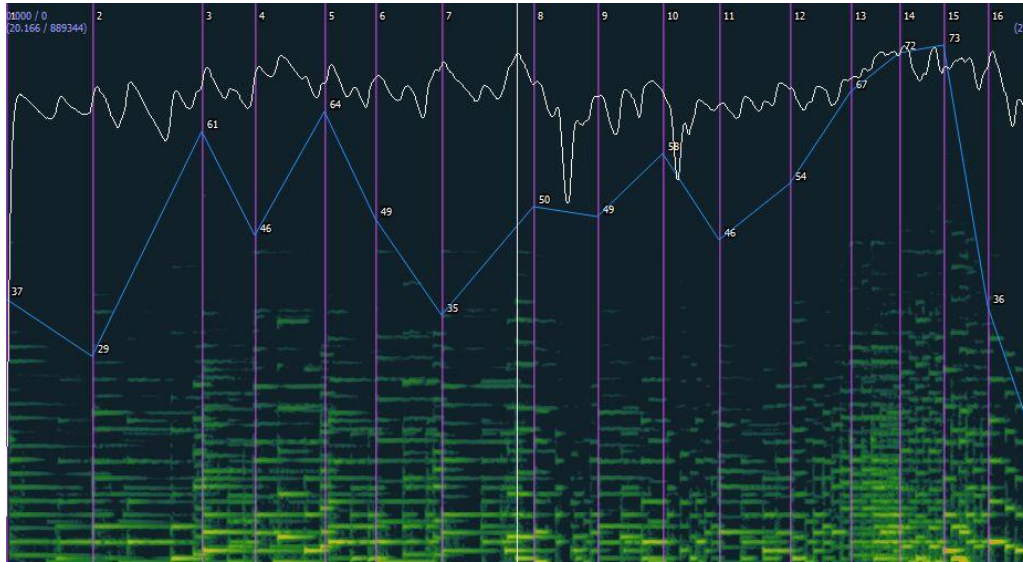


Figure 3: 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*, m.1-16, performed by Francisco Mignone: white graph – dynamic shape; blue graph – tempo in each measure (bpm).

Arnaldo Estrella (1908-1981) seems to have conceived the phrases in a similar manner. In his performance (1950) the middle of each phrase, the ascending third, is emphasized. Figure 4 demonstrates his relatively constant tempo in m.1-16.

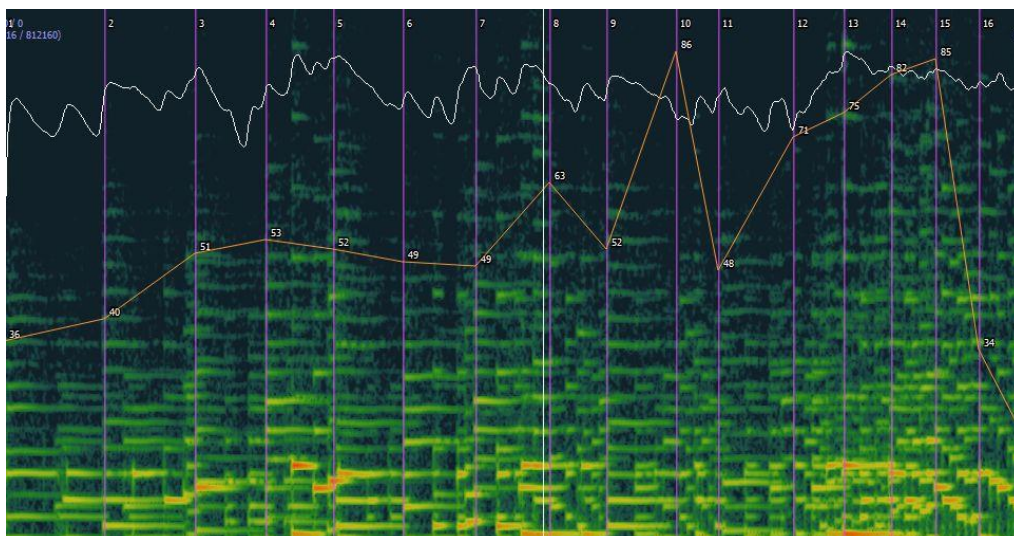


Figure 4: 7^a *Valsa de Esquina* m.1-16, performed by Arnaldo Estrella: white graph – dynamic shape; orange graph – tempo in each measure (bpm).

Mignone and Estrella, besides contemporaries, had a close relationship, since Estrella debuted many of Mignone's piano works, some of which were composed in his honour. Very likely this conceptual similarity in phrasing derives from this familiarity and the fact that they breathed in the musical tendencies of the same epoch. In Estrella's case, however, this concept in phrasing does not seem to alter the tempo balance (see Figure 4).

It is interesting to observe in a *choro*-version of Waltz Op.64 Nr.7 in C# Major by Chopin¹² that the guitar players of *Jacob do Bandolim*¹³ (Bandolin-Jacob) display a similar concept of tempo shaping inside the metric feel of the waltz. In spite of keeping a steady pulse, there is an impression of anticipated arrival on the down beat of the triple meter.

Arthur Moreira Lima (born 1940), who recorded the *12 Valsas de Esquina* in 1982, has a different concept of the beginning of the 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*. He emphasizes the Bb of the middle of the first phrase but plays it as if it was the beginning of a phrase and the response in the right hand on the second beat is intensified, and consequently resolved, on the downbeat of the next measure. This phrasing does not affect the tempo in his performance much, as may be seen in Figure 5.

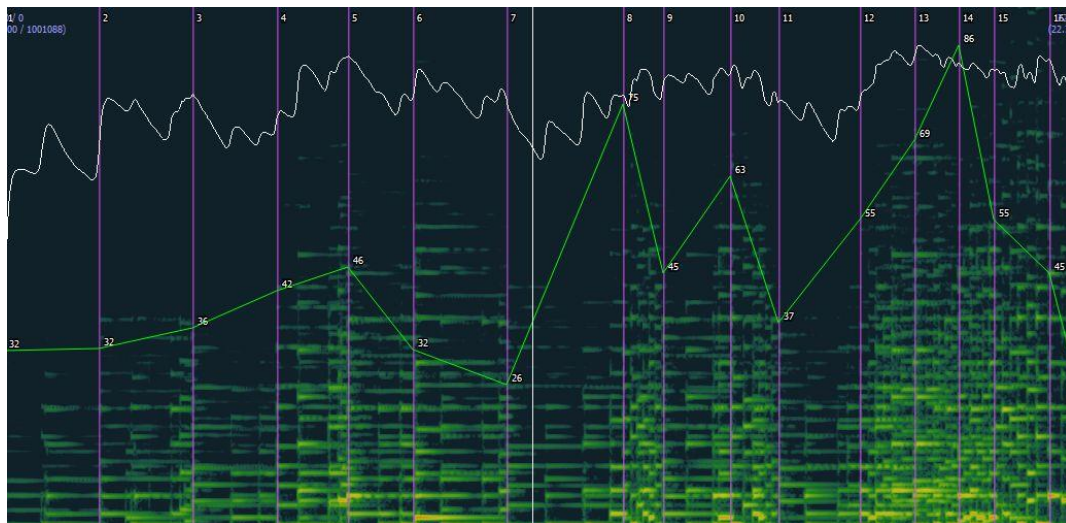


Figure 5: 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*, m.1-16, performed by Arthur Moreira Lima: white graph – dynamic shape; green graph – tempo in each measure (bpm).

Maria Josephina Mignone, who also recorded the complete set of the *12 Valsas de Esquina* (1997), shows a concept of phrasing similar to that of Moreira Lima. She, on the other hand, demonstrates a concept of tempo shaping in which a longer measure keeps alternating with a shorter measure (see Figure 6). This model of tempo shaping was seen in Francisco Mignone's performance, even though in Maria Josephina's performance the 1st of each two measures is the longer one (m.1-2: 21 and 36 bpm; m.3-4: 33 and 50 bpm; m.5-6:39 and 40 bpm), contrary to what happened in the composer's performance. Maria Josephina is Francisco Mignone's widow

¹² The recording can be accessed on Youtube <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arYFnSr559s>>

¹³ *Jacob do Bandolim* (1918-1969): One of the most important players of the instrument *bandolim*, originally developed from the *mandola* in Italy in the 18th century and diffused in Brazil via Portugal.

and second wife. One may presume, and in interviews Maria Josephina herself has confirmed, that through the proximity of their life together she assimilated much of his musicality and his concept of performing the pieces. She was the main interpreter of his piano works and they performed a great deal together on 2 pianos.

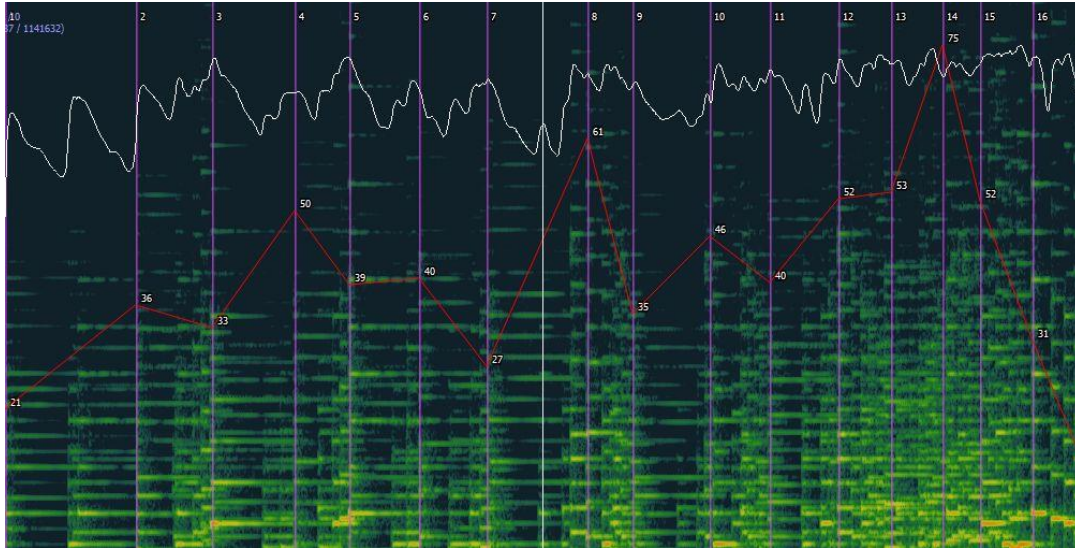


Figure 6: 7ª *Valsa de Esquina*, m.1-16, performed by Maria Josephina Mignone: white graph– dynamic shape; red graph – tempo in each measure (bpm).

Figure 7 shows the first four measures of a transcription of the 7ª *Valsa de Esquina* for flute and piano, made by Mignone himself in 1967. In this transcription, the piano has the role of rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment, commonly played by the guitar in a *choro*-group. Surprisingly, the flute is responsible for the *baixaria* melody which in the original version of this waltz is played by the pianist's left hand. It is worth mentioning that in the second part of Section A (2nd Ending) Mignone writes a virtuoso part for the flute, in an improvisational style, supposedly referring to the flute of the *choro*, while the piano takes over the *baixaria* part.



Figure 7: 7ª *Valsa de Esquina*, m.1-4. Mignone's transcription for flute and piano. The flute plays the part of the *baixaria*.

Figure 8 shows a graph made of a rather recent recording (2010) by Sérgio and Lúcia Barrenechea - Duo Barrenechea - of this transcription (m.1-16) of the 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*. In the context of an ensemble the shaping of tempo has the perspective of the steady pulse being maintained by the accompanying instrument whilst the solo instrument is rather free to play with melodic *rubato*.

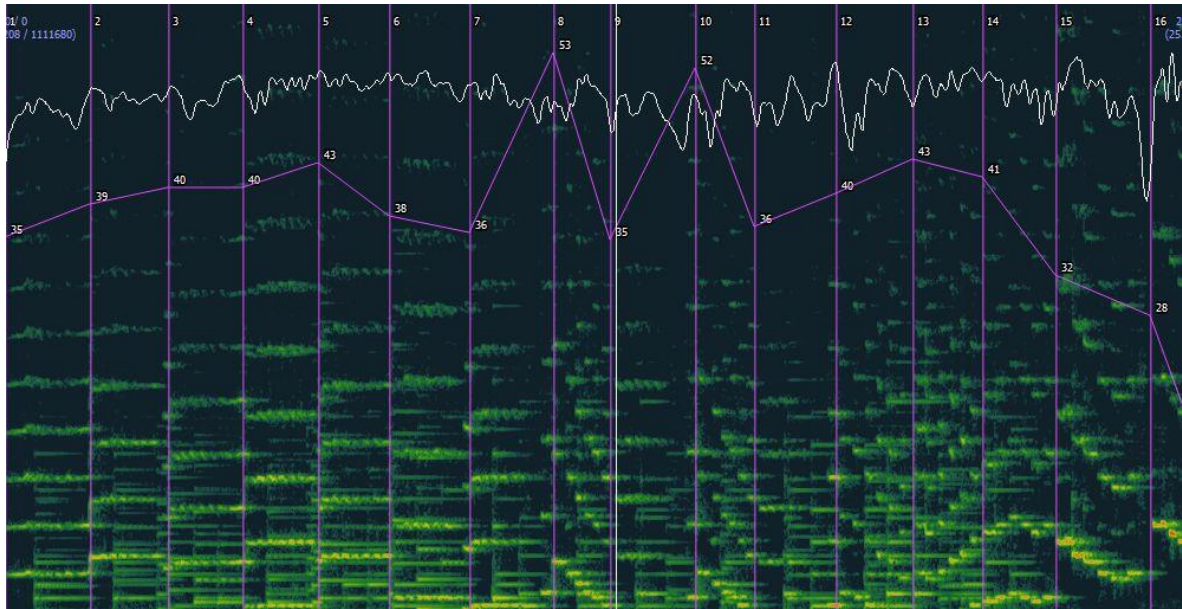


Figure 8: 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*, m.1-16, performed by Sérgio Barrenechea (flute) and Lúcia Barrenechea (piano): white graph – dynamic shape; purple graph – tempo in each measure (bpm).

Figure 9 demonstrates the tempo in each measure (m.1-16) of all recordings analyzed:

Measure	1 ^o	2 ^o	3 ^o	4 ^o	5 ^o	6 ^o	7 ^o	8 ^o	9 ^o	10 ^o	11 ^o	12 ^o	13 ^o	14 ^o	15 ^o	16 ^o	
Tempo	Moderadamente							<i>poco affrett</i>	<i>a tempo</i>	<i>poco affrett</i>	<i>a tempo</i>		<i>poco</i>	<i>affrett</i>	<i>a tempo</i>	<i>affrett.</i>	
Dynamics	<i>p</i>	<i>cresc. pouco a pouco</i>						<i>mf</i>	<i>dim</i>							<i>poco ritard</i>	<i>rit.</i>
Tempo per measure (bpm)																	
F.Mignone	37	29	61	46	64	49	35	50	49	58	46	54	67	72	73	36	
A.Estrella	36	40	51	53	52	49	49	63	52	86	48	71	75	82	85	34	
A.M.Lima	32	32	36	42	46	32	26	75	45	63	37	55	69	86	55	45	
M.J.Mignone	21	36	33	50	39	40	27	61	35	46	40	52	53	75	52	31	
Duo Barrenechea	35	39	40	40	43	38	36	53	35	52	36	40	43	41	32	28	

Figure 9: 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*, mm.1-16. Tempo (bpm) in each measure of all recordings analyzed.

From Figure 9 it can be concluded that in the recordings analyzed the shaping of tempo in m.7-16 generally is according to the tempo indications written in the score. On the other hand, in the first 6 measures, with no tempo indications made by the composer, a more intuitive tempo shaping takes place: Francisco Mignone shortens the 1st measure of each pair of measures (speeds up the tempo), while Maria Josephina does the opposite. Estrella has the tempo per measure varying somewhere between 36 and 53 bpm, whilst the variation in the tempo of

Moreira Lima is between 32 and 46 bpm. The smallest span between the slowest and fastest measure is observed in the performance of Duo Barrenechea (slowest 35 - fastest 43 bpm). In all performances a tempo peak is observed, an intuitive one, not written in the score, towards the 4th (Maria Josephina Mignone and Estrella) or 5th measure (Mignone, Moreira Lima and Duo Barrenechea).

4 – Final Considerations

Imagery of *seresta* is present in many of the 12 *Valsas de Esquina* for piano by Francisco Mignone: in the word *Esquina* (Corner), used in the title, indicating an out-door music event; in the character indications written in the score; and in the 'echos', inside the musical texture, of instruments commonly used in serenades in Brazil. Shaping of tempo is an essential parameter for establishing what can be considered a serenade-atmosphere. The 'malleable meter' applied to a melody (ULHÔA, 2006) – equally found in serenades in Conservatória/RJ, in the rendition of Chopin by *choro* players, as well as in the historical recordings by Francisco Mignone and Arnaldo Estrella discussed in this article - engenders the tender, sentimental and nostalgic atmosphere of the Brazilian serenade. This melodic *rubato*, in the case of a pianist playing without accompaniment, often diffuses the meter of the waltz. Each one of the performers of the recordings analyzed created their own interpretation of the elements of the *seresta* and the comparison of their renditions does not offer any conclusions as to what is the most correct or best path. Nevertheless, it gives a historical picture of the tendencies in these recordings, pointing to the alternatives of possible and convincing ways of rendering the 7^a *Valsa de Esquina*.

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Notes on the authors

Sigridur Malaguti obtained a Bachelor Degree in piano performance at the New England Conservatory/Boston, her Master's Degree at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and her PhD at The Federal University of Rio de Janeiro State-UNIRIO/Rio de Janeiro, the title of her thesis being: The *seresta*-imagery and the interpretation of the *12 Valsas de Esquina* (12 Corner Waltzes) for piano by Francisco Mignone. She has performed in concerts in the United States, Canada, Brazil and in Iceland, her homeland, where she has debuted piano works by Brazilian composers.

Sérgio Barrenechea is an associate professor at the Villa-Lobos Institute/UNIRIO. With a Bachelor Degree in flute performance from Brasilia University, he obtained his Master's Degree at the Boston Conservatory and his PhD at the University of Iowa. He has recorded CDs with *Duo Barrenechea* and the *Quinteto Brasília*, including a triple CD *A Música para Flauta de Francisco Mignone* (The Complete Works for Flute by Francisco Mignone) (2010) and the CD and DVD *Brasileiríssimo: Encontros* (Brazilianity: Rendezvous) (2015).