

Reaching Out to the Youth

The *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*
by Heitor Villa-Lobos

The Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1897–1959) is well-known in the canon of Western classical music. His most popular works include the *Choros*, the *Bachianas Brasileiras*, and the piano sets *A Prole do Bebê*, *Cirandinhas*, *Cirandas*, and *Ciclo Brasileiro*. What is less well-known is Villa-Lobos as the main figure in the development of music education for young people in Brazil and his efforts in documenting national styles and creating pedagogical works for students. Villa-Lobos immersed himself in the musical and cultural traditions throughout his country and incorporated these into an educational collection that could serve to bring cultural education to everyone, the *Guia Prático, Estudo Folclórico Musical*.

Villa-Lobos envisioned younger generations as the national future audiences who must be educated to listen to, feel and critique the musical art at an early age, with the ultimate goal of cultivating their taste for music and keeping high-quality music alive. He believed anyone who could learn a language was capable of learning music; anyone who could emit sounds to speak could also emit sounds

to sing; and anyone who had ears to hear words and sounds also had ears for music. In his own words, “It all depends on education and methodology” (Presença de Villa-Lobos 1966, 86). He was a national idealist, for whom music was indispensable to educate the character of the youth:

“In this crusade of our native country’s awakening, experiencing a great economic, social, and moral crisis that is shaking the entire world, you should have the most powerful and enchanting of all arts—the Music, the most perfect expression of life. How to propose this to the Brazilian Nation of the Future? ... Disseminated in the public schools, the choir singing spreads enthusiasm and happiness among children, it awakens in the youth the spontaneous discipline, the health interest for life, and the love for the Nation and for the Humanity!!!” (Presença de Villa-Lobos 1969, 115).

In 1932, after returning from Paris to live in Brazil and showing increasing concerns about the lack of a solid music education program

in his own country and the deficient music curriculum of the public schools, Villa-Lobos was appointed superintendent of artistic and musical education in Rio de Janeiro by the federal government (Appleby 2002, 98). While in this position, the composer developed a program of choral singing in the public schools in Rio de Janeiro to be expanded into a nationally mandatory music education program. As part of the program, he designed a project to assemble a six-volume collection of music teaching materials—known as the *Guia Prático, Estudo Folclórico Musical*—from which only the first volume, consisting of 137 vocal pieces based on children's tunes and a supplemental section with charts and explanation notes for teachers, was ever completed.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Villa-Lobos redistributed a great number of pieces from the *Guia Prático, Estudo Folclórico Musical* to other collections. The *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*, a collection of 59 solo piano pieces presented in 11 albums, is an example of this practice and the focus of this study.

Overview

These piano albums reflect a considerable simplification of the complex compositional style of Villa-Lobos based on dense textures, multilayered writing, intricate syncopations, strident dissonances and substantial technical challenges as featured in his major works. While strongly committed to education during 1930–1945, Villa-Lobos simplified his language through more accessible musical materials centered on children's folk tunes, which are smaller in scope, with clearer form and harmonic structure, lighter textures and with more appeal to the target population of young students.

In numerous respects, these piano pieces serve a similar functional purpose as the well-known *Mikrokosmos* by Hungarian composer Béla Bartók. In both works, the educational approach is grounded in the style of a folk music tradition. Moreover, in the collections of both composers, pieces for beginners and concert pieces coexist, and the musical quality is preserved but not surpassed by its pedagogical nature (Lago et al. 2009, 18). In contrast to the

six volumes of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*, however, the pieces from the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano* are not ordered by level of difficulty. Pieces from varied levels are arranged among the 11 albums without following a system that organizes pieces by increasing level of difficulty.

Selected pieces from the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano* were chosen to best represent the collection in this article. These selections are short, accessible piano pieces of pedagogical value that highlight two distinctive facets of Villa-Lobos's music: his melodies crafted from Brazilian folk tunes and lively, syncopated rhythms. Among them are two of the most popular folk tunes that children from all parts of Brazil sing in circle games—"O Ciranda, O Cirandinha" and "Vestidinho Branco"—that Villa-Lobos also used in other major collections. The pieces are presented here in order of difficulty from early-intermediate to early-advanced levels.

A leveling reference that approximates *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Magrath 1995) and the *Celebration Series* (The Royal Conservatory 2015) grading systems is provided.

The Pianist's Guide (PG) suggests leveling for albums I, III, VIII and XI, but not for the individual pieces. The *Celebration Series* (CS) does not contain selections from the *Álbuns Para Piano* in any of its 10 levels. Therefore, the procedure in this study was to compare pieces from the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano* to those in the CS and match their levels. A comparative listing of pieces is available in the description of each selection to indicate an approximate level to CS. A list of all 59 pieces ordered by level of difficulty is available in Appendix B to assist teachers with placing them at the appropriate level for their students.

Information on publication, length and duration, meter, tempo, key, form, rhythm, harmony, melody, technical challenges and stylistic features are included to help the reader gain performance insights into each selection. Cultural elements and influences present in these piano works include extramusical associations such as popular narratives and rituals of nature. The stylistic remarks highlight the

incorporation of musical genres and dance styles—*samba* and *lundu*,¹ children's rounds and mazurka—folk tunes that are still currently learned in childhood and ways in which the titles and lyrics are reflected in the music.

Literature Review

Specific research and other studies related to the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano* by Heitor Villa-Lobos include biographical resources on Villa-Lobos, information on Brazilian music history, the development of music education in Brazil, the composer's piano works, the *Guia Prático* as choral and as solo piano works and original writings by Villa-Lobos. Sources containing this information comprise books, articles, theses and dissertations, online resources, audio and video recordings, documentaries, scores and interviews.

A notable biographical study on the composer is the book *Villa-Lobos* (Peppercorn 1989), a comprehensive biography in which the author includes an informative chapter describing the composer's role in the music education system in Brazil, enriched by a large number of illustrations and documents. David Appleby supplies in his biography of Villa-Lobos (2002) a copy and translation of the essay "Educação Musical," in which the composer expresses his dissatisfaction with current music teaching methods. This biography also includes information about the role of the *Guia Prático* as the main source used by music educators for the solidification of the education reform. In Gerard Béhague's biographical study (1994), the author explains in detail the political regime of "Estado Novo" and the "Campaign for Music Education," describing Villa-Lobos's strong reaction to the low-quality state of music education in the public schools.

Sources on Brazilian music history that inform the study include Vasco Mariz's *História da Música do Brasil* (2005). In his notable and fairly recent study of the history of music of Brazil, Mariz described the composer's career path in the 1930s and the context in which he wrote his *Guia Prático*.

Simon Wright (1992) contributes a detailed study on the composer's life and works, encompassing his accomplishments during

Getúlio Vargas' government and the music composed during that period, such as the 11 albums of the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*.

In regard to the original project, the *Guia Prático*, the fairly recent and comprehensive four-volume source published by Funarte (2009) and the federal government represents an invaluable resource to this study. In addition to historical, political and musicological background, it provides the complete scores of the original vocal pieces and invaluable information on their incorporation into the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*.

A significant number of studies can be found on the vocal anthology of the *Guia Prático* and its central role in the process of implementing music education in Brazilian public schools in the 1930s, but very little in-depth research can be found on the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*. Laurence Morton briefly discusses his favorite pieces from the piano albums along with their approximate grade level in his article on Villa-Lobos for the piano magazine *Clavier* (1977, 29–32). Jane Magrath lists selected pieces from Albums I, III, VIII and XI in *The Pianist's Guide* (1995) with brief commentary and their approximate level of difficulty according to her leveling system. In his dissertation, Fabián Herra (2009) compares original choral manuscripts and published editions of piano versions to create a revised and edited performance edition of the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*. Finally, Susan Schroeder Cobb's dissertation (1998) is the most authoritative study on the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*, containing stylistic analysis and pedagogic insights on Albums I, VII and IX.

Selections

"O Ciranda, O Cirandinha" (Circle Dance, Little Circle Dance)

"O Ciranda, O Cirandinha" is a popular children's game in Brazil in which boys and girls form a circle, hold hands and dance around it singing a folk song, moving faster and in a different direction at each repetition of the tune. Villa-Lobos's great interest in this round dance is reflected in the titles of two of his piano suites, *Cirandas* and *Cirandinhas*. He also used the melodic material of "O Ciranda, O

Cirandinha" as the main theme of the well-known "O Polichinelo" from his piano set, *A Prole do Bebê No. 1*.

"O Ciranda, O Cirandinha" is a charming, early-intermediate-level piece appropriate for the young student with smaller hands. The form lacks introduction and coda, consisting solely of four statements of the A section, each time in a faster tempo just like the children's game—*andantino*, *allegretto*, *allegro* and *vivo*—and with the right hand in a higher register. The right-hand melody outlines the F tonic chord in the opening of each statement of the theme and remains within the range of an octave (Figure 1). The F major five-finger pattern technique is reinforced and expanded into an octave scale through which the young student will experience finger crossing and the sixth and seventh intervals (Figure 2). The left-hand blocked chords revolve around tonic, subdominant and dominant harmonies in support of the right-hand folk tune.



Figure 1: Octave-range melody in the RH accompanied by staccato, accented chords in the LH, mm. 1–5.



Figure 2: Interval of a 7th and additional voice in syncopation, mm. 6–7.

Technical challenges include hand coordination due to the contrasting articulations between the hands (Figure 1), voicing the occasional right-hand C alto pedal in syncopation (Figure 2) and reading upper-ledger notes in the final section (Figure 3). Although reading notes in such a high register might be a challenge, the teacher should facilitate the process by guiding the young student into recognizing patterns—this is the last repetition of the A section, only higher.

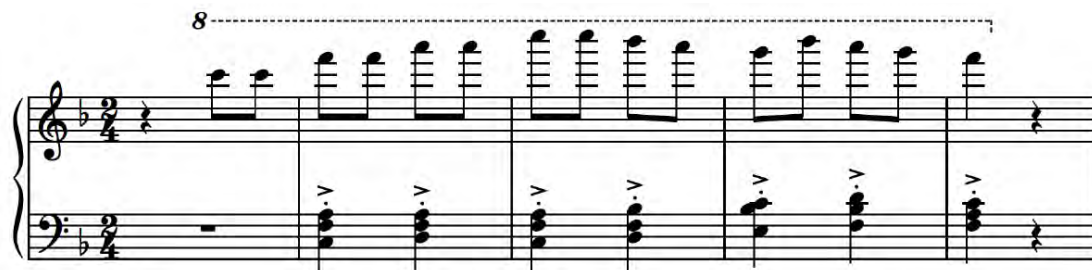


Figure 3: RH ledger notes in the Vivo section, mm. 37–41.

"O Ciranda, O Cirandinha" is similar to level 6 in PG and comparable to *Sounding the Accordion* by Jeno Takács in CS level 5.

"O Ciranda, O Cirandinha" (Circle Dance, Little Circle Dance) Album IX, No. 3			
Year	Publisher	Page Number	Length
1948	Consolidated Music Publishers	46–47	48 measures, c. 1'
Meter/Tempo/Key	Form AA'A''A'''	Rhythm	Harmony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 2/4 » <i>Andantino, Allegretto, Allegro, Vivo</i> » F Major 	AAA'A''' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A:12 measures » A':12 measures » A'':12 measures » A''':12 measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Eighth notes and quarter notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Harmony centered in F major » Predominance of I, IV and V chords
Melody	Technical Challenges	Stylistic Notes	Level of Difficulty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Among the most popular Brazilian folk tunes » Narrow range » Wavelike contour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Quick register shifts » High treble ledger notes » Tempo changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Children's circle game in which children march and sing around a circle » Child-like atmosphere evoked by light textures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » PG: Level 6 » CS: Level 5 » VA: Early-Intermediate



Performance of "O Ciranda, O Cirandinha."

"Vestidinho Branco" (Little White Dress)

Also a popular folk tune in Brazil and sung by children in circle games, "Vestidinho Branco" presents similar characteristics as "O Ciranda, O Cirandinha." The form lacks introduction and coda, consisting of three occurrences of the main theme. The C major harmonic structure revolves around the basic functions of tonic, subdominant and dominant. The opening measures feature right and left hands outlining the tonic chord in contrary motion (Figure 4). Differently from "O Ciranda, O Cirandinha," however, the tempo remains the same through the entire piece, and the last statement of the theme has an additional voice added to the texture (Figure 5).

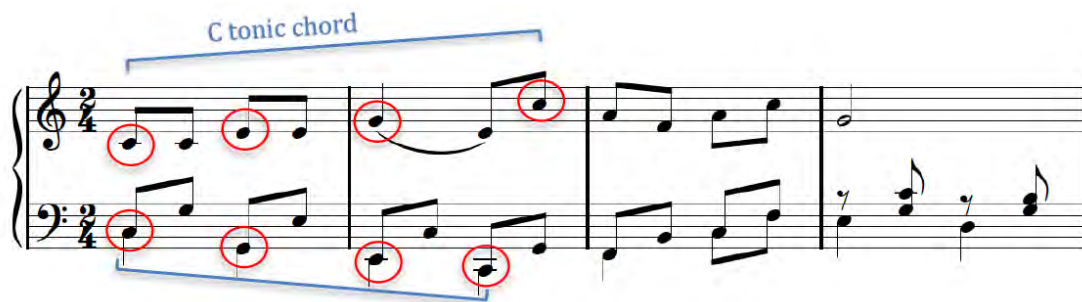


Figure 4: Opening measures outlining the tonic chord in both hands, mm. 1–4.

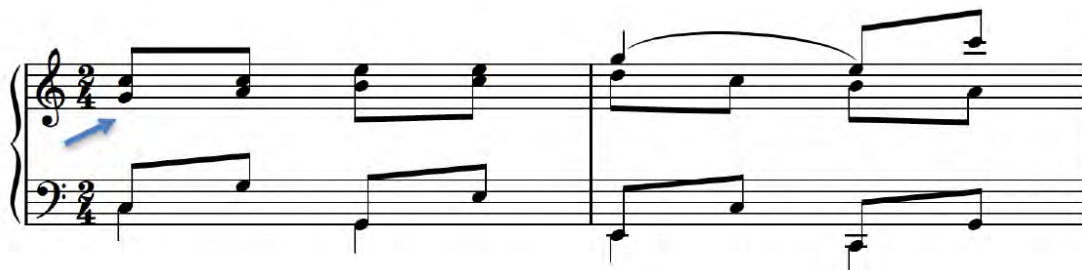



Figure 5: Addition of the alto line in the third statement of the theme, mm. 33–34.

"Vestidinho Branco" presents national and foreign features, as listed by the composer in the classification chart of the vocal anthology of the *Guia Prático* (Lago et al. 2009, 130). The traditional harmonies blend with the rhythmic cells of the *samba*, a vibrant dance and musical genre in duple meter and with syncopated rhythms, typical of the carnival season in Rio de Janeiro. Villa-Lobos's efforts to familiarize students with the European styles as well as the different facets of the Brazilian popular music at the time is made evident through this selection. The young pianist experiences not only musical concepts and technical challenges, but also the history and culture of Brazil, which was the core of Villa-Lobos's educational philosophy.



Figure 6: RH *samba* cells, mm. 26–27.

"Vestidinho Branco" is appropriate for the early-intermediate-level student and would be comparable to Schumann's *The Happy Farmer* in CS level 4. The change in texture of the last statement of the theme (Figure 5), however, increases the difficulty of the piece to level 5 in CS and approximates the piece to level 6 in PG.

“Vestidinho Branco” (Little White Dress) Album VIII, No. 7			
Year	Publisher	Page Number	Length
1948	Consolidated Music Publishers	40	48 measures, c. 1'
Meter/Tempo/Key	Form	Rhythm	Harmony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 2/4 » <i>Molto allegro</i> » C Major 	AAA" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A: 16 measures » A': 16 measures » A'': 16 measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Samba cell: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Harmony centered in C major » Predominance of I, IV and V chords » Seventh chords » Added m6 to the final tonic chord
Melody	Technical Challenges	Stylistic Notes	Level of Difficulty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Narrow range » The tune is limited to the soprano line » A secondary melodic line is outlined in the bass line » Also used by V-L in his piano set <i>Petizada</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Hand balance » Voicing melodic lines » Managing a thicker texture in the last statement of the theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Mixture of national and European features » Samba features » Popular folk tune sung by children in circle games in Brazil 	PG: Levels 6 CS: Level 5 VA: Early-Intermediate



Performance of “Vestidinho Branco.”

O Corcunda (The Hunchback)

"O Corcunda" is quite an amusing piece, as opposed, perhaps, to what the title may suggest. The overall character reflects the witty lyrics of the folk song: "I am a hunchback, but I have money. Because of the young ladies I won't die alone. ... The ladies at the windows made faces ... and threw little bombs." As expected, a somber atmosphere is established in the opening, in which the right hand crosses over the left to execute a melodic line in the low range of the piano while the left hand is playing repeated tenuto chords in the D major tonic (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Low register and hand crossover, mm. 1-3.

The dark introduction, however, gives place to the humorous A section, in which the folk song is featured in the treble clef range upon a lighter left-hand texture. The piece remains entirely in D major with a traditional harmony that adds a few chromatic notes for variety and color (Figure 8).



Figure 8: The opening of A section with chromatic motion in the LH, mm. 4-6.

The darkness of the opening measures returns in the coda but is immediately followed by a lighter atmosphere evoked by rolled chords as if strummed on a harp (Figure 9). The harp effect is then succeeded by one beat of polyrhythmic cells between hands (Figure 10) and the final D major chord.



Figure 9: Rolled chords, mm. 25-27.



Figure 10: Polyrhythm, m. 27.

In summary, this single-page miniature offers a great deal of challenges for the young student to experience in snippets, such as hand crossover, chromaticism, voicing, rolled chords and polyrhythms. Awareness of the folk song lyrics may assist with creativity and interpretation.

"O Corcunda" is among the most accessible pieces in the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*. This selection is appropriate for the early-intermediate student who is developing voicing technique to bring out the top notes of harmonic intervals and blocked triads. "O Corcunda" is approximately level 6 in PG and level 5 in CS and comparable to *Arabesque*, Op. 6, No. 2 by G nari Karganov (1858–1890) as a study in hand balance and voicing.

"O Corcunda" (The Hunchback) Album VI, No. 2			
Year	Publisher	Page Number	Length
1947	Mercury Music	4	28 measures, c. 55"
Meter/Tempo/Key	Form	Rhythm	Harmony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2/4 Andantino calmo D Major 	Intro-A-Coda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro: 4 measures A: 16 measures Coda: 8 measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A single occurrence of an eighth note triplet in the RH against a pair of eighth notes in the LH in the coda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional harmony combined with chromatic notes as well as seventh and color chords
Melody	Technical Challenges	Stylistic Notes	Level of Difficulty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly conjunct motion within the range of an octave Wavelike contour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand crossover: RH melodic motive over LH chords (low range) Hand balance: melody vs. accompaniment Voicing melodic notes from the top of the chords Clef changes along the piece Rolled chords from the LH to the RH in the coda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European influence Humorous character related to its programmatic meaning 	PG: Level 6 CS: Level 5 VA: Early-Intermediate



Performance of "O Corcunda"

Samba-Lelê

In his classification chart, Villa-Lobos categorizes “Samba-Lelê” as a *lundu-canção*, a song with rhythmic features of the *lundu*—an Afro-Brazilian dance from the late 18th century rich in syncopated rhythms, with perpetual alternation between tonic and dominant harmony and the use of arpeggiated or strummed chords (Budasz 2007, 10). Implied in its title, “Samba-Lelê” also carries features of the *samba*, a more dynamic genre of African influence (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Typical rhythmic cells of *samba*.


"Samba-Lelê" consists of a 10-measure introduction, followed by a 16-measure A section and a 6-measure coda. Introduction, interlude and coda share similar musical material, slightly differing in length. Traditional harmony based on the primary chords is combined with chromatic passages and seventh chords throughout the piece. The tonic pedal is sustained in the left hand in the introduction, interlude and coda sections.

In Album II of the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*, “Samba-Lelê” is the most accessible piece for young students. The frequent syncopations are based on the same *samba* rhythmic cell and primarily executed by one hand, therefore making it easier to manage than the usual syncopations and polyrhythms in Villa-Lobos’s music (for example, *Impressões Seresteiras* and *Rudepoema*). The student is exposed to varied situations that require refined hand balance as well as the voicing technique necessary to bring out the notes in the left-hand chords that integrate the melody, which is divided between the hands (Figure 12). The A octave melodic pattern that permeates all the sections in this piece also poses a challenge, especially for those with smaller hands.



Figure 12: Melody split into the hands, RH octave patterns, and LH extended chord, mm. 11–14.

“Samba-Lelê” is favored by intermediate-level students for its vibrant rhythms and flashy character. It is comparable in difficulty to levels 7 or 8 in PG and level 7 in CS. “Samba-Lelê” was included in the syllabus of the 2014–2015 piano examinations of the Association Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) as a grade 5 piece. Differently from PG and CS, ABRSM follows a grading system from 1–8 (ABRSM Syllabus 2013).

"Samba-Lelê" Album II, No. 4			
Year	Publisher	Page Number	Length
1957	Max Eschig	8–9	104 measures, c. 1'30"
Meter/Tempo/Key	Form	Rhythm	Harmony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2/2 <i>Poco lento</i> D Major 	Intro-A-Interlude-A'-coda D.S. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro: 10 measures A: 16 measures Interlude: 5 measures A': 16 measures Coda: 6 measures Repetition of the piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syncopations based on the <i>samba</i> cell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional harmony combined with seventh chords, chromatic passages, and color harmony
Melody	Technical Challenges	Stylistic Notes	Level of Difficulty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disjunct motion within the range of a sixth Often outlines tonic and dominant chords Wavelike contour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall hand balance RH melodic octaves Outlining the melodic line split into both hands, voicing the top notes of the chords in the LH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence of <i>lundu</i> and <i>samba</i> 	PG: Levels 7–8 CS: Level 7 VA: Intermediate



Performance of "Samba-Lelê."

Manquinha (The Little Limping Girl)

"Manquinha" is a remarkable piece that combines a great number of technical and artistic aspects to explore with the intermediate student. What really stands out is the rhythmic cell that evokes the limp walk of the little girl, the same *samba* cell that indicated excitement and vitality in "Samba-Lelé" and "Vestidinho Branco." Despite the traditional harmonic structure that outlines the main sections of "Manquinha," Villa-Lobos uses chromaticism in the inner voices, seventh chords and color harmonies as occasional expressive devices throughout the selection, which are subtly tied to the programmatic value of this piece. The dark B minor chord that opens the sorrowful B section evokes the pathos of the little girl's limp walk also rhythmically present in the A section—a happy "walk in the woods"—through a *samba* rhythmic cell (Figure 13). Awareness of the folk song lyrics may assist the young pianist with interpretation.




Figure 13: *Samba* rhythmic cell and "limp walk."

"Manquinha" consists of a five-measure introduction that cadences on the dominant of G major, followed by A section in G major, B section in D major and a four-measure coda back in the original key, G major. The introduction and coda share similar musical material, except the coda is one measure shorter and the cadencing on the tonic, which gives closure to the piece. Technical challenges include control of texture—sustaining half notes against faster notes in the same hand—and voicing—bringing out the melodic line in the large chords. Large hands are a prerequisite for the execution of chords and octaves in the B section (Figure 14).



Figure 14: B section opening, a sequence of octaves and octave chords, mm. 22–25.

"Manquinha" is appropriate for the intermediate-level student. As a selection from Album I, the piece is classified as a level 7 or 8 in PG. "Manquinha" is comparable to "Our Little Garden" by Feliks Rybicki (1899–1978) in CS level 7, as both character pieces share similar treatment to texture and voicing.

"Manquinha" (The Little Limping Girl) Album I, No. 4			
Year	Publisher	Page Number	Length
1945	Consolidated Music Publishers	24–25	49 measures, c. 2'13"
Meter/Tempo/Key	Form	Rhythm	Harmony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2/4 <i>Andante moderato</i> G major 	Intro-ABA'-Coda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro: 5 measures A: 16 measures B: 16 measures A': 8 measures Coda: 4 measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soprano ostinato of half notes in the introduction and coda Alto and tenor ostinato in the same sections based on the samba rhythmic cell:  Bass ostinato in the same sections based on the cell:  	Traditional harmonic structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A in the tonic B in the dominant, beginning with a B minor chord Outer voices of Intro and Coda reinforce the G tonality with a tonic pedal point Seventh chords and chromaticism
Melody	Technical Challenges	Stylistic Notes	Level of Difficulty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> French-Italian origin of the melody Disjunct movement within an octave range 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control of texture and voicing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sustaining longer notes while moving faster figures Bringing the melodic line out of chords Large hands for sequences of octaves and chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Song and circle-dance <i>Samba</i> rhythmic influence Programmatic features in which the little limping girl is evoked by harmonic and rhythmic means 	PG: Levels 7–8 CS: Level 7 VA: Intermediate



Performance of "Manquinha."

Constante (Constant)

This single-page selection consists of a measure-long introduction, an eight-measure theme and a six-measure coda, which is the unique feature in this piece given its unbalanced proportions. The virtuosic, improvisatory style of the coda contrasts to the overall simplicity of the folk song (Figure 15). A C major chord in the introduction establishes the tonality, and harmonic color is achieved through chromaticism and seventh chords (Figure 16).

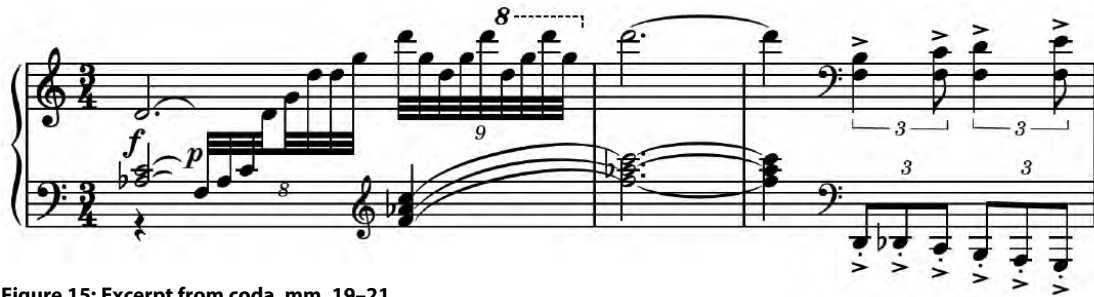


Figure 15: Excerpt from coda, mm. 19–21.



Figure 16: LH chromaticism in thirds, mm. 6–7.

In his classification chart, Villa-Lobos addresses the European aspects of this selection, such as the melody of French origin, the genre of *mazurka*, the European character and the category of Portuguese song and circle dance (Lago et al. 2009, 103).

Technical challenges are condensed in the coda, with an ascending virtuosic arpeggiation and rapid register shifts. “Constante” could be classified as a late-elementary-level piece without the coda. The elaborate coda, however, increases the difficulty of this selection, making it suitable for the intermediate-level student. The piece is approximately level 6 in PG and comparable to *Roundup* by André Previn in CS level 6.

"Constante" (Constant) Album IX, No. 5			
Year	Publisher	Page Number	Length
1948	Consolidated Music Publishers	50	23 measures, c. 50"
Meter/Tempo/Key	Form	Rhythm	Harmony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3/4 <i>Andantino quasi allegretto</i> C Major 	Intro-A-Coda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro: 1 measure A: 8 measures Coda: 6 measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular, basic rhythms Coda features thirty seconds, triplets and syncopations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmony centered in C major Predominance of I, IV, and V chords Chromaticism and seventh chords
Melody	Technical Challenges	Stylistic Notes	Level of Difficulty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stepwise Narrow range of an octave French origin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtuosic arpeggiation, sudden dynamic changes, and rapid register shifts in the coda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> French origin of the melody <i>Mazurka</i> Song and circle dance 	PG: Level 6 CS: Level 6 VA: Intermediate



Performance of "Constante."

Rosa Amarela (Yellow Rose)

A popular folk tune and standard choir repertoire in Brazil, “Rosa Amarela” captures the vibrancy of Brazilian culture and style through *samba* syncopations. This piano miniature consists of a five-measure introduction and a two-period A section followed by a return of the introduction material and a two-measure conclusion. Although “Rosa Amarela” remains entirely in D major, a rich harmonic variety is achieved by the strong presence of chromaticism, seventh chords, and color notes (Figure 17).



Figure 17: Chromatic LH and syncopations in both hands, mm. 1–2.

The overall hand balance requires careful attention as well as the voicing technique necessary to bring the melody out of chords and harmonic intervals throughout the entire piece (Figure 18). Large hands are a prerequisite, and a refined use of the damper pedal is expected due to a substantial presence of chromaticism.

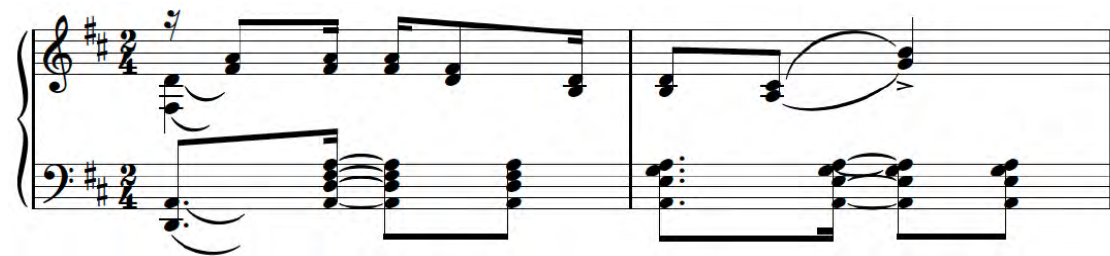



Figure 18: A section opening, RH melody from harmonic thirds, mm. 6–7.

“Rosa Amarela” would be comparable in difficulty to “Samba-Lelê” in Album I if it were shorter and the syncopations were concentrated on one hand alone. Therefore, this selection suits the late-intermediate-level student and would be approximately level 7 or 8 in PG and level 8 in CS.

"Rosa Amarela" (Yellow Rose) Album IV, No. 2			
Year	Publisher	Page Number	Length
1987	Max Eschig	2–3	72 measures, c. 2'20"
Meter/Tempo/Key	Form	Rhythm	Harmony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2/4 <i>Poco moderato</i> D Major 	Intro-AA'Intro-AA'-Intro-Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro: 5 measures A: 8 measures A': 17 measures Intro: 5 measures A: 8 measures A': 17 measures Intro: 5 measures Conclusion: 2 measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rich in syncopations based on the <i>samba</i> cells: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entirely in D major Rich in chromaticism Seventh chords and color tones permeate the piece
Melody	Technical Challenges	Stylistic Notes	Level of Difficulty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Octave range Outlines the tonic chord Wavelike contour A few leaps Hispanic and African ethnikal origins of the melody (Lago et al. 2009, 102) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall hand balance and voicing to bring the melody out of chords and harmonic intervals Refined pedaling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence of <i>samba</i> Character classified by Villa-Lobos as a mix of national and foreign (Lago et al. 2009, 102) 	PG: Levels 7–8 CS: 8 VA: Late Intermediate



Performance of "Rosa Amarela."

A Maré Encheu (Full Tide)

A folk song from Northeast of Brazil (Lago et al. 2009, 133), “A Maré Encheu” depicts rituals of nature and popular beliefs with a witty humor that is common in children’s songs and circle dances:

“The tide flowed	Seven and seven makes fourteen
The tide ebbd	Plus seven, twenty-one,
The hair of the brunette	I have seven boyfriends
The brook took away.	But won’t marry anyone.”

The programmatic aspect of “A Maré Encheu” lies in the phases of the tide. In the four-measure introduction, the ascending chords evoke the tide flowing while the ebb of the tide is portrayed by the descending sixteenth notes (Figure 19). This imagery reference may assist the student in relating technique gestures with the programmatic connotation of this section. The same effect returns in the coda.



Figure 19: A-flat minor ascending chords with added sixths, “the flow of the tide,” and descending sixteenth notes, “the ebb of the tide,” mm. 1–2.

The piece consists of an introduction in A-flat minor, followed by A section in its parallel key A-flat major, B section also in A-flat major, *Da Capo* and coda. Although the B section remains in the key of A-flat major, it provides a dramatic contrast in texture and character and reveals a strong influence from *lundu* and *samba* similarly to “Samba-Lelê” and “Rosa Amarela.” The frequent hand crossover in syncopation present in this section is among the most difficult technical challenges in “A Maré Encheu” (Figure 20).

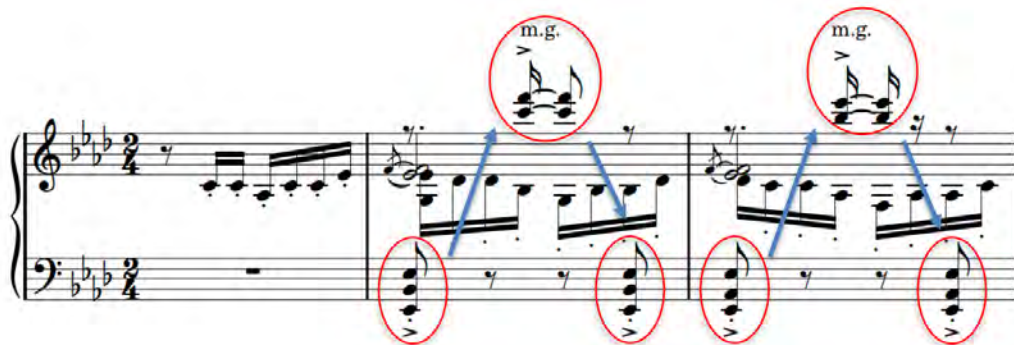
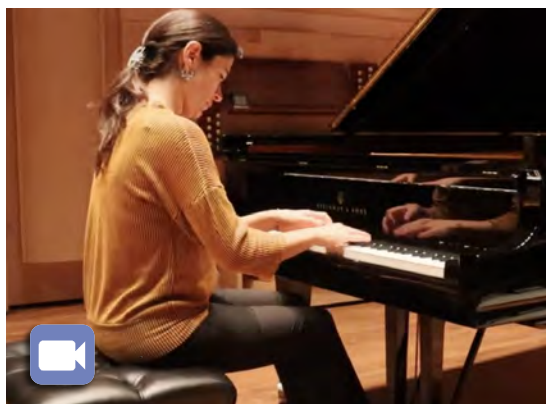


Figure 20: Opening of B Section, hand crossover in syncopation, mm. 20–22.

“A Maré Encheu” is appropriate for the early-advanced-level student developing the technical ability to execute complex textures, cross-handed syncopated rhythms and evenly precise articulation. The selection is classified as a level 7 or 8 piece in PG and comparable to the level 9 pieces in CS, such as Debussy’s *La fille aux cheveux de lin*.

"A Maré Encheu" (Full Tide) Album I, No. 2			
Year	Publisher	Page Number	Length
1945	Consolidated Music Publishers	20-21	56 measures, c. 1'35"
Meter/Tempo/Key	Form	Rhythm	Harmony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2/4 <i>Poco moderato</i> A-flat Major 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro-AB-<i>Da Capo</i>-Coda Intro: 4 measures in A-flat minor A: 16 measures in A-flat major B: 8 measures in A-flat major <i>Da Capo</i> Coda: 4 measures in A-flat major 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syncopated rhythms influenced by <i>Lundu</i> and <i>Samba</i> Perpetual sixteenth notes in the B section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added sixth I-IV-I-V-I (A section) V7-vi-V7-I (B section) Seventh, ninth, and thirteenth chords
Melody	Technical Challenges	Stylistic Notes	Level of Difficulty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text influenced by rituals of nature and popular beliefs RH lyrical octaves in the A section RH agitated and articulated sixteenth notes in the middle range of the piano in the B section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting/shaping the melodic octaves in the RH Holding a chord in the LH for a measure as the thumb continues moving, outlining the countermelody Control of texture in the B section, in which the LH crosses over the RH from the lower to the upper register for harmonic and color purposes in syncopated rhythms Precise and even articulation of the perpetual sixteenth notes in the B section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ebb and flow of the tide depicted in the introduction by ascending chords and a descending scale Influence of <i>Lundu</i> and <i>Samba</i> music and dance styles Lyrical and expressive theme in octaves (A section) Contrasting B section displaying a dynamic and articulated melody in the middle register of the keyboard, interplayed by two outer layers of chords in syncopation 	PG: Levels 7–8 CS: Level 9 VA: Early-advanced



Performance of "A Maré Encheu."

Final Considerations

Villa-Lobos designed a system of music education with the purpose to educate children in the public schools of Brazil. The *Guia Prático*, based on Brazilian folk traditions, became the channel for diffusing this musical heritage.

From 1932 to 1947, Villa-Lobos selected 54 piano accompaniments from the *Guia Prático* and arranged them into 11 albums for solo piano, the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*. He composed an additional five pieces designed to complete the albums: “Nesta Rua” in Album X and “O Anel,” “Nigue Ninhas,” “Pobre Cega” and “Viva o Carnaval!” in Album XI.

Album I is a set of five pieces dedicated to José Vieira Brandão, Brazilian composer, pianist, music educator, and choir conductor who premiered a number of pieces from the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*. Album II, first printed by the French publisher Max Eschig in Paris in 1957, is a collection of five pieces dedicated to Julieta d’Almeida Strutt, Villa-Lobos’s sister-in-law. Album III, also first printed in Paris in 1957, is dedicated to the Brazilian pianist Arnaldo Estrella, who during his career premiered and recorded a number of Villa-Lobos’s piano pieces. Album IV, first printed by Max Eschig in 1987, compiles five pieces and is dedicated to the Brazilian pianist Magdalena Tagliaferro, who during her career also premiered a number of Villa-Lobos’s piano works. Album V, a set of five pieces, is dedicated to Anna Stella Schic, a Brazilian pianist who recorded the complete solo piano music of Heitor Villa-Lobos, including all the 11 albums of the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano*. Album VI contains five pieces and is dedicated to the American pianist William Kapell, a close colleague of the composer. Album VII, a set of five pieces, is dedicated to Noemi Bittencourt, a Brazilian pianist and friend of Villa-Lobos. Album VIII contains six pieces with no dedication and represents the most accessible for students among all the piano albums. Album IX contains seven pieces with no dedication. Album X, first published in 1987 by Max Eschig, contains five pieces and is dedicated to Sonia Maria Strutt, Villa-Lobos’s niece-in-law and interpreter of his piano works. Finally, the closing set of six pieces—four of which were originally conceived for solo piano—Album XI is dedicated to Mieczysław Horszowski, Polish-American pianist

who performed and recorded several of the composer’s piano pieces.

These charming, miniature selections highlight the fascinating abundance of Brazilian culture. *Samba* figures and ostinato motives reflect the influence of African rhythms as children’s circle games reflect Portuguese traditions. The influence of the *choros* from the streets of Rio de Janeiro is suggested in pieces such as “Na Corda da Viola” in Album I and “Pai Francisco” in Album IX with their guitar idiomatic gestures and techniques. Impressionistic influence is also evident in the harmonic language used by Villa-Lobos in a number of pieces, where he utilizes parallelism, sequences of seventh chords, pedal points, chromaticism and color harmonies. Finally, the composer’s empathy for the music of J. S. Bach, the inspiration for his renowned *Bachianas Brasileiras*, is represented in the piano albums by the contrapuntal texture in pieces such as “A Roseira” in Album I and “Nesta Rua” in Album X.

Despite its musical quality, historical importance and educational value, the *Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano* is still relatively unknown among pianists and pedagogues. For several years, the Brazilian and French publishing companies *Napoleão* and *Eschig*, respectively, had exclusivity on publishing rights, which partially explains the limited availability of some of the albums (Cobb 1998, 181). Albums IV, V and X are still published exclusively by *Eschig*, while the other eight are available through the American companies Consolidated Music Publishers, Masters Music Publications and Mercury Music Corporation.

Heitor Villa-Lobos was a vibrant nationalistic voice in his country, not only for his music pervaded with the spirit of Brazil, but also for his accomplishments as an educator. The significance of the *Álbuns Para Piano*, along with its original vocal anthology, transcends the musical boundaries by representing a nation rising from the worldwide Great Depression—felt not only in the United States, but in numerous other countries around the world—preserving folk traditions and enhancing the educational system across the country. Through the *Álbuns Para Piano*, Villa-Lobos made available to all people the multifaceted idioms of Brazilian music and culture and created a monumental music education resource for students of all ages.

Appendix A Leveling Systems

Title/Author	Abbreviations
<i>The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature</i> (Magrath 1995)	PG
<i>Celebrations Series</i> (The Royal Conservatory 2015)	CS
Verena Abufaiad	VA

A List of Available Scores

Selected Pieces	Guia Prático Albums	CS Approximate Levels	Free Online Resources
<i>O Ciranda, O Cirandinha</i> (Album IX, No. 3)	<i>The Piano Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos</i> , Music for Million Series, Amsco Publications	<i>Sounding the Accordion</i> by Jeno Takács, level 5	IMSLP – Petrucci Music Library
<i>Vestidinho Branco</i> (Album VIII, No. 7)	<i>The Piano Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos</i> , Music for Million Series, Amsco Publications	<i>You and I</i> by Tom Gerou, Level 5	
<i>O Corcunda</i> (Album VI, No. 2)	<i>Twice Five Pieces</i> , Albums 6-7, Theodore Pressler Company	<i>Arabesque</i> , Op. 6, No. 2 by Génari Karganov, level 5	IMSLP – Petrucci Music Library
<i>Samba-Lelê</i> (Album II, No. 4)	<i>Heitor Villa-Lobos: Guia Prático (sélection)</i> , Children's Series, Eschig	<i>Peace Country Hoedown</i> by Christine Donkin, level 7	IMSLP – Petrucci Music Library
<i>Manquinha</i> (Album I, No. 4)	<i>The Piano Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos</i> , Music for Million Series, Amsco Publications	<i>Our Little Garden</i> by Feliks Rybicki, level 7	IMSLP – Petrucci Music Library
Constante (Album IX, No. 5)	<i>The Piano Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos</i> , Music for Million Series, Amsco Publications	<i>Roundup</i> by André Previn, level 6	IMSLP – Petrucci Music Library
<i>Rosa Amarela</i> (Album IV, No. 2)	<i>Heitor Villa-Lobos: Guia Prático (sélection)</i> , Children's Series, Eschig	<i>Jazz Exercise No. 2</i> by Oscar Peterson, level 8	
<i>A Maré Encheu</i> (Album I, No. 2)	<i>The Piano Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos</i> , Music for Million Series, Amsco Publications	<i>La fille aux cheveux de lin</i> by Claude Debussy, level 9	IMSLP – Petrucci Music Library

Appendix B
The Guia Prático, Álbuns Para Piano:
A List of Pieces in Order by Level of Difficulty

Early-Intermediate	Intermediate
1. <i>Sonho de uma Criança</i> (Album VI, No. 1) 2. <i>O Corcunda</i> (Album VI, No. 2) 3. <i>Ó Limão</i> (Album VIII, No. 1) 4. <i>Carambola</i> (Album VIII, No. 2) 5. <i>Pobre Cega</i> (Album VIII, No. 3) 6. <i>Xo! Passarinho!</i> (Album VIII, No. 5) 7. <i>Sinh'Aninha</i> (Album VIII, No. 6) 8. <i>Vestidinho Branco</i> (Album VIII, No. 7) 9. <i>O Ciranda, O Cirandinha</i> (Album IX, No. 3)	10. <i>Manquinha</i> (Album I, No. 4) 11. <i>Samba-Lelê</i> (Album II, No. 4) 12. <i>O Pobre e o Rico</i> (Album IV, No. 1) 13. <i>O Gato</i> (Album IV, No. 4) 14. <i>Os Pombinhos</i> (Album V, No. 1) 15. <i>Você Diz Que Sabe Tudo</i> (Album V, No. 2) 16. <i>Caranguejo</i> (Album VI, No. 3) 17. <i>A Pombinha Voou</i> (Album VI, No. 4) 18. <i>No Fundo do Meu Quintal</i> (Album VII, No. 1) 19. <i>Vai, Abobóia</i> (Album VII, No. 2) 20. <i>Anda a Roda</i> (Album VII, No. 5) 21. <i>Constante</i> (Album IX, No. 5) 22. <i>Atché</i> (Album X, No. 2)
Late-Intermediate	Early-Advanced
23. <i>Acordei de Madrugada</i> (Album I, No. 1) 24. <i>Machadinha</i> (Album II, No. 2) 25. <i>A Freira</i> (Album III, No. 3) 26. <i>Rosa Amarela</i> (Album IV, No. 2) 27. <i>Olha o Passarinho, Dominé!</i> (Album IV, No. 3) 28. <i>Ó Sim!</i> (Album IV, No. 5) 29. <i>Có. Có. Có.</i> (Album V, No. 3) 30. <i>O Bastão ou Mia Gato</i> (Album V, No. 4) 31. <i>Vamos Atrás da Serra, Ó Calunga!</i> (Album VI, No. 5) 32. <i>Vamos, Maruca</i> (Album VII, No. 3) 33. <i>Pai Francisco</i> (Album VIII, No. 4) 34. <i>O Castelo</i> (Album IX, No. 6) 35. <i>No Jardim Celestial</i> (Album X, no. 6) 36. <i>A Cotia</i> (Album XI, No. 4)	37. <i>A Maré Encheu</i> (Album I, No. 2) 38. <i>A Roseira</i> (Album I, No. 3) 39. <i>Na Corda da Viola</i> (Album I, No. 5) 40. <i>Brinquedo</i> (Album II, No. 1) 41. <i>Espanha</i> (Album II, No. 3) 42. <i>Senhora Dona Viúva</i> (Album II, No. 5) 43. <i>O Pastorzinho</i> (Album III, No. 1) 44. <i>João Cabuê</i> (Album III, No. 2) 45. <i>Garibaldi Foi à Missa</i> (Album III, No. 4) 46. <i>O Pião</i> (Album III, No. 5) 47. <i>A Condessa</i> (Album V, No. 5) 48. <i>Laranjeira Pequeninha</i> (Album IX, No. 1) 49. <i>Pombinha, Rolinha</i> (Album IX, No. 2) 50. <i>A Velha que Tinha Nove Filhas</i> (Album IX, No. 4) 51. <i>De Flor em Flor</i> (Album X, No. 1) 52. <i>Nesta Rua</i> (Album X, No. 3) 53. <i>Fui no Itororó</i> (Album X, No. 4) 54. <i>Mariquita Muchacha</i> (Album X, No. 5) 55. <i>O Anel</i> (Album XI, No. 1) 56. <i>Nigue Ninhas</i> (Album XI, No. 2) 57. <i>Pobre Cega</i> (Album XI, No. 3) 58. <i>Vida Formosa</i> (Album XI, No. 5) 59. <i>Viva o Carnaval!</i> (Album XI, No. 6)

Note

1. Samba and lundu are Afro-Brazilian dances and musical genres in duple meter with highly syncopated rhythms.

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