

Brazilian Four-Hands: the history, repertoire, and tradition of piano duets in Brazil

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The rise, the decline, and the arrival of the genre piano four-hands in Brazil:

- England – beginning of 17th century
- Europe – 18th century:
- Sonatas by J. C. Bach and Mozart
- Texts on the importance of piano four-hands practice in the formation of pianists by Charles Burney
- Romanticism in Europe:
 - Schubert, Brahms, Dvorak
- The appearance of the radio and the gramophone in the 19th Century
- Late arrival in Brazil through Portuguese composers - late 18th and 19th Centuries

First composers of piano four-hands in Brazil:

- Arthur Napoleão (1843-1925) and José Domingues Brandão (1865-1941)
- Carlos Gomes (1836-1896) and Leopoldo Miguez (1850-1902)
- Alexandre Levy (1864-1892) and Francisco Braga (1868-1945)

→ Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959):

- *A Folia de um bloco infantil*

→ Francisco Mignone (1897-1986):

- *Congada*

→ Radamés Gnattali (1906-1988):

- *Graciosa*

→ Lorenzo Fernandes (1897-1948):

- *Cavaleiro fantástico*

→ Alencar Pinto (1911-2007):

- *Sarau de sinhá*

→ Ernst Mahle (1929-):

- *Peças modais*
- *Toccata*
- *Suíte nordestina*
- *Carimbó*

→ Ronaldo Miranda (1948-):

- Tango:
 - Ronaldo Miranda's interpretation of the dance (tango)
 - Extremely fast and does not follow the style of the original tango
 - Bartokian harshness, contrasting with the *molto cantabile* in the middle section, reminiscent of Piazzolla

→ Edino Krieger (1928-):

- Sonata

Compositions with Children's theme

- Octavio Maul (1901-1974):
 - *Cirandinha*
- Cláudio Santoro (1919-1989):
 - *Brincadeira*
- Almeida Prado (1943-2010):
 - *IV peças para piano a quatro mãos*
 - *Ciranda*
 - *Jogo*
 - *Cantiga*
 - *Passeando*

→ Osvaldo Lacerda (1927-2011):

- Brasiliana No. 4
 - “Dobrado”
 - Brazilian march, in 2/4 or 4/4 time signature
 - Slight influence of the Spanish music ("dobrado" comes from “passo doble” or "double step")
 - “Embolada”
 - Vocal genre, typical of the Northeast of Brazil
 - It appears alone or integrating dances (usually, côco)
 - The melody is declamatory, in fast tempo.
 - “Seresta”
 - In general, the same as serenade.
 - Song of sentimental or passionate lyrics, directed to the singer’s beloved.
 - Its style is very close to the slow waltz and the “modinha,” (another Brazilian slow love song style).
 - “Candomblé”
 - Afro-Brazilian religion. In it, each divine entity is invoked by its own songs.
 - It includes characteristic rhythms, most in 6/8.

→ Henrique Morozowicz (1934-2008):

- *Suíte de Natal*
- *Suíte abajour*
- *Capricho no. 1 “Corre... corre p’ra Goiania”*

→ Estércio Cunha (1941-):

- *Marcha*
- *Cinco para os quatro*
- *Chôro*
- 2 other pieces without a name

→ Amaral Vieira (1952-): 23 pieces for piano four-hands!

→ Edson Zampronha (1963-):

- *Composição para piano a quatro mãos e dois comentários:*
 - The piece is divided into three movements: The first movement was composed in 1985 and was originally titled *Composition for Piano Four Hands*
 - 20 years later, in 2005, Zampronha decided to compose two other works that are musical comments on the composition from 1985
 - The composer reports being influenced by self-referentiality and fractals

Some Reference Websites:

<http://institutopianobrasileiro.com.br/> - for bios in Portuguese (you can use google translate for English), for discography, for images, for sheet music, for a timeline of the Brazilian music for piano, and more. The founder of this institute told me that if you want to receive scores by Brazilian composers regularly, you just need contact him (Alexandre Dias) and subscribe to the website.

<http://institutopianobrasileiro.com.br/partituras> - for sheet music directly (just put the name of the composer)

<https://musicabrasilis.com/> - Information on composers and scores. The website says: “Musica Brasili’s main goal is to make available Brazilian repertoires of all times and genres, mostly inaccessible due to the lack of editions.” (This website is in English)

For sheet music of some composers, like Claudio Santoro, Ronaldo Miranda, and Edson Zampronha, please contact them directly from their official websites (Claudio Santoro’s son, Alessandro Santoro, coordinates the business of his dad’s website).