**Marlos Nobre**

Ilka Vasconcelos Araújo



**Marlos Nobre** is a Brazilian composer, pianist, and conductor. His music presents a unique characteristic that combines Brazilian features with advanced compositional techniques. His pluralistic musical view went through several phases, from tonal to modal, polytonal, atonal, serial, and aleatoric until he defined his own style, which became a combination of everything he had learned and filtered.

Nobre’s enormous output and strong, individual approach are substantial enough to distinguish him as one of today’s greatest composers.

Nobre was born in Recife, Pernambuco, on February 18, 1939. At age five, Nobre began his musical studies at the Music Conservatory of Pernambuco in Recife, where he graduated in Piano Performance and Theory in 1955. The following year, he entered Ernani Braga Institute to study Harmony, Counterpoint, and Composition, graduating with honors in 1959. After receiving a scholarship to participate at the X International Summer Festival in Teresópolis, Nobre studied under Hans-Joachim Koellreuter, who introduced him to the dodecaphonic technique. In 1961, Nobre received another scholarship to study under Camargo Guarnieri, with whom the composer embraced Nationalistic influences. At the time, Nobre and Guarnieri’s other students founded the Brazilian Society Pro-Music, whose objective was to promote the New Music of Brazil. The composer also founded and led other associations, whose main objective was to promote contemporary Brazilian music such as the Music Renovation Movement in Brazil. In 1963, Nobre received a scholarship from the Rockfeller Foundation to pursue Graduate studies at the Latin American Center of the Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires. He then studied advanced techniques with Alberto Ginastera, Olivier Messiaen, Riccardo Malipiero, Aaron Copland, Luigi Dallapiccola, and Bruno Maderna.

From that point, Nobre was able to define a more personal style. He received grants from the Brazilian government, which enabled him to participate in several important festivals of avant-garde music in Europe and the United States. This experience exposed him to different compositional techniques and, at the same time, helped him to share his works with other contemporary composers. Throughout the years, Nobre has held important positions such as general coordinator of the Brazilian Music Council of UNESCO, general secretary of the Brazilian Musician’s Union (1972), director of the National Institute of Music of the Brazilian National Foundation for the Arts (1976–9), and president of the Brazilian Academy of Music (1985–91). He has received commissions from the Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra (1973–6), the Goethe Institute, Radio Suisse Romande, and the Spanish Ministry of Culture (1992). He was composer-in-residence of the Brahms-Haus (1980–81) and received a Guggenheim Fellowship (1985–6). He has held visiting professorships at Indiana University (1981), Yale (1992), the Juilliard School (1996), and the University of Arizona (1997). His work has been recognized through the Order of Merit (1988), the Order of Rio Branco (1989) and the Ordre d’Arts et Lettres (1994). Nobre has conducted such orchestras as the Royal Philharmonic, London, the Suisse Romande, the Teatro Colon Philharmonic Orchestra, the Symphonic Orchestra of Mexico, the Havana Symphonic Orchestra, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France. Nobre has received many important prizes including the sixth edition of the Tomás Luis de Victoria Prize in Spain (2005).

Nobre’s pluralistic language combines a series of influences from different periods and styles of music. In his concept, the greatest formal structures are those of traditional classical works, which he combines with modern techniques. The composer’s multifaceted music represents the influence of Debussy, Bartók, Stravinsky, Lutosławski, and displays a vigorous, distinguished rhythmic vitality, colored by elements from Brazilian folklore and nature, striking sound combinations, and spontaneity. His music ranges from tonal to freely-atonal with serial and sonorous techniques. The influence of Bartók and Lutosławski can be seen in Nobre’s combination of diatonic folk material with dissonant harmonies, polyrhythmic structures, rhythmic drive, textual effects and the use of non-traditional scales. Afro-Brazilian rhythms from Nobre’s hometown highly influence the regular pulse, meter, and strong rhythmic freedom in his works.

The first period of Nobre’s output clearly spans from his *Concertino for piano and orchestra*, Op. 1, (1959) until *Divertimento for piano and orchestra*, Op. 14, (1963). All of the pieces from this period display the direct influence of Villa-Lobos and Ernesto Nazareth. The second phase goes from *Variações Rítmicas*, Op. 15, (1963) until *Dia da Graça*, Op. 32b, (1968). It displays a combination of serial and aleatoric features with Brazilian traditional rhythms. Nobre follows a freer use of dodecaphony seen in works of Dallapiccola and Ginastera. Important compositions are *Ukrinmakrinkrin*, Op. 17, *Canticum Instrumentale*, Op. 25, and *String Quartet I*, Op. 26. Nobre’s third phase becomes the synthesis and integration of all techniques he assimilated. The result of a combination of serialism, indeterminacy, and eventual polytonal techniques culminates in a creative process that allows the composer to use all means available without distinction or discrimination to fulfill his musical expression. His search for an identity brings pieces that range from his *Concerto Breve*, Op. 33, (1969) up to *Homenagem a Villa-Lobos*, Op. 46, (1977). Nobre develops his interest in simultaneously using a fixed notation along with a more flexible notation, which is found through the use of proportional and aleatoric writing. *Ludus Instrumentalis,* Op. 34, *Mosaico,* Op. 36, *Sonoridades,* Op. 37, *O Canto Multiplicado,* Op. 38, and *In Memoriam,* Op. 39 belong to this phase. Nobre further develops and extends his musical language and compositional process starting in the 1980s. From *Yanomani,* Op. 47 forward, Nobre emerges with a more defined aesthetic thought where rhythm, harmony, and form gain stronger character. By the 1990s, Nobre begins to rely more frequently on tonal formal structures and a combination of traditional and contemporary elements, as one can see in later works such as *Passacaglia for Orchestra*, Op. 84, and *Kabbalah*, Op. 96.

Marlos Nobre’s aesthetics and style have been well received by many artists and scholars worldwide. His unique capacity for absorbing and filtering ideas and techniques has afforded him considerable prestige among his contemporaries and will serve as valuable foundation for the future.

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