

# Universalism, or the fabrication of concert music: A Brazilian history of cultural appropriation, political propaganda, and inequality

## Universalismo, ou a fabricação da música de concerto: uma história brasileira de apropriação cultural, propaganda política e desigualdade social



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**Abstract:** The idea of a 'universal music,' which develops alongside the supposed hegemony of European classical music, has historical roots that have been expressed as disciplinary content since at least the Enlightenment. However, its current relevance is shown in processes of symbolic appropriation, which we analyze in the contemporary Brazilian scenario, where the dissemination of universalism as an unquestionable paradigm of cultural superiority guides the relationship with musical discipline and is shaped by the context of social, political, and economic fragility, which we will analyze in the case of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, concluding, finally, the difficulty of music in constituting itself as an epistemic object in this context.

**Keywords:** Musical universalism. Osesp. Brazilian music. Social inequality. Brazilian politics.

**Resumo:** A ideia de uma “música universal”, que se desenvolve a partir da suposta hegemonia da música clássica europeia, tem raízes históricas que se expressam como conteúdo disciplinar desde pelo menos o Iluminismo. No entanto, sua relevância atual se mostra em processos de apropriação simbólica, que analisamos no cenário brasileiro contemporâneo, onde a disseminação do universalismo como paradigma inquestionável de superioridade cultural orienta a relação com a disciplina musical e é moldada pelo contexto das relações sociais, políticas e de fragilidade econômica, que analisaremos no caso da Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo (OSESP), concluindo, por fim, a dificuldade da música em se constituir como objeto epistêmico nesse contexto.

**Palavras-chave:** Universalismo musical. Osesp. Música brasileira. Desigualdade social. Política brasileira.

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## Musical universalism from a historical perspective and its investigation in the contemporary Brazilian context

A close historical association between European classical music and the supposed 'aesthetic universality' of sounds frequently reveals itself through contradictory postures towards musical phenomena, which enable music's political and propagandistic use, as well as its function as a symbolic expression of social relations. According to Dave (2014, p. 1-17), such expressions are ultimately materialized through laws and human rights practices, while Toews (2008, p. 309) presents its relationship to various processes of integrating individuals into collectivities by means of subjective identifications. Thus, the notion of the 'universality' of music continues to reemerge in several contexts, as presented by Berkman (2007, p. 41-62), Hamel (2007, p. 106-119), and Strohm (2019; 2018), although understood in a radically different way compared to its historical development, revealing that the use of the term 'universalism' may be inaccurate, as in the scenario of concert music in Brazil, which will be presented below. But long before it constituted itself as a contemporary Brazilian phenomenon, musical universalism has often been expressed as a general hope for a 'universal language,' or even as music's independence from a cultural 'origin,' as if musical expressions were immune from, or superior to, the peculiarities of their human contexts. This understanding has been maintained throughout different moments in the history of Western music and the expansion of its values to other musical traditions, as highlighted by Gelbart (2015, p. 135-138), as in the typical invention of an 'orientalism' by the West, presented by Said (2007), which curiously expands itself to countries in a 'left half' of the globe, like Brazil, which are not part of a 'hegemonic West.' Thus, the universalist ideal comes to encompass much more than an 'aesthetic universality' and becomes 'a way of relating' to the musical phenomenon, exemplified in works by Dave (2014), Bohlman (2018, p. 61-80), and Toews (2008), which we investigate here, echoing Schmidt:

“Like almost no other art, music was and is connected with the hope of an aesthetic universality that encompasses much more than just independence from language and thus, even if only supposedly, from its place of cultural ‘origin’.” (2008, p. 1).<sup>1</sup>

In the case of Brazil, a fracture between concert music and its social context becomes fundamental to the spread of a ‘musical universality,’ which thus starts to be configured as a paradigm that directly influences the understanding of music as a discipline and, consequently, determines the practices of musical creation, diffusion, and fruition. However, the constitution of this ‘mode’ of relationship and understanding of the musical phenomenon occurred over at least the last two hundred years in Europe. If the affirmation of a “true universal language” (*wahre Universalsprache*) already appeared in the music history by Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1788, p. 65) as disciplinary content in Leipzig at the end of the eighteenth century, its diffusion was completed through other artistic expressions, especially as ‘literary history,’ in essays, prose, and fiction. In 1799, essays on art by Wackenroder (2016) were published, in which a form of content abstraction overlaps the musical discipline, giving it the character of a ‘fantasy,’ which is already expressed in the title of the work, *Fantasies on Art for Friends of Art (Phantasien über die Kunst für Freunde der Kunst)*. This continued to expand towards the philosophy of music of the German romantic period, which, according to Siegel (1972, p. 351), obtains in Wackenroder the necessary foundation for its development. In these first elaborations on a ‘universal music,’ a paradigmatic conception about music is already present. It builds on the abstraction of the musical content and expands into a belief that does not fail to act very directly on music as a discipline. The ‘fantasy’ ideal does not in any way remain limited to literature, but acts directly on the understanding and diffusion of the musical discipline — which we continue to experience in contemporary times, as we will see in the Brazilian

<sup>1</sup> “Wie kaum eine andere Kunst wurde und wird die Musik verbunden mit der Hoffnung auf eine ästhetische Allgemeingültigkeit, die viel mehr umfasst als nur die Unabhängigkeit von Sprache und damit, wenn auch nur vermeintlich, von ihrem kulturellen ‘Ursprungs’-Ort.” (Schmidt, 2008, p. 1). Translated by the authors.

case. The decade that elapsed between the publication of the works by Forkel and Wackenroder corresponds precisely to the outbreak of the French Revolution and was characterized by the wide spread of egalitarian ideals that depend on a universal validity, whose impact on the European environment, mainly the Germanic, exceeded the Revolution in French territory, both in the repercussions of the philosophy of the French Enlightenment and its musical impacts, as Christensen (2005, p. 93–106) reports about the European reception of Rameau's work, and in the interest and diffusion of 'natural' mathematical principles, often related to music, as Schmidt (2005, p. 107–132) presents in the German and English translations of D'Alembert's *Elements of Music* (*Éléments de Musique*). This historical process of disseminating musical knowledge constitutes, according to Toews, "an enormously significant dimension of European cultural and intellectual history," (2008, p. 309) which has gradually been transmitted as an "imaginary museum of classical music," according to Goehr (1992), and attests to the need to consider the constitution of several expressions of the Enlightenment in Europe in its investigation, as attested by Bohlman (2018, p. 61–80) and Gelbart (2015, p. 135–138). Furthermore, the impact of Enlightenment values on music remains current. Bohlman (2018, p. 61–80) discusses them in the context of contemporary globalization processes, which embody the responsibility of a cosmopolitan stance in the relationship between individuals and human groups, which Mignolo (2000) relates to academic research in general, attributing to it the responsibility to allow more diverse contexts and equal participation in the dialogue, starting from the consideration that all knowledge is located and involves its media, social actors, etc. — which seems to represent the current Brazilian musical context.

At the end of the eighteenth century, a hope for 'universal' values was already recognized as a symbolic expression of music, and thus the consideration of this period becomes essential to their investigation, which we propose through the historical study

of a 'musical universalism.' In this period, the immateriality of the universalist ideal was a determinant of its diffusion, which again allowed it to be represented symbolically *par excellence*. In the following years, adherence to the universal paradigm of music would soon cross the Atlantic to be also read in North America, where, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Henry Longfellow reaffirmed in the field of literature that "Music is the universal language of mankind." (1835, p. 4). Again, a few years later, German musicology publicly placed itself in this discussion. Carl Dahlhaus indicates the year 1846 (1978, p. 26) as the first moment in which the concept of absolute music was mentioned by Wagner in a program on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, generating an extensive musicological clash over a supposed absolute music, which, intending to be absolute, depended directly on a universal foundation. Just as in the relationship between music, literature, and philosophy, in yet another powerful association, the combination of universalism and absolute music has hampered future investigations of the universal in music. According to Schmidt, "The fact that a claim to universality in historical musicology has remained undiscussed for a long time . . . may be due to the fact that research into music . . . has understood itself through the concept of absolute music as an unspoken universalist orientation." (2005, p. 13).<sup>2</sup> Again, the immateriality of an ideal and the power of its symbolic representation strengthen its 'silent' diffusion — which continues to be observed in contemporary times, as per Homi Bhabha: "It is the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the *beyond*." (1994, p. 1). If Bhabha affirms a high degree of abstraction when dealing with culture in general, in the case of European classical music, this "realm of the beyond" is historically related to the hope for a universal 'language' of music, which makes direct reference to 'verbal' language and, not by chance, creates space for other areas of knowledge to play a decisive role in the construction of music as 'universal art'

<sup>2</sup> "Daß sich ein Universalitätsanspruch in der historischen Musikwissenschaft länger undiskutiert hielt . . . mag daran liegen, daß die Erforschung der Musik . . . sich an einer Orientierung am Konzept der absoluten Musik unausgesprochen universalistisch verstanden hat." (Schmidt 2005, p. 13). Translated by the authors.

— which was equally accepted, co-constructed, and reaffirmed by music as a discipline. The specificity of musical notation, which is often associated with the fantasy of decoding abstract (and therefore supposedly absolute) symbols into melodies, rhythms, harmonies, etc., decisively influences the hermeticism of musical theory and analysis. Abstraction surrounds musical analysis with a certain gap that occupies an evident place in musical research, in addition to making interfaces with other research areas arduous, as presented by Toews (2008, p. 310–313), both in the sense that musical analysis bases a large part of its legitimacy on investigations related to notation — and this is a reason why it usually understands itself as ‘diminished’ by a social understanding of the sound phenomena — and also in the sense that all other areas find themselves struggling while trying to relate their scopes to musical notation, and they can rarely carry it out without cooperation from musicians or musicologists.

In its direct relationship with graphic notation and the particularities of music scores, music theory is also impacted by a ‘universalism’ of music. Not without reason, Schmidt (2005, p. 9–17) points to the need for a joint reflection between musical theory and cultural context, to which Christensen (2018, p. 15–21) adds the consequences of cultural transfer and hybridism, described by Bhabha (1994, p. 245–258). In Christensen’s words: “the process of cultural transfer is rarely a unidirectional one of simple import and export” (2005, p. 17) and includes dialogical relations of intermediation and negotiation. European music theory, associated with the myth of symbolic writing that would correspond to a supposedly perfect deciphering of ‘reality,’ allows music to be repeatedly represented as a symbol of abstraction, as a ‘fantasy’ of intangible character, which is mixed with perception and reflection on the discipline. Because it does not allow itself to be investigated in an environment that is distinct from the analytical context of its own symbols, musical writing becomes somewhat ‘invisible,’ and for this very reason, it also becomes unassailable, making an understanding

of music based on the ideal universality little questioned. As the writing of scores is directly related to the recognition of a 'musical language,' it is configured as a central symbol of the legitimation of this 'musical language,' and even in the twenty-first century, it is still treated as a 'method' applicable to manifestations of distinct sounds, often in an attempt to legitimize these same manifestations by attesting them as 'language,' whose deciphering becomes 'universal' through the score. Thus, European music theory and its application to different sound phenomena is closely related to the tacit belief in the universalism of music, which corresponds with the silent spread of cultural hegemonies, which will become clear in the following Brazilian example, in which musical writing is also shown as a revealing form of self-legitimation. Orchestral music, as a symbol, plays an important role in the acknowledgement of a 'musical hegemony' based in a 'language' that also constitutes a 'theory': the development of symphonic music, the numerical growth in the use of instruments and the consequent possibilities of orchestration, coincides with the association between musical theory and the spread of a Germanic canon, mainly centered in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in the repertoire of the classical and romantic periods, in the consolidation and apogee of the symphonic form as a symbol of orchestral music, and, consequently, in a canonical repertoire, especially of Mozart and Beethoven, which starts to be configured as "the set of universal values [that] is presented as the core of historical identity," according to Rösen (2008, p. 15).

This historical identity associated with universal values is central to Latin America's importation of a musical canon, which in turn is related to exile and European migration, addressed by current research that considers the impact of universalism on musical cultures, as in Köster and Schmidt (2005) and Schmidt (2008, p. 1-7). The transfer of Portuguese court to Brazil is determinant to this appropriation of a European "universal" musical canon, which was kept alive by imperial

Brazilian elite in their effort to get hold of European culture and habits (AUGUSTO, 2010). The maintenance of the universalist appropriation touches the core of later American nationalist movements, such as the *Semana de Arte Moderna* (1922), as well as its ideology and aesthetic of “antropofagia”. In 1943, in the field of music, Ernst Krenek described a song of “universal and planetary significance,” relating it to the works of “Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert,” (2004, p. 55) and thus managed to make the concept of ‘universal’ undoubtedly synonymous with European music, predominantly symphonic and Germanic, while the Uruguayan-Argentine composer Graciela Paraskevaídes, representative of the Latin American national movement, names this understanding “German-centrist.” (2004, p. 58). In Brazil, the same opposition between national and “universal-European” caused both adherence to and denial of the serial movement spread by Koellreutter in the same period, but later it also expanded through popular music, as presented by the composer Sidney Miller (1968, p. 207–221) in his criticism of a supposed ‘universalization’ of Brazilian song by rock, guided by the ideal of modernization and the interests of the phonographic market. In this case, a transposition of European universalism to a North American hegemonic place is evident, which is configured as a usual process for Brazilian culture, mainly from the effects of the “American way of life” policy widespread in the Vargas era. Characteristic of the nationalist period and its developments is, once again, a lack of definition of the term ‘universalism,’ which makes it represent contradictions: on the one hand, an opposition to European music is proclaimed; on the other hand, the use of a cosmopolitan ideal as a way to legitimize versions of what would be a national art is shown in the maintenance of European compositional forms and procedures in Brazilian nationalist works. Symbolically, this same contradiction remains in the classical music scene, as we will see in the course of this research. Investigations of the relationship between universal and national become very relevant in view of this panorama,

mainly from a historical perspective that stretches for several centuries until reaching the present time, as in Hübinger, Osterhammel, and Pelzer (1994), thus encompassing the consideration of different cultural and historical contexts in the observation of parameters and terminologies that are consistent with the description of the plurality of music 'histories,' as presented by Strohm (2019). Its relationship with contemporary and authorial music, described by Hamel (2007, p. 106–119), as well as with the area of sound studies, presented by Stokes (2018, p. 3–18), and with a religious-musical universalism that can be read in Berkman (2007, p. 41–62) also composes the current literature.

Mozart and Beethoven remain extensively repeated in Brazil as symbolic representations of a construction that involves musicology, history, and musical theory, which nevertheless brings up a form of appropriation of universalism. The nature of this appropriation depends largely on the Brazilian *status quo* and is shaped by it to the extreme, making it difficult to investigate music as a discipline. But even in the first formulations of music as a 'universal language' in the eighteenth century, this 'universalism' cannot be proven as such. To some extent, it must also be a form of appropriation carried out by repeated, albeit distinct, discourses throughout music history. In this sense, we propose here a return to the investigation of specific human contexts as a methodology for studying universalism: if it constitutes appropriation, its critical investigation depends on the clarification of ties and mechanisms of relationship with the *status quo* that builds this same appropriation. 'Universal' references to an origin, place, language, or understanding are immediately pushed into a contextual reproduction of the so-called 'universal,' where it shows itself as a particular interpretation of a phenomenon, while the 'universal' paradigm starts to be configured as a tool to erase differences inherent to this same context. In this sense, Arjun Appadurai mentions the term 'false universalism,' (2018, p. 6) which, in a way, is

also understood through a “myth of universalism,” presented by Nomi Dave (2014, p. 1), in a work on human rights that addresses the legal consequences of universalism in music. In line with Rüsen’s perspective of “encourage ambivalence in historical experience” (2008, p. 18), Appadurai describes the way in which ‘false universalisms’ can eliminate ambivalence by disregarding basic convictions in favor of understanding between different parties through a common ground built as a tool for maintaining hegemony:

But complete understanding at the level of primary ethical, religious or political convictions carries yet another danger with it. That danger is the urge to eliminate basic differences altogether. For if we wish to establish common grounds at the level of basic convictions, somebody’s basic convictions must change. And this usually means that one party’s deepest convictions become the measure of common ground. This is the way in which false universalisms can erase true differences (APPADURAI, 2018, p. 6).

Interestingly, the reference to cultural hegemony in the current Brazilian musical context related to concert music is not to a direct musical relationship between Brazil and Europe, but is configured as a behavior reproduced by Brazilians themselves, in accordance with Bourdieu (2011, 2009, p. 86–132), Freire (2013, p. 39–78), and Freyre (2003, 2014) as a constant experimentation with the universality of European music in the tropics, *à la* eternal Herzog’s *Fitzcarraldos* (1982),<sup>3</sup> and also as a form of engagement in the maintenance of such universal understanding. It is an appropriation of universalism with historical roots and particular developments, whose peculiarity is attested by Christensen regarding the spread of music theory in general: “there is no such thing as a simple or ‘pure’ reception of European music theory anywhere in the world. For that matter, we would do well to

<sup>3</sup> Fitzcarraldo is the main character of the eponymous film by Werner Herzog (1983), who aims to build an opera house in the Amazon Rainforest, for which sake he runs over several aspects of that particular context, including not only expressions of the local culture but also human survival. The film features Brazilian artists who are well known in their context, such as the actor Grande Otelo and the popular singer Milton Nascimento. The latter acts as a porter of the opera “in the jungle.” But, symbolically, doesn’t it mean that Brazilian popular music is left out of the show? Werner Herzog, *Fitzcarraldo* (Werner Herzog Filmproduktion, 1982).

remember that there is no such thing as a stable and pure object that we can call 'European music theory.'" (2018, p. 19). A Brazilian musical universalism constitutes itself as a present phenomenon; its tacit repetition and its undisputed character constitute it as a paradigm that starts from the appropriation of a European history but transforms it according to its own political and social context, which provides a propagandistic use and a symbolic expression of social relations, which are even materialized through laws, human rights practices, and reparation policies. In this sense, the investigation of the Brazilian context presents itself as a methodology for studying musical universalism, which still indicates the exponential growth of the 'universal symbol': it is through symbolic appropriation that European classical music becomes an expression of a civilized West, making the study of its diffusion in structures of negotiation central to its investigation, as stated by Rüsen: "the inbuilt universality of master narratives has to be explained and reflected as an element of communication between self and otherness according to the possibility of mutual understanding and recognition." (2008, p. 17). The consideration of particular conditions of action, historical development, and ambivalences as a method presents itself as an alternative to 'erasing the difference,' the latter commonly promoted by the parallel with a universal art, presented by Köster and Schmidt: "Basically, parallelizations of this kind are used to deliberately and ultimately transparently compare things that are not comparable. The essential differences can only be seen more precisely if one does not let the historical conditions of action disappear behind an apparently absolute art, but instead consciously revisits them." (2005, 13)<sup>4</sup>. An abstraction regarding universalism is convenient. Its association with another level of abstraction, referring to the musical language, becomes even more convenient, as it causes both universalism itself and a musical universalism as a paradigm to remain poorly discussed. This abstraction and the lack of

<sup>4</sup>"Im Grunde wird mit solchen Parallelisierungen ebenso absichtsvoll wie letztlich durchsichtig nicht Vergleichbares miteinander verglichen. Die essenziellen Unterschiede sieht man genauer nur, wenn man die historischen Handlungsbedingungen eben nicht hinter einer scheinbar absoluten Kunst verschwinden lässt, sondern bewusst wieder in den Blick nimmt." (Köster; Schmidt 2005, p. 13). Translated by the authors.

definition of the term 'universalism' not only exclude the chance of investigating possible "common aspects" to the human but work to erase them from the horizon of this same abstraction.

The investigation of a musical historical universalism, analyzed through contexts that currently indicate its effects, is the conceptual basis of the investigative method proposed here through the study of the Brazilian scenario related to classical orchestral music. The definition of this methodology determined the choice of our object of study: São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (Osesp), one of the largest Brazilian orchestras, with more than six decades of existence; a considerable number of musicians and employees; extensive and constant concert offers, educational projects, and dissemination of classical music; and a significant budget. As part of our methodology, historical and social study of the orchestra was adopted, including the collection of data on politics, economics, administration, artistic orientation, and mechanisms of relationship with society in general. In addition to historical and numerical data, the speech about the orchestra presented by Brazilian musicians, artists, journalists, public figures, and politicians also constitutes relevant material to our methodology as a means of investigating the symbolic relationships that are established around orchestral music. Osesp has undergone several transformations that are directly related to the country's political, economic and social scenario — described by Teperman (2018, p. 245–272); Peci, Oquendo, and Mendonça (2020, p. 375–389); and Leite (2014) — which are reflected in the development of its administrative management and in its artistic orientation. In this sense, a Brazilian restoration of musical universalism defines an appropriation of music by political, propagandistic, and social means. Our hypothesis is that a universalist paradigm historically supports the activity of the orchestra, revealing itself mainly through the following three pillars: (1) political involvement, (2) legitimation attempts through propaganda (political, private and institutional), and (3) maintenance of a symbolic relationship between social classes.

The study of these pillars leads to our conclusion: the difficulty of music in establishing itself as an epistemic object in this context.

Expressions of musical universalism are historically present in the Brazilian context. They are not limited to individual positions, to unique political contexts or moments, but rather expand and reconstruct themselves through time, economic orientations, and social and political instabilities. In this sense, the present work does not focus on a criticism of individuals or institutions, as it seeks to analyze the universalist paradigm as a historical foundation that has influenced the orchestra throughout its existence in several aspects of its administration and artistic direction. As a form of expression of aesthetic preferences and social habits, the universalist paradigm let itself be constitutionally noticed through reparation policies and mostly through Brazilian law, which decisively privileges classical European music, defining the allocation of funds to this cultural area from both direct government sponsorship and private funds through tax deduction incentives, as we shall see in the course of this study. Initially, the orchestra's history will be presented, including its artistic developments, forms of management, political involvement, financial administration, and changes in the usage of government incentives. The relevance of a paradigm associated with classical European music related to a Brazilian attempt to sustain its 'universal' validity will be shown throughout the conduct of musical activities. It is revealed in party disputes, suspicions of involvement with corruption, the explicit expression of political engagements in personalist policies, the destination of the government's budget, and the regulation of fiscal incentives. Thereafter, we will present speeches about music that are articulated as mechanisms of self-legitimation, both as institutional propaganda of the orchestra itself and as political, governmental, and private advertisements, the latter in association with the business sector under an ideology of progressivism, literally declared in the Brazilian flag and

metaphorically in the neoliberal engagement. We will emphasize the relations with a universalist paradigm through discourses about music that are not disciplinarily grounded, and hence partial, superficial, and often serving personal interests. At this point, we will also present issues related to the orchestra's social representation, elitism, symbolic maintenance of inequality, segregation of social classes, cultural imperialism, human rights, and reparation policies. Here, the effects of this social context on the orchestra's decisions and aesthetic engagements will be analyzed through its artistic direction, the selection of musicians and repertoire, which guarantees the vividness of the reference to a predominantly European musical canon, precisely as a way of referencing a 'universal' music, in an attempt to be part of it. Finally, the difficulty of constituting music as an epistemic object in this context will be pointed out, raising the centrality of the denunciation of Appadurai's 'false universalism' (2018, p. 6) that maintains hegemony and of Dave's 'myth of universalism' (2014) as a way to promote the investigation of musical discipline.

## 2. Administrative history and management of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (Osesp)

Since its official founding by law in 1954, Osesp has maintained a close relationship with the Brazilian government, both the federal government and São Paulo's state government. After some periods of interruption of activities, the most significant artistic direction of the orchestra extended for twenty-four years from 1972, with Eleazar de Carvalho as the chief conductor.<sup>5</sup> In this period, Osesp was a public agency, the musicians were hired as civil servants, and the entire administration of the orchestra had to follow parameters that were specific to the public administration, which naturally

<sup>5</sup> The first conductor of Osesp, at that time simply known as the "State Orchestra," was João de Souza Lima (1898–1982). After a few years of interruption in its musical activities, in 1964, the orchestra got a new conductor, Bruno Roccella, who remained active for about four years. After another pause began Eleazar de Carvalho's long-term direction.

made their organization inflexible with regard to employment contracts, concert expenses, destination of revenues, and associations with the private sector.

In this sense, John Neschling, who succeeded Eleazar as principal conductor of the orchestra between 1997 and 2009, thus holding the second-longest term, expressed his preference for a new form of administration, distinct from the civil service, to the English newspaper *The Financial Times*: “It is an absolute obligation” (Wheatley, October 30, 2002). In 2005, the so-called Osesp Foundation came to be constituted as a private non-profit organization (NPO)<sup>6</sup> responsible for administering the orchestra and thus making it undergo major transformations, particularly regarding work relationships and management. The hiring of musicians, relations with non-governmental institutions, sources of revenue, and the destination of funds were made more flexible, in addition to the changes in terms of employment contracts.<sup>7</sup> The major part of the orchestra’s budget initially came from the federal culture incentive law (Lei Rouanet, n. 8,313, sanctioned on November 23, 1991, during the government of Fernando Collor). This law allows the deduction of up to 100 percent of the tax contribution that would be paid to the government in exchange for donations to cultural projects formulated by three categories of proponents: for-profit and non-profit legal entities (NPOs) and individuals (who represent a minority of the funds raised). Besides the flexibility of this new form of management, there were other reasons that induced administrative change. The mentioned report by *The Financial Time* (Wheatley, October 30, 2002) includes explanations why Neschling would need to be flexible in hiring musicians: “Otherwise, we cannot attract foreigners

<sup>6</sup> The fourth (and current) amendment to the foundation’s statute, dated May 15, 2018, describes its denomination and nature in the following terms: “Article 1º. THE FOUNDATION OF THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO, also called OSESP FOUNDATION, is a legal entity established under private right, non-profit, with administrative, operational and financial autonomy, established by public deed, whose operation will be governed by this bylaw and other applicable legal dispositions.” Translated by the authors, [http://www.fundacao-osesp.art.br/upload/documentos/Estatutos/Estatuto\\_Fundacao\\_Osesp-4aAlteracao.pdf](http://www.fundacao-osesp.art.br/upload/documentos/Estatutos/Estatuto_Fundacao_Osesp-4aAlteracao.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> At the time, the change in employment contracts was not necessarily understood as an advantage by musicians who were so far hired as civil servants, since their positions were lifelong and ceased to be so. It was also necessary to pass an internal contest to remain in the orchestra. Among the ninety-seven musicians, forty-four remained. Numbers available at: <http://www.osesp.art.br/paginadinamica.aspx?pagina=linhadotempo>.

— and there are no Brazilians left.” (Neschling quoted by Wheatley, October 30, 2002). The report also presents the ‘need’ to build a new venue for the orchestra, which Teperman attests in a close symbolic relationship with European music: “The supposedly high, universal and timeless dimension of classical music would reverberate in the grand space of the concert hall, with its neoclassical columns and high standard acoustic treatment, transmitting strength and stability.” (2018, p. 246). The construction of this new concert hall will be analyzed in the next section.

But it was not only the preference for hiring foreign musicians<sup>8</sup> to the detriment of Brazilians or the construction of a new concert hall that motivated the new way of managing the orchestra as a non-profit organization, even though both represent forms of self-legitimation through belonging to a historical legacy of European classical music and its ‘place of origin.’ Rather, since the first years of the new administration, the Brazilian open media have already announced the political victory that the Osesp Foundation would have represented. Neoliberally oriented, as the political trend of the time, which for example is evident in several privatization processes, the creation of the Foundation did not mean the ‘sale’ of the orchestra to the private sector but was based on the establishment of partnerships between government and non-profit organizations (PNPs: public/non-profit partnerships) in an administrative model that Bresser-Pereira clarifies as having been developed during the Brazilian political reforms at the end of the nineties (1998, p. 5–42). In this way, the desired independence of a governmental administration reveals itself to be the other way round: in addition to maintaining the use of public money, it places private initiative at the center of institutional decisions and also enables political relationships based on a form of personalism (affectionate interpersonal relationships) — as

<sup>8</sup> Foreign auditions to the “new Osesp” hired musicians in New York, Paris, Bucharest, and Sofia. In addition to the clear European preference, ‘foreign’ musicians could also come from the United States, reaffirming the country as a maintainer of the post-1945 classical music legacy, which, in Brazil, also has the meaning of maintaining an economic hegemony and the famous American way of life.

described in the Brazilian bibliography on public administration by Freitas (1997); Peci, Oquendo, and Mendonça (2020); and Sobral, Carvalho, and Almeida (2007) — instead of establishing direct relationships between institutions.<sup>9</sup> In 2008, one of the main Brazilian cultural magazines published the information that it was up to conductor Neschling “to make the invitations to the Osesp Foundation’s board of directors and advisory board. For the presidency, he called ex-president [of the republic] Fernando Henrique Cardoso. For vice-president, Pedro Moreira Salles, president of Unibanco.” (KAZ, January, 2008). That is: the highest positions of the Osesp Foundation were maintained by an alliance between government and private initiative, guaranteeing them the possibility of deciding on administrative aspects of the orchestra. And according to Kaz: “Under Osesp’s statute, only the board can nominate and dismiss the artistic director, by an absolute majority of votes. In other words, only the group formed by Neschling has the power to turn against Neschling.” (KAZ, January, 2008).

In line with Brazilian studies by Sobral Carvalho and Almeida (2007, p. 32–42) and Freitas (1997, p. 38–54), which have investigated how personalist political relations influence the management model of non-profit organizations (NPOs) and the nature of their relationships with the government in establishing partnerships between public and non-profit organizations (PNPs), the specific case of Osesp reveals precisely the fragility of management based on personal relationships. Peci, Oquendo, and Mendonça (2020, p. 378) affirm the existence of institutional instability, which is caused by the low levels of interpersonal trust established by PNPs. A classic example of the instability of interpersonal relationships in Brazil, which are sometimes advantageous and sometimes disadvantageous for institutions and individuals, can be seen in the history of Osesp in 2007, when declared conflicts were

<sup>9</sup> The Brazilian term ‘personalism’ (personalismo), often related to public–private relationships, was described by Peci *et al.* as “the tendency to have close and affectionate interpersonal relationships,” the authors add that “[it] is said to influence organizational negotiations.” (PECI *et al.*, 2020, p. 378). The definition of this term is based on previous studies by Freitas (1997, p. 38–54), and Sobral, *et al.*, (2007, p. 32–42).

established between the then conductor John Neschling and the governor of São Paulo, José Serra, which ended with the conductor's accusation published in *Folha de São Paulo*, one of the main newspapers of the country: "Serra is a spoiled boy." (Bergamo, November 2, 2007). On the relationship between this personal conflict and the maintenance of PNP, Peci Oquendo and Mendonça report that "It is clear that that climate negatively affected the progress of things." (2020, p. 384). As the rules on the use and accountability of NPOs are defined by the government, several authors, such as Hodgson (2004, p. 139–164) and Brandsen, Trommel, and Verschuere (2017, p. 676–693), state that such a structure means a mere extension of state power. In this regard, statements of dissatisfaction by Governor José Serra regarding the salary of the conductor, who at that time was the highest-paid employee in the state of São Paulo, also circulated in the Brazilian media: "according to the protocol of the second ordinary meeting of the board, of November 28, 2005, 'the remuneration for the position of artistic director of Osesp was unanimously fixed at 110 thousand reais'." (Kaz, January, 2008).<sup>10</sup>

Not without reason, several recent studies on NPOs and the Rouanet law centrally focus on the Osesp Foundation's management, such as those by Menezes (2016), Leite (2014), Arruda (2010; 2012), and Peci, Oquendo, and Mendonça (2020). They are often based on the justification of the orchestra's long existence and the consequent possibility of observing the development of the partnership with the government over the years. But these studies do not fail to mix methodological reasons with arguments such as the "international prestige and cultural significance" of the orchestra, as described by Peci, Oquendo, and Mendonça (2020, p. 385). In this sense, it is necessary to observe some form of political and social agreement on the 'superiority' of the orchestra that becomes

<sup>10</sup> Another highlight in the relationship with Brazilian politics was the summoning of the principal conductor, John Neschling, to testify at the CPI (Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry) investigating a case of corruption at the Municipal Theater of São Paulo in 2016, after his controversial departure from Osesp. The conductor left unscathed.

evident in an unverified international prestige, as well as in the monetary value given to the conductor's work. The possibility of mixing several political and economic interests with the image of the orchestra forms a conjunction that goes far beyond the role of a conductor, or a musical group as an institution. The highest salary in the state of São Paulo is the price paid for the symbol. This, in turn, builds a façade that allows profit and benefits for all involved: the government, the private initiative, and the Osesp Foundation itself. Symbolic façades are central to the support of social, political, and economic structures and are based on a tacit agreement on their symbols by human groups or social classes that recognize themselves through them, as described by Bourdieu (2011). A social class that has access to the orchestra's concerts and is formed by clients of its financing bank would hardly disagree with the importance of maintaining the 'legacy of classical music.' At the same time, this mentality reproduces that class's values through its cultural capital (2009, p. 86–132). Even though attempts to improve access to classical music are present in the Brazilian context today, mainly through social projects and low-cost tickets, the maintenance of cultural capital remains controlled by the same elite that defines this access and is represented by Osesp in its social and musical repertoire. Slavoj Žižek<sup>11</sup> supports us, clarifying how the bank Unibanco (Osesp's sponsor)<sup>12</sup> sells the tranquility of being its customer by creating a feeling of 'social responsibility' through musical propaganda. According to Žižek (2012), if in a usual relation of consumerism, buying means responsibility for unequal and exploratory mechanisms of production, involvement in a certain level of social responsibility starts to work as a kind of a bribe: solidarity, collective discipline, and

<sup>11</sup> Žižek clarifies this ultimate form of consumerism through the example of Starbucks: "What Starbucks enables you is to be a consumerist without any bad conscience, because the price for the countermeasure, for fighting consumerism is already included into the price of a commodity, like, you pay a little bit more and you are not just a consumerist but you do also your duty towards environment, the poor starving people in Africa, and so on and so on, it is, I think, the ultimate form of consumerism." This film section starts at 55'46".

<sup>12</sup> The Unibanco brand is presented here as a metaphor for all major orchestra funders, very often banks. Unibanco had literally been present on the Osesp Foundation's Board of Directors and Advisory Board at its creation, as previously presented. Between 2010 and 2014, the Itaú Unibanco Holding merger was the largest financier of the Brazilian culture law. Today, the bank Itaú Personalidade appears first on the list of sponsors of Osesp, which is available at: <http://www.fundacao-osesp.art.br/PaginaDinamica.aspx?Pagina=patrocinioeapoiocorporativo>.

interest in the situation of the other can counterbalance the purely distracting consumerist act. We pay a little more to consume in peace — which seems to us a faithful description of the mechanisms created by the Brazilian culture law. Thus, investing in a large bank that supports an orchestra becomes “the right thing to do.”

At this point, the effort of the Brazilian elite to resort to musical universalism as a way of identifying with European culture is a fundamental part of the façade of music and its action power. If ‘classical music’ is universal, Brazilians can identify themselves as ‘part of world history’ through music’s appropriation, even if it does not refer to Brazilian society as a whole, but to a very specific, elitist part of it. This Brazilian appropriation of a musical universalism builds a social gap that denies any kind of universality; it generates discourses that are difficult to sustain as well as attempts at reparation policies that keep representing the same elitist cultural capital. In the London newspaper *The Times*, the ex-president of the Brazilian republic, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, made the following statement: “This orchestra is not just a project for the elite, but it is sustained by the public.” (Fisher, April 20, 2012). However, even with the passing of the years, it continues to be observed that, according to Menezes, “Donations and sponsorships for Osesp with resources not encouraged [by the government] are very small.” (2016, 303). There has also been a decrease in concert subscriptions over the years (Ayashe, August 19, 2017). In other words, the orchestra continues as a project for the elite and is not supported by the public. Fausto Arruda, superintendent of the Osesp Foundation since 2005, reported that “The Foundation’s budget today, in approximate numbers, is made up of 50% of the State Government, through a management contract, 20% comes from the Rouanet Law and the another 30% are own revenues, such as ticket sales, leasing of Sala São Paulo spaces, royalties from CDs, receipt of parking concessionaires, restaurant, Osesp store and

cafe.” (Arruda quoted by Menezes 2016, p. 302–303). The last annual budget released by Osesp, for the year 2019, points to the maintenance of the management model of the previous years: approximately 75% of the orchestra’s budget comes from the state, both through direct financing and through the deduction of taxes under the Rouanet law<sup>13</sup> — which reaffirms the government’s interest in maintaining European classical music as a political mechanism, both historically, when the orchestra was a public organ, and in the last fifteen years, since the creation of the Osesp Foundation. This does not mean that the management of Eleazar de Carvalho, prior to the incentive law, was exempt from a relationship with the private sector. As Alphen describes, Coca-Cola was a significant sponsor of Osesp in that period, but the fragility of direct cultural sponsorship did not allow bilateral benefits that would remain relevant for both parties: “Coca-Cola is a huge, powerful, expanding brand and we do not exactly need more publicity,” (ALPHEN, 2004, p. 461–466). Eleazar reportedly heard in one of his tough annual meetings with the sponsor. However, a fundamental difference between the two periods is the transformation of propaganda from direct and political-governmental to public-private through the mechanisms of the Rouanet law. The latter, strongly encouraged by the government in open public-private personal relationships, whose main interests are financial, often adopts the social expression of an ‘artistic’ façade, on which there is agreement in an elitist social sphere — and that constitutes itself as a consumer market: both for music and for the illusion of fulfilled ‘social responsibility.’ Government participation, on the other hand, refers not only to advertising, but to the definition of taxes and regulations on the performance of companies, which is of great interest to the private sector.

<sup>13</sup> “Osesp revenues in 2019:

Direct financing from the state government of São Paulo: R\$55,360,000.00

Culture Incentive law (Federal Government/Tax deduction) 17,413,000.00 + 8,878,000.00 = 26,291,000.00

Total: Direct government + Culture law = 81,651,000.00 [75.23% of the revenue comes from the state]

Other revenues (such as ticket sales, etc.) 26,884,000.00 [24.76% comes from own collection]

Total revenue: 108,535,000.00” Translated by the authors. Fundação Osesp, Orçamento, (São Paulo: Fundação Osesp, 2019),

<http://www.fundacao-osesp.art.br/PaginaDinamica.aspx?Pagina=transparencia>.

By establishing this mutual interest between the orchestra and the public and private sectors, the effectiveness of John Neschling's management through mechanisms of the incentive law is proven in numbers: the concert offer increased, as well as recordings, tours, and all other mechanisms for accessing classical music. In addition to the expansions, one must also consider the stability achieved by the musical group, which in periods of public management had its activities interrupted for periods that extended for up to ten years. In this sense, public-private institutional relations, as well as the personalist politics that often characterize them, show results in this context and become encouraged by it in a vicious cycle. In Brazil, European classical music occupies a privileged place in the maintenance of capitalist mechanisms. The role of the elite, denied by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, comes to be represented through cultural expressions taken as synonymous to financial hegemony.

This whole construct around a 'classical' musical expression has clear commercial consequences. Classical music presents itself as a sure investment: "Today, the biggest investor in the Rouanet Law is Itaú Unibanco Holding, a group of financial institutions that, between 2010 and 2014, contributed R\$48 million to the Rouanet Law." (2016, p. 438-439). In the music field, the biggest projects financed by Itaú Unibanco in the same period were Osesp, the Philharmonic Cultural Institute (which applied Osesp's model in another Brazilian state),<sup>14</sup> and the Guri Project (which promotes musical education for children at social risk).<sup>15</sup> The choice of projects clearly shows the preference for 'classical' music. But it also reveals an efficient way of using public money for private advertising, using the safe and unquestionable façade of Western classical music. The allocation of the public budget for culture attests to the same: "The main project in this area [music] is the annual maintenance of the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra

<sup>14</sup> This is the foundation that manages the Minas Gerais State Philharmonic, which will be presented here.

<sup>15</sup> Information about the project is available at: <http://www.projetoguri.org.br/>

— Osesp.” (Menezes 2016, p. 302). In this case, the clash between tradition (already legitimized) and uncertainty about the symbolic effectiveness of financing other musical genres, the latter often seen as expressions of particular groups and therefore less useful as a mechanism for self-recognition by society as a whole, freeze the Brazilian cultural policy and prevent its transformation. At this point, universalism as a paradigm of cultural understanding expands as a way of sustaining and justifying an essentialist understanding of music regarding not only supposedly “national” expressions, but also regarding those expressions which are motivated by a financial interest, since the fabrication of music as a commercial product is a way of fixing musical identities.

In the Brazilian context, a preference for advertisement related to classical music is by no means immaterial. On the contrary, it is expressed through the culture law: Art. 18 of the Rouanet law allows the waiver of 100 percent of the tax contribution of projects that include only certain specific expressions.<sup>16</sup> In the case of music, projects are allowed in the areas of “Classical or instrumental music” (Brazil, Law 8.313 / 91, Art. 18, b)<sup>17</sup> — which means the exclusion of a considerable number of expressions of Brazilian popular music, folk music, and urban music, among others. In addition to this exclusion, the percentage of projects that effectively raise funds, according to Menezes, is “90.30% in Art. 18,” against “only 9.70% of funding in Art. 26.” (Menezes 2016, p. 44).<sup>18</sup> The latter, Art. 26, allows for the sponsorship of other areas and artistic expressions, but it offers lower percentages of tax deduction and, thus, less than 10 percent of the projects are able to attract any sponsorship.

<sup>16</sup> Menezes highlights the areas covered by Law 8,313 / 91, Art. 18: “a. Performing arts; b. Books of artistic, literary or humanistic value; c. Classical or instrumental music; d. Visual arts exhibitions; e. Donations of collections to public libraries, museums, public archives and movie theaters, as well as training of personnel and acquisition of equipment to maintain these collections; f. Production of short and medium-length cinematographic and video-phonographic works and preservation and diffusion of the audiovisual collection; g. preservation of material and immaterial cultural heritage; and h. Construction and maintenance of cinema and theater rooms, which may also function as community cultural centers, in Municipalities with less than 100,000 (one hundred thousand) inhabitants.” Translated by the authors. (Menezes 2016, p. 44–45).

<sup>17</sup> Brasil, *Lei no. 8.313*, de 23 de novembro de 1991. Dispõe sobre o incentivo a cultura e dá outras providências, Câmara dos Deputados, Brasília, DF.

<sup>18</sup> These data refer to the years 2010–2014. Menezes was secretary of promotion and incentive to culture between January 2010 and December 2013, which period corresponds to the access to the numbers on the Rouanet law presented here and which are available in his book, which remains the most comprehensive list of data and numbers on the law.

Consider also that mentioning “instrumental music” excludes any kind of vocal music.

As in any essentialist effort, the adoption of models starts to act as a mechanism of identity representation: “And every other rising cultural institution in Brazil has been following OSESP’s lead,” attests Fisher (April 20, 2012). In this sense, Osesp’s management regarding both its administration and its artistic direction has been influencing the Brazilian scene as a whole. An evident example is the aforementioned Minas Gerais State Philharmonic, which applied the same change from public management to the constitution of an NPO, discarding musicians from the former symphony orchestra (OSMG) that preceded it and establishing financial obligations that are not consistent with the Brazilian reality in order to hire foreign musicians, and it still managed to reproduce the delicate political engagement that was seen in the state of São Paulo, maintaining its borders with government propaganda and corruption.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. The symbolic construction of music, its material and discursive expressions

We have observed so far how much the administrative history of Osesp, founded and heavily financed by the government, mixes with the Brazilian political context and

<sup>19</sup> The Minas Gerais State Philharmonic Orchestra was created in 2008 by the then-governor of the state, Aécio Neves, who in 2010 disputed the PSDB’s nomination as candidate for the presidency of the republic with José Serra, the governor of São Paulo who established a public conflict with the conductor of Osesp, John Neschling. The Minas Gerais government’s propaganda attempt projected in the orchestra followed both the transformation of Osesp’s management into an NPO and political personalism. It failed twice but had a rematch: First, Serra became a candidate in 2010. Then, in the 2014 election, when PSDB defended Aécio’s candidacy, Dilma Rousseff, the PT candidate, won the election. But at the PSDB convention that succeeded Dilma’s inauguration, Aécio made the ‘strange’ prediction that the president “will not finish her term.” O Globo, “Em Convenção, Aécio diz que Dilma não concluirá mandato e faz apelo por unidade no PSDB,” O Globo, July 2015, <https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/em-convencao-aecio-diz-que-dilma-nao-concluira-mandato-faz-apelo-por-unidade-no-psdb-16667961>, which really happened through an impeachment process, whose reasons remain not entirely clear, but came to be described as “a historic injustice.” Deutsche Welle, “Uma injustiça histórica: o impeachment de Dilma Rousseff na imprensa alemã,” *Deutsche Welle*, September 2016, <https://www.dw.com/pt-br/uma-injusti%C3%A7a-hist%C3%B3rica-o-impeachment-de-dilma-rousseff-na-imprensa-alem%C3%A3/a-19517970>. One can read about the competition between Aécio and Serra in the context of the creation of the orchestra at <https://www.brasil247.com/geral/minas-aproveita-vacuo-de-serra-e-aecio-fatura-com-orchestra>. The Minas State Philharmonic has had Fabio Mechetti as artistic director and principal conductor since its foundation. The conductor is the son of Marcelo Mechetti, who had been an assistant conductor at Osesp under the management of Bruno Roccella in the sixties. Not only does Osesp’s administrative model serve as a reference for Brazilian institutions, but its ‘human capital’ is also shared in a structure that is again similar to the country’s political context, where ‘democratic’ spaces are filled with oligarchic practices. The main example is the Brazilian congress itself, which employs the whole Bolsonaro dynasty.

its own practices, even manifesting itself concretely in the government's preference for the financing of classical music, through Law 8,313 / 91, Art. 18. However, several other material expressions of a symbolic construction of music can be evidenced in the history of the orchestra's activities, as well as in its aesthetic-musical engagements, such as the construction of its current headquarters and social projects related to music education, maintained by the Osesp Foundation. They will be presented below in connection with the spread of a symbolic discourse on music, which gains a voice in the speeches of both musicians and politicians, and clearly disseminates a paradigm that tries to associate classical music with the contemporary Brazilian social panorama.

The orchestra's direct involvement with politicians bears clear symbols of personalism, as can be seen in the invitation card<sup>20</sup> to the concert that was meant to launch the project for the new Osesp headquarters, built at the former Júlio Prestes Station and inaugurated in 1999. In great prominence, a name is read, Mario Covas, followed by his position, Governor of the State, accompanied by the coat of arms of São Paulo, where a Latin slogan is read: *Pro Brasilia Fiant Eximia*, meaning "be exceptional for Brazil" — in a little comical replacement of a country by a state, silently erasing the integrity of the first. Unmentioned are any musical work to be performed or the name of any composer, musical genre, or historical period of the repertoire, implying that the name of the governor is more important than any musical information and even that of the government itself. Mario Covas personally invites to the "presentation" (in Portuguese: *apresentação*), not to the orchestra's concert, a very imprecise term in the context of classical music. The rest of the information is of a practical nature, but the need to present the invitation at the entrance of the station is nevertheless mentioned in the text, which highlights the character of a closed "presentation" designed

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<sup>20</sup> A picture of this invitation card is available at <http://www.osesp.art.br/paginadinamica.aspx?pagina=linhadotempo>.

to bring together politicians, influential entrepreneurs and possible supporters of the construction of the new concert hall, for whom the musical repertoire does not really matter — although the possibility of associating their images with that of the orchestra is most welcome.

Ricardo Teperman (2016, 2018) presents a thorough study on the inauguration of the new headquarters of Osesp, named *Sala São Paulo* (São Paulo Hall), as a symbol of this state's pride.<sup>21</sup> The name of the train station where it was built, Júlio Prestes, refers to the former president of the State of São Paulo in the heyday of the coffee economy. According to Teperman, the inauguration date, July 9, was the starting date of a 1932 São Paulo separatist uprising against the Vargas government, and the repertoire presented at the inauguration, Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 2 'Resurrection,'* represents the resurrection of the orchestra itself and thus contributes to the context of extolling the culture of São Paulo (2018, p. 248). The resurrection attempt also applies to the region of the city where the hall was built: "in the heart of the decrepit inner city," describes Wheatley (October 30, 2002). Teperman states that "building a high-end concert hall in an old train station — the Julio Prestes Station — where the trains continue to circulate daily, was certainly an engineering feat, as much boasted at the time." (2018, p. 245). But the separation of the hall from its 'decrepit' surroundings is a faithful representation of the universalist 'project' of classical music in Brazilian territory. In addition to representing an association with a European model, the hermetic halls are a very strong symbol of musical hegemony. No matter where they were built, the surroundings do not interfere with the phenomenon that goes on inside the black box. In the case of Sala São Paulo, the separation takes on even greater proportions: the construction took place at a station whose complex is still used, generating very

<sup>21</sup> The orchestra uses the same symbol presenting itself on its website: "The Orchestra is today an inseparable part of São Paulo and Brazilian culture, promoting profound cultural and social transformations." Available at: <http://www.osesp.art.br/paginadinamica.aspx?pagina=orquestra>.

high costs for sound insulation, besides the high-technology requirements that were met by Artec, the North American engineering firm founded by Russell Johnson, which was responsible for the acoustic design of the room. The isolation of misery and abandonment in downtown São Paulo, in a region known as '*cracolândia*' (crackland), as it is frequented by crack cocaine users and sellers, also represents the 'success' of building and copying European halls. In this case, the maintenance of 'universal' symbols of classical music acts as political propaganda that evokes the ideals of not only quality and efficiency, but also power — in the sense of victory over the context, the environment, the hall's surroundings, and finally misery. However, this political power misses an opportunity to open new spaces for musical fruition. The idea of separation from the external environment, accepted as unquestionable, prevents a closer regard of local specificities. Would not Latin America be experimenting with alternative models of classical music fruition, both in the diversity of its environment and in the creation of new social ties distinct to the symbolic maintenance of a ruling class? The propaganda of efficiency disguises music as a discipline, but speeches about music will take this misunderstanding forward, as we will see below.

The intimacy between Osesp and Brazilian politics certainly determined the presence of former President of the Republic Fernando Henrique Cardoso in that same concert inaugurating the Sala São Paulo. As president of the Osesp Foundation, the orchestra's managing body since 2005, Henrique Cardoso emphasizes the quality and artistic excellence of the orchestra: "Osesp Foundation continues the tonic of a policy that projects the artistic quality of the largest Brazilian orchestra beyond the concert hall . . . Osesp, in addition to its recognized artistic excellence, is moving towards maturity at the institutional level." (CARDOSO, 2011, p. 2). Along with the praise of a "recognized artistic excellence," the terms 'policy' and 'institutional level' create a direct link between the alleged 'excellence' of the

orchestra and a supposed excellence of the government. On top of a universalist discourse that equates things that are not equivalent, in the Brazilian scenario, politics and art are also equated in a propaganda recognized in different historical moments and contexts, often present in dictatorial states. By “a maturation at the institutional level,” the ex-president refers to the management change of the orchestra, which was a public agency, became an NPO, and continued to be mostly sponsored by the government, as previously presented.

A very similar discourse, which now directly mentions a “universal heritage of music” contextualized as a clearly populist tool, can be seen in the speech by Andrea Matarazzo, then secretary of state for culture in São Paulo: “as well as the universal heritage of music, the Orchestra belongs to all of us” (MATARAZZO, 2011, p. 3) — a statement that is difficult to prove in a context where strategies to popularize music are largely financed by fiscal incentives, constituting themselves as excellent means of both public and private advertising.<sup>22</sup> The promotion of popular concerts and the offer of music courses for underprivileged children reaffirm the universalist ideal of music that “transcends culture and all its problematics,” as stated by Nomi Dave, who still clarifies that “music is seen as above and beyond culture and difference. Yet this idea confuses music’s role in social life.” (2014, p. 2). The expansion of a “universal heritage of music,” attested in Matarazzo’s speech, combined with the Brazilian context, takes the form of policies and reparation mechanisms, largely supported by the Osesp Foundation.<sup>23</sup> These policies are financed by public funds and the fiscal incentive of the Rouanet law, guaranteeing a significant return on investments by the private sector, in addition to creating the image of a ‘social responsibility’ related

<sup>22</sup> Andrea Matarazzo was indicted by the Brazilian Federal Police on suspicion of passive and active corruption, as well as money laundering in the Alstom Case in 2013.

<sup>23</sup> “The Osesp Foundation is qualified as a Social Organization for Culture,” which guarantees the maintenance and development of “children’s and youth choirs, the Osesp academy, the Osesp press, the ‘Maestro Eleazar de Carvalho’ Musical Documentation Center and the Campos do Jordão International Winter Festival. It also carries out, within the scope of the management contract, musical education actions for children, youth and adults; promotion, qualification and training of professionals in the fields of music and education; and audience formation.” Information available at: <http://www.fundacao-osesp.art.br/PaginaDinamica.aspx?Pagina=fundacaoosesp>.

to consumerism. Although social projects are deeply relevant to an unequal social structure, insofar as they guarantee the access of the lower classes to education and culture, these policies simultaneously act to maintain the symbolic difference between social classes and to establish a delicate border between art and cultural domination. According to Rösen: “there is a growing awareness of this element of power and violence in the soft language of culture.” (2008, p. 12).

In the foundations of a Brazilian sociology, Gilberto Freyre (2003, 2014) reports the slave’s process of ‘whitening’ and ‘sweetening’ as a way of entering the ‘Casa Grande’: the social context of their masters. Slaves should serve their ‘owners’ without ever expressing discontent, or the slightest gesture of dissatisfaction, and should adopt cultural standards from their ‘masters’ in order to serve them properly. As a veiled form of violence, this same whitening process is revisited by the relationship between current social classes and the multiculturalism that it now includes. According to Silviano Santiago: “In Brazil, as we know, the multiculturalist aim was strengthened by the ideology of *cordiality*” (2008, p. 55, emphasis by the author). Santiago synthesizes the idea of a “cosmopolitanism of the poor,” referring at first to the rural population that migrates to large cities and undergoes intense processes of acculturation and, later, in Brazil today, to a cosmopolitanism of minorities excluded from their own country (2008, p. 60–61).<sup>24</sup> The actuality of this ‘cordial’ whitening continues to be created in processes of hybridization, as described by Bhabha (1994, p. 275–282), through which hegemonic cultural symbols are maintained by higher classes as mechanisms of self-legitimation, in addition to representing the hope for integrating a dialogue of ‘humanity’ as a whole by sharing a ‘universal heritage.’ In the Brazilian case, this is currently not a direct relationship with European culture, as in

<sup>24</sup> In this current cosmopolitan turn, Santiago presents two examples from Brazilian music, Martinho da Vila and Clara Nunes, who approach African culture and represent it musically in a cosmopolitanism that creates its own Brazilianness. (SANTIAGO, 2008, p. 60–61).

a model of cultural reproduction of colonizers by the colonized. Hybridization is present in the symbolic use of some (meager) aspects of European culture by the Brazilian upper class, which through them is symbolically differentiated from other classes, maintaining the ideal of hegemony. This is the case of the fragmented appropriation of classical music, which adopts immediate musical images but does not focus on its legacy, which consequently means a disciplinary emptying, even though there are orchestras and musicians in Brazil — even if Neschling attests the opposite. Thus, few examples of symbolic relationships are as emblematic as European classical music. It represents participation in a “universal dialogue” represented by an ‘empty space,’ as presented by Žižek (2012), in this case related to music theory, which allows appropriation by most different contexts. Thus, everyday criteria for living together in an unequal society are projected on artistic expression. Aesthetics becomes an identity struggle, and, in the Brazilian case, a European symbol becomes the object of appropriation by a dominant class that seeks self-legitimation by associating itself with the ‘universal,’ without this meaning dedication to or even appreciation of orchestral music. At this point, it is necessary to recapitulate Bourdieu (2011) in his observation of snobbery as a component of the aesthetic taste of each class and social subclass, as well as the role of cultural capital in the establishment of ‘habitus,’ which constitutes a pillar of support for social structure (BOURDIEU, 2009, p. 86–132). The diffusion of cultural expressions from the upper classes is described by Paulo Freire (2013, p. 39–78) through the symbolic reproduction of patterns of the rich as a cultural reference and an existential horizon by the poor. Whenever poor people have the opportunity, they repeat the patterns and preferences of the rich, as they are the only ones presented to them, thus maintaining immense chains of reproduction of empty meanings, which are sustained only by the façade of their symbols. From the perspective of the poor, reproducing a song ‘of the rich,’ as offered to them in social projects, is also

a way of “becoming universal,” not through an approach to European culture, but through that of rich Brazilians. However, their real belonging to the context of the lower classes remains unchallenged.<sup>25</sup> In this case, poverty is a fundamental element in not questioning symbolic reproduction and only the poor’s access to culture, which, according to Freire and Macedo (2014), begins with literacy, could break these chains. In the case of European classical music in Brazil, the frequent use of music as a ‘reparation policy’ symbolically reaffirms a subordination of the lower to the upper classes through the reproduction of its parameters, through processes of whitening and ‘cordiality.’

#### 4. The symbolic speech of the musicians

Government propaganda and the attempt to associate the supposed ‘efficiency’ of the orchestra with the even more dubious ‘efficiency’ of the government, later extended to the private sector as a cultural promoter, is not only defended by politicians but also expressed in the speech of musicians, who use the same political, social and economic ideology when characterizing their work. Thus, political, propagandistic, and universalist engagements are reaffirmed, albeit in a naïve way. Even more linguistic inaccuracies are spread by these speeches, which replace the use of concrete terms of theory and musical analysis by those who could do so with abstract descriptions of music: “I think the orchestra has passion, commitment and energy,” said Marin Alsop to BBC News Brasil (August 10, 2012), Osesp’s principal conductor between 2012 and 2019.<sup>26</sup> At the end of a tour in Europe, the conductor added to the passion, quality and efficiency of the orchestra: “Now, the international community knows the quality, the passion and efficiency

<sup>25</sup> A universalism of the poor is represented in a religious sphere by the vertiginous expansion of the “Universal Church of the Kingdom of God” — one of many evangelical currents founded in Brazil. Its universalist appropriation is materialized through the adoption of Jewish symbols, particularly in the reconstruction of the “Temple of Solomon” in the heart of São Paulo. If the participation of the poor in any ‘universalism’ seems to be possible only through a miracle, in the Universal Church one can pay for it. Edir Macedo, the creator of this church, not only became extremely wealthy “selling the sky” but was also indicted for money laundering by the Federal Public Ministry in São Paulo. Information about the “Universal Church” is available at: <https://www.universal.org/templo-de-salomao/>

<sup>26</sup> Between Neschling and Alsop, Yan Pascal Tortelier conducted the orchestra for two years (2009–2011).

of Osesp.” (*Revista Época*, July 20, 2013). While the Brazilian media praised the so-called “efficiency” of Osesp, the German newspaper *Berliner Zeitung* reviewed the presentation of the Brazilian orchestra at the Berliner Philharmonie during this same tour. Music journalist Martin Wilkening spares no musical and historical knowledge when comparing Alsop’s conducting style, which includes large body movements, to that of her professor, Leonard Bernstein, in order to theoretically base his criticism of the Brazilian orchestra’s concert: “By Alsop, this full-body activity including hip swings and hops on the heavy beats acts more like a burden that is placed on the music.” (WILKENING, October 22, 2013)<sup>27</sup>. In addition to the abstraction and disciplinary inaccuracy of the speech addressed to the Brazilian public, particularly if compared with the technical criticism of the German newspaper, there is also this association between ‘quality’ and ‘passion,’ which makes a particular sense in Brazil, since the latter is often employed in relation to popular music in general. However, it doesn’t relate to technical accuracy or ‘quality’ but rather describes the fruition of a musical praxis. Playing ‘passionately’ is different from ‘playing accurately,’ and the use of this term reflects the audience’s unfamiliarity with the subject in question — the musical technique itself — since this wording is widely accepted.

An ignorance of the Brazilian context as a whole in relation to European classical music is observed and treated very directly by Alsop, as reported by journalist Neil Fisher of the English newspaper *The Times*: “For Marin Alsop, who combines the job of principal conductor of OSESP with being music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the openness of the [Brazilian] audience was also a draw. ‘When I talk to Arthur about programming and I say, “Is that going to sell?” he looks at me and says, “Everything sells.” It’s almost frightening. If we planned a Lutosławski series in Baltimore, as we have here,

<sup>27</sup> “Bei Alsop dagegen wirkt dieser Ganzkörper-Einsatz inklusive Hüftschwüngen und Hopsern auf die schweren Taktschläge eher wie eine Bürde, die der Musik auferlegt wird” Translated by the authors. Martin Wilkening, “Alsop dirigiert Orchester aus Sao Paulo: Gnadenlos vorgeführter Dauerschwing,” *Berliner Zeitung*, October 2013, <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/kultur-vergnuegen/alsop-dirigiert-orchester-aus-sao-paulo-gnadenlos-vorgefuehrter-dauerschwing-li.68547>.

then it would be the end of me. Nobody would come.” (FISHER, 2012). Even if based on a serious lack of technical-musical, historical, and musicological knowledge, the processes of legitimation of orchestral music in Brazil have such strong roots that a question about repertoire does not become an issue: it’s European classical, anyway. As well as in the event that inaugurated the project of Sala São Paulo, previously presented as an expression of the political personalism expressed through music, the context makes the repertoire simply not of interest. Thus, the foundation for a universalist paradigm is revealed in the speeches about Osesp, as they establish an abyss between the discourse about music and musical practice — which can only be sustained by the action of ‘silent’ and ‘discreet’ paradigms accepted by the society in question. Assertions about music as a discipline, whether historical, technical, musicological, performative, compositional, etc., cannot support a politically engaged musical practice, as their substitution by empty discourses opens space for a convenient use of music. In the case of Brazil, the symbolic maintenance of the distinction between social classes is enhanced by the disconnection between discourse and musical practice. “[Osesp] is the mirror of Brazilian society: authoritarian, personalist and without the participation of the lower floor,” said the director of the São Paulo Municipal School of Music, Henrique Autran Dourado (DOURADO by KAZ, 2008). Teperman attests that “dissonant voices were heard” (2018, p. 246) at the inauguration of Sala São Paulo. Protests that combined political dissatisfaction regarding the neoliberal government with the demands of left-wing student organizations, movements for housing, and Banespa Bank employees (on the eve of privatization) symbolically represented the social clashes in the face of the “greatness of the cultural enterprise (the room of ‘breathtaking beauty’ and the ‘first world sound’)” that had been inaugurated there (2018, p. 258).

The widespread and completely unreflected association that something that is erudite and European is undoubtedly be 'good' establishes an unfounded relationship with artistic expression. Especially in the music scene, this association is spread in the form of reiterations of empty speeches, and thus, it becomes difficult to investigate, since the 'object' of study is replaced by a discourse that does not elucidate it. At this point, the acceptance of historical musical universalism is added to the Brazilian context as a representation of a 'myth' of 'European quality' and spreads almost virulently towards different spheres of musical production and reception, protected by this illusion of an 'unassailable quality.' For this reason, in Brazil, universalism works as an indispensable element for the silent entry of corruption in the music scene and the difficulty of combating it, since music is an unquestionable 'universal language.' While investigating the consequences of musical universalism on initiatives related to human rights and music, Dave attests that "Many music-based human rights initiatives are ineffective because they are awarded on an erroneous assumption about the nature of music." (2014, p. 2). Also, in contexts where culture is generally discussed, the praise of a European musical canon is widespread, as if it were a form of 'true music,' and for this reason it is called 'universal.' Even in the direct criticism of political situations that involve corruption in the Brazilian music scene, individuals can be held responsible for the situation, but not the symbolic representation of the orchestra, which is kept on a pedestal. The Brazilian historian Leandro Karnal, in a direct criticism of the then-governor of the State of São Paulo, Geraldo Alckmin, attacks the decrease in the public budget allocated to Osesp while keeping the orchestra unscathed in the face of any suspicion of corruption related to that management,<sup>28</sup> but not without resorting to a universal 'value' of the orchestra: "I am not the one who loves Osesp,

<sup>28</sup> In July 2020, Geraldo Alckmin was denounced by the São Paulo public prosecutor's office on suspicion of passive corruption, running a slush fund, and money laundering, adding to the diversion of more than eleven million reais. Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/jornal-nacional/noticia/2020/07/23/geraldo-alckmin-e-denunciado-por-caixa-dois-corrupcao-passiva-e-lavagem-de-dinheiro.ghtml>.

Dr. Geraldo Alckmin, it is the world and the erudite criticism of planet Earth.” (KARNAL, 2018). In this sense, when government officials talk about the quality of Osesp, much of this discourse is related to a form of self-legitimation that is extremely common to political propaganda, which effectively has very little to do with Europe and even less with music as a discipline. This same “expansion of the universal” by a Brazilian political and social scenario, generates a notable linguistic inaccuracy that, in turn, again shakes the communication of music as a discipline: “[The Osesp Foundation] provides recordings of universal classics with a greater focus on Brazilian Music, such as Villa-Lobos, Camargo Guarnieri and others more contemporary.” (Menezes 2016, p. 302). Here, the idea of “universal classics” is used as a synonym for European music, which in turn needs to be added to a Brazilian meaning that includes “classics” that are not at all classic and “others more contemporary,” which perhaps represent what cannot be called “classic,” but interestingly must be associated with the latter by the society that, ‘hopefully’, will buy the recordings.

The fabrication of European music as a superior expression expands towards musicians as individuals, establishing serious segregations in relation to their nationalities. “[Osesp] needs someone to leverage it, as Neschling did. We want a pureblood [puro sangue],” attests Osesp double bassist, Jefferson Collacico (COLLACICO by KAZ, 2008).<sup>29</sup> A ‘pureblood’ would be erudite and European, which the Brazilian media frequently highlights, pointing out a kinship between Neschling and Arnold Schoenberg. The conductor was born in São Paulo (NESCHLING, 2009), and his ability to interact with the Brazilian political scene was a decisive aspect for that ‘leverage’ of the orchestra described by the double bass player, which did not happen without the typical Brazilian personal involvement.<sup>30</sup> But the

29 “[A Osesp] precisa que alguém a alavanque, como o Neschling fez. Queremos um puro-sangue”. (COLLACICO by KAZ, 2008). Translated by the authors.

30 In his autobiography, entitled *Música Mundana* (2009), John Neschling reinforces these relations with Europe, often repeated by the media. In 2009, after conflicts with the government and with musicians, the conductor had to leave the orchestra. In 2013, he was called to testify at the CPI on suspicion of corruption in the administration of the Municipal Theater of São Paulo, where the conductor served as director after leaving Osesp. This CPI concluded with inconclusive data.

search for a 'pureblood' goes far beyond the relationship with the former conductor. His next two successors as principal conductors have been foreigners: Marin Alsop is American, and Thierry Fischer, who became Osesp's principal conductor in 2020, is Swiss. Collacico's speech shows a preference for foreign musicians that is widely disseminated and is defended, at least in part, by the musicians themselves, as presented in the motivation to be managed by an NPO in order to hire foreign musicians. Added to this, the ideal of a 'pureblood' is directly related to the musical repertoire of the so-called "universal classics" of music, which are clearly a reference to the canon of German-speaking nations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the repertoire from the classical and romantic periods, centered on the so-called First Vienna School, especially on Mozart, Beethoven, and the propagation of the symphony orchestra itself. In 2019, preparing Beethoven's 250th jubilee in 2020, Osesp premiered the project "All Together: A Global Ode to Joy,"<sup>31</sup> created by Marin Alsop in partnership with Carnegie Hall, presenting Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* sung in the mother tongues of nine countries. The Portuguese version was translated by Arthur Nistrovski, the same Osesp artistic director who stated that "everything sells" (FISHER, 2012) regarding the series of concerts with works by Lutosławski, as previously presented, if not in an expression of disinterest in the repertoire presented by Osesp, then at least regarding the prevalence of its commercial intention.<sup>32</sup> In March 2020, for Thierry Fisher's debut, a grandiose work by Beethoven, *Missa Solemnis*,<sup>33</sup> was chosen, as could be expected, since a paradigm is made present by repeated symbolic representations. The strength of this repertoire on the Brazilian scene is based less on its significance for the history of Western classical

31 Available at: <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Young-Musicians/All-Together-A-Global-Ode-to-Joy>.

32 Nistrovski reports the challenge of translating the Ninth in the text indicated below. However, wouldn't the partnership with Carnegie Hall be a fundamental aspect to the emergence of this "Brazilian version" of a work that does not require versions? It is impossible not to notice the Brazilian attempt to become part of 'universal music' in this case. Available at: <https://www.nexojournal.com.br/ensaio/2019/Alegria-Alegria-uma-Ode-à-Alegria-em-português>.

33 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrada/2020/03/estreia-de-novo-regente-da-osesp-tem-beethoven-e-julgamentos-da-plateia.shtml>.

music than on the widespread diffusion and tacit acceptance of the universalist paradigm daily applied to music — which sounded like a shock to Alsop, because the commercial aspect of the orchestra is not based on appreciation but on ignorance. Lutosławski (1913–1994) is understood as “a universal classic,” “another Beethoven,” although more than a century of music history separates them. In this sense, universalism serves as the foundation of a mentality widespread in Brazilian society as a whole, which is not extinguished in criticism centered on specific individuals, musicians, conductors, or politicians, but which highlights a paradigm that pops up in some of the ‘nodal points’ of this society, in social symbolic places that disclose collective understandings, in expressions that usually seem undoubted, and therefore unassailable and almost innocent, such as Western classical music — which is very difficult to investigate in itself due to the mixture of artistic expression with social and political settings. But the attempt to approach them precisely acts as a mechanism for clarification and reformulation of this very musical praxis — this is our hypothesis.

The clash between the constant reference to foreign parameters and the general lack of knowledge about them corresponds to a discourse about music that is unfounded and essentially empty, since it focuses much more on attempts at recognition and on self-legitimation than on any kind of theoretical knowledge, be it musical, historical, musicological, or aesthetic. Being acknowledged as a representation of Western classical music, particularly symphonic music, by Brazilian society as a whole and by the media, Osesp’s presence in the international music scene is frequently reaffirmed. In 2012, the BBC Brasil newspaper stated that “Osesp will become the first Brazilian orchestra to participate in BBC Proms, one of the most important classical music festivals in the world, held in the British capital since 1895,” (*BBC News Brasil*, August 10, 2012) adding descriptions by the then-conductor, Marin Alsop, about this “very important invitation” and this “wonderful

opportunity,” which led to the prediction that “In some years I think [Osesp] will be among the most important orchestras in the world. That is my goal.” (*BBC News Brasil*, August 10, 2012). However, in the same context, the conductor does not fail to emphasize the Brazilian lack of knowledge about the international classical music scene: “I do not know if Brazilians are aware of the importance of The Proms. It is one of the largest classical music festivals in the world.” (*BBC News Brasil*, August 10, 2012). Its tropical and exotic participation earned the festival that year the nickname “Olympic Proms,” coined by the critic Neil Fisher of the London newspaper *The Times*. The author relates the presence of Brazil at the festival to the fact that the country had just been chosen as the next host of the Olympics in 2016; in this sense, the invitation to the orchestra “seemed like a very obvious thing to do.” (FISHER, 2012). After 2012, Osesp never performed again at BBC Proms, which strengthens its “Olympic” character as an isolated event and not the result of the maturation of the orchestra, which the musicians seemed to want to believe.

## 5. Concluding remarks

We conclude that the presence of a historical musical universalism, constituting a paradigm in the contemporary Brazilian classical music scene, is configured as an appropriation defined by the *status quo* — which means that it projects itself on musical expression, molding it to its own criteria. The main characteristic of this appropriation is the association with political, social, and economic aspects, which establish the powerful possibility of maintaining a social (dis)order. A ‘universal language of music’ becomes a justification and a tool for the symbolic division of classes, which blurs the vision of the universalist paradigm, as well as making its investigation practically impossible, insofar as universalism and social structure justify each other in an endless vicious cycle (which

is also comfortable for the hegemonic classes). If, on the one hand, the musical universalist paradigm supports societal structures and gives concert music in Brazil a privileged place in the maintenance of capitalist mechanisms, on the other (musical) hand, it acts as a form of self-legitimation through the idea of belonging to a historical legacy of European classical music. At this point, a curious intersection with the historical perspective of musical universalism becomes evident: the wish for a kind of a “Brazilian Enlightenment” is represented by classical music — not as a struggle for real equality or fraternity, but as an attempt to become part of a ‘universal’ history, which means equality for the upper class. Even when it comes to concert music by Brazilian composers, played by Brazilians, the reference to a hegemonic musical canon remains in musical forms, in the use of compositional tools typical of the European classical tradition, and, mainly, in the attempt to ‘be part’ of a hegemonic history through parameters recognized by it, even if outdated. It is an attempt that is carried out by Brazilians in contemporary times, as a reproduction of a ‘universal’ ideal, which nevertheless exemplifies the topicality of the theme and its constitution as a paradigm, which has persisted at different historical moments.

The diffusion of a ‘universal music’ is as effective as the ‘silent’ paradigm that sustains it, and for that reason, it remains undisputed, guaranteeing the severe difficulty of music in establishing itself as an epistemic object in this panorama. A façade associated with the efficiency and excellence of orchestral music, whose propagandistic intention is evident, is used by Brazilian society, both by the government and the private sector, and in the symbolic maintenance of the ruling class. The construction of this façade has not been properly examined, and the consequences of its non-reflection are brutal, starting with the emptying and the gross use of a historical artistic legacy in favor of governments provenly involved in corruption, though not always properly condemned.

But above all, a direct consequence of non-reflection is a 'silencing' of music as a discipline of human knowledge. Instead of dedication to its constitutive aspects, such as musical theory, or to the distinctions between performance practices, etc., a representation of the "efficiency of the orchestra" is highlighted and does not lose strength in the face of an out-of-tune chord, as it is rarely recognized as such. A use of music, although naïve, contributes to the power of the façade to the detriment of the discipline, which ultimately leads to severe difficulties for music in becoming an epistemic object. Also, attempts to popularize the orchestra end up constituting political maneuvers to sustain the *status quo*, in addition to being an effective way of raising public money, hiding behind the safe and unquestionable façade of European classical music.

As we have seen, the Brazilian culture incentive law follows neoliberal political trends typical of the 1990s, especially through the establishment of partnerships with the private sector. In this relationship, culture is configured as a kind of a bribe, which is hidden by the idea of a 'social responsibility,' which occludes the maintenance of the essentially unequal consumption structures that accompany it. In Brazil, 'big banks' sell the image of concert music as a representation of their commitment to society, which accepts the 'exchange.' But the social loss involved in the profit of large companies is infinitely greater than the musical improvement of the orchestra. The silence about universal certainties supports the social structure by selling tranquility to the consuming public and maintaining the profit of the private initiative. But the relations between government and companies established by Brazilian law go beyond a 'positive image' by opening the door to the participation of large companies in government decisions, defined by political personalism, which we present in the example of Osesp. According to the Rouanet law figures made public by Menezes (2016), no other area has greater tax incentive funding than classical music, which, in

our interpretation, is justified by the power of a façade of 'universal music' and its not being questioned by society, in addition to confirming our hypothesis that music occupies a privileged place in the study of universalism in general. In this sense, we conclude that an effective methodology for studying the place of concert music in Brazil has to consider this universalism, since it manifests a particular appropriation of a historical paradigm of music, which shapes musical expression and its relationships with political, economic, legal, and social structures. In the case of Osesp, we observed a historical maintenance of the universalist paradigm that influences its aesthetic orientation through the following tripod: political involvement (which manifests itself as law and in personalist relations); an attempt to self-legitimization through political, private, and institutional propaganda; and the maintenance of a symbolic relationship between social classes. We found that an investigation of universalism corresponds to the plurality of the musical phenomenon, in its aesthetic, theoretical, musicological, historical, social, political, and other aspects, which resume a crooked relationship with the European Enlightenment that is self-beneficial. Even if Beethoven, particularly through the *Ninth*, is related worldwide to the search for equality, contemporarily in Brazil, instead of echoing an exhortation against inequality, it is used to maintain privileges.

The non-constitution of music as an epistemic object means the feeding of a vicious cycle, which reaffirms music as a fantasy, as a merely symbolic façade, which weakens it as a discipline and as a mode of human relationship, which is rendered inauthentic by social mechanisms that maintain inequality. For this reason, we defend here a recovery of musical discipline as such — which does not mean any appeal against the practice of a European musical canon in Brazil; on the contrary, it hopes to open up space for its unpropagandized fruition, free from corruption and without the reproduction of

cultural imperialism by the Brazilian hegemonic classes. In this sense, although much has been done in the investigation of contemporary Brazilian music, especially in relation to the legacy of musical minorities and Afro-Brazilian expression, the professional performance of musicologists who, beyond historical musicology, reflect the current situation of classical music seems to us to be indispensable for the establishment of constructive postures vis-à-vis the public, as a way of combating any sloppy profitable conviction. The opening of a space between music as a discipline and its appropriation by a universalist paradigm can correct mistakes in the management model of musical institutions, open new spaces for listening to music, and consequently create new possibilities for relationships with a wider and plural audience, including the lower classes. Perhaps it could also serve as an example of the need for direct relations with public and private initiatives, avoiding exchange of favors with the state, but, above all, it could make possible the study of music as such.

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