

The Modernist Movement in Brazil - Week of 1922

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The knowledge of the avant-garde currents in the world, in the beginning of the 20th century, and the desire to concretize a Brazilian modern art, valuing the national and eliminating the school models, allowed the discussion of ideas about norms and concepts of what would be genuinely Brazilian among intellectuals and artists, initially in São Paulo, which would start the Modernist Movement in Brazil. According to Travassos, “the Modern Art Week, held on February 13, 15 and 17, 1922 at the Municipal Theater of São Paulo, became part of the history of culture in Brazil as an event that symbolically inaugurates modernism” (TRAVASSOS, 2000, p. 17). One of its greatest representatives was Mário de Andrade, a personality who played a fundamental role in the search for Brazilian nationalism. According to Neves, “the intellectual mentor of the Brazilian musical movement after the Week of Modern Art and the maximum theorist of musical nationalism would be precisely the pope of the Modernist Movement, the poet Mário de Andrade” (NEVES, 2008, p. 59). The Movement, with the support of the writer Graça Aranha, who, despite being an accomplished writer, declares himself a supporter of modernism, gains a strong ally and becomes one of its leaders, alongside Mário de Andrade. The modernist group, which was born in São Paulo, was represented by Martins Fontes (1884-1937), Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954), Coelho Netto (1864-1934), Graça Aranha (1868-1931), Anita Malfatti (1889-1964) Lasar Segall (1891-1957) among others.

Concerned about the national diffusion of ideas, the group saw a need to expand the movement and, still in 1921, organized a caravan to Rio de Janeiro, in order to win over the intellectual youth of the country's capital. With the intention of organizing a week of Modern Art at the beginning of the following year, more precisely in February 1922, the group found new supporters for the movement, 16 mainly linked to literature, in prose and poetry, such as Guilherme de Almeida (1890. - 1960), Manuel Bandeira (1886-1968), Sergio Buarque de Holanda (1902-1982), Ronald de Carvalho (1893-1935) and others. It was also necessary to have a representative in the music and for the musical part of the Week, the guest was the composer Heitor Villa-Lobos. Villa-Lobos' aesthetic independence from composing music placed him on a different level in relation to other composers of the time, such as Francisco Braga (1868-1945) and Henrique Oswald (1854-1931), who

followed a post-romantic aesthetic, which it did not meet the musical modernist and nationalist aspirations sought by Mário de Andrade. This musical modernism was seen in Villa-Lobos' music. In his book *História da Música no Brasil* (2005), Vasco Mariz (1921-2017) says: Talking to Villa-Lobos about his participation in the Semana da Arte Moderna, the maestro told me that he heard about the project by Graça Aranha and Ronald de Carvalho, who came to his house to explain the plan to him and ask for his participation. Villa-Lobos was delighted with the proposal, as it coincided with the ideas he had been fighting for years. (MARIZ, 2005, p. 146)

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