



THE INSERTION OF WOMEN IN THE FIELD OF MUSIC THROUGH THE PROTAGONISM OF CHIQUINHA GONZAGA¹



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ABSTRACT

This research, of qualitative character and bibliographic foundation, has as its main objective to present a nucleus of reflections on the historical/social, professional and musical process of the composer, conductor and pianist Francisca Edwiges Neves Gonzaga (1847-1935), better known as Chiquinha Gonzaga. The text portrays fragments of the artist's trajectory, considering her insertion in the field of music and protagonism, ratifying the title of this work: "The insertion of women in the field of music through the protagonism of Chiquinha Gonzaga", stressing that this struggle is still necessary in contemporary times, as well as connecting the investigation with the proposal of ANPPOM/2024 (music and people who live music). From the bibliography consulted, it was understood that his actions, breaking numerous paradigms of the current society, address considerations that deserve attention such as: machismo; social imbalance regarding women's rights; professional prejudice based on foundations founded by patriarchal society; inequality in the political field; prejudices in the process of musical creation; ethnic-racial position, expanding the unacceptable condition of not having the right to freedom, autonomy, respect and equality, essential items for the construction of a just and humane society. The reflective content about the aforementioned composer is in continuous dialogue with the present, ratifying that revisiting the past helps in the evaluation and critical position of the present day. The results of this investigation point to the challenging scenario of a woman who explored and faced numerous social, economic and artistic obstacles in the mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, verifying her real importance in the social and artistic body, considering that in the twenty-first century such struggles still potentiate great difficulties and contestations.

Keywords: Chiquinha Gonzaga. Historical/social process. Empowerment. Music. Contemporaneity.

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INTRODUCTION

We begin the present investigation by highlighting the choice and relevance of the aforementioned composer. According to Baltar (2020), Chiquinha Gonzaga's pioneering spirit is present in several historical-social causes and reflects multiple changes in contemporary society. According to a literature review, the artist is appointed as the first woman to play with a choro group; first woman to compose a carnival march; first woman to compose for Brazilian theater; first woman to conduct an orchestra; a pioneer figure in the action of copyright as one of the founders of the Brazilian Society of Theater Authors (SBAT) and the first artist to build her record label, pioneering Rio de Janeiro society in a scenario contrary to the feminine universe.

She was the first woman to play the piano, accompanying a choro ensemble. The first to compose a carnival march: *Ô abre alas*, para a Rosa de Ouro. The first woman to compose for Brazilian theater. The first woman to conduct an orchestra. She was part of the creation of the Brazilian Society of Theater Authors (SBAT) and was the first artist to found her record label (BALTAR, 2020, p.27).

About artistic production, Simões (2021) stresses the importance of his pianistic literature about technical, musical and stylistic development due to the diversity of riches found in his pieces, as well as dialoguing elements of concert music together with popular music, breaking barriers that still exist today.

In addition to the historical importance of studying her work, Chiquinha's pieces contribute to the technical, musical and stylistic development of piano students by presenting a wide variety of pianistic elements that will be found in subsequent repertoire both in the traditional classical branch, such as the waltzes of Schubert and Brahms, nocturnes, mazurkas and waltzes of Chopin and pieces by Brazilian nationalist composers such as Villa-Lobos, Francisco Mignone and Guerra-Peixe, as well as repertoire considered more popular in scope, such as waltzes and tangos by Ernesto Nazareth, waltzes and ragtimes by Scott Joplin (SIMÕES, 2021, p.10).

Taking into account that motivation is an important requirement in the teaching/learning action, the researchers of this work, two pianist instrumentalists, justify their interests based exactly on the diversity of technical and musical resources present in Gonzaga's work, as well as on the representativeness of the composer as a symbol of the struggles for minorities, configuring important reflections on confronting machismo and the real imbalances present in contemporary society. Simões (2021), ratifies the motivational factor through the richness of instrumental execution elements related to the action of the performance.

This mixture of classical and popular elements in Gonzaga's work can also be a motivational factor for piano students and includes a greater variety of styles in the

student's training. By studying the work of Chiquinha Gonzaga, students will develop technical skills, such as the execution of scales, arpeggios, parallel intervals, repeated notes, ornamentation and jumps. They will also develop musical skills by exploring a wide variety of touches, timbres, expressiveness, balance between voices, as well as different experiments in dynamics, articulations, agogic nuances, and pedaling styles (SIMÕES, 2021, p.10).

As a result of a course completion work, defended in 2023, the methodological process of this article was carried out through a qualitative approach with the support of the bibliographic reference in continuous dialogue with the respective authors of this research. Creswell (2014) defines qualitative research as a way of studying the world in which we live by understanding the meanings that people attribute to phenomena. It consists of interpretation practices through the following tools: field notes, interviews, conversations, biographies, analysis procedures, photographs, records, among others. These practices transform the world into representations, allowing researchers to study elements within their possibilities of perception, reflection, and considerations.

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They transform the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, records, and reminders to the person. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things within their natural contexts, trying to understand, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people attribute to them (DENZIN and LINCOLN, 2011 *apud* CRESWELL, 2014, p.49).

Regarding the bibliographic reference, Lima *et al* (2007) points out that a bibliographic research helps in the definition of ideas of the object of study, as well as guides the construction and organization of the research process.

... bibliographic research enables a wide range of information, in addition to allowing the use of data dispersed in numerous publications, also helping in the construction, or in the better definition of the conceptual framework that involves the proposed object of study (GIL, 1994 *apud* LIMA *et al*, 2007, p.40).

In continuity, we will describe the diversity of events in the composer's life, emphasizing the challenges, her conduct and, consequently, her achievements in the social and musical field.

CHIQUINHA GONZAGA: CHALLENGES, CONDUCT, ACHIEVEMENTS, PREJUDICE AND RESISTANCE

Through the bibliographic reference, we begin this investigation by informing that Francisca Edwiges Neves Gonzaga, better known as Chiquinha Gonzaga, was born on

October 17, 1847 in the city of Rio de Janeiro. She was the offspring of the military José Basileu Neves Gonzaga (1817-1891) and the mestizo Rosa Maria Neves de Lima (1827-1896), the daughter of an enslaved woman. In this scenario, Chiquinha Gonzaga had a white man in her fatherhood who allowed her to have access to everything that the social body of the time could offer: "like all the little girls of the Second Reign, Chiquinha Gonzaga had an education that strictly obeyed the standards imposed by the patriarchal family structure of our slave society" (DINIZ, 2009, p.41). In this way, she began her musical studies and piano lessons as a child, being influenced by the musical fashion of the time, as well as with the popular repertoire. As one of the artist's main biographers, Edinha Diniz, narrates:

It is easy to assume that at this stage of her formation, Chiquinha was exposed to the musical fashion of the time and the popular repertoire. In addition to the conviviality with the teacher conductor and his amateur musician uncle, the sounds of the streets certainly reached him, which, in this period, especially, are loaded with musical suggestions; whistle to the *pregão*, the *carioca* of the time did not dispense with the musicality that accompanied him in the most prosaic and everyday activities (DINIZ, 2009, p.49).

According to the social organization of the time, her marriage was premature and took place in "1839, at the age of sixteen, to a boy recommended by her father – the cattle landowner and army officer Jacinto Ribeiro do Amaral" (TORTOLA, 2018, p.43). It is important to note that, according to Tortola (2018), he was "a boy recommended by his father", configuring the total lack of freedom and autonomy fed back by machismo. The fruits of this union, watered by great troubles, were the three children that Chiquinha generated. However, the result of this marriage is not surprising: the piano, which for the composer was a way of enunciating freedom and manifesting her thoughts, for her husband, was a rival.

Considering the nature of his personality, music represented a means of manifesting and venting his temperament and maintaining his own will. It is understandable, therefore, that she provoked jealousy in her husband and even challenged him. Jacinto regarded him as a strong rival; He provided his wife with reverie, joy and a form of affirmation. And this was incompatible with the austere, submissive, and self-sacrificing behavior that he demanded of her. In these circumstances, the marital relationship becomes delicate (DINIZ, 2009, p. 61-62).

It is important to reflect that, in contemporary society, that is, in the twenty-first century, there is still great resistance, from a large part of the male universe, to allow their partners/wives to have daydreams, joys and achievements that represent them. Fear, insecurity, machismo?

The result of this sad reality, that is, the frustration experienced in her marriage, makes Chiquinha Gonzaga abandon her home, generating scandal due to an action totally out of the reality of women at that time. Her family "reacts with all the rigor that was due to it: it declares her dead, and her name unpronounceable" (DINIZ, 2009, p.68). In this way, Chiquinha's behavior contributed to many women not carrying the burden of a coexistence based on subtractions.

If a separation already placed her as "dead", the possibility of rebuilding her life with someone else materialized in another challenge: "Chiquinha causes a new scandal when she joins the engineer João Batista de Carvalho", (VIANA *et al*, 2015, p.5) however, this union did not last and "in 1876, the couple separated. A year later, the divorce decree filed by Jacinto was issued, condemning the defendant, D. Francisca Edwiges Neves Gonzaga do Amaral, to perpetual separation" (VIANA *et al*, 2015, p.6). Diniz (2009, p.76) points out that "Chiquinha Gonzaga was a divorced woman a century before divorce became a civil right in Brazil. An exact century: 1877-1977". The absurdity is configured by imagining that she would not be "condemned" to spend the rest of her life with someone who did not respect her identity, her desires and purpose in life.

From this moment on, Chiquinha Gonzaga began to make the piano her work instrument and, consequently, her livelihood. He attended choro circles, as well as played at dances. The cultural reference of the polka, of European origin, reterritorialized in Brazil, marked its Western formation. About the polka, Rosa *et al* (2018, p.79), comment:

The polka was another example of the appropriation of a European genre of ballroom for the popular environment. Dance in binary time coming from Bohemia around 1830, it was very successful in Europe, having arrived in Brazil around 1845. Dance has been consolidated in Brazilian music, having been incorporated by several composers and to which, along with lundu, the birth of choro as a language is attributed.

When it comes to the language of choro, Joaquim Callado (1848-1880) was a great representative on the national scene. He created a group called "Choro Carioca" in which the main tool used, as a musical resource, was the practice of improvisation of the following genres: polka, waltz, tango, among others. Around 1877, when Callado's group was on the rise in the musical world, Chiquinha Gonzaga published her first hit: the polka "Attractive". Consequently, she was included in the group and gained recognition "as a composer of polka and pianeira de choros" (DINIZ, 2009, p.107).

Understanding the challenging scenario, the result of the patriarchy present in the social body, even with the success about the launch of his musical creation, his artistic performance was refuted by the current society.

Her first edited composition, the polka Attractive, from 1877, was a sales success and little by little the pianist established her name as a composer. This fact still did not guarantee a good reputation for her in society, since the musical practice for women was restricted to the family environment. In addition, a woman with Francisca's behavior would not be a "good example" for society (GOMES, 2019, p.21).

Ratifying the thought about the "domestic" practice of instrumental performance, Costa (2018, p.6) states that:

To analyze Chiquinha Gonzaga's trajectory, we have to stick to the issues inherent to social class, as it is of paramount importance to know the women who had access to piano lessons, an instrument used for the education of the little girls. It was used as a form of entertainment for wives, "ladies of parlor", to play for guests in their homes, and it was not allowed to touch them in public places (COSTA, 2018, p.6).

However, resistance to any form of prejudice was a hallmark of the aforementioned composer, ratifying that the "domesticated" spirit never represented her, and in this way "she was the first piano professional linked to choro: first planeira and first chorona" (DINIZ, 2009, p.109).

Figure 1 – Chiquinha Gonzaga (1877)

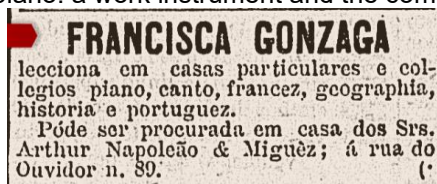


Source: Chiquinha Gonzaga, uma história de vida/ Edinha Diniz, Editora Zahar, 2009, p.116.

It is worth reflecting that his difficulties and the historical/social context served as tools for the construction of his musical trajectory. In this scenario, it is worth noting that as divorce or separation was not yet a legalized reality in Brazil, women who fought for their rights, respect and identity, as well as did not accept the submission of a life alongside those who took away their existence, suffered prejudice and the gaze of an "alleged adultery" and, as a result, the criticism of a society that similarly regarded them as

prostitutes. What draws our attention, in the case of Chiquinha Gonzaga, is that she transforms the piano into a source of work and an instrument of liberation, giving new purpose to her personal and professional life through her competence, compositional process and, later, musical recognition. And it was then that "instead of shining in the halls of the court of D. Pedro II, she became a piano teacher, pianist of musical ensembles, composer and conductor" (DINIZ, 2009, p.103).

Figure 2 - The piano: a work instrument and the composer's livelihood



Source: Gazeta de Notícias, Rio de Janeiro (RJ), January 11, 1880.

Despite the diversity of actions in the musical field, Chiquinha had difficulties in maintaining a reasonable number of students due to her conduct disapproved by the social body, as well as the collection of her musical production, through sales, did not offer her a significant gain.

His songs became hits quickly, were performed in dance halls, but the sales were not enough. As for the students, it was not very easy to overcome certain resistances either. Some parents, like José Basileu in the past, preferred to give their daughters a piano teacher instead of a male teacher, but these teachers were required to behave socially (DINIZ, 2009, p.134).

After Callado's premature death, the composer inaugurated her group called "Grupo Chiquinha Gonzaga". The focus was on finding ways to play choro on the piano, so:

(...) the pianists sought in the choro groups elements for the elaboration of ways of playing choro on the piano, performing a kind of reduction of the choro group on the piano by resorting to characteristic elements of common instruments in regional ones, such as rhythmic and harmonic aspects of the cavaquinho, melodic variations characteristic of solo instruments and basses characteristic of the 7-string guitar (ALMEIDA, 1999; MARQUES, 2017; OLIVEIRA, 2017 *apud* MARCONATO, 2021, p.2).

"In 1885, she finally managed to debut as a conductor" (DINIZ, 2009, p.136). Costa (2018, p.2) points out that Chiquinha Gonzaga

She managed to obtain a prominent role when she became the first woman to conduct an orchestra, almost predominantly male, that is, in a society where most women were conducted by men, she managed to reverse this role, at least on the stage of musical theater.

In the same year "he began to compose for the revue theater" (SIMÕES, 2021, p. 2), standing out inside and outside the theater. Her works reinforced characteristics of her identity, quality and charisma, and, in this way, she became the most requested composer of the time.

Ratifying its identity traits highlighted above, it is worth mentioning that in 1894, the French warship "Duquesne" was anchored in Rio de Janeiro. During the period of the anchorage, Chiquinha Gonzaga, discovered by the French Navy officers as an author of popular songs, began to frequent the ship and her compositions became part of the musical repertoire. Finally, he received from Commander E. Fournier, on behalf of the French government, a medal and the title of "Singing Soul of Brazil".

Now it was the French officers. Between July and September 1894, the French warship Duquesne was anchored in Rio de Janeiro. It was two months of parties, tributes and camaraderie. Discovered by French Navy officers as an author of musical hits, Chiquinha was soon frequenting the ship, where her songs became part of the musical repertoire. He was at lunches, dances and masses. In all these moments, he paid tribute to the official team with songs written especially for the occasion. He ended up receiving from the hands of E. Fournier, commander and head of the Atlantic division, on behalf of the French government, a medal and the title of "Singing Soul of Brazil". (DINIZ, 2009, p.165).

In 1899, he composed the play "Ó abre alas". According to Diniz (2009, p. 176) the work "more than a baptism (...) confirms Carnival as a popular festival and promoted its marriage with urban music".

In 1912, Chiquinha premiered the operetta Forrobodó, a great theatrical success, however, due to the discrepancy between the profit of the authors of works and the business machine, the composer, revolted by the situation, founded, along with other artists, the SBAT: Brazilian Society of Theatrical Authors.

Chiquinha composes the operetta "Forrobodó", an absolute success with more than 1,500 performances. However, all this success serves to enrich entrepreneurs, while authors receive very little for their work, especially as a woman. Outraged by such exploitation, the composer decides to bring the artists together to create an association to protect her copyrights. In 1917, SBAT, the Brazilian Society of Theater Authors, was founded, with Chiquinha as a founding partner. This association is one of the greatest legacies left by the visionary Chiquinha to the artistic class (VIANA, 2015, p.11).

Within the whole context of struggle and resilience of the aforementioned composer, it is impossible not to reflect on her ethnic-racial condition. Although portrayed as a white woman, the result of her paternity, there is no denying her Afro descent, granddaughter of an enslaved black woman and a freed black woman and, on this important aspect, it is possible to suppose that she grew up and was educated in the coexistence with the cultural

forms of blacks at the time, not only because of her origin, but also because she inhabited a city in which the black contingent was considerable (KARASCH, 2000). Thus, as a consequence "from his coexistence with black cultural forms, many of his behavioral characteristics emerged, as well as the cultural and musical manifestations that he used as a substrate for his innovative creations" (WERNECK, 2013, p.8-9).

It is worth noting that, if nowadays, the discussion about ethnicities and representativeness for the struggle for rights and equal respect are extremely important agendas. In the period of Chiquinha Gonzaga the impossibility was real, there was no room for such a manifestation. However, what potentiated the prejudice against the aforementioned composer was her position as a woman in a mostly male context, fed back by submission and machismo.

Chiquinha bothered her because she was a woman. I refer to the figure of Chiquinha Gonzaga so that, observing her history from an intersectional perspective, it is possible to understand how the articulation between categories such as gender and race is fundamental to think about her trajectory as a black woman (ALVES, 2020, p.20).

We cannot forget that the formation of his education occurred through the social and economic position of his father, a white man and recognized in the social body, building a scenario known as the "ideology of whitening".

Chiquinha was the granddaughter of an enslaved black woman and the daughter of a black mother. In this sense, even if her father was white, it would not be possible to perceive her as a white woman. I believe that the process of denial of Chiquinha's blackness and the consolidation of her image as that of a white woman can be understood in the light of what some intellectuals call the "ideology of whitening", which must be observed without losing sight of the structural racism that exists in Brazil (ALVES, 2020, p.23).

Here, we portray the real state of racism present to the present day in our society, configuring that color enhances the degree of "belonging" of a better prepared class, recognized in the social body and holder of privileges.

The black body in Chiquinha Gonzaga suggests a representation of brunette or mulatto, that is, the black woman as a subject crossed by the device of whitening, that is, a mechanism that activates modes of objectification that makes black women recognize themselves as mulatto or brunettes, given the conditions of possibility in which they are immersed, that is, a current social context in which white women are given the condition of superiority to the detriment of black women, due to the

process of slavery to which black women were subjected at the time (TORTOLA, 2018, p.96).

Below, to situate the aforementioned composer in the historical context, it is worth observing the "Timeline" through Figure 3:

Figure 3 – Timeline – Chiquinha Gonzaga



Source: Chiquinha Gonzaga IMS/SBAT Collection.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We begin the final considerations by ratifying that there is no denying the challenging scenario of a woman who explored and faced numerous social, economic and artistic paradigms in the mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, remembering that, in the twenty-first century, such struggles still potentiate great difficulties and contestations.

As for the aspect of her personal life, it becomes relevant to observe how society looked at a woman who did not give up her identity and who, above all, valued freedom and autonomy. Chiquinha Gonzaga dared to break the paradigms, being the first woman divorced a century before divorce was a civil right in Brazil. In her second marriage, with José Batista de Carvalho, the end of the relationship happened due to the infidelity of her partner. The courageous conduct of the pioneer paved the way for many women not to accept a life full of subtractions.

In the musical field, the composer diversified her actions by going through and responding to demands in the area of instrumental performance, teaching/learning, creation/composition, conducting, as well as in the copyright fight, even within a scenario antagonistic to the female universe. In addition to breaking paradigms and expanding borders, he dialogued with the languages of concert music and popular music. If, at the end of the nineteenth century, the diversity of actions of the aforementioned composer helped her living condition in the field of music, we provoke a reflection: with the courses increasingly directed to the formation of "specialties", as well as the public notices of public



exams focused on the demands of a certain area, how to obtain a multiple professional? Isn't there a contradiction between training and current professional demands?

One of the actions that are contrary to concert music is that popular musician had the practice of "playing by ear". The music that was heard at that time was of European tradition. Once reproduced by popular instrumentalists, the result changed, causing the genesis of new genres. In this regard, Chiquinha Gonzaga was present.

About the concept of "whitening ideology", it is necessary to emphasize the paramount importance of the debate on ethnicities and their representativeness in the struggle for rights, equality and respect in the social body. However, the prejudice against the renowned composer was strengthened because she was simply a woman and broke rules in an environment dominated by men, fueled by machismo, intolerance and racism.

The composer caused discomfort in a patriarchal society, she was the absolute owner of her trajectory.

Confirming its importance in the historical/social scenario, in 2012, President Dilma Rousseff sanctioned Law 12.624, making October 17 the National Day of Brazilian Popular Music, the day of Chiquinha Gonzaga's birth.

And to confirm her importance and extraordinary contribution to the Brazilian musical universe, in 2012, President Dilma Rousseff sanctioned law 12.624, which establishes the day of the artist's birth, October 17, as the National Day of Brazilian Popular Music; A fair tribute to someone who dedicated his entire life to music. Chiquinha Gonzaga, therefore, used courage and boldness to transgress rules established for women, and did not allow her sensitivity and artistic talent to be destroyed by intolerance. She opened wings to pass (CRUZ, 2022, p.1.327).

It is worth noting that the quality of her work, combined with her protagonism, responded and overcame the obstacles, ratifying the insertion of women in the field of music.

With the change of times, the image of Chiquinha Gonzaga ceased to be a problem and the artist began to be admired for the importance of her work, for questioning the current system and also for being ahead of her time (BALTAR, 2019, p.27).

Finally, this investigation represents an excerpt from a course completion work (TCC), the result of the motivation and interest of researchers on the proposed theme, an essential item in the teaching/learning process, respecting the principles of ethics and the tools of an academic work, causing profound changes in the training process.

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