

# The Brazilian “Choro”: An Historical Survey of Brazil’s National Music

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## ABSTRACT:

The Brazilian “choro” (to cry), the national music of Brazil, began in the late 1800s in Rio de Janeiro. The music is a fusion of African-based rhythms, European forms, and both Brazilian and European instruments. In the twentieth century, it came to represent social and racial diversity in Brazil. The music traversed from plantation to the city, through upper and lower class societies, and integrated into film and radio industries in America and Europe. The “choro’s” nationalistic tendencies were very strong in the Brazilian government in the 1930s, with an invasion of American music in the 1940s, followed by a strong movement of national pride in the 1950s that was anti-American. The music can be described as a true representation of the emotional feelings that Brazilians felt in daily life. Out of the several thousand “choro” compositions, they all represent a story of happiness, sadness, joy, hope, love, desperation, joy, and spiritual connection. Perhaps the most famous composer and performer of the “choro” is Pixinguinha, who suffered discrimination amongst his own countrymen and in his travels to Europe, just to play what was to become the national music of Brazil. In his later years, he organized “choro” festivals as well as ‘regionals’ to help promote and restore the “choro” to its early national style and one that was truly Brazilian.

The lecture/paper will include a power point presentation along with listening to relevant music examples on compact disc of this author (clarinet) and Brazilian pianist Rafael Dos Santos, playing historical “choros”, describing the emotional impact of Brazilian life.

**Keywords:** choro, Pixinguinha, miscegenation

Dr. Maurita Murphy Marx was appointed Professor of Clarinet at the University of Iowa in 1983. She is an international performer and teacher of the clarinet. During the past seventeen years, she has been specializing passionately in Brazilian music, most specifically the “choro”. She is a highly recognized performer and scholar of the “choro” both nationally and internationally.

Her two Brazilian compact discs of “choros” with Brazilian pianist Rafael dos Santos, “Over the Fence” and “Red Hot & Brazilian” have received high international acclaim. Dr. Marx has received the Collegiate Teaching Award at the University of Iowa for the highest success in training students. In turn, her students have won first prizes, exclusively, in international clarinet competitions. Her service to the clarinet profession includes six years on the Executive Board of the International Clarinet Association. Dr. Marx’s degrees are from Eastman School of Music (NY) with the Performer’s Certificate and Michigan State University

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