

# Wagner's Latin American Outreach (to 1900)



IN *MEIN LEBEN*—which he began dictating to Cosima in 1865<sup>1</sup>—Wagner erred in recalling various details of an invitation to visit Brazil<sup>2</sup> that he received in 1857.<sup>3</sup> Among errors, he misspelled the name of the Brazilian who suggested that he visit Rio de Janeiro, there to conduct an opera dedicated to Pedro II (1825–1891). He also wrongly claimed that the Brazilian emissary was a consul writing him from Leipzig. Wagner's version of what happened (according to the "authorized" 1911 English translation of *Mein Leben*) ran thus:<sup>4</sup>

The miscarriage of my prospects of support for the *Nibelungen* from the Grand Duke of Weimar fostered in me a continued depression of spirits; for I saw before me a burden of which I knew not how to rid myself. At the same time a romantic message was conveyed to me: a man who rejoiced in the name of Ferreiro [Ernesto Ferreira França filho (1828–1888)] introduced himself to me as the Brazilian consul in Leipzig, and told me that the Emperor of Brazil was greatly attracted by my music. The man was an adept in meeting my doubts about this strange phenomenon in the letters which he wrote; the Emperor loved everything German, and wanted me very much to come to him in Rio [de] Janeiro, so that I might conduct

<sup>1</sup>On the genesis of *Mein Leben*, written on the urging of Ludwig II of Bavaria (1845–1886), see Curt von Westernhagen, *Wagner: A Biography*, transl. by Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), II, 357–358.

<sup>2</sup>*Mein Leben*, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin (Munich: Paul List Verlag, 1969), II, 561–562: "ein Mensch, welcher sehr natürlich Ferreiro heiss, hatte sich als brasilianischer Konsul von Leipzig aus bei mir gemeldet und mir Anzeige von der grossen Zuneigung des Kaisers von Brasilien für meine Musik gemacht. Meinen Zweifeln an dieser sonderbaren Erscheinung wusste der Mann in seinen Briefen recht hübsch zu entgegen; der Kaiser liebte das Deutsche und wünschte mich gerne zu sich nach Rio de Janeiro zu haben, damit ich ihm daselbst meine Opern vorführe, wozu, da dort allerdings nur italienisch gesungen würde, es nur der Übersetzung meiner Texte bedürfe, was er als sehr leicht und zugleich sehr vorteilhaft für dieselben ansah. Sonderbarerweise wirkte die hierdurch angeregte Vorstellung in Wahrheit sehr angenehm auf mich, und es schien mir, als müsste ich sehr gut ein leidenschaftliches Musikgedicht zustande bringen können, welches sich im Italienischen ganz trefflich ausnehmen sollte. Wiederum gedachte ich mit stets neu auflebender Vorliebe an »Tristan und Isolde«. Zunächst übersandte ich Herrn Ferreiro, um der grossmütigen Neigung des Kaisers von Brasilien einermassen auf den Zahn zu fühlen, die kostbar eingebundenen Klavierauszüge meiner drei älteren Opern, von deren gnädiger und splendor Aufnahme in Rio de Janeiro ich mir längere Zeit etwas recht Angenehmes erwartete. Weder von diesen Klavierauszügen noch vom Kaiser von Brasilien und dessen Konsul Ferreiro habe ich in meinem Leben je wieder etwas gehört. Nur Semper geriet noch mit diesem tropischen Lande in eine architektonische Verwicklung: für Rio war eine Konkurrenz zum Bau eines neuen Opernhauses ausgeschrieben; Semper hatte sich zur Teilnahme gemeldet und verfertigte wunderschöne Pläne dazu, welche uns viele Unterhaltung gewährten und unter anderm dem Dr. Wille eine besonders interessante Aufgabe zu bieten schienen, da er annahm, es müsse einem Architekten etwas Neues dünken, ein Operntheater für ein schwarzes Publikum zu entwerfen. Ich habe nicht erfahren, ob die Resultate von Sempers Verkehr mit Brasilien viel befriedigender waren als die des meinigen; jedenfalls weiss ich, dass er das Theater nicht gebaut hat."

<sup>3</sup>On April 28, 1857, Wagner and Minna moved into the house Asyl, provided them by the Wesendonck[s]. That summer he desisted from composing *Siegfried* after the second act to start composing *Tristan* October 1.

<sup>4</sup>*My Life* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1927), pp. 662–663.





my operas in person. As only Italian was sung in that country, it would be necessary to translate my libretto, which the Emperor regarded as a very easy matter, and actually an improvement to the libretto itself. Strange to say, these proposals exercised a very agreeable influence on me. I felt I could easily produce a passionate musical poem which would turn out quite excellent in Italian, and I turned my thoughts once more, with an ever-reviving preference, towards *Tristan und Isolde*. In order in some way to test the intensity of that generous affection for my works protested by the Emperor of Brazil, I promptly sent to Señor Ferreiro the expensively bound volumes containing the pianoforte versions of my three earlier operas, and for a long time I indulged in the hope of some very handsome return from their gracious and splendid reception in Rio [de] Janeiro. But of these pianoforte versions, and the Emperor of Brazil and his consul Ferreiro, I never heard a single syllable again as long as I lived.

[Gottfried] Semper,<sup>5]</sup> it is true, involved himself in an architectonic entanglement with this tropical country: a competition was invited for the building of a new opera house in Rio; Semper had announced that he would take part in it, and completed some splendid plans<sup>6]</sup> which afforded us great entertainment, and appeared to be of special interest, among others, to Dr. [François] Wille,<sup>7]</sup> who thought that it must be a new problem for an architect to sketch an opera house for a black public. I have not learned whether the results of Semper's negotiations with Brazil were much more satisfactory than mine; at all events, I know that he did not build the theatre.

Faulty as was his memory of how Ernesto Ferreira França spelled his name, what his credentials were, and what the true purport of his messages had been, Wagner did not err when in *Mein Leben* he said that Ferreira França's "proposals exercised a very agreeable influence on me" at the time that they were received. On May 8, 1857, he wrote Liszt that "the Emperor of Brazil has just caused me to be invited [*jetzt hat mich der Kaiser von Brasilien auffordern lassen*] to go to him at Rio de Janeiro where I am to have everything in plenty."<sup>8</sup> In his letter of June 28, 1857,

<sup>5</sup>Semper (1803-1879), Hamburg-born architect who "initiated the neo-Renaissance style," designed the Opera House at Dresden built 1837-1841. Implicated in the same May 1849 uprising with Wagner, he escaped abroad. From 1855 to 1871 he headed the architecture department of the Zürich Polytechnikum. Concerning his "impracticably grandiose plans" for an opera house at Rio de Janeiro, see *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1891), xxxiii, 712.

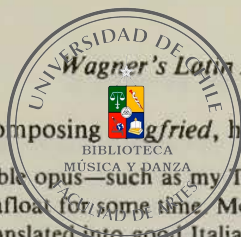
Wagner continued Semper's fast friend. On November 29, 1864, Ludwig II yielded to Wagner's suggestion that Semper be commissioned to design a new festival theater, to be built on Gasteig hill in Munich, for the staging of the *Ring*. Like the Rio de Janeiro plans, those for Munich came to nothing.

<sup>6</sup>Semper's plans drawn in 1858 for an Imperial Theater at Rio de Janeiro seating 2300 auditors—together with his *Notes explicatives au Projet de Théâtre* dated August 20, 1858, and his colored sketches of the projected theater—were bequeathed to the Theater Museum at Munich. For discussion of these Rio de Janeiro materials, see Franz B. Biermann, *Die Pläne für Reform des Theaterbaues bei Karl Friedrich Schinkel und Gottfried Semper* (Berlin: Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte, 1928), 60-61. For Semper's sketch showing the outside appearance of the projected Rio de Janeiro Imperial Theater, see Biermann's plate 39.

<sup>7</sup>François Wille, a "fellow student with Bismarck at Göttingen" (Westernhagen, II, 435), "was a journalist who had championed constitutional democracy in his role as a Schleswig-Holstein delegate to the Frankfurt assembly" (Martin Gregor-Dellin, *Richard Wagner: His Life, His Work, His Century*, transl. by J. Maxwell Brownjohn [San Diego/New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983], p. 239). "His wife Eliza Wille, a shipowner's daughter, was wealthy enough to afford the expense of an early retirement in Switzerland." Wagner first met the pair in May 1852. On September 4, 1870, one week after marriage with Cosima in Lucerne, "the faithful Willes turned up at the christening of Siegfried," born June 6, 1869 (Gregor-Dellin, p. 398). Dr. Wille "stood proxy for King Ludwig, who was named godfather in the parish register."

<sup>8</sup>William Aston Ellis, *Life of Richard Wagner* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1908), VI, 254. In 1855 Rio de Janeiro counted a population of 296,136; in 1866 approximately 306,000. See





telling Liszt that he has stopped composing *Gugfried*, he announces:<sup>9</sup>

I may assume, I hope, that a practicable opus—such as my *Tristan* is to become—will very soon yield good returns and keep me afloat for some time. Moreover, I've another odd idea with it: I think of getting this work translated into good Italian, and offering its first Italian reproduction to the theatre at Rio de Janeiro—which probably will mount my *Tannhäuser* meantime. I shall also dedicate it to the Emperor of Brazil, who will shortly be receiving copies of my last three operas; and all this together, I imagine, will shed enough to keep me from the dogs awhile.

So seriously did Wagner continue taking Ferreira França's proposals that in late September—before starting to compose *Tristan* on October 1<sup>10</sup>—he wrote the Härtels that he had an excellent “prospect of producing *Tristan* in the Italian tongue at Rio de Janeiro.”<sup>11</sup>

Wagner authorities have variously treated this “curious episode” (as Ernest Newman dubbed it<sup>12</sup>) involving Brazil. Even so conscientious a biographer as Newman added his own mistakes to Wagner's bloopers: (1) by turning Ferreira França into “Ferrero,” (2) by claiming that “Ferrero announced himself as Brazilian consul at Leipzig,” (3) by saying that this consul “called on Wagner,” and (4) by averring that “this Ferrero” had aught to do with Gottfried Semper's “drawing up plans for a grand new opera house” at Rio de Janeiro. Newman described the “curious episode” thus:

A certain Ferrero, announcing himself as the Brazilian consul in Leipzig, called on Wagner with an invitation from his master, who, he said, was a great admirer of his genius, to go to Rio de Janeiro and conduct his operas there. For a while Wagner seriously thought of producing *Tristan* in Rio de Janeiro, naturally in an Italian translation. Even Semper was somehow or other worked upon by this Ferrero to the extent of drawing up the plans for a grand new opera house in the Brazilian capital; while Wagner sent the Emperor expensively bound copies of the piano scores of the *Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, hoping, as he says, for some tangible expression of the imperial esteem in return.

Westernhagen, author of the Wagner article in *The New Grove Dictionary*, did manage to spell Ernesto Ferreira França's name correctly. But even Westernhagen seems not to have consulted the original text of any of Ferreira França's six letters to Wagner dated March 9, 22, June 16, 26, July 12, and 20, 1857.<sup>13</sup> In none of these

D. Appleton's *New American Cyclopaedia*, xiv (1864), 91; Brockhaus's *Conversations-Lexikon*, xi (1867), 541. A third of the population were foreign-born whites (84,000 Portuguese), a third were native-born whites, the rest were Blacks.

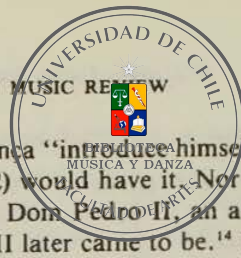
<sup>9</sup>Ellis, vi, 255. Wagner's letters of May 8 and June 28, 1857, translated by Ellis.

<sup>10</sup>Westernhagen, i, 237. Wagner finished the composition sketch of Act I December 31, 1857; he completed the scoring of Act I between February 6 and April 3, 1858 (*ibid.*, i, 241). He sketched Act II between May 4 and July 1 (i, 244).

<sup>11</sup>Ellis, vi, 256. Cosima Wagner, *Die Tagebücher*, Band I, 1869–1877, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack (Munich/Zürich: R. Piper & Co., 1976), p. 206, wrote that on the evening of March 6, 1870, Wagner recalled how after the “dreadfulness” of the *Nibelungen* he turned to *Tristan und Isolde*, “which was, so to speak, just a love scene; indeed, I thought of it as an Italian opera, that is to say, to be sung by Italian singers—and in Rio de Janeiro” (trans. by Geoffrey Skelton, *Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, i, 197).

<sup>12</sup>*The Life of Richard Wagner 1848–1860* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), 519.

<sup>13</sup>First published in the documentary appendix to Carl Heinrich Hunsche, “Richard Wagner und



letters does Ferreira França "introduce himself as the Brazilian consul in Dresden," as Westernhagen (I, 232) would have it. Nor for that matter does Ferreira França ever call "the emperor, Dom Pedro II, an admirer of his music." An admirer of Wagner's music Pedro II later came to be.<sup>14</sup> But in 1857 Ferreira França never for a moment intimated that Pedro II so much as knew a note of Wagner's music.<sup>15</sup>

Ernesto Ferreira França—who was a 28-year-old doctor of jurisprudence from Leipzig University when on his own initiative and without any emperor's prompting he wrote Wagner—did fortunately belong to one of the more important Brazilian families. His grandfather, Antônio Ferreira França (1771–1848), after having graduated from Coimbra University in three faculties, became personal physician to the first Brazilian emperor, Dom Pedro I.<sup>16</sup> His father, Ernesto Ferreira França *sênior* (1804–1872), matriculated in the law faculty of Coimbra University in 1819. Upon returning to Brazil with his degree, Ernesto Ferreira França *sênior* was named a magistrate at São Paulo October 19, 1824. Successive crown appointments next took him August 2, 1827, to Recife (where his son Ernesto Ferreira França, who corresponded with Wagner, was born November 1, 1828) and on October 4, 1832, back to Bahia (his own place of birth). Service in the Brazilian legislative assembly as deputy for Pernambuco, Bahia, and Minas Gerais, culminated in his being confirmed as Brazilian minister of foreign affairs February 2, 1844.<sup>17</sup> For outstanding services, including the marriage contract of the Princess Januária with the Conde d'Aquila, Pedro II rewarded him with the Order of Christ December 2, 1854, and a knighthood on May 16, 1857. By imperial decree he became Brazilian lifetime Supreme Court Justice April 25, 1857.<sup>18</sup>

Ernesto Ferreira França *filho* had therefore spent his youth in court circles at Rio de Janeiro and knew Dom Pedro II's cultural interests at first hand. He did not go beyond his personal knowledge of the Emperor's habits when in his initial letter to Wagner written March 9, 1857, from Dresden (Wilsdruffergasse No. 3) he promised that at Rio de Janeiro "without doubt you will find support and protection from an Emperor who is the zealous protector of arts and letters." Nor did he idly speculate when he rated Dom Pedro II's "qualities and vast knowledge [as] exceeding all praise." In his second letter dated March 22 at Dresden, Ferreira França promised Wagner that both his literary and musical merits would be recognized by "the Emperor who possesses great talent and a decided taste for both the fine arts and

Brasilien," *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv* (Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Berlin), XIII/3 (October 1939), 211–216.

<sup>14</sup>Gregor-Dellin, pp. 431, 433; Cosima Wagner, *Die Tagebücher*, I, p. 998, Pedro Calmon, *História de D. Pedro II*, III (*No País e no Estrangeiro 1870–1887*) (Rio de Janeiro/Brasília: José Olympio Editora, 1975), 920, 1102–1103.

<sup>15</sup>Geoffrey Skelton, *Richard and Cosima Wagner: Biography of a Marriage* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), p. 224, continues perpetrating old error when he claims that Dom Pedro II's "love of Wagner's music had led him in 1857 to invite the composer to stage his works in Rio de Janeiro" (italics ours).

<sup>16</sup>Augusto V. A. Sacramento Blake, *Diccionario Bibliographico Brasileiro*, I (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Nacional, 1883), 161.

<sup>17</sup>The Ibero-American Collection, Catholic University of America Library, Washington, D.C., owns copies of his *Relatorio da repartição dos negocios estrangeiros apresentado à Assamblêa Geral Legislativo* in both the years 1843 and 1844. See *National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints*, CLXX (1971), 497.

<sup>18</sup>Laurenio Lago, *Supremo Tribunal de Justiça e Supremo Tribunal Federal. Dados Biográficos 1828–1939* (Rio de Janeiro: Oficinas Gráficas de A Noite [1940]), pp. 73–74.





letters." As a result, "he will take double interest in your works." Moreover, the Emperor always "welcomes merit wherever manifested, considering that it entitles its possessor to world citizenship." In the penultimate paragraph of the same letter, Ferreira França assured Wagner that Pedro II (whose mother was the German-speaking Leopoldina [1797-1826], daughter of Emperor Franz I of Austria [1768-1835]) "loves the German language, which he speaks with ease, as he does also most of the modern European languages."

Continuing in the same vein, Ferreira França repeats himself in this second letter when he rates the Emperor as not only possessing "natural gifts" but also as being "extremely well educated." Without dangling before Wagner's eyes the role played by his father at court, Ferreira França does in his third letter, dated at Jena June 16, promise that any communication from Wagner to the Emperor will be hand-delivered by his father.

As to the theater at Rio de Janeiro where Wagner's operas could have been suitably presented, Ferreira França in his letter from Jena dated July 12 specified the Théâtre Lyrique = Teatro Lyrico. Erected in 1851-1852 under supervision of Vicente Rodrigues,<sup>19</sup> the Lyrico stood in what is now the Praça da República (then called Campo da Aclamação). When formally inaugurated with Verdi's *Macbeth* March 25, 1852,<sup>20</sup> it bore the name of Teatro = Teatro Provisório. Although intended to be merely a temporary, "provisional" theater (erected to replace the Teatro São Pedro de Alcântara that burned the night of August 8, 1851), the new Provisório proved itself so adequate for both operas and concerts that on May 19, 1854, after being shut for only three days, it reopened with the new name of Teatro Lyrico Fluminense.<sup>21</sup>

The orchestra section of the interior (measuring 27 meters to the proscenium by 22 meters at the widest point<sup>22</sup>) sat 830 male spectators—514 in soft seats, 316 on benches. Beginning in September 1854, orchestra seats were numbered. Women, alone or with their escorts, sat in four tiers of pinewood boxes, 30 boxes in the two lower tiers, 32 boxes in the upper two tiers. Each box sat four persons. The seating capacity of the Provisório = Lyrico Fluminense (1854-1875<sup>23</sup>) therefore totalled

<sup>19</sup>Rodrigues won the builder's contract signed September 26, 1851, after a competition in which seven architectural plans were entered. "Of the seven submitted, that of a German was preferred, but he was willing only to supervise construction, not actually undertake it." See Eric Arthur Gordon, "A New Opera House: An Investigation of Elite Values in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro," *Yearbook Inter-American Institute for Musical Research*, v (1969), 54.

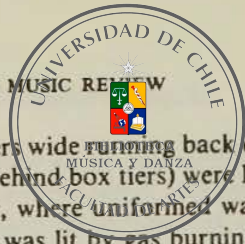
<sup>20</sup>Lafayette Silva, *História do Teatro Brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do MES, 1938), p. 44. A carnival ball for Vicente Rodrigues's benefit February 21, 1852, preceded official opening. As was customary in other opera houses of the period, orchestra seats "could be either removed or covered with platforms in order to hold balls in the auditorium" (Gordon, pp. 56-57). Vicente Gesualdo, *Historia de la música en la Argentina 1852-1900* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Beta S.R.L., 1961), II (1852-1900), 36, described the masked ball February 25, 1857, in the old Teatro Colón that preceded its formal opening April 25, 1857, with *La Traviata*.

<sup>21</sup>The last opera in the "Provisório" was Rossini's *Cenerentola*, May 16, 1854; the first in the same theater renamed "Lyrico Fluminense" was Verdi's *Ernani*, May 19, 1854 (Silva, p. 45).

<sup>22</sup>Gordon, p. 56. A Latin American history major who took his Ph.D. at Tulane University in 1977 with a dissertation on "Anarchism in Brazil: Theory and Practice 1890-1920," Gordon chose not to explore opera history, as such, in his article on the building of the Lyrico Fluminense.

<sup>23</sup>The Lyrico Fluminense finally closed doors April 30, 1875. In that year it began being torn down (Silva, pp. 45, 48).





1326. Corridors 2.4 meters wide ~~running~~ back of the boxes encouraged strolling. On first and second levels (behind box tiers) were located ladies' rest rooms, and on the third was installed a bar, where uniformed waiters served drinks "in a discreet atmosphere." The theater was lit by gas burning in 19 crystal fixtures hanging from the ceiling. The interior walls were painted rose. Medallions spaced around the walls depicted Auber, Donizetti, Verdi, and Meyerbeer, with Rossini occupying the central position. The only writer honored with a medallion was Schiller. The stage was criticized for being too wide. Backstage were located 20 dressing rooms and space for stage machinery. The roof of the theater was tiled; stairs of cut stone led up to theater entrances.

Not only did the Lyrico Fluminense in the 1850's host opera stars of such international magnitude as Annetta Casaloni (chosen by Verdi to sing Maddalena at the première of *Rigoletto* March 11, 1851<sup>24</sup>), Anne Arsène Charton-Demeur (1827-1892; created the role of Dido at the première of Berlioz's *Les Troyens* November 4, 1863<sup>25</sup>), Anne Caroline de Lagrange (1825-1905<sup>26</sup>), Rosine Stol[t]z (1815-1903; soloist at the Paris premières of Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* [Ascanio] and of *Roméo et Juliette*<sup>27</sup>), and the paramount tenor of the epoch, Enrico Tamberli[c]k (1820-1889<sup>28</sup>), but also it was in the Lyrico Fluminense that Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871) in 1855 played four of his six concerts while en route to and from Buenos Aires.<sup>29</sup>

Such was the illustriousness of the visiting Europeans who had already performed at the Lyrico Fluminense during the preceding five years that in 1857 Wagner needed fear no loss of prestige by himself appearing there. Nor was the resident Italian company despicable. In 1856 (as in prior years since its opening) Gioacchino Giannini (1817-1860) continued directing the orchestra of the resident Teatro Lyrico Fluminense opera company. That same year (1856) the company enrolled seven "artistas" headed by the above mentioned Madame Charton-Demeur of Berlioz fame and twenty "coristas."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Gaetano Cesari and Alessandro Luzio, *I Copialettere di Giuseppe Verdi* (Bologna: Forni, 1968), p. 491.

<sup>25</sup>Jacques Barzun, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1950), II, 237; see also I, 513, II, 162. Concerning her successes at London in 1852, see Benjamin Lumley, *Reminiscences of the Opera* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1864), pp. 346, 348.

<sup>26</sup>Lumley, pp. 339 (London début in *Lucia di Lammermoor*), 343, 345. For her triumphs at Buenos Aires in 1859, where she debuted December 17 at the Teatro de la Victoria (again in *Lucia*), her picture and her biography, see Gesualdo, II, 41-42.

<sup>27</sup>Barzun, I, 319. Concerning her tempestuous career, see *The New Grove*, xviii, 169. She created the roles of Leonore and Zaida in Donizetti's *La favorite* (December 2, 1840) and *Dom Sébastien* (November 13, 1843).

<sup>28</sup>Profiled in all standard lexicons, Tamberli[c]k made his Rio de Janeiro début June 6, 1856, in Rossini's *Otello*. After twelve operas at Rio, he sang five at Montevideo beginning with *Il trovatore* January 10, 1857 (Lauro Ayestarán, *La música en el Uruguay* [Montevideo: SODRE, 1953], I, 217-220). From Montevideo he passed to Buenos Aires, where he inaugurated the old Teatro Colón (Gesualdo, II, 35-38).

<sup>29</sup>July 25, August 3, August 18, September 26, 1855. See Ayres de Andrade, "Um rival de Liszt no Rio de Janeiro," *Revista Brasileira de Música*, 1/1 (April-June 1962), 27-50. Charton-Demeur and Casaloni assisted at three of Thalberg's concerts; see their portraits between pp. 32-33.

<sup>30</sup>Múcio da Paixão, *O Theatro no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Brasília Editora, [?1936]), pp. 324-325, listed by individual name the entire personnel of the Lyrico company in 1856. Management consisted of João Maria do Valle and Manuel Pinto Torres Neves, *directoria*; and Manuel José de Araújo, *gerente*.





Giannini, born at Lucca, March 20, 1813, had studied there with the Lucca *maestro di cappella* and cathedral canon, Marco Santucci (1762-1843; teacher of Puccini's father, Michele Puccini [1813-1864]), and with Domenico Fanucchi (1795-1862; eminent Lucca-born organist and sacred music composer). In 1846 the 29-year-old Giannini arrived at Rio de Janeiro to direct the Italian opera company contracted that year for the Theatro São Pedro de Alcântara.<sup>31</sup> In that theater he conducted on October 27, 1846, the South American première of Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*.<sup>32</sup> Remaining in Brazil, he shared musical direction at the São Pedro de Alcântara with the Oporto-born violinist and conductor who after settling at Rio de Janeiro in 1841 died there January 26, 1856, João Victor Ribas.<sup>33</sup>

Giannini conducted the South American première of Verdi's *Macbeth* at the already mentioned official inauguration of the Lyrico Fluminense March 25, 1852. In 1855, the same year that he won appointment to the newly created chair of organ, accompaniment, and counterpoint (*cadeira de regras de acompanhar, órgão e contrapunto*) in the Conservatório Nacional,<sup>34</sup> Giannini directed the orchestra that played at the Thalberg concerts. At the first of these, July 25, 1855, he conducted an *Ouvertura pela orchestra* of his own composition (item 7 on the program that began with the overture to Flotow's *Stradella*<sup>35</sup>). To begin Thalberg's second concert August 3, Giannini conducted the *ouvertura* to the first opera on a Brazilian subject written at Rio de Janeiro, *Marília de Itamaracá ou A donzella da Mangueira*. With libretto based on an episode during the Dutch invasion of Pernambuco, this opera was composed by a German "doctor of music from Berlin" and "pupil of Liszt" residing at Rio de Janeiro since 1849, Adolph Maersch.<sup>36</sup>

The next year after Thalberg's concerts Giannini pioneered with his own original "operatic sketch" on a national subject, *Vésperas dos Guararapes* (Manuel de Araújo Pôrto-Alegre's verses translated into Italian). Sung between second and third acts of *Il trovatore* November 27, 1856, at the Lyrico Fluminense by Enrico

<sup>31</sup>The Real Theatro de São João inaugurated October 12, 1813, with *O juramento dos numes* (opera by Marcos Portugal) changed its name to Imperial Theatro de São Pedro de Alcântara by Pedro I's decree of September 15, 1824. From May 30, 1831, to June 9, 1838, it was called the Theatro Constitucional Fluminense. Two fires destroyed the successively rebuilt São Pedro, August 9, 1851, and January 26, 1856. The Lyrico Fluminense was built in response to the fire of August 9, 1851. See Lafayette Silva, pp. 24-29, for summary history of this theater under its different names.

<sup>32</sup>Details concerning Giannini from *Enciclopédia da música brasileira: erudita, folclórica e popular* (São Paulo: Art Editora, 1977), I, 309. Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera 1597-1940* (1955), I, 756, lists first performance of *Lucrezia Borgia* at Buenos Aires April 5, 1849.

<sup>33</sup>Ernesto Vieira, *Diccionario biographico de musicos portugueses* (Lisbon: Mattos Moreira & Pinheiro, 1900), II, 257. Concerning Ribas's allegorical cantata *Il nuovo Pigmalião* dedicated to the Empress of Brazil, see [Mercedes Reis Pequeno], *Música no Rio de Janeiro Imperial 1822-1870* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional, [1970]), p. 11. Ribas "published countless romances, modinhas, quadrilhas, etc."

<sup>34</sup>Inaugurated August 13, 1848, the conservatory floundered during the first few years for lack of a secure income. Finally, by decree of January 23, 1855, the "conservatory became the 5th Section of the Academy of Fine Arts." Thenceforth it was financed by the government (rather than dependent on income from lotteries). See Luiz Heitor Corrêa de Azevedo, *150 Anos de Música no Brasil (1800-1950)* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1956), pp. 53-55.

<sup>35</sup>Program in *Jornal do Commercio*, July 25, 1855, facsimiled in Ayres de Andrade, between pp. 32 and 33.

<sup>36</sup>Concerning Maersch, see *150 Anos de Música*, p. 64; *Música no Rio de Janeiro Imperial*, pp. 33 (item 96) and 47 (item 157).





Tamberlik, this patriotic "esboço de ópera" proved so well liked that Tamberlik included Giannini's "lyric scene" *Dexai que as crianças venham a ter comigo* at his farewell concert in the Lyrico Fluminense December 16, 1856.<sup>37</sup>

In 1860 Giannini became director of music in the Imperial Chapel (for which he composed copious orchestrally accompanied works). His most famous pupil, Antônio Carlos Gomes (1836-1896), went him better by using Portuguese texts for both his operas composed before departure for Milan—*A noite do castelo* (3 acts; Teatro Lyrico Fluminense, September 4, 1861; libretto by A. J. Fernandes dos Reis) and *Joana de Flandres* (4 acts; Lyrico Fluminense, September 15, 1863; libretto by Salvador de Mendonça).<sup>38</sup>

How would Giannini—whose directing an opera overture by the German "doctor of music" resident at Rio de Janeiro in the 1850's, Adolph Maersch, is documented<sup>39</sup>—have reacted to the scores of *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*?<sup>40</sup> Whether or not Giannini's professional opinion was sought, Pedro II did certainly receive all three luxuriously bound scores bearing Wagner's inscriptions in German.<sup>41</sup> Contrary to Wagner's report that the Emperor failed to acknowledge their receipt, Dom Pedro II did acknowledge receipt—but in a somewhat noncommittal reply that failed to reach Wagner. After thanking him, Pedro II explained that for the time being he lacked the leisure necessary to examine the three scores.<sup>42</sup> When in 1852 so consummate a composer as Robert Franz had been forced to confess his utter inability to make musical sense out of Wagner's score for

<sup>37</sup>Ayres de Andrade, *Francisco Manuel da Silva e seu tempo* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições Tempo Brasileiro, 1967), II, 47 and 84-86.

<sup>38</sup>Corrêa de Azevedo, *Relação das óperas de Autores brasileiros* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do MES, 1938), pp. 36-37.

<sup>39</sup>According to Corrêa de Azevedo, *Relação*, p. 16, Maersch's opera was staged: "Em 1854, no Teatro Lyrico Fluminense, subia à cena a ópera *Marília* . . . libretto de Luiz Vicente De Simoni (italiano), música de Adolfo Maersch (alemão), ambos fixados no Brasil." However, Carlos H. Oberwacker, Jr., *A contribuição teuta a formação da nação brasileira*, 2.<sup>a</sup> edição (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Presença, 1968), p. 401, denies that Maersch's opera was staged.

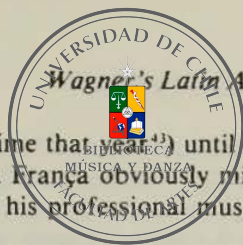
For the title page of Maersch's *Flores Guanabarenses* (Rio de Janeiro: Salmon e C.ª, 1852/57), see [Mercedes Reis Pequeno], *Rio Musical Crônica de uma cidade* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional, 1965), plate opp. p. 20; see also item 5 on pp. 11-12. According to Franz Pazdirek, *Universal-Handbuch der Musikliteratur*, Maersch published five opus-numbers in Germany, beginning with *Vier deutsche Lieder*, op. 1. Only one opus-title suggests where he may have lived; *Klänge von der Insel Mainau*, waltzes, op. 4, connects him with the 15-acre island north of Constance = Konstanz.

<sup>40</sup>*Der fliegende Holländer. Romantische Oper in 3 Aufzügen . . . Vollständiger Clavieraufzug* (Dresden: C. F. Meser, 1844 [Plate no. 275; 274 pp.]); in a second issue dated approximately 1857 Hermann Müller's name is added to Meser's); *Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg. Romantische Oper in drei Acten . . . Vollständiger Clavieraufzug* (Dresden: C. F. Meser, ca. 1845 [Plate no. 325, 263 pp.]); in 1852 Meser published a *Zweite Auflage mit einer neuen Bearbeitung des dritten Actes* [*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 36/8, February 20, 1852, p. 92]; *Lohengrin. Romantische Oper in drei Acten . . . Clavieraufzug von Theodor Uhlig* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1852 [Plate no. 8411, 327 pp.]).

<sup>41</sup>In his letter to Wagner dated March 22, Ferreira França suggested writing the dedications in German, "which language the Emperor loves and speaks with ease."

<sup>42</sup>Pedro Calmon, *História de D. Pedro II*, III (*No País e no Estrangeiro 1870-1887*), 1101: "Wagner mandou-lhe as partituras das três óperas, que D. Pedro II recebeu, meio perplexo, pois por Paulo Barbosa [da Silva, recalled to be the Emperor's majordomo in November 1850; died January 28, 1868] agradeceu sem julgar; que faltara lazer para a análise." Copy of the Emperor's reply credited to the Américo Lacombe archive. Pedro II gave Wagner's autographed scores to the Rio de Janeiro Biblioteca Nacional (belonging to the Teresa Cristina collection; see Calmon's footnote 23).





*Lohengrin* (published for the first time that year<sup>43</sup>) until he heard and saw *Lohengrin* mounted at Weimar,<sup>44</sup> Ferreira França obviously miscalculated when he supposed that the Emperor (or any of his professional music advisers) could fathom Wagner's scores at mere sight.

Ferreira França's own enthusiasm did not grow from looking at any of Wagner's scores, but from seeing productions. On March 22, 1857, he said that "for a long time" Wagner had been among those composers whose music had charmed him most. On June 16 he wrote from Jena that before hearing *Tannhäuser* at Weimar

I was already familiar with the best conductors and singers of Europe<sup>45</sup> and, to tell the truth, had grown musically somewhat blasé. But I was swept away with emotion and admiration by your music which has affected me beyond that of most other great masters. To the degree that my musical knowledge permits me, I would say that yours is indeed the true language of both poetry and music. While many other composers are content with merely making a discordant racket, you speak intelligently, and as a result make yourself understood. *Tannhäuser* is an enthralling work . . .

In his letter from Jena dated June 26, Ferreira França—again signing himself *Dr. Ernesto Ferreira-França* and again writing in French—assured Wagner that it was his consuming desire to plant German culture in Brazil. Next year the publishing firm at Leipzig to which belonged Wagner's brother-in-law Friedrich Brockhaus (married to Wagner's sister Luise) published Ferreira França's 39-page pamphlet *Brasilien und Deutschland. Ein offener Brief an die Redactionen der deutschen Tagespresse*.<sup>46</sup> In 1859 the same Leipzig firm issued his 119-page opera libretto *Lindoya. Tragedia lyrica em quatro actos*.<sup>47</sup> Written for a competition sponsored by the Conservatório Dramático Brasileiro (founded April 30, 1843),<sup>48</sup> *Lindoya* deals with the resistance of Paraguay Indians in 1750 to the incursions of troops commanded by the governor of Rio de Janeiro, Gomes Freire de Andrade (1685–1763).

*Lindoya*'s beloved Catambo = Guaicambo, failing to stem enemy advance by firing the edges of the Uruguay river, is captured and dies in prison. Overcome by grief, *Lindoya* expires from a self-inflicted poisonous snake bite.

<sup>43</sup>Breitkopf & Härtel issued [300?] autolithograph copies of Wagner's 395-page full orchestral score of *Lohengrin* in the same year that the firm published the piano-vocal score.

<sup>44</sup>See Robert Franz, "Ein Brief über Richard Wagner," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 36/13 (March 26, 1852), pp. 142–145.

<sup>45</sup>At age 26 he published at Paris a 324-page volume of poetry, *O Livro de Irtilia* (Paris: V<sup>a</sup>J. P. Ailland, Monlon e C<sup>a</sup>, 1854).

For a specimen sonnet from this maiden poetical collection, see Spencer Vampré, *Memórias para a História da Academia de São Paulo*, II (São Paulo: Saraiva & C.<sup>ia</sup> Editores, 1924), 134. Beginning "Beija o Favonio a flôr, na branda aurora," the sonneteer asks his lady love why she approves his love of beauty in nature, but reproves him from loving her, who incarnates beauty.

<sup>46</sup>Antônio Gonçalves Dias (1823–1864), paramount Brazilian poet of his generation, assured Pedro II that *Brasilien und Deutschland* "merited warm reception by the German press." See Calmon, *História de D. Pedro II*, II (1852–1870), p. 521.

<sup>47</sup>Cited in Wilhelm Heisius, *Allgemeines Bücher-Lexikon*, XIII (1857–1861) (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1863), p. 310, *Lindoya* = *Lindoiia* is summarized and described in Ferdinand Wolf's *Le Brésil littéraire* (1863), chapter 17. See the Portuguese translation, *O Brasil literário* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1955), pp. 342–343.

<sup>48</sup>José Galante de Sousa, *O Teatro no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: MEC/Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1960), I, 187. J. J. von Tschudi, *Reisen durch Südamerika* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1866), I, 142, gives July 19, 1845, as the date of its becoming a literary tribunal.



Apart from *Lindoya*, the Leipzig firm of Brockhaus issued in 1859—the same year as his opera libretto—Ferreira França's 230-page *Chrestomathia da lingua Brazílica*, containing a Tupi vocabulary, prayers in Tupi, and various doctrinal texts in Tupi copied from the British Library manuscript Cat. Kings 223, Ord. 5696.<sup>49</sup>

Ferreira França dated the preface to the *Chrestomathia* at Dresden, em Março de 1859—the same month that Wagner finished composing Act II of *Tristan und Isolde*. During the rest of 1859 Ferreira França busied himself trying to get published at Leipzig José de Anchieta's *Arte de Grammatica da lingoa mais vsada na costa do Brasil* [Coimbra: António de Mariz, 1595] and João Phelippe Bettendorf's *Compendio da Doutrina Christã na lingua portugueza, & Brasilica* [1687]. Called back to Brazil before the printing of either Tupi language work could be completed, he next published at Rio de Janeiro in 1860 his 65-page translation into Italian of a three-act opera libretto. Dealing with an episode in the discovery of Brazil, the Portuguese text of the opera libretto in question, *Moema e Paraguassú*, was written by the imperial physician who also distinguished himself as professor of organic chemistry and of medicine, Francisco Bonifácio de Abreu (Bahia, November 29, 1819; Rio de Janeiro, July 30, 1887).

After the usual application and public competition, Ferreira França won a teaching post in the Faculty of Law at São Paulo—July 23, 1861, being his date of official appointment. On December 15, 1871, he ascended to the chair of Natural Law, which he occupied until retirement from the São Paulo Faculty of Law in 1877. Thenceforth, he resided at Rio de Janeiro until his death there December 24, 1888.

Neither Sacramento Blake's *Diccionario Bibliographico Brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Nacional, 1893), II, 286–288, 413–415, nor Spencer Vampré's *Memórias para a História da Academia de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Saraiva & C<sup>a</sup> [Livraria Acadêmica], 1924), II, 131–133—from which the biobibliographical details in the preceding two paragraphs have been extracted—mentions Wagner. Whether Ferreira França visited Europe at any time after 1860, or whether he pursued Wagner after writing him the six letters saved by Wagner must therefore remain conjectural.

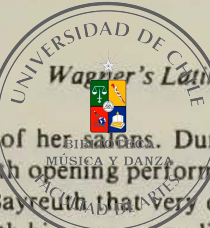
According to the Emperor's best informed biographer, Pedro II "saw" Wagner during his first visit to Germany in late summer of 1871.<sup>50</sup> In Berlin on Wednesday August 23, the high society leader Marie von Schleinitz<sup>51</sup>—Wagner's fanatical

<sup>49</sup>Concerning the 1859 *Chrestomathia*, see Plínio Ayrosa, *Apontamentos para a Bibliografia da lingua tupi-guaraní* (São Paulo: Estabelecimento Gráfico "Cruzeiro do Sul," 1943), pp. 108–109; *Apontamentos*, 2.<sup>a</sup> ed. (Universidade de São Paulo, Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciência e Letras, Boletim N.º 169 [Etnografia e Língua Tupi-Guaraní, N.º 28], 1954), pp. 99–100. *Boletim CVI* [Etnografia, N.º 17] contains Plínio Ayrosa's re-edition of portions of the British Library manuscript published in the *Chrestomathia*, pp. 157–197. According to Ayrosa, Ferreira França was a careful transcriber.

<sup>50</sup>Calmon, *História*, III, 920: "No salão da Condessa de Schleinitz, o imperador viu pela primeira vez Richard Wagner." Wagner spent April 25 to May 8, 1871, at Berlin (Tiergarten Hotel), where on May 5 he conducted a concert at the Royal Opera House. Contradictory dates prevent verifying that Pedro II "saw" Wagner anywhere during late summer of 1871. On Wednesday, September 6, 1871, Wagner remarked to Cosima that a letter just written by her matched the addressee "as little as *Tristan the Emperor of Brazil*" (*Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, I, 409).

<sup>51</sup>Born Maria von Buch (1842–1912), she married the Prussian minister of the Royal Household, Baron (Count after 1879) Alexander Schleinitz (1807–1885). She played a leading role in the establishment of the Bayreuth Festival.





devotee—received Pedro II at one of her saloons. During his second visit to Germany, Pedro II attended the Bayreuth opening performance of *Das Rheingold* Sunday, August 13, 1876. Arriving at Bayreuth that very day, he stayed overnight at a hotel where he signed the register with his occupation listed as *Kaiser*. After the performance—during which Franz Betz (Wotan) “mislaid the ring, and a stagehand raised the backdrop too soon during the first scene change, disclosing the rear wall of the theater and a group of fellow stage hands standing around in their shirt sleeves”<sup>52</sup>—Wagner was “beside himself with rage.” However, the Emperor’s late-night visit to Wahnfried restored his spirits. As Cosima wrote in her diary for August 13, “the sudden visit of the Emperor of Brazil restores the mood of ebullience. We go to bed in very good spirits.”<sup>53</sup>

With all the background data thus far assembled concerning both Emperor Pedro II and Ferreira França now in the reader’s hands, the letters written by the latter acquire greater added meaning. First published from their originals at Wahnfried in *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv*, XIII/3 (October 1939), 211–216, the 1939 printed version is facsimiled below at pages 79–83. English paraphrases of Ferreira França’s six letters begin as follows.

Wilsdruffergasse No. 3  
Dresden, March 9, 1857

Sir,

I am one of the admirers of your works, both musical and literary. Knowing that you find yourself in Zürich and perhaps lack anything at the moment that binds you to Europe, the idea occurred to me of establishing a relation between you and my country. In my thinking, the great talent which none can deny you invites association with our enchanting southern environment. I thought that perhaps you might be prevailed upon to make a trip to Brazil, the capital of which, Rio de Janeiro (as you must know), possesses a very well installed Italian Opera where your works could be presented, and where without doubt you would find support and protection from the Emperor—a person who zealously foments letters and arts.

Accordingly, I have taken the liberty of consulting you on the matter, and if you authorize my doing so I will write the direction of the Teatro Lyrico of Rio de Janeiro on the 24th of this month [March 1857] a letter transmitting your desires. Although not myself charged with taking any initiative in this matter, I believe that I will be doing my country a service by affording it an opportunity to appreciate such a talent as yours.

I also understand that you are now finishing a large work, the title of which is worthy of you—*The Nibelungs*. If perchance you are interested in dedicating your new opera, I will with great pleasure undertake to convey your desire to the Emperor, whose qualities and learning exceed all praise. In that event, your request should be accompanied by a copy of all your musical and

<sup>52</sup>Gregor-Dellin, *Richard Wagner*, p. 432.

<sup>53</sup>*Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, I, 919. On April 2, 1888, during his third trip to Europe, Pedro II by chance met Nietzsche during a train trip from Nice to Genoa. According to Nietzsche's sister (Elizabeth Foerster), Wagner was one of their topics of conversation. See Calmon, *História*, IV, 1390.



poetical works. I hope, Sir, that you will excuse the liberty I have taken, and will accept my expression of highest esteem.

I have the honor to be your most humble servant

Dr. Ernesto Ferreira França.

In his reply dated at Zürich March 15, 1857, six days after Ferreira França's letter dated March 9 at Dresden, Wagner explained why the Nibelungs could not suit Rio de Janeiro.

[Zürich, March 15, 1857]

Illustrious Sir: Your communication and suggestion greatly surprised and rejoiced me. However, I regret not being able to accept your invitation to Rio de Janeiro. The character of my art joins me solely to Germany and I believe that Italian singers would find it difficult to make my dramatic compositions understood. So far as my new work is concerned, it is very complicated and I must say that it will take me another two years of work. I must also say that frankly I do not believe that it would serve to dedicate it to His Majesty, the Emperor of Brazil. Only under exceptional circumstances could it be staged, and those conditions exist solely in Germany.

Nonetheless, the prospect which you open to me of finding in the Emperor a person so interested in the arts and so magnanimous a patron that he would extend me his favor cannot but animate me in the precarious straits in which I continuously find myself. Acting on your supposition that His Majesty might favorably accept my musical and poetic works sent him, you may inform me where to send properly prepared copies (with the understanding that you will kindly look after mailing them to their destination).

If this mailing is well received, there exists the possibility of dedicating to the Emperor another work already conceived and awaiting later realization, a work that I consider more appropriate for dedication to him. I close these lines repeating that your offer causes me extraordinary happiness. I add the expression of my highest esteem and gratitude.

[Yours most devotedly,  
Richard Wagner]

Ferreira França's second letter contained the following sentiments:

Dresden, March 22, 1857  
[Wilsdruffergasse No. 3]

Sir,

I have the honor to have received your letter of the 15th and beg you to excuse my not having replied immediately because of pressing business. With great delight in being serviceable, I can guarantee reception by His Majesty of whatever you confide to me. I am certain that the Emperor—who is gifted with talent and excellent taste for both letters and the fine arts—will take a double interest in your works. Furthermore, His Majesty always takes much pleasure in recognizing merit, which in his view confers worldwide citizenship. I therefore place myself at your entire disposal (as I had the honor to tell you



previously). You may send whatever you intend to present the Emperor here to Dresden, in care of the Brazilian Consul, whose address is Räcknitzstrasse No. 6.

It will also be very agreeable for me to make known your works in Brazil. Far from fearing (as apparently you do) that your works may not accord with our taste, I believe on the contrary that they might enjoy great success. I judge for myself. Your music has for a long time been among that which has charmed me the most. The sole difficulty in the presentation of your operas at Rio de Janeiro would be translation of the texts. But that difficulty is by no means insurmountable. So far as the staging goes, the theater is quite well equipped, and the artists are, in general, good.

Regarding the future work that you might perhaps dedicate to His Majesty: I shall always continue at your service, because of my admiration for such a splendid talent as yours. It is customary when presenting a work to His Majesty to write a few lines on the first blank page. You can do so in German, since German is a language which the Emperor both loves and speaks with ease (as for that matter he speaks most modern European languages). Not only is the Emperor possessed of many natural gifts, but also he is extremely well educated.

I congratulate myself on having made the acquaintance of someone so worthy of esteem as you, and I beg you to believe in the high regard with which I have the honor to subscribe myself

Your very humble servant,  
Dr. Ernesto Ferreira-França

Fourteen weeks elapsed between Ferreira França's second and third letters. During that interval, Wagner (1) had written a letter to the Emperor, (2) had written Ferreira França two letters, and (3) had prepared three piano-vocal scores for dispatch to Rio de Janeiro.

Jena, June 16, 1857

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your two letters, as well as the parcel destined for His Majesty the Emperor. Already I have hastily dispatched the latter to Hamburg, whence it will leave for Rio de Janeiro on the 20th of this month [June 20]. Regarding your letter to His Majesty: I am sending it to my family with my own correspondence, so that my father may personally place it in the hands of the Emperor.

I beg a thousand pardons for not having been able to reply immediately to your last kind letter. I have been away on a trip to Bonn, and arrived here only a few days ago. Nonetheless, I immediately gave the necessary orders so that your parcel would not be at all delayed.

Yesterday I again had an opportunity to appreciate your beautiful and great talent. *Tannhäuser* was given at the Weimar Theater, and I—who have heard the best masters and the foremost singers of Europe, and who (to tell truth) have become somewhat surfeited, musically speaking—was completely swept away and seized by admiration. What your music has done to arouse me goes far beyond what other great masters' compositions have done; and, were I





sufficient a musical authority to dictate, I would inscribe you as true arbiter of the language of both poetry and music. While many others make mere noise without striking discords, what you speak and what you conceive make themselves fully understood. *Tannhäuser* is indeed one of those compositions that, however staged, can be heartily enjoyed from beginning to end—which says all. Kindly excuse this digression, which nonetheless does not go beyond my sincere feelings. I believe that I can predict your immense success at Rio de Janeiro.

At the same time that I dispatched your letter to Rio de Janeiro, I also took the opportunity of mailing one of our leading newspapers a short sketch of your life and works. I do not doubt that the Emperor will take delight in the works that you have sent him, and I will immediately communicate news of his receipt of them. I will continue taking lively pleasure in any letters with which you may choose to honor me, sent care of Schurz at the Dresden address that I gave you.

My utmost services remain at your command. Receive this testimonial of the true esteem and high consideration of your

Very devoted  
Dr. E. Ferreira-França

A day or so after his June 16 letter to Wagner, Ferreira França received an invitation from Wagner to visit him in Switzerland. On June 26 Ferreira França gave as his excuse for not replying by return of mail the pressure of preparing correspondence for Brazil.

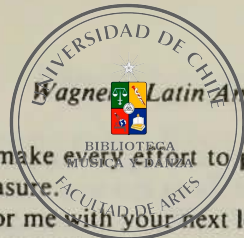
Jena, June 26, 1857

Sir,

My correspondence for Brazil has not until now permitted my replying to your kind letter, which I had the honor of receiving. Please excuse my delay in fulfilling my obligation.

I am entirely ready to proceed with whatever plan you find agreeable. At the same time, I hold fast to the conviction that Brazil will be deeply grateful to me for my providing an opportunity to appreciate your great merits. Believe me, sir: although a new people that has for only a short time enjoyed a liberal régime and orderly conduct of public affairs, we nonetheless have a feeling for beauty. My task will be to turn this feeling to my nation's cultural benefit, while at the same time affording a new opportunity for hospitable German outreach in the New World. German propaganda is by no means my aim. Rather, it is German science and culture which I wish to see auspiciously reborn in Brazil along with the German spirit as a needed corrective to the Latin heritage. Despite our intellectual riches, our faculties often remain not fully utilized; and just now I am scarcely concerned with the masses, which can after all take care of themselves, guided as they are by public opinion which is always more or less justified.

I remain entirely at your disposal for whatever I can do to satisfy your desires. However, at the moment I find myself unfortunately unable to undertake a trip to Switzerland. A publication presently in hand detains me. Once it



is finished, be assured that I will make every effort to pay you a visit that is sure to afford me the liveliest pleasure.

Whenever you may wish to honor me with your next letter, you may send it directly to Jena, where I shall be detained for some time. Accept again, I beg of you, my most fervent salutations.

Devotedly yours,  
Dr. Ernesto Ferreira-França

Instead of delaying a few days, Wagner again wrote back immediately—now proposing not only to dedicate *Tristan und Isolde* to the Emperor but also again asking how to phrase the dedication and enquiring what might be his financial reward. Simultaneously, Wagner enjoined Ferreira França to keep entirely confidential the contents of their correspondence one with another. Ferreira França's reply, although dated only slightly more than a fortnight after his June 26 letter, begins with another apology for delay in answering Wagner's eagerly pursued enquiries.

Jena, July 12, 1857

Sir,

Again, I beg a thousand pardons for not having been able to reply immediately to your amiable letter. I was in Göttingen doing some research that had to be done in the library there and received your letter only upon my return.

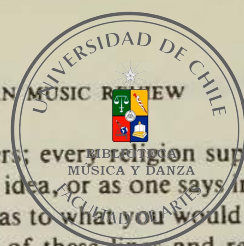
The project that you have so kindly communicated charms me and will, I believe, be welcomed among us with great satisfaction. Not wishing to reply until I could assure you that without delay I had busied myself complying with your expressed wishes, I have just a moment ago finished my letter to the direction of the Theatro Lyrico at Rio de Janeiro.

Also, I am just now writing my father whom I have entrusted with pushing this affair and who will inform His Majesty of your desire to dedicate *Tristan und Isolde* to him. But I do believe that you should yourself write His Majesty making known your request. With great pleasure, I will see to it that your letter reaches its lofty destination. So far as the manner of addressing the Emperor goes, a point brought up in your last letter, I leave this matter to your own discretion. It would be presumptuous for me to prescribe rules, when your fertile imagination and beautiful language have already earned your texts such great success.

It will always afford me lively and sincere satisfaction if I succeed in making your operas generally known in Brazil—and, more particularly, this new work announced under such happy augury. I do believe that the idea of having your librettos translated into Italian will henceforth be found very beneficial. Your works can then with much greater ease be presented in Italy, France, and other countries. As for the choice of a translator, I am of the opinion that you should choose a person who will do the job under your own supervision.

Rest completely assured, I beg you, that nothing which has passed between us will be made known here in Europe, and please believe that your last letter has been especially welcome, because of the confidence reposed in me. I trust that the opera management at Rio will designate compensation that does them honor and worthily matches your offer. I see no reason for you to be worried





about money matters; every religion supports its ministers. However, if you yourself give me an idea, or as one says in German, *ein Wink*, I can then pass on your suggestion as to what you would consider appropriate compensation.

Excuse the haste of these lines and remain always assured of the perfect friendship of

Your devoted  
Ferreira França

Wagner's proposal that Ferreira França visit him in Switzerland elicited a counter-proposal in Ferreira França's letter, dated at Jena, July 20, 1857. He now suggests that Wagner help him obtain an invitation to lecture in a Swiss university—preferably at Zürich.

Ferreira França's confessing that he had already been refused *Privatdozent* ([un-salaried] university lecturer) status in a German university (because not possessed of any German civic rights) may have been an unwise tactic. After having begun their correspondence posing as Wagner's potential great benefactor, he now turns the tables when he makes visiting Wagner conditional on being himself done a considerable favor.

Jena, July 20, 1857

Sir,

I have not forgotten your extremely kind proposal that I come visit you in Switzerland. For me it would be a great and true pleasure to make your personal acquaintance. I therefore take the liberty of soliciting your help in achieving this trip.

I have already applied for the right to teach in a German university, with the status of *Privatdozent*. Unfortunately, my application could not be favorably acted on, because my not being legally domiciled in a German state prevented the respective ministries from considering it. Thus rebuffed, I have resolved to seek the same lecturing rights in a Swiss university—and I prefer Zürich. Since I know no one in Switzerland and you are there on the spot, may I prevail upon you to do me the kindness of enquiring from the dean of the [Zürich] law faculty how I should proceed and giving me the necessary information?

You might also do me the kindness of mentioning that I became *Doctor Juris Utriusque* [Doctor of Civil and Canon Law] of Leipzig University with a dissertation in Latin and can furnish all the documentation that would be required of me.

I beg a thousand pardons for importuning you on this account. The sympathy that I feel for so distinguished a person as you serves as my sufficient excuse for allowing myself to call upon your generosity. As I already had the honor of telling you, I wrote Rio de Janeiro concerning *Tristan und Isolde* and your intention of dedicating it to His Majesty. Should you wish to write directly to His Majesty concerning this dedication, I remain at your entire disposition for the sending of the letter.

Accept once again the tribute of highest consideration and perfect esteem from him who has the honor of being

Your very devoted  
Ferreira França



## I. Ernesto Ferreira-França an Richard Wagner

Wilsdruffergasse No 3  
Dresden le 9 Mars 1857

Monsieur.

Je suis un des admirateurs de votre talent et de vos productions tant musicales que littéraires, et sachant que vous êtes à Zurich, et peut-être sans avoir des liens qui vous attachent pour le moment à ma patrie, en joignant dans ma pensée la nature enchanteresse du Midi et le beau génie que personne ne saurait vous disputer. J'ai donc pensé vous vous pourriez peut-être décider à faire un voyage au Brésil, dont la capitale Rio de Janeiro a comme vous le savez un opéra Italien très-bien monté, où vos productions pourraient être mises en scène<sup>25)</sup> et où vous trouveriez sans doute dans l'Empereur, protecteur zélé des lettres et des arts, un appui et une protection.

J'ai donc pris a liberté de vous consulter sur ce rapport, et si vous m'y autorisez, j'écrirai le 24 de ce mois à la Direction du Théâtre Lyrique de Rio de Janeiro, ce qu'il vous plaira que je lui fasse savoir. Je ne suis pas chargé de prendre sous ce rapport aucune initiative, mais je croirai avoir fait un service à ma patrie en lui fournissant l'occasion l'apprécier un talent comme le vôtre.

J'entends encore que vous mettez la dernière main à un grand ouvrage dont le titre est digne de vous — Die Niebelungen. Si par hasard vous vouliez dédier à S. M. l'Empereur ce nouvel Opéra, je me chargerais avec beaucoup de plaisir de faire parvenir votre demande à S. M., dont les qualités et l'illustration sont au-dessus de tout éloge. Dans ce cas votre requête devrait être ac[c]ompagnée d'un exemplaire de toutes vos oeuvres musicales et poétiques. J'espère, Monsieur, que vous voudrez bien excuser la liberté que j'ai prise, et que vous agréerez l'hommage de la haute considération avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être

Votre très humble serv[i]t[eu]r  
le Dr. Ernesto Ferreira-França

## II. Richard Wagner an Ernesto Ferreira-França.

Geehrter Herr!

Sehr überrascht und erfreut durch Ihre Mittheilung und Aufforderung, muß ich dennoch bedauern, einer Einladung nach Rio [de] Janeiro nicht folgen zu können. Das Eigenthümliche meiner Kunstrichtung verweist mich einzig auf Deutschland, und namentlich dürften meine dramatischen Compositionen von Italienischen Sängern wohl schwerlich zum Verständnis zu bringen sein. Mit meinem neuesten, sehr complicirten Werke, an dem ich mindestens noch 2 Jahre zu arbeiten habe, verhält es sich aber so, daß ich unmöglich glauben kann, es werde sich zu einer Dedication an S. M. d[en] Kaiser von Br[asilien] eignen. Es wird nur unter außerordentlichen Umständen zur Aufführung zu bringen sein, und diese können nur in Deutschland herbeigeführt werden. Die Aussicht, die Sie mir jedoch eröffnen, in der Person Ihres kunstsinnigen Kaisers einen großmüthigen Protector zu finden, dürfte mir, in meiner andauernd sehr schwierigen Lage, sehr erfreulich sein, wenn ich im Stande wäre, seine Gunst zu verdienen. Glauben Sie, daß eine Zusendung meiner musikalischen u. poetischen Werke von S. M. irgendwo günstig u. vortheilhaft aufgenommen werden könnte, so bitte ich Sie, mir zu melden, bis wann ich Ihnen die geeignet hergerichteten Exemplare

<sup>25)</sup> Im Original steht „scènes“.<sup>26)</sup> Wiedergegeben nach dem im Archiv des Hauses Wahnfried befindlichen Originalkonzept Wagners!



zu überschicken hätte, falls sich mit der Weiterbeförderung<sup>27)</sup> gütigst beschweren wollten. Sollte diese Zusendung gut aufgenommen werden, so hätte ich mir vorzubehalten, ein bereits entworfenes, später auszuführendes Werk, das ich zu diesem Zwecke geeigneter finde, dem Kaiser zu dediciren.

Ich schließe diese Zeilen mit der abernächigen Versicherung, daß Ihr Anerbieten mir ungewöhnliche Freude gemacht, und füge meinem Dank dafür den Ausdruck größter Hochachtung bei, mit der ich bin

[Ihr

[Zürich

15. März 1857.]<sup>28)</sup>

ergehenster

Richard Wagner]

### III. Ernesto Ferreira-França an Richard Wagner.

Dresden le 22 Mars 1857

Monsieur.

J'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir votre lettre du 15 et je vous prie de vouloir bien m'excuser si je n'y ai pas répondu immédiatement, à cause d'affaires pressantes. Je me mets avec beaucoup de plaisir à votre disposition pour faire parvenir à S. M. tout ce que vous voudrez me confier à cet effet. Je suis aussi bien persuadé que l'Empereur, doué de beaucoup de talent et d'un goût décidé pour lettres et les beaux arts, prendra à vos ouvrages un double intérêt. S. M. d'ailleurs accueille toujours avec beaucoup de plaisir le mérite que S. M. considère comme donnant le droit de cité dans toutes les parties du monde. Je me mets donc, comme j'ai eu l'honneur de vous le dire, entièrement à votre disposition et vous pourrez, m'envoyer, ce que vous avez l'intention de présenter à S. M. ici à Dresde — Räcknitzstrasse No 6 — aux soins de Mr. le Consul du Brésil.

Il me sera aussi très agréable de faire connaître vos ouvrages au Brésil, et loin de craindre comme le paraissez faire, qu'ils ne soient pas dans notre goût, je crois au contraire qu'ils ne pourront qu'avoir beaucoup de succès. Je'en juge par moi: votre musique est une de celles qui depuis longtemps m'ont<sup>29)</sup> charmé le plus. La seule difficulté dans la représentation de vos Opéras à Rio de Janeiro est la traduction du texte; mais celle là même n'est pas invincible: quant à la mise en scène, le théâtre est assez bien monté; et les artistes sont en général bons.

Quant à l'ouvrage futur que vous voudrez peut-être dédier à S. M. vous pouvez, Monsieur, disposer de moi en toute occasion, vu qu'il me sera toujours agréable de vous montrer combien je suis un admirateur d'un aussi beau talent.

Il est d'habitude quand on présente quelque ouvrage à S. M. d'écrire quelques lignes dans la première page blanche. Vous pouvez le faire en Allemand, vu que c'est une langue que l'Empereur aime et qu'il parle avec facilité; ainsi qu'en général la plupart des langues modernes de l'Europe. L'Empereur est non seulement un homme de beaucoup de dons naturels, mais aussi très instruit.

En me félicitant de l'occasion que j'ai eu de faire la connaissance d'une personne tellement digne d'estime je vous prie de croire à la haute considération avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être

Monsieur

Votre très humble serviteur  
le Dr. Ernesto Ferreira-França  
(Wilsdrufferg. 3).

<sup>27)</sup> Im Original steht „weiter Beförderung“!

<sup>28)</sup> Das Datum ergibt sich aus dem ersten Satz von Ferreira-Franças Brief an Wagner vom 22. März 1857!

<sup>29)</sup> Im Original steht „a“.



## IV. Ernesto Ferreira-França an Richard Wagner.

Jena de 16 Juin 1857

Monsieur!

J'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir vos deux lettres, ainsi que l'envoi que vous destinez à S. M. l'Empereur. Je me suis déjà hâté de le diriger sur Hamburg, et il partira pour Rio de Janeiro le 20 de ce mois. Quant à votre lettre à S. M. je l'envoie à ma famille avec ma correspondance, et elle sera remise par mon père lui-même entre les mains de l'Empereur.

Je vous demande mille excuses de ne pas avoir pu répondre immédiatement à votre obligeante lettre; j'étais en voyage, à Bonn, et je ne me trouve ici tout récemment. J'ai néanmoins aussitôt donné les ordres nécessaires pour que votre envoi ne fût point retardé.

J'ai eu hier encore l'occasion de pouvoir apprécier votre beau e[t] grand talent. On a donné Tannhäuser au Théâtre de Weimar, et moi qui ai entendu les premiers maîtres et les premiers chanteurs de l'Europe, et qui, pour dire vrai, suis un peu blasé en fait de musique, j'en ai été tout ému et saisi d'admiration. Votre musique a produit sur moi un effet que ne produisent certainement pas les compositions de bien d'autres grands maîtres, et si j'étais connaisseur en musique je dirais que vous avez compris le vrai langage et la poésie de l'art musical; vous parlez, vous comprenez, et pour cela vous vous faites comprendre; tandis que bien d'autres ne font qu'un bruit sans discordances frappantes. Tannhäuser est enfin uné de ces compositions que l'on peut entendre sans regarder la montre, d'un bout à l'autre, avec entrain, et c'est tout dire. Mais veuillez, Monsieur, m'excuser cette digression, qui pourtant n'est que la pure expression de mes sentiments. Je crois pouvoir vous prédire un immense succès à Rio de Janeiro.

En remettant votre lettre j'aurai aussi l'occasion d'envoyer une petite notice sur vous et vos ouvrages à un de nos premiers journaux. Je ne doute pas non plus du plaisir que S. M. aura de recevoir les ouvrages que vous Lui avez envoyés; et j'aurai l'honneur de vous faire part, aussitôt que l'on me communiquera leur remise à l'Empereur. J'aurai toujours également un vif plaisir à savoir directement de vos nouvelles, et je vous prie, toutes les fois que vous voudrez bien m'honorer de vos lettres, de vous diriger à Mr. Schurz à Dresde, à l'adresse que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous donner.

Disposez, Monsieur, de mes faibles services, et agréez l'hommage de la véritable estime et de la haute considération avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être

Votre tout-dévoûé

Dr. E. Ferreira-França.

## V. Ernesto Ferreira-França an Richard Wagner.

Jena, le 26 Juin 1857

Monsieur.

J'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir votre obligeante lettre, et c'est ma correspondance pour le Brésil qui ne m'a pas permis jusqu'à présent d'y répondre, comme c'était mon devoir: veuillez bien m'en excuser.

Je me trouve tout disposé à entrer dans un plan quelconque qui puisse vous être agréable, ayant en même temps la conviction que le Brésil me saura gré de lui donner l'apprécier vos grands mérites. Croyez-moi bien, Monsieur: peuple nouveau et qui ne jouit que depuis bien peu de temps d'un régime libéral et d'un ordre réglé des choses pbliques, nous n'en avons pas





moins un vii sentiment du beau. Tâche sera de profiter de ces sentiments pour la culture de ma patrie, tout en ouvrant à l'hospitalière Allemagne un nouvel horizon dans un nouvel hémisphère. Ceci, soit dit en passant, n'est pas propagande: je ne m'en occupe pas. C'est la science, c'est la culture allemande que je désirais voir renaître au Brésil sous heureux auspices; c'est l'esprit allemand, correctif nécessaire des races romanes, d'ailleurs pleines de richesses intellectuelles, mais qui malheureusement ne sont en grand nombre de cas, que facultés non utilisées: je ne m'occupe guère des masses; elles s'occupent d'elles-mêmes; et se régent par l'opinion publique, qui a ou a eu toujours plus ou moins raison.

Je suis donc tout à votre disposition dans ce que je pourrai pour complaire à vos désirs. Il s'agit à présent de mon voyage en Suisse. Quant à ce point, je me trouve malheureusement dans l'occasion tout à fait dans l'impossibilité de faire un pareille voyage. Une publication que j'ai entreprise m'en empêche, mais une fois terminée, soyez sûr que je ferai mon possible pour pouvoir vous rendre visite ce qui sera pour moi un bien vif plaisir.

Vous pourrez vous adresser directement à Jena, où je m'arrête quelque temps, quand<sup>20)</sup> vous voudrez bien m'honorer de vos lettres.

Agréer encore, je vous prie, mes salutations les plus empressées.

Votre tout-dévoué  
Dr. Ernesto Ferreira-França.

## VI. Ernesto Ferreira-França an Richard Wagner.

Jena, le 12 Juillet 1857

Monsieur.

Encore une fois mille pardons de ce que je n'ai pas pu répondre immédiatement à votre aimable lettre. J'étais à Göttingen où j'avais des recherches à faire à la Bibliothèque, et l'ai reçue qu'à mon retour!

Le projet que vous avez bien voulu me communiquer m'a charmé et, je crois, sera chez nous accueilli avec grande satisfaction. Ne voulant pas vous écrire, sans vous faire savoir que je m'étais occupé sans déli de complaire à vos désirs, je viens il y [a] un moment de finir ma lettre à la Direction du Théâtre Lyrique à Rio de Janeiro.

J'écris en même temps à mon père, que je charge de pousser cette affaire, et qui présentera également à S. M. le désir que vous m'exprimez de Lui dédier Tristan et Isolde. Mais sur ce compte je crois que vous devez écrire vous-même à S. M. et exposer Votre demande. Je me chargerai avec beaucoup de plaisir de faire parvenir votre lettre à sa haute destination. Quant à l'adresse, puisque vous m'en avez parlé au sujet de votre dernière lettre, j'ai à dire que vous pouvez la faire comme vous voudrez. Je me garderai bien de fixer des règles à quelqu'un qui a cette riche imagination et ce beau langage qui ont donné tant de succès à vos textes.

Ce sera, Monsieur, toujours por moi une bien vive et bien sincère satisfaction, si je réussis à faire connaître au Brésil vos Opéras en général, et en particulier ce nouvel ouvrage qui s'annonce sous d' aussi heureux auspices.

Je crois également qu'il est très utile de prendre dorénavant la délibération de traduire vos textes en Italien, vu que de cette façon on pourra avec beaucoup plus de facilité représenter vos<sup>21)</sup> ouvrages en Italien, en France etc. Quant au

<sup>20)</sup> Im Original steht „qd“.

<sup>21)</sup> Im Original steht „vous“.



traducteur. je crois qu'il vaut beaucoup mieux que vous le choisissiez vous-même. et que le travail soit fait sous votre direction.

Soyez, je vous prie, bien sûr que rien de ce qui s'est passé entre nous, ne transpire ici en Europe; et veuillez bien croire que votre lettre m'a été bien agréable à cause de la confiance que vous avez déposée en moi.

J'espère que la Direction à Rio vous marquera une compensation honorable pour elle et digne de vous être offerte. Je ne vois pas pourquoi vous vous gêneriez sur ce compte: toute religion entretient ses ministres. Vous pourriez même sur ce sujet me donner, comme on dit en allemand — Ein [en] Wink — vu que je pourrais insinuer dans ce sens ce qui vous serait convenable.

Excusez la hâte de ces lignes et soyez toujours sûr de la parfaite amitié avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur,

Votre tout-dévoué  
Ferreira França

## VII. Ernesto Ferreira-França an Richard Wagner.

Monsieur.

Je n'ai pas oublié la proposition que vous avez bien voulu me faire d'aller vous voir en Suisse. Ce serait moi un grand et véritable plaisir — que de faire personnellement votre connaissance. Je vous demande donc la permission de mettre en contribution votre obligeance pour un objet qui se trouverait lié à ce voyage.

J'ai, Monsieur, essayé d'acquérir ici en Allemagne dans une Université allemande — das Recht zu dociren — ou comme on dit aussi — mir die venia legendi zu erwerben — mich als Privatdozent zu habilitiren. Malheureusement ma prétention n'a point pu avoir de suite, vu que les Ministères respectifs n'ont pas admis ma demande: da ich das Bürgerrecht in einem dem Deutschen Bund angehörigen Staate nicht hatte. —

J'ai en conséquence pris la résolution de me diriger à cet effet à une Université de la Suisse et j'ai préféré Zürich. Je me permets donc, Monsieur, vu que je ne connais personne en Suisse, et que vous êtes sur les lieux, je me permets donc, dis-je, de vous prier de parler sur cet objet avec le Doyen de la faculté de Droit et de vouloir bien me donner les informations nécessaires.

Vous pourrez aussi avoir la complaisance de lui dire, que j'ai à cette fin écrit une dissertation latin, et que je suis Doctor Juris Ultriusque par l'Université de Leipzig. Je puis également fournir tous les documents que l'on voudra exiger de moi.

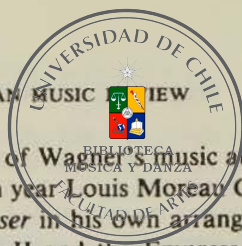
Je vous demande, Monsieur, mille excuses, de vous importuner sur ce compte; mais la sympathie que je me sens pour une personne aussi distinguée m'a paru une excuse suffisante pour que vous me permisiez cet appel à votre obligeance. J'ai déjà, comme j'ai eu l'honneur de vous dire, écrit à Rio de Janeiro sur le compte de Tristan et Isolde, ainsi que fait parvenir à S. M. votre demande pour la dédication. Si vous voulez écrire directement à S. M. sur ce sujet, je me mets tout à votre disposition pour l'envoi de la lettre.

Agréez encore une fois, Monsieur, l'hommage de ma considération la plus haute et de la parfaite estime avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être

Jena, le 20 Juillet  
1857.

Votre tout-dévoué  
Ferreira França





Public performance of Wagner's music at Rio de Janeiro began in 1869—on October 5 and 7 of which year Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869)<sup>54</sup> introduced the March from *Tannhäuser* in his own arrangement involving two orchestras and 31 pianists.<sup>55</sup> Both Pedro II and the Empress Teresa Cristina attended this concert, given at the Theatro Lyrico Fluminense. They also attended a concert July 18, 1870, in the Theatro São Pedro de Alcântara given by Carlotta Patti and Pablo Sarasate. This concert closed with an orchestra of fifty conducted by André Gravenstein filho<sup>56</sup> playing the *Tannhäuser* March. On July 30, 1870, Gravenstein—son of Dutch conductor André Gravenstein, who died at Rio de Janeiro January 18, 1869—conducted the first performance of the *Rienzi* overture at Rio de Janeiro.<sup>57</sup>

In 1883 was founded at Rio de Janeiro a *Club Ricardo Wagner*. Listed in the *Almanak Laemmaert* of 1884 with the residence of its procurator, Manoel Antônio Ladeira, at Voluntários da Pátria, 56, as headquarters, the club was born the same year that *Lohengrin* had its first hearing at Rio de Janeiro. All performances of Wagner's operas were sung in Italian at Rio de Janeiro until 1922. In chronological order, first performances of his six operas heard there through 1913 occurred on the following dates: *Lohengrin* September 19, 1883<sup>58</sup> (Theatro D. Pedro II<sup>59</sup>); *Tannhäuser* September 30, 1892<sup>60</sup> (Theatro Lyrico [formerly Theatro D. Pedro II]); *Die Meistersinger*<sup>61</sup> August 3, 1905 (Theatro Lyrico); *Tristan und Isolde*<sup>62</sup> May 27, 1910 (Theatro Lyrico); *Die Walküre* September 2, 1913 (Theatro Municipal<sup>63</sup>); *Parsifal*

<sup>54</sup>On Wednesday, April 29, 1868, Gottschalk at his last concert in Buenos Aires (old Teatro Colón) had introduced Wagner to the Argentine public. The third number on Part II of the program was the "Gran marcha de la célebre ópera *Tannhäuser* de Richard Wagner, arreglada para 14 pianos por L. M. Gottschalk." See Vicente Gesualdo, *Historia de la música en la Argentina*, II, 255–256.

<sup>55</sup>Francisco Curt Lange, "Vida y muerte de Louis Moreau Gottschalk en Rio de Janeiro (1869)," *Revista de Estudios Musicales*, II/4 (August 1950), 120. *A Semana Ilustrada*, No. 460, October 3, 1869, p. 3679, announced 24 pianists, but seven more played October 5. The review in *A Semana Ilustrada*, No. 461, October 10, 1869, pp. 3686–87, said that the *Tannhäuser* March aroused such tremendous enthusiasm that it had to be repeated, "apezar de sua extenção" ("despite its length"). Gottschalk repeated the *Tannhäuser* March with 31 pianists and two orchestras at his benefit concert for the war wounded November 12, 1869.

<sup>56</sup>Edgard de Brito Chaves Júnior, *Wagner e o Brasil (Rio de Janeiro)* (Rio de Janeiro: Companhia Editora Americana, 1976), p. 15. Concerning Gravenstein filho, see *Enciclopédia da música brasileira*, I, 330–331.

<sup>57</sup>Chaves Júnior, pp. 16–17. Leopoldo Miguez (1850–1902), composer of the prizewinning *Hymno da Proclamação da República* (1890), conducted the *Rienzi* overture at an orchestral Festival Commemorative November 15, 1890, celebrating the first anniversary of the Brazilian republic.

<sup>58</sup>The same travelling Italian company had already given *Lohengrin* its South American first performance at the old Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires June 17, 1883—and with the same cuts and incomplete orchestra that disfigured its Rio de Janeiro first performance. Virginia Germano-Ferni sang Elsa, Franco Cardinali sang Lohengrin. See Roberto Caamaño, *La historia del Teatro Colón 1908–1968* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Cinetea, 1969), I, 60.

<sup>59</sup>Inaugurated February 19, 1871, this theater seating 1400 began opera presentations with Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* February 20. On April 25, 1890, the theater opened its season with the new name of Theatro Lyrico. See Lafayette Silva, *História*, pp. 55–59.

<sup>60</sup>Lafayette Silva, p. 102, gives July 15, 1893. Chaves Júnior's dates for all ten operas, given at his pp. 33–34, are preferred in the above paragraph.

<sup>61</sup>Loewenberg, I, 1002, dates the Buenos Aires first performance (in Italian) August 6, 1898. See facsimile of August 14, 1898, playbill in Caamaño, I, 82.

<sup>62</sup>Arturo Toscanini conducted the Buenos Aires first performance Thursday, August 1, 1901, at the Teatro de la Ópera (Caamaño, I, 88, playbill facsimile).

<sup>63</sup>For a dated list of all operas performed at the Theatro = Teatro Municipal to 1920, usually with





September 8, 1913<sup>64</sup> (Municipal). In 1922, after doing the same at Buenos Aires,<sup>65</sup> Felix Weingartner conducted at the Rio de Janeiro Municipal the entire *Ring* cycle (in German): *Das Rheingold* September 15 and 19; *Die Walküre* September 21 and 22; *Siegfried* September 26, 30, and October 8; *Die Götterdämmerung* October 6 and 10.<sup>66</sup>

According to Paulo de Oliveira Castro Cerqueira, *Um Século de Ópera em São Paulo*, Weingartner took the *Ring* cycle to the Teatro Municipal in São Paulo immediately after October 10, 1922. Except for *Tristan und Isolde* (1911 and 1921) and *Lohengrin* (1924, 1926, 1940) all Wagner opera performances in that same São Paulo theater from 1913 through 1926 were repeats by the same touring ensembles that gave *Parsifal* (1913 and 1920), *Die Walküre* (1913, 1920, 1922, 1923, 1926), *Tannhäuser* (1914 and 1921), and *Siegfried* (1922 and 1926) at Rio de Janeiro.

The 1922 performances of the complete *Ring* cycle made its characters extremely well known among polite Brazilian society. So well known through repeated performances of *Die Walküre* had Wagner's *dramatis personae* indeed become by February 1925 that a popular novel serialized in the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *O Jornal*, beginning that month, could include a revealing conversation among young ladies at a coming out ball. They refer to themselves as Brünnhildes awaiting their Siegfrieds. In the third installment of Afrânio Peixoto's *As razões do coração*, eighteen-year-old Dulce remarks to her companions at the ball: "We are all Brünnhildes, circled by fire and sleeping. Who will wake us?"

Silvia, less of an opera goer than the rest, asks, "Who is Brünnhilde?" The other young ladies smile at her ignorance. Adelina counters: "Haven't you been to the Municipal to see *Die Walküre*?" Adelina wishes for her Siegfried to arrive soon. Not-so-eager Silvia protests that she is in no hurry to meet her Siegfried. The bonds of marriage and children will be forged soon enough.

Just as *Lohengrin* was Wagner's first opera to be performed (albeit with cuts and with reduced and falsified instrumentation) at both Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, so also it was his first opera mounted in Chile. The Chilean first performance October 17, 1889, in Italian at the Santiago Teatro Municipal (inaugurated July 16, 1873, with Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*) attempted greater authenticity than was known at Brazilian and Argentine first performances.<sup>67</sup>

An elaborate literary campaign waged by the first Chilean to hear Wagner's operas at Bayreuth, Luis Arrieta Cañas, made intellectuals better aware of Wagner's message and aesthetic at Santiago than in other Spanish-speaking capitals. Eugenio

names of chief singers, see Lafayette Silva, pp. 95–103. The Municipal opened July 14, 1909, with a program including Delgado de Carvalho's (1872–1921) one-act opera *Moema* (1890–1892; premiered Teatro Lyrico in 1894) on a national subject (see Corrêa de Azevedo, *Relação*, pp. 68–69).

<sup>64</sup>Chaves Júnior, p. 24, credits the South American première of a staged *Parsifal* (sung in Italian) to Rio de Janeiro. The same Kundry (Elena Rakowska) sang the role at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires May 16, 1914, and seven times later through August 15.

<sup>65</sup>Caamaño, II, 92–94, gives the dates for performances running from June 6 to August 25, at the Teatro Colón, including six of *Das Rheingold*, seven of *Die Walküre*, eight of *Siegfried*, six of *Götterdämmerung*. Given in Italian as *Il Crepuscolo degli Dei*, the latter was first heard at Buenos Aires in the Teatro de la Ópera July 14, 1910.

<sup>66</sup>Chaves Júnior, pp. 32–33.

<sup>67</sup>Mario Canepa Guzmán, *La Ópera en Chile (1839–1930)* (Santiago: Editorial Del Pacífico, 1976), pp. 103–104. *Lohengrin* reappeared in the 1897 season (pl. 115).





Pereira Salas, in his *Historia de la música en Chile (1850-1900)* (Santiago: Editorial Del Pacífico, 1957), devoted his entire chapter 13 to "La aparición de Wagner en el escenario nacional." Apart from Arrieta Cañas's *Cartas sobre música* (containing a euphoric account of *Die Meistersinger*, *Parsifal*, and other operas heard in 1888 at Bayreuth), Pereira Salas called attention to such other persuasive propaganda as Marcial Martínez de Ferrari's "Wagner y el drama lírico moderno" published in *La Libertad Electoral*, June 5 and 6, 1892, and Julio Grande's "La Música de Wagner" in *Familia*, September 1, 1890.

Pereira Salas again reverted to the importance of Arrieta Cañas's Wagnerian zeal in "La vida musical en Chile en el siglo XIX," published in *Die Musikulturen Lateinamerikas im 19. Jahrhundert* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1982).<sup>68</sup> Arrieta Cañas's immense social prestige (his father was an ambassador to Uruguay), his youthful enthusiasm (he was still in his 'teens when he fell in love with Wagner upon hearing his operas at Paris in 1879-1880, and 27 when he made his Bayreuth pilgrimage), and his trenchant literary style that carried all before him, made his compatriots take seriously his elevation of Wagner to equal rank with Beethoven. True, even *Tannhäuser* had to await 1897 for first performance at Santiago, and 1898 for hearings at Santiago and Valparaíso.<sup>69</sup> Wagner's clinching victory at Santiago awaited first performance of *Parsifal* at the Santiago Teatro Municipal October 8, 1920.

In Italy and in England the Chilean mezzo-soprano Rosita Jacoby, beginning in 1897, became a celebrity singing in *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, and *Tristan und Isolde*.<sup>70</sup> Heading Chilean Wagnerian singers in the present century, Ramón Vinay (Chillán, August 31, 1912) sang at Bayreuth from 1952 to 1957. Renato Zanelli [Morales] (Valparaíso, April 1, 1892; Santiago, March 25, 1935) was preparing himself to sing *Tristan* at Covent Garden shortly before his untimely death.

In Colombia, as elsewhere throughout South America, *Lohengrin* was again the first Wagner opera attempted by a visiting Italian troupe. At the Teatro Colón in Bogotá the company of Americo Mancini presented it three times in 1916—on July 22, 27, and 30. The Bogotá newspaper *El Nuevo Tiempo* of July 26, 1916, characterized the performances thus: "Wagner, performed with the resources available at Bogotá, is another Wagner. Still, the Director and his musicians show great enterprise. Lacking resources, they have succeeded in producing *Lohengrin*, if not with the majesty and authority that the work requires, still in a manner far from caricature."<sup>71</sup>

The *Tannhäuser* March—introduced by Gottschalk at Buenos Aires April 27, 29,

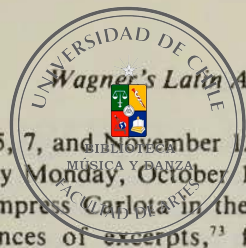
<sup>68</sup>When in 1953 Arrieta Cañas published his 93-page *Música; recuerdos y opiniones* and in 1954 his 92-page *Música; reuniones musicales (de 1889 a 1933)* he was a nonagenarian. Pereira Salas reviewed both in *Revista Musical Chilena*, x/48 (January 1955), 97-98. For further testimonies to Arrieta Cañas's efficacy in promoting Wagnerism, see Samuel Claro Valdés and Jorge Urrutia Blondel, *Historia de la música en Chile* (Santiago: Editorial Orbe, 1973), pp. 118-119, and Claro Valdés, *Oyendo a Chile* (Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1979), pp. 93-94.

<sup>69</sup>Canepa Guzmán, pp. 116-117. Eva Tetrizzini sang Elisabeth in the Valparaíso *Tannhäuser* performance at the Teatro Victoria July 16, 1898. Valparaíso heard *Lohengrin* September 1, 1898.

<sup>70</sup>Eugenio Pereira Salas, *Historia de la música en Chile (1850-1900)* (Santiago: Editorial Del Pacífico, 1957), p. 252.

<sup>71</sup>Quoted in José Ignacio Perdomo Escobar, *La ópera en Colombia* (Bogotá: Litografía Arco, 1979), p. 86; facsimile of playbill at p. 111.





1868, and Rio de Janeiro October 5, 7, and November 12, 1869, in multiple-piano arrangements—reached Mexico City Monday, October 10, 1864, at an orchestral concert under patronage of the Empress Carlota in the Gran Teatro Imperial.<sup>72</sup> Apart from orchestral performances of excerpts,<sup>73</sup> full operas began being presented at Mexico City in 1890. The Italian opera company of Napoleon Sieni gave *Lohengrin* November 18.<sup>74</sup> On March 29, 1891 (Easter Sunday), an English Opera Company managed by Charles E. Locke with Emma Juch (1863–1935)<sup>75</sup> as leading female singer began a fifteen-function series with *Tannhäuser*.

The first impression caused by the Company was very good, Emma Juch and Georgine von Januschowsky pleasing the select audience in the extreme. The tenor and baritone principals were also liked. The truly splendid orchestra directed by Adolph Neuendorff<sup>76</sup> was heard with positive and unanimous amazement. Also, the choruses—which included numerous fine voices and good-looking figures—seemed magnificent. The decorations brought from Europe were attractive and the staging almost irreproachable. Without overflowing the Teatro Principal, the audience for *Tannhäuser* was very elegant. In boxes and in the orchestra sat the cream of society, including President Díaz and the chief political figures. Most gentlemen wore formal attire and ladies came luxuriously dressed and wearing a profusion of jewels.

After *Tannhäuser* on March 29 came *Der fliegende Holländer* on April 3, *Lohengrin* on April 8, *Die Walküre* on April 14—interspersed with the first Mexico City performances of Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Beethoven's *Fidelio*. Attendance dwindled for these successive first performances so that when *Die Walküre* was given April 14, the theater was almost empty. Probably the Juch company, hearing that Mexico is the Italy of the New World, hoped to encounter a public here eager to know hitherto unperformed masterpieces. Unfortunately, the public grew successively smaller and colder from the opening night to the closing night a month later (April 28). Having lost so much money, the company did not even have funds to pay hotel bills at the moment of departure. The train scheduled to carry them back to the United States was held up several hours while various leading members of the English and American colonies in Mexico City were coming to the rescue of the departing company members with guaranteed loans.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Enrique de Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica del Teatro en México 1538–1911 . . . tercera edición* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1961), II, 688. Émile Palant, who conducted, closed Part I with his own *El Advenimiento* dedicated to Carlota. Part II closed with the *Tannhäuser* March.

<sup>73</sup>Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña*, II, 1111, credits the Orquesta Típica Mexicana with including the *Tannhäuser* March in the program at the Teatro del Conservatorio September 20, 1884. The Prelude to Act I of *Lohengrin* was performed September 9, 1889, in the Teatro del Conservatorio by "an excellent orchestra" (*ibid.*, II, 1264).

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 1295. At the Metropolitan in New York, as late as January 4, 1892, *Lohengrin* was sung in Italian (with Jean de Reszke in the title role). "We had the elegance and tonal purity to which in this opera Campanini and Christine Nilsson had accustomed us," according to George C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), xv (1891–1894), 119–120.

<sup>75</sup>Born at Vienna of American parents, she is profiled in *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: James T. White & Co., 1896), VI, 300, and *The New Grove Dictionary*, IX, 745. She retired from opera in 1894 upon marrying F. L. Wellman, assistant district attorney of New York City. According to Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage*, xv, 474, she "sang Senta's ballad better than anyone else, including the much-vaunted Kirsten Flagstad." Her wide repertory ranged from Gluck's *Orfeo Eurydice* to *Der Freischütz* (*Annals*, XII, 146), to *Faust*, and to all Wagnerian soprano parts.

<sup>76</sup>Born Hamburg 1843, he died at New York City, 1897; in United States from 1855. He conducted the first New York stagings of both *Lohengrin* and *Die Walküre*. During the season that he conducted the New York Philharmonic, 1878–1879, he gave the first American performances of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 3* and *Francesca da Rimini* fantasia. See Howard Shanet, *Philharmonic, A History of New York's Orchestra* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1975), p. 438, note 94.

<sup>77</sup>Olavarría y Ferrari, II, 1305.



Defending the Mexican opera-going public, the critic Fernando J. Domec agreed that the male singers assigned the roles of Wotan and Siegmund were ruinously affected by the Mexico City altitude and climate. But the true reasons that *Die Walküre* made so miserable an impression (according to Domec) were the constant declamation, the heavy orchestration drowning out the singers' voices, the tiresomeness of the story, lack of stage movement, long scenes with only three persons on stage, and the unbearable tediousness of the work as a whole.<sup>78</sup>

Domec's extremely detailed critique of *Die Walküre* continues with other classic arraignments of Wagnerian opera. Nor does any German composer's opera whatsoever completely please him. For him, the libretto of *Fidelio* did not merit Beethoven's attention. At best, *Fidelio* lies "an abyss below Beethoven's symphonies."<sup>79</sup> Far from being the Latin American nation readiest to embrace Wagner, Mexico's febrile opera life throughout the century bred up an opera public willing to embrace nothing new to them in 1891 except Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*—first performed at Mexico City to delirious acclaim October 27, 1891.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 1316–1317: "neither the words, the action, nor the music has anything to do with sentiments that affect, interest, or move, the human heart."

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 1310.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 1353–1354. Melesio Morales's *Cleopatra*, premiered November 14, 1891, enjoyed "great success" (II, 1363–1364) and "was repeated several times later during the same season."