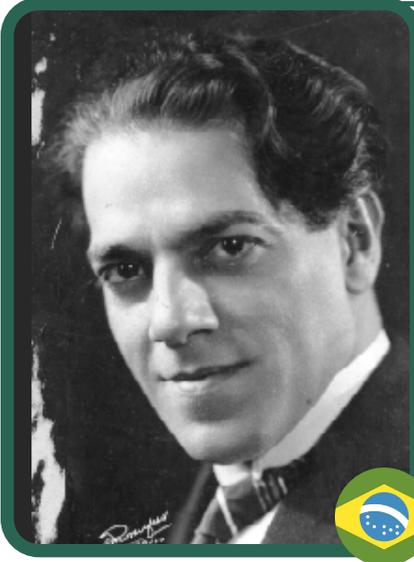




COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS**

BORN: March 5, 1887

ERA/STYLE: Brazilian Neoclassical

DIED: November 17, 1959

HOMETOWN: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Heitor Villa-Lobos was born in March 1887 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Aside from composing, Villa-Lobos was also a conductor, cellist, guitarist, and clarinetist. He is considered the most important and influential composer of Brazilian art music, and is the most well-known South American composer of all time. He wrote over 2,000 different works in his lifetime for a variety of different ensembles, solo instruments, and voice, drawing on both European classical music and traditional Brazilian folk music.

When he was very young, there was a social revolution in Brazil that affected the country's government and culture, which would impact Villa-Lobos' future musical life. As a result, Heitor had no formal training in European classical music or composition beyond a few basic lessons in harmony. His father was a musician and would often have small concerts or gatherings with other musicians in the home. It is said that Villa-Lobos learned music from observing and listening to these evenings from the top of the stairs!

As a young man, Villa-Lobos went on a long period of exploration throughout his country, soaking up the traditional folk music played by people all over Brazil. His earliest compositions, mostly for the guitar, are from this time in his life. He also played in a number of street bands and in silent movie houses, adding to the list of diverse influences on his music.

Later in his life, travels to Europe and experiences with other classical musicians (including famed pianist Arthur Rubinstein, whom he met in 1918) and composers, Villa-Lobos began to fuse his influences together, combining more traditional European classical musical techniques or themes with the folk music of Brazil and South America that he loved so much. Towards the end of his life, he was in high demand as a composer, even writing scores for films. Heitor was so well-known and loved throughout Brazil that when he passed in 1959, his funeral was a country-wide event.