

Notes

INTERNATIONAL ADVENTIST MUSICIANS ASSOCIATION



The Carlos Gomes Chorale, Turibio de Burgo, conductor, at the Adventist college in Sao Paulo

Adventist Music in Brazil

451 elementary schools with an average enrollment of over 250 students? A day school with three thousand students? What follows is the story of what is happening in music in Brazil, a vast country where Adventist education, like the membership, is mushrooming.

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, covering almost half of South America. Originally a series of colonies established by Portugal, it was united into one immense country which today retains the Portuguese language. It is divided into six major geographical areas, and is

populated primarily by people with roots traceable to the original Indians, Portuguese settlers, African slaves, or, since the mid-1800's, to immigrants from other areas of Europe and the Pacific rim. Brazilians are at ease with their racially mixed

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Adventist Music in Brazil *cont.*

population and have little trouble with discrimination.

From the beginning of the Adventist church in Brazil, schools played an important role. Today its educational system is one of the largest in the church, exceeded in size only by that found in the United States. It is comprehensive, including 451 grade schools with a total of 102,863 students; eight boarding academies, ranging in size from just under a hundred to over five hundred students; many day schools, including one with 3,000 students; and three colleges, all with music programs.

Music in Brazil is all pervasive, a national preoccupation, one that because of the mix of cultures in the country encompasses all styles of music. Because it is such an integral part of Brazilian life, it is an important part of the church's work there. Male quartets patterned after the one used by the Voice of Prophecy remain popular

and are widely used in evangelism and outreach, along with music groups provided by the schools and contemporary Christian groups.

church sponsored recording company. Today's highly successful operation started as a production center for music materials in the academy at Sao Paulo (IASP). It was recently separated from the school, given its

current name, and placed under the direction of two full-time workers.

In addition to producing recordings, the company, in collaboration with IASP, promotes and hosts a popular annual music festival. This summer's activities featured a classical music piano competition, male quartet festival, and a number of music seminars.

Schools are identified as Adventist Institutes, located in a city or area, such as the one in Sao Paulo. Although Brazilian public schools rarely have music programs, most Adventist schools at all levels have choirs and/or music classes.

While some schools have contemporary groups as part of their music offerings, the biggest force in producing and promoting this type of music is Cromus, a

There are eight regional Adventist boarding academies, ranging in size from less than 100 to as many as 500 students. The academies have music conservatories, with some accredited by the state. Because instruments are





expensive, few of them have bands or small orchestras.

Other larger day schools with both grade school and academy students exist in heavily populated

areas. The largest, one of 3,000 students located in the city of Salvador, Bahia, has two full-time music teachers, one in choir and one in keyboard.

There are two colleges, Northeast Brazil College and Brazil College. The latter is a large two-campus school located in the cities of Sao

Teaching in Brazil

*What happens when American trained musicians go to Brazil to teach?
What follow are the experiences of three former teachers in Brazil*

Robert Benfield taught in Brazil at three schools for seventeen years, from 1955-1972. During his tenure there he witnessed significant growth and many changes. He enjoyed his work, remembering his hurried attempts at mastering Portuguese in his first summer there, making band uniforms from scratch at that first school, traveling in a Volkswagen van with a marimba group, accompanying in recording sessions with the newly formed Voice of Prophecy quartet, watching a new music conservatory building being built and assembling and installing a Schober church organ kit for it, and enjoying many years of wonderful music making with people who reveled in the sheer pleasure of music making.

Harry Bennett Jr., and his wife, Marilyn, worked in Brazil for thirteen years, beginning in 1969. He began his work at an academy in southern Brazil where he taught general music and conducted the band and choir. From 1974 to 1981 he chaired the music conservatory at Northeast Brazil College, overseeing a program with twelve teachers. He taught in many areas of music while there and in 1980 was ordained as a minister in recognition of his spiritual leadership in both music and evangelism. During this time he gained government endorsement for the music courses offered at the conservatory and sought to bring high quality music to the Adventist schools. He concertized widely throughout most of Brazil with the school's choirs, performing for government dignitaries and participating in and winning top honors at national and South American music festivals. Bennett recalls with immense pleasure his work with the talented Brazilian youth and their enthusiastic response to classical music.

Harlen Miller was born in the mission field and, following graduation from Walla Walla College in 1972, served in both Puerto Rico and Brazil, as well as the United States. When contacted recently at Shenandoah Valley Academy, where he directs the vocal choral program, he wrote about his five years in Brazil. "I directed four choirs and taught lessons and music classes at East Brazil Academy, a K-11 school (there is no 12th grade in Brazilian high schools) located an hour north of Rio de Janeiro. The music program was run by the Conservatorio de Musica and was an adjunct to the regular school curriculum. Our conservatory, like most in the country, was accredited by a national conservatory of which there were two, both located in nearby Rio. Choirs and choir festivals are an important part of civic life in Brazil, sponsored by communities, banks, industries and companies. Teaching there was an incredible experience, the richest I have ever had. Had it not been for a family medical emergency back in the States, we would probably still be there."



Paulo and Coelho in the state of Sao Paulo.

All three campuses run multi-level music programs for pre-school to college age students, with the largest being at the school in Sao Paulo, referred to as the "Old Campus." It offers a diploma-granting conservatory program with 240 students of all ages, taught by twenty-seven teachers, nine of whom are full-time. Another sixty students study art. Because of growth on that campus, from 600 to 2,700 students, and a corresponding expansion in the conservatory program, the building constructed twenty years ago for music and art is inadequate, and an additional building is now planned. This increase has also created a need for additional and better keyboard instruments.

There are five choirs with students from pre-school to college age. The best of these groups is a college level community based ensemble of ninety singers. It is conducted by

Turibio de Burgo, head of the conservatory, and is well known in the country, having sung with some of Brazil's leading orchestras. It was awarded first place in state and national competition in 1996. There are also four contemporary Christian vocal groups on campus.

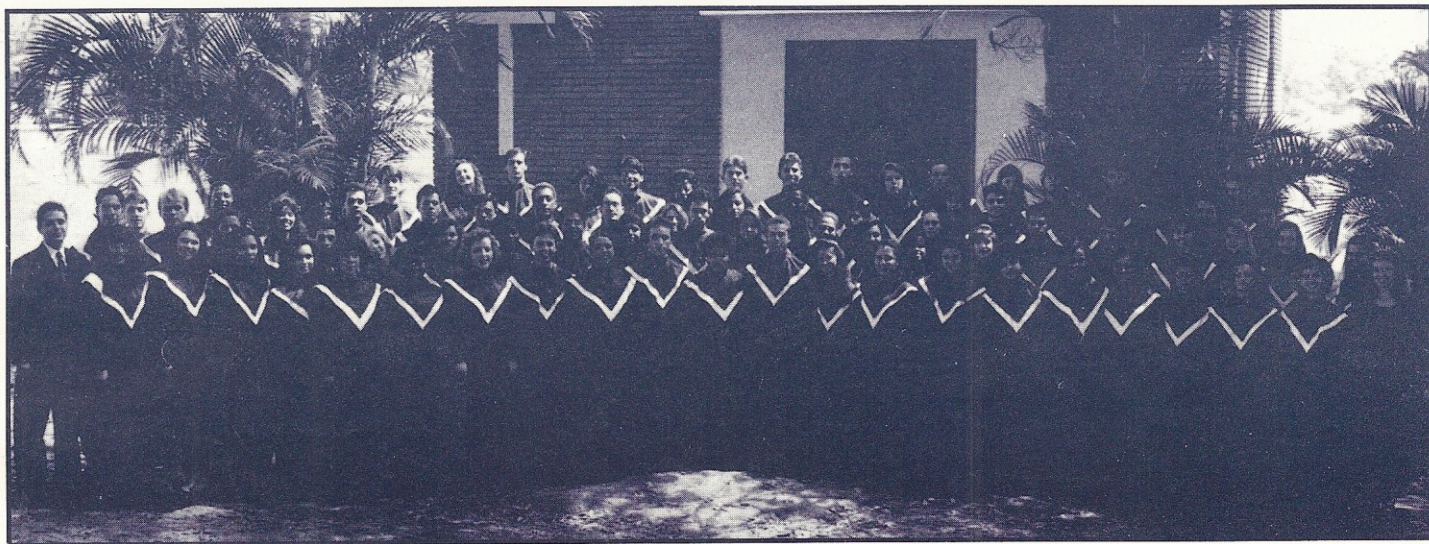
While the choirs are the primary ensemble focus in the program, there are also two bands, an orchestra, and recorder ensembles. The advanced band of fifty has participated in and won in national competitions. While the orchestra is small at this time, there are plans to start a Suzuki string program in the near future.

The music program at the "New Campus," known officially as the Second Campus, is part of the Arts Department. The campus has an enrollment of 2,700, with 900 college students. The music program in the music conservatory has 130 pre-school to college-age students and seven full-time and

two contract teachers. All of the full-time teachers have music degrees, and three have master's degrees. Additionally, 630 students from preschool to eighth grade are involved in curriculum music classes.

There are six choirs, two of which are college level and conducted by the chair of the department, Jetro de Oliveira. Three others are for younger students and another performs contemporary Christian music. Additionally, there are three contemporary Christian groups led by students. There is a band of 20, an orchestra of 36, and a student and a faculty string quartet.

Beginning this year, this campus has been authorized by government to offer a three-year degree program in music teaching, to be offered through the education department. This is viewed as a major accomplishment, the result of efforts spanning more than a quarter century to have a degree program in one of the Adventist colleges in that country. Another recent accomplishment for the program was the purchase of the school's first grand piano in August.



One of two college choirs conducted by Jetro de Oliveira at the Adventist college in Coelho

Notes



All three campuses run extensive children's programs, based in part on Orff and Kodaly concepts and Brazilian elementary music materials. The present success of these and similar elementary programs in other Adventist

schools in Brazil is exciting to observe.

In spite of limitations in equipment and buildings, the level of performance and achievements occurring in Adventist music education programs is remarkable.

These successes, coupled with an upgrading of instruments and the construction of new facilities, can only mean an exceptional future for Adventist music in Brazil.

Dan Shultz