

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

FORGING AN URBAN PUBLIC:
THEATERS, AUDIENCES, AND THE CITY IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL, 1854-1924

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2016

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In memory of Alan Kaplan,
who taught us the power of history

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NOTE ON SPELLING, CURRENCY, AND TERMS

Due to the lack of orthographic standardization in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Brazil, historians are forced to choose among a set of options in their reference to proper nouns. For the purpose of this dissertation, I have decided to preserve the spellings most commonly utilized in the primary sources I consulted. As a result, “Teatro” is written as “Theatro,” “Politeama” remains “Polytheama,” etc. An exception is neighborhood names, which I have updated so that the reader can more easily connect them to present-day locations. All citations have been kept in their original form.

The notation of currency at the turn of the twentieth century is likewise a complicated matter. Known as the *mil-réis*, or “thousand *réis*,” Brazil’s official currency could be notated as either 1\$000 or 1\$. By extension, a tenth of a *mil-réis* was 100 *réis*, or \$100, and half a *mil-réis* equivalent to 500 *réis*, or \$500. In the other direction, one thousand *mil-réis* was also known as one *conto* and written as 1:000\$. One thousand *contos* (1 million *mil-réis*) took on the form of 1.000:000\$. During the dissertation’s studied period, the *mil-réis* fluctuated between US\$0.19 and US\$0.60. What these numbers meant in terms of purchasing power is explained throughout the chapters.

Finally, it is important to distinguish at the outset the difference between the terms Paulista and Paulistano. While “Paulista” is the noun or adjective that describes a person or object from the *province or state* of São Paulo, “Paulistano” refers more specifically to someone or something from the *city* of São Paulo. I also use the latter term in its feminine form, “Paulistana,” when discussing women in São Paulo City.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like the *festas* that occupied São Paulo's theaters, this dissertation is the product of an entire community. To all those who cheered me on and pushed me further, thank you for making this dissertation a reality.

This project was conceived and nurtured at the University of Chicago, where I had the privilege of working with and learning from many fantastic scholars. I am particularly grateful to my dissertation committee chairs, Dain Borges and Brodie Fischer—a true dream team. Thank you for your high bar, insights, humor, and understanding. I am also indebted to the questions, comments, and encouragement of Jan Goldstein and Mauricio Tenorio, who shaped my work as both dissertation readers and teachers. The dissertation (and my time at Chicago) would not have been the same without the sharp eyes, ready laughs, and generous advice of my fellow graduate students, especially Diana Schwartz, Tessa Murphy, Ramaesh Bhagirat, Sabine Cadeau, C.J. Alvarez, Casey Lurtz, Jackie Sumner, Patrick Kelly, and my São Paulo partners-in-crime, Daniel Gough and Jay Sosa. I am also thankful for the writing companionship of Natalie Belsky, Cameron Penwell, and Sheila Wille, and for the comments of Emilio de Antuñano, Susannah Engstrom, Pablo Palomino, and Marcio Siwi at the Latin American History Workshop (LAHW). I could not have asked for a better environment in which to grow than the LAHW or for better colleagues than the LAHW's participants. I additionally appreciate the conversations that developed out of the LAHW with Workshop visitors, in particular, Anne Hanley, Hendrik Kraay, Jutta Toelle, and Jeremy Adelman. Neither the LAHW nor my work at Chicago would have been possible without the Center for Latin American Studies, and especially Jamie Gentry and Josh Beck. Nor would the final product have been the same without the explorations of my students or the feedback of my peers in the Urban Doctoral Fellows Program and the Newberry

Library Urban History Dissertation Group; their multidisciplinary perspectives helped connect the project to other audiences, times, and spaces.

I was thankful to find welcoming intellectual communities while researching and writing outside of Chicago. In Rochester, NY, Rohma Khan, Andrew Kless, Marianne Kupin, and especially Amy Arbogast kept me on task and sane. The New York State Latin American History Workshop and the University of Rochester's Department of History contributed to the improvement of at least half the dissertation, and I am particularly grateful to Molly Ball, Anne Macpherson, and Laura Smoller for their mentorship and friendship. In São Paulo, I relied on the hospitality and advice of a large number of scholars. An especially warm *obrigada* is due to Michael Hall, Cristina Mehtens, Heloisa Pontes, Elizabeth Azevedo, Sidney Chalhoub, Marcos Moraes, Luigi Biondi, Edilene Toledo, and Hélio de Seixas Guimarães. Research discussions turned into lasting friendships with Courtney Campbell, Lena Suk, and Sarah Townsend. I also benefited from the graduate workshop led by Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni at USP's Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, as well as from the História Social do Trabalho seminar at UNICAMP. Additionally, I am indebted to the staff at UNICAMP's Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth and the Centro de Pesquisa em História Social da Cultura, as well as the friendly faces at the Acervo Histórico da Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo (especially Guilherme Arduini), the Biblioteca Jenny Klabin Segall, the Centro de Documentação e Memória at UNESP, and the Arquivo Público do Estado de Sao Paulo.

At the latter, I was introduced to Luis Ferla and Unifesp's Grupo Hímaco, whose GIS work informed my own mapping. The maps below, and my approach to digital tools more generally, also owe a great deal to the digital history community that I found at various THATCamps, the AHA, the Digital Humanities Center at the University of Rochester, and the

Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI), as well as in Jo Guldi's course, which introduced me to the field.

My participation in the DHSI would not have been possible without a tuition scholarship, and I am grateful for that and many other sources of financial support: the Jacob K. Javits and Social Sciences Division Fellowships that sponsored my study at the University of Chicago; the Tinker Field Research Grant and the Institute of International Education Graduate Fellowship for International Study, courtesy of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, that funded my research trips (even when Congress eliminated the Fulbright-Hays DDRA from the year's budget); and the William Rainey Harper/Provost Dissertation Fellowship and Coordinating Council for Women in History/Berkshire Conference of Women Historians Graduate Student Fellowship that allowed me to focus on writing in my final years as a graduate student. I am additionally thankful for the various conference travel grants that I received; many ideas and collaborations took root in the panels in which I participated. A big thanks in particular to Kristen McCleary and Brian Bockelman for your thoughts and energy.

Finally, this dissertation owes its completion to friends in music and dance and other corners of my life. I am above all grateful to my family. My mother and sister contributed not only their love, laughter, song, and encouragement, but also their proofreading prowess. Timur's optimism, curiosity, partnership, and smiles helped me through the uphill climbs and made the downhill slides all the more thrilling. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. And, thank you, Mr. Kaplan, for making history exciting and relevant to me and countless other jaded teens at Alexander Hamilton High School. We would not be the same without you.

Introduction

How does a city become a city? How do different residents perceive, guide, and experience urbanization? The pages that follow offer an answer by explaining how inhabitants of São Paulo, Brazil, used theaters to forge an urban public in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century. To be sure, by that moment, São Paulo could hardly have been called a new city: founded as a Jesuit mission in 1554, the village of São Paulo dos Campos de Piratininga was one of the first settlements in the New World. Already in 1711, the Portuguese Crown had formally recognized São Paulo as a city, acknowledging the latter's shift in function from a gateway to the west, to the stomping grounds of slave hunters known as *bandeirantes* (literally, standard-bearers), to a gateway to the north, to the epicenter of colonial Brazil's gold rush.¹ Inland, flanked by rivers, and at the edge of a vast plateau (see Map 1 inset), the newly christened São Paulo City served as a launching point for miners and an end point for tradesmen and farmers looking to profit from this steady stream of customers—a sort of St. Louis of Brazil. Within a few decades, however, this stream had reduced to a mere trickle, leaving São Paulo's population hovering around 25,000 souls for the remainder of the eighteenth century.² The 1827 founding of a national law school, which came on the heels of Brazilian independence in 1822, certainly helped attract newcomers in the form of students, but this was a largely transient and

¹ An overview of the *bandeirante*, and especially his appearance in regionalist discourse during the first half of the twentieth century, is offered by Barbara Weinstein, *Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 36–46.

² Maria Luiza Marcílio, “A população paulistana ao longo dos 450 anos da Cidade,” in *História da cidade de São Paulo*, ed. Paula Porta, vol. 1, *A cidade colonial, 1554–1822* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2004), 253. For an extended, pioneering demographic analysis of colonial São Paulo, see Maria Luiza Marcílio, *A cidade de São Paulo: povoamento e população, 1750-1850, com base nos registros paroquiais e nos recenseamentos antigos* (São Paulo: Pioneira, USP, 1974).



Map 1: São Paulo City inside present-day São Paulo State. Source: Google Maps, 2016. The dark green ridge southeast of the city marks the Serra do Mar mountain range and the eastern border of the plateau on which São Paulo sits.

privileged lot that, flamboyance aside, only contributed to the town’s characterization as a quiet outpost, an “academic village.”

Then, all of a sudden, in the 1870s the city’s population exceeded 30,000, and within twenty years’ time, this number was doubling and quadrupling. By 1900, census-takers estimated the urban population to total nearly 240,000 inhabitants, making São Paulo the second most populous city in Brazil after the national capital, Rio de Janeiro. In 1920 that estimate was

recalibrated at roughly 580,000, surpassing Mexico City, Havana, and Lima, although still lagging behind Rio and Buenos Aires. São Paulo's demographic boom was accompanied by an equally astonishing infrastructural transformation. To many observers, the city seemed an expert illusionist at work: muddy roads and pastures disappeared while tree-lined avenues, sewage tunnels, gas pipes, and power lines materialized, stretching ever further alongside railroad tracks to create what more than one contemporary called a "tentacular" city. This breathtaking feat left Brazilians and foreigners alike gaping at São Paulo's "marvelous and incomparable development."³ Even the *New York Times* took notice in 1900, christening São Paulo the "Yankee City of Brazil."⁴ The academic village was now, according to José Moya's framework, a truly modern Atlantic city, rivaling Latin America's leading centers in both residents and riches.⁵

It is this period of unusually rapid growth, this acceleration toward mass society, that the chapters below seek to explain. In doing so, the dissertation offers São Paulo as a case for understanding urbanization in Latin America and what is now referred to as the Global South. More precisely, it offers São Paulo as a case for understanding an immigrant city at a particular moment of urbanization: that moment between closed and mass society that has largely been brushed off as transitional.⁶ If in his sweeping overview of urban Latin America José Luis

³ "desenvolvimento maravilhoso e incomparável... a mais magnífica," Henrique Raffard, *Diário do Comércio* (Rio de Janeiro, 1890), in Carlos José Ferreira dos Santos, *Nem tudo era italiano: São Paulo e pobreza, 1890-1915* (São Paulo: Annablume, 1998), 29.

⁴ "Yankee City of Brazil," *New York Times*, Dec 23, 1900.

⁵ Jose Moya, "A Continent of Immigrants: Postcolonial Shifts in the Western Hemisphere," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 86, no. 1 (February 2006): 18.

⁶ Geographers tend to classify contemporaneous cities (as opposed to one city changing over time) by what is known as a settlement hierarchy. In this model, urban centers are ranked according to the settlement's area and population, range and number of services, and sphere of influence. In present-day terms, turn-of-the-twentieth-century São Paulo falls under the heading

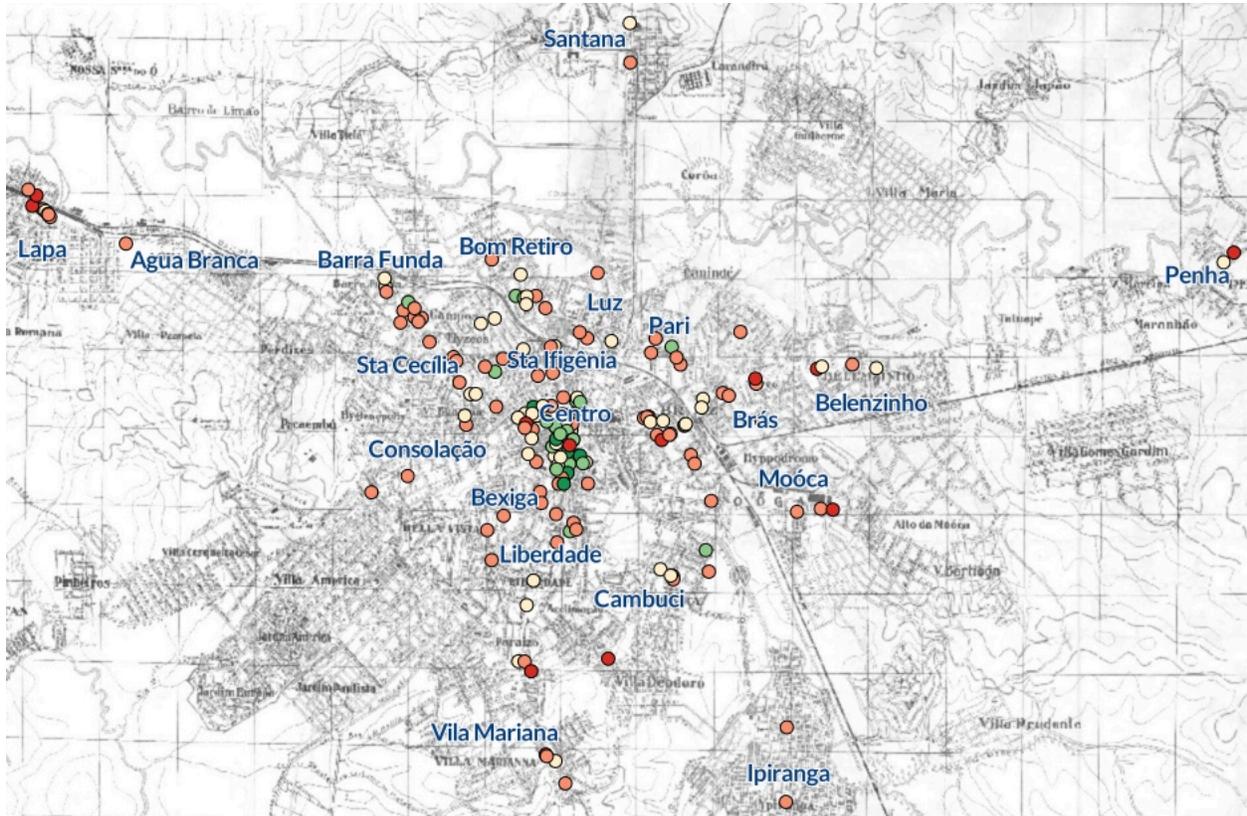
Romero gives the phase its due, Romero's label of choice, the "bourgeois city," belies the extent to which this city was up for grabs.⁷ Indeed, this dissertation argues, it was precisely in the ferment of the inchoate metropolis that Paulistanos—that is, residents of the city of São Paulo—from across the social spectrum were able to directly contribute to the creation of new businesses, new public spaces, and new ways of life.

This dissertation explains the alterability of the inchoate metropolis by turning to a space rarely examined by urban historians: theaters. Their near absence in the historiography is surprising given that theaters—a term that I use broadly to encompass playhouses, cinemas, union halls, and multipurpose auditoriums—were almost exclusively urban institutions, certainly in the plural form and in contrast to the circus tent.⁸ These were contained, roofed, and at least semi-permanent spaces intended for the seated and standing gathering of dozens, if not hundreds or thousands, of spectators, of women and men and children who came primarily to be amused. Compared to the churches, markets, taverns, and ballrooms that came before them, theaters were spaces of leisure on a new, mass scale, both in terms of the numbers of attendees that each hall accommodated and the number of halls that dotted the hilly landscape of São

of "city" or "large city," an unsatisfyingly vague label that proves problematic given the common usage of "city" for referring to any urban settlement.

⁷ For Brazil more specifically, bourgeois influence is likewise the focus of Jeffrey D. Needell, *A Tropical Belle Époque: Elite Culture and Society in Turn-of-the-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Cambridge University Press, 1987). The US historiography is hardly different: studies of the Gilded-Age city have similarly been preoccupied with linking the birth of the metropolis to the emergence of an urban bourgeoisie, as in Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), or, most recently, Emily A. Remus, *Consumers' Metropolis: How Monied Women Purchased Pleasure and Power in the New Downtown* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).

⁸ The extensive rural reach of Brazil's traveling circuses is pointed out by Erminia Silva in her thesis, "O circo: sua arte e seus saberes: O circo no Brasil do final do Século XIX a meados do XX" (master's thesis, UNICAMP, 1996), 22.

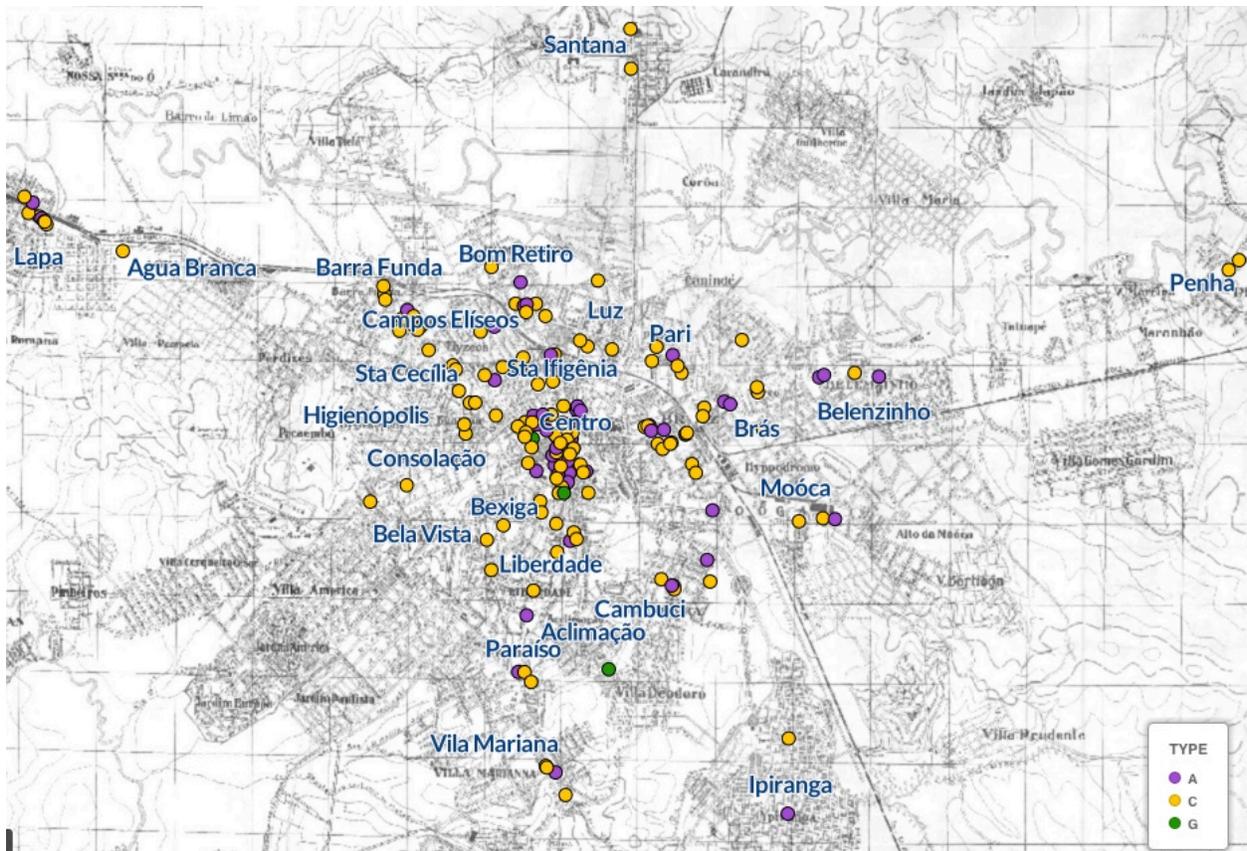


Map 2: São Paulo's theaters according to year in which inaugurated, 1854-1924. Dark green dots indicate those theaters established before 1891; light green, those between 1891 and 1902; yellow, 1903-1909; orange, 1910-1917; red, 1918-1924. Chloropleth quantile map generated by CartoDB. Basemap: "Planta da Cidade de S. Paulo mostrando todos os arrabaldes e terrenos arruados," Rio de Janeiro, 1924. Interactive map can be accessed at https://aialalevy.carto.com/viz/119553d2-501e-11e6-b641-0ef7f98ade21/public_map.

Paulo.⁹ In fact, nearly two hundred theaters opened their doors in the period between 1891 and 1924 (Map 2), offering Paulistanos and visitors a wide variety of live and recorded performances and a wide variety of types of sociability.

Those offerings, as we shall see in the chapters to come, changed over time (Map 3). The first auditorium examined, the São José Theater, was constructed between 1858 and 1864 with government funding and primarily hosted European operas and domestic and imported plays. In the 1890s, the São José was joined by a handful of large, downtown commercial theaters as well

⁹ For a detailed discussion of how I define a theater and a list of included spaces, see Appendix.



Map 3: São Paulo's theaters according to ownership type, 1854-1924. Green indicates theaters operated by the government; yellow, those primarily used for commercial purposes; and, purple, those largely occupied by associations. Category map generated by CartoDB. Basemap: "Planta da Cidade de S. Paulo," Rio de Janeiro, 1924. Interactive map can be accessed at https://aialalevy.carto.com/viz/ba6cf91b-b09d-4e68-a502-e3ad1bd12767/public_map.

as more modest halls utilized by a range of civic associations for fundraising soirees and other events. While associational theaters rapidly multiplied during the first decade of the new century, after 1908 they were significantly outpaced by for-profit auditoriums that both screened films and hosted live performances, often combining the two in what were known as *palco e tela* (stage and screen) shows. As a result of this commercial theater rush, most city residents after 1910 were able to walk a mere few blocks to enjoy a screening of the latest films or an amateur theater production, or take an electric streetcar to downtown or the neighborhood of Brás for an evening of opera, zarzuela, or *revista*, Brazil's answer to the French revue.

Theaters also offered Paulistanos from across the social spectrum a new kind of enterprise. If theaters were first and foremost a source of revenue, an unprecedented economy of scale that took advantage of the thousands of Paulistanos who weekly, or even nightly, pursued pleasure, they were at the same time seen by many as a secular force for transforming urban society. For government officials and organizers of São Paulo's myriad of associations, theaters were versatile bullhorns, platforms from which to disseminate ideas and beliefs to listeners en masse without the prescriptions of the Catholic (or any) Church. In a city of few parks and plazas where approximately half of the population in 1900 was foreign born, with an even larger percentage that could not fluently read or write Portuguese, theaters—rather than newspapers—functioned in the pre-radio era as São Paulo's only truly mass medium and an essential channel of communication with the world beyond Brazil.¹⁰ Theaters were also valued by some Paulistanos for their ability to cultivate aesthetic improvement, whether by “elevating” audiences' appreciation for beauty through a performance or by adding beauty to the urban landscape through a theater's design. From this perspective, some theaters served as erudite alternatives to other sites of amusement, such as cabarets, bars, boxing rings, and, increasingly, the dance hall and soccer field. The social interactions possible within theaters were likewise perceived to be shaping experiences: planted in their tiers and rowed seats, or mingling in a theater's aisles or lobby, spectators could see and be seen as members of a particular family or group, along the way learning and teaching tastes and habits specific to their circle. Finally, as highly visible

¹⁰ The ratio of people to park hectare in São Paulo was 12,000, in contrast to London's 1,031, Buenos Aires's 1,200, and Paris's 1,354, according to Nicolau Sevcenko, *Orfeu extático na metrópole: São Paulo, sociedade e cultura nos frementes anos 20* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992), 132. Illiteracy in São Paulo City did gradually drop during the studied period. Rates for 1897 and 1922 are calculated to have been 64% and 42%, respectively, in Raquel Rolnik, *A cidade e a lei: legislação, política urbana e territórios na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Studio Nobel, 1997), 19, Table 1.

edifices, theaters helped Paulistanos make sense of urban space; their role as landmarks captured the attention of urban reformers, who pointed to theaters' contribution to a neighborhood's characterization and its social and economic life.

Methodology

For all of these reasons, theaters were in the inchoate metropolis highly contested sites. By analyzing why and how different Paulistanos used theaters to shape a rapidly changing society, this dissertation illuminates the contours of that contestation. I do so through the eyes of theater producers themselves, that is, through the eyes of the men and women who owned, financed, operated, or organized events within the city's theaters. For the purpose of my analysis, I divide producers into three subsets: government officials, associational leaders, and businessmen. Together, theater producers formed an expansive group, encompassing industrialists and actors, peddlers and a prefect. Some were Brazilian born but the majority in São Paulo were foreigners, either passing through or settling down. Whatever their station in life, theater producers' primary concern was to build an audience, to fill their hall in the face of a crowding field of options for leisure in the city. They did so through the language of advertising, through the performances they chose to stage or screen, and through the spaces they constructed, redesigned, or rented.

All of these strategies have left a paper trail for the historian to follow. This trail is composed of mainstream and associational periodicals, play scripts and playbills, architectural plans and engineers' reports. It also consists of maps, photographs, and annals of municipal, provincial, and state legislative sessions, all of which I supplement with the more limited supply of theatergoers' observations, primarily in the form of novels and memoirs. We can think of these sources as multiple spotlights from multiple angles illuminating the focal point of theaters,

spotlights that collectively represent not only the powerful and the power-scarce, but also, to borrow Marc Hertzman's wording, the "missing middle" in between.¹¹ As a widely used medium of communication and social performance, as works of architecture, and as urban microcosms—spaces that accommodated both rich and poor, educated and illiterate, native and foreign, male and female—theaters thus merit a closer look for their methodological worth in addition to their historical significance.

In taking a closer look at theaters, in juxtaposing underexplored sources and culling new data (presented in the Appendix), this dissertation analyzes theaters not in terms of genre or architecture, but rather builds on the scholarship of both to understand theaters as sites of a new, mass sociability.¹² Phrased differently, I approach the built environment and the performances

¹¹ Marc A. Hertzman, *Making Samba: A New History of Race and Music in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 5. While Heloisa Pontes in *Intérpretes da metrópole: história social e relações de gênero no teatro e no campo intelectual, 1940-1968* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2010), likewise uses theater (the profession and genre) as a lens for examining ideas about the city of São Paulo and its social categories in the mid-twentieth century, her aim is to understand the Brazilian intellectual field à la Pierre Bourdieu. As a result, Pontes's analysis is limited to a few figures, the majority of whom had strong connections or belonged to São Paulo's leading families.

¹² By examining theaters as spaces rather than theater or film as genre, I break from, but also rely on, previous approaches to the study of theater, cinema, and performance in imperial and First Republic Brazil. Among those that move beyond formal analysis to connect the action onstage or onscreen with larger social shifts during the dissertation's period of study are Tiago de Melo Gomes, *Um espelho no palco: identidades sociais e massificação da cultura no teatro de revista dos anos 1920* (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 2004); Chapter 7 of Hendrik Kraay, *Days of National Festivity in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1823–1889* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); José Inácio de Melo Souza, *Imagens do passado: São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro nos primórdios do cinema* (São Paulo: Senac, 2003); and Flora Sússekind, *As revistas de ano e a invenção do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa, 1986). Due to Rio's cultural primacy during the imperial and Republican periods, little work has been done on theater in São Paulo specifically. Two notable exceptions that, like the monographs above, situate theater within its broader context are Elizabeth Ribeiro Azevedo, *Um Palco sob as Arcadas: o teatro dos estudantes de direito do Largo de São Francisco, em São Paulo, no século XIX* (Sao Paulo: Annablume, 2000), and Maria Thereza Vargas, *Teatro operário na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, Idart, 1980). At

onstage and onscreen not as the subject of study themselves, but as elements of the theatergoing experience that affected and reveal assumptions about how Paulistanos came together to be entertained, to chat, to escape the home and toils of daily life. More specifically, I approach theaters as spaces that a cross-section of urban dwellers recognized to be the abodes of “culture,” as “temples” and “schools” in which men, women, and children gathered, if only temporarily, to determine and alter what behaviors, dress, and ideas defined their and others’ place among the urban multitude.

The urban public

I argue that, in coming together under theaters’ roofs, a wide variety of residents began to think about and actively create what I call an urban public. By “public,” I mean more than the political intermediary between civil society and the state that is Jürgen Habermas’s public sphere. Indeed, I want to wrest “public” from Habermas, and not only to show, as many others have already done, that political agency and change also lay in the hands of those beyond a white, literate, male bourgeoisie.¹³ I want to return us to the term at its core: what was the significance of constantly being in open view, of having one’s body and one’s life on display outside the home while regularly interacting with mere acquaintances and even strangers? As the chapters below will demonstrate, theaters were sites within which a broad range of Paulistanos articulated

the same time, my research is also indebted to studies of Brazilian theater itself, including anthologies of performances, such as Antonio Barreto do Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo (da Casa da Ópera à inauguração do Teatro Municipal)*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2006), along with histories of theater writing, such as the excellent essays in João Roberto Faria and J. Guinsburg, eds., *História do teatro brasileiro* (São Paulo: SESC SP/Perspectiva, 2012).

¹³ For a deeper debate of Jürgen Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962), and alternatives to his “public sphere,” see Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 209–142.

a keen sense of self-representation to both their fellow spectators and the world beyond the theater's walls.¹⁴ Much like our own era's transition to social media, in other words, Paulistanos a century ago were adjusting to and creating new levels of visibility and audibility previously inconceivable. The urban public was a part of that turn-of-the-twentieth-century adjustment, a social body fit for and dependent on the sudden visibility of big-city life.¹⁵

The issue at stake was what exactly such a social body entailed. Theater producers daily laid down their stakes as they competed for the purses, hearts, and minds of what they called “the public,” a term that united spectators into a single-minded whole.¹⁶ The dissertation reveals that,

¹⁴ This is different from, for example, nineteenth-century Brazilian travel narratives, which, according to Flora Süssekind, reveal their protagonists' determination to prove, through detailed and detached spectatorship, their own and their country's worth to, above all, compatriots. See Flora Süssekind, *O Brasil não é longe daqui: o narrador, a viagem* (São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 1990), 24. The “spectacular reality” of turn-of-the-century Paris offers a closer approximation: in the cases that Vanessa Schwartz examines, Parisians placed themselves within the spectacle, although without necessarily a sense of who their audiences were. See Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 6, 10.

¹⁵ The growing significance of public cultural practices can also be seen for Rio de Janeiro. Flora Süssekind, in *As revistas de ano e a invenção do Rio de Janeiro*, 37, notes that *revistas* on Rio's stage during this period were increasingly set in public, rather than domestic, spaces, hinting at the transformative power attributed to public settings. Along the same lines, the contemporary chronicler João do Rio observed in *A alma encantadora* (1906) that Rio's streets were creating a new urban type, characterized by his or her “tastes, customs, habits, manners, and political opinions.” Cited and translated in Bruno Carvalho, *Porous City: A Cultural History of Rio de Janeiro (from the 1810s Onward)* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 84.

¹⁶ It was “the public” that, for example, newspapers described stomping its feet in appreciation of an actress's heartfelt passion, or “the public” that flung tomatoes at an out-of-tune tenor. I attempt, but am not always able, to distinguish between the overlapping meanings of “public” (i.e. “audience” versus “the citizenry” versus “the people” writ large) in my translations. The other, and increasingly more popular, option for “audience” in Portuguese was the plural *espectadores*, or “spectators.” While it is difficult to tell from simply a keyword query of the mainstream newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*—made possible through the paper's online archive, acervo.estadao.com.br—whether or not “espectadores” always referred to theater audiences, there is a significant leap in the registered frequency of the term's use between the last decade of the nineteenth century (425 appearances) and the first decade of the twentieth century (914 appearances). This leap perhaps suggests a growing understanding of theatergoers

while no single notion spanned all of the auditoriums examined (and, in fact, most auditoriums were breeding grounds for multiple kinds of publics), there were surprising overlaps in producers' understanding of what an urban public should be and what its realization demanded. In principle, most producers agreed, the urban public was the harmonious juxtaposition of individuals united by shared behavioral, ethical, and aesthetic preferences, that is, by a shared understanding of what contemporaries referred to as "culture." The urban public was in this manner the antithesis of the heterogeneous multitude that increasingly characterized São Paulo at the time. Whether that multitude was perceived to be a threat to public order, morality, taste, or all three, the urban public offered under the label of culture a secular solution, a reframing of social norms without the need for a church. Consequently, the urban public was also a conceptual reframing of the sites in which such norms could be determined and diffused. Rather than rely on domestic or sacred spaces, Paulistanos took advantage of the expanding city to build or occupy public structures, enclosed settings in which they advanced their own vision for urban society, settings in which they tried to forge their own urban public.

In the context of the inchoate metropolis, then, social transformation was realized within the secular public arena and through visible, cultural practices. Inside São Paulo's theaters, producers and audiences were daily playing out different renditions of the urban public, challenging or reinforcing on a mass scale existing social categories as well as offering new forms for asserting those categories. As the number of theaters in São Paulo multiplied around the turn of the twentieth century, the implications of and on the urban public were immense. First, if it was visible, cultural practices that determined one's place within urban society, then

as individual consumers and as consumers, rather than producers, of the visual (or perhaps is merely the reflection of a lengthening newspaper). Still, in my reading of multiple source types, it is "publico," and not "espectadores," that dominates discussions of audiences in the period before 1924.

belonging to one group or another became little more than a performance, an acquirable act if one had the necessary talent, props, and guidance. Theaters provided that guidance, allowing Paulistanos to hypothetically observe and, at least momentarily, move between worlds for the price of an entry ticket. Moreover, through the activities and aesthetics that theaters fostered, those worlds could be reinterpreted. Within associational theaters, as Chapters 3 and 4 will detail, audiences were often circumscribed according to their nationality, race, neighborhood, or political ideology, boundaries that allowed participants to connect particular cultural practices with a particular group, even if many of these practices were shared. At the same time, as demonstrated in Chapters 2, 6, and 7, government and commercial theater producers were welcoming much more heterogeneous audiences, in the process disseminating fashions and ideas across group lines. In this latter sense, the shattering of “absolute social identities” that Nicolau Sevcenko and, for Rio, Tiago de Gomes Melo attribute to the 1920s owed much to the cracks already in place by 1910.¹⁷

Second, whether theater producers were aiming for a distinct or all-encompassing spectatorship, the net effect of theaters’ expansion was an expanded urban public. Much like the late nineteenth-century department store in Paris or Chicago (São Paulo’s did not arrive until 1913), a large number of theaters offered São Paulo’s women a destination, a public space in which they could socialize and consume pleasure without compromising their reputation. Furthermore, Paulistanas could do so at a minimal cost if necessary and, if desired, with children and husband in tow. Indeed, it was precisely because theaters enabled and many theater producers encouraged women’s attendance in the company of their family that the majority of São Paulo’s theaters were widely viewed as, if not morally pure, at least not morally threatening

¹⁷ Gomes, *Um espelho no palco*, 36; Sevcenko, *Orfeu extático na metrópole*, 18.

spaces. As Chapters 4 and 5 will argue, theaters' legitimation—that is, certain producers' ability to frame their auditorium as the dwelling place of the urban public—in turn granted producers and spectators the license to gradually adjust the norms governing female and familial sociability. At the same time, some associational leaders relied on more traditional forms of respectability, enforceable within theaters, in order to openly gather their socially marginalized constituency—working-class, foreign, anarchist, “of color”—without raising police officers' suspicions. Two general interpretations of urban society, then, collided within São Paulo's theaters, even as both rejected what were regarded to be rural customs: one that equated urbanity with existing notions of civilization, in the process laying the groundwork for middle-class respectability, and one that linked the city (and its theaters) to escape, to change, to social emancipation.

Rethinking the city

The urban public accommodated both interpretations, giving Paulistanos a conceptual framework for altering their city through culture, manifested in São Paulo's public spaces and especially its theaters. In this manner, the urban public was about more than citizenship, even in the term's broadest sense of “belonging.” To be sure, at a moment in which the franchise constituted less than five percent of the Brazilian population, the urban public was an important, and in many cases the only, means by which the majority of Paulistanos could influence national and urban policymaking: inside theaters, a variety of residents cultivated the ideas upon which later legislation rested.¹⁸ The ideas and tastes expressed within São Paulo's theaters were also significant in determining who was represented in the “realms of race, culture, religion, and

¹⁸ Joseph Love, *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), xv.

national identities and histories,” to borrow Paulina Alberto’s phrasing.¹⁹ The analysis of theaters in turn-of-the-twentieth-century São Paulo in this sense sheds light on the mechanisms by which a more capacious citizenship was realized. Yet, such an analysis also points to the limited political aims and consequences of much of the activity within the city’s theaters.²⁰ Although a substantial proportion of the associations utilizing São Paulo’s theaters were founded around political ideologies and many of the works performed or screened provided politically charged messages, organizers and reviewers tended to stress the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic effects of an event. By organizing performances, dances, contests, and lectures inside São Paulo’s auditoriums, Paulistanos were above all anticipating what Henri Lefebvre would half a century later call their “right to the city”: by occupying public spaces and participating in public life, they were changing urban society and themselves.²¹

¹⁹ Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 17. See Alberto’s fn. 41 from the same page for a bibliographic introduction to the literature on “belonging.” In her analysis of São Paulo’s black press, Alberto makes the same argument that, before 1924, Brazilian citizenship depended on “culture and literacy” (31). A more extended conceptualization of culture, and specifically Brazilian popular culture, as citizenship is articulated in the introduction of Idelber Avelar and Christopher Dunn, eds., *Brazilian Popular Music and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

²⁰ This is opposed to the emphasis on performance as explicit political resistance by scholars of Latin American theater. Leading studies include Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina’s “Dirty War”* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Jean Graham-Jones, *Exorcising History: Argentine Theater Under Dictatorship* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2000).

²¹ Henri Lefebvre, *Le Droit à la ville* (Paris: Anthropos, 1968), published in English within the collection *Writings on Cities*, ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996). As David Harvey points out in his own theorization of the right to the city, “The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city.” See David Harvey, “The Right to the City,” *New Left Review*, II, no. 53 (Sep-Oct 2008): 23.

In unpacking how Paulistanos perceived their city as more than a political plaza or service hub, this dissertation strays from the Latin American historiography's emphasis on cities as intermediaries between the nation-state and its subjects.²² Along the way, the dissertation also makes a parallel argument for the study of mass and popular culture in Latin America, which has traditionally aimed to elucidate how identities, and especially national identities, were constructed.²³ For Brazil, these analyses have largely focused on Rio de Janeiro and the Northeast, with São Paulo at best dismissed as an outlier due to its role as the birthplace of Brazilian modernism.²⁴ An important exception is Barbara Weinstein's recent *Color of Modernity*, which scrutinizes two major events—the 1932 Constitutionalist Revolution and the city's 1954 quadricentennial celebrations—to explain Paulistas' regionalist, race-based vision for the nation. Still, Weinstein, like many scholars of Brazilian culture, problematically reduces Paulistano cultural production to a narrow circle of intellectuals and politicians, practically ignoring the city's vibrant theater scene. As a result, Weinstein takes for granted the

²² The emphasis on the city as site of “collective consumption” and social movement mobilization can also be found in the works of Marxian geographers such as Manuel Castells, e.g. *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977) and *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

²³ This is, of course, not unique to the Latin American historiography, although in France the study of theater and other entertainment has also sought to explain, beyond identity formation, the country's shifting political culture. See, for example, Jeffrey S. Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theater and French Political Culture, 1680-1791* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*; Cecilia Beach, *Staging Politics and Gender: French Women's Drama, 1880-1923* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

²⁴ A few recent histories that extrapolate Brazil from Rio are Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Gomes, *Um espelho no palco*; Amy Chazkel, *Laws of Chance: Brazil's Clandestine Lottery and the Making of Urban Public Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); and Hertzman, *Making Samba*. In the past few years, several studies outside of history have moved away from the nation as subject to analyze instead the interplay between cultural practices and urban life in Rio, among them Maite Conde's *Consuming Visions: Cinema, Writing and Modernity in Rio de Janeiro* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), and Carvalho's *Porous City*.

homogeneity of the “whiteness” on which mid-century regionalism was built, at the same time that cultural scholars take for granted the homogeneity of Brazilian “popular” culture, a term that Chapter 6 interrogates. While opera and zarzuela were heard with greater frequency than samba in São Paulo’s theaters, the two European genres were by no means equally touted by those Paulistas seeking to modernize the nation. Moreover, after 1910, the widespread consumption of European and US films only further complicated Paulistanos’ attitudes toward “white” cultural imports. In the moment before Weinstein’s “internal orientalism,” and especially before World War I, Paulistanos were still figuring out what it meant to be a modern, urban society—what, from the confluence of local and foreign forces at play in São Paulo’s theaters, should shape their urban public. By addressing the discrepancies above, the dissertation also warns against pigeonholing cultural practices into the service of the nation or resistance to it. With the notable exception of associations of color, most groups utilizing São Paulo’s theaters did so with the aim of improving their community, their workplace, their city, or their bank account.

Finally, in examining the diversity of São Paulo’s cultural production, the dissertation contributes to the historiography of the city itself. While a number of historians have taken on the task of explaining São Paulo’s metamorphosis since the 1958 publication of Richard Morse’s *From Community to Metropolis*, the majority, much like the *New York Times* in 1900, has focused on the city’s physical, economic, and technological changes—what São Paulo’s lawmakers would have called “material progress.”²⁵ Yet, as Chapter 2 will explain, many

²⁵ Richard M. Morse's *From Community to Metropolis: A Biography of São Paulo, Brazil* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), is widely considered to be the classic history of São Paulo City. Yet, it is also a classic overly concerned with narrating São Paulo’s metamorphosis as a string of static phases that correspond to, as the book’s subtitle suggests, the stages of human development: infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood. While many of those who followed in Morse’s footsteps sought to detail these stages, more recent scholars have instead worked to explain the transitions between periods and to trace continuities. Among the

legislators were less interested in becoming the *Times*' "Yankee City" than they were in becoming Paris; "cultural progress," to borrow their term, was as much a marker of urbanization as upticks in the quantity of buildings, roads, goods exchanged, or people. If not all embraced lawmakers' notion of cultural progress, plenty of others were paying attention to São Paulo's cultural alterations as well. Memoirists, poets, novelists, and writers of all stripes captured the growing number of ways in which Paulistanos—the city's residents—walked, dressed, ate, drank, shopped, conversed, danced, made music, and prayed. Among the best preserved voices are

latter is Candido Malta Campos, who, in *Os rumos da cidade: urbanismo e modernização em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Senac, 2002), uses urban planning as a case for upending Morse's periodization. In doing so, Campos builds on the now crowded literature on "urbanism" in São Paulo, which interprets urban growth in terms of infrastructural and architectural expansion and its related political processes. Recent examples from this scholarship include Luiz Augusto Maia Costa, *O ideário urbano paulista na virada do século: o engenheiro Theodoro Sampaio e as questões territoriais e urbanas modernas (1886-1903)* (São Carlos, SP: RiMA, 2003); Paulo Cesar Xavier Pereira, *São Paulo: a construção da cidade, 1872-1914* (São Carlos, SP: RiMA, 2004); and Maria Lucia Caira Gitahy, ed., *Desenhando a cidade do século XX* (São Carlos, SP: RiMA, 2005). This preoccupation with the built environment is also evident in the works of historians who narrate urbanization in São Paulo with private enterprise as their subject, e.g. Marisa Midori Deaecto, *Comércio e vida urbana na cidade de São Paulo (1889-1930)* (São Paulo: Senac, 2002), and Heloísa Barbuy, *A Cidade-Exposição: Comércio e Cosmopolitismo em São Paulo, 1860-1914* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2006). Unfortunately, by limiting citification to commercial growth and urban planning, most of the above monographs reduce the city to the historic center (the Triângulo) and the *jardim* neighborhoods developed by private investors for middle and upper-class residents. That reduction persists in a second body of scholarship, which has found greater success in the United States and which folds urbanization into a larger story of regional (economic) development and especially industrialization. Most notable among these are Warren Dean, *The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1880-1945* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969); Love, *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937*; Anne G. Hanley, *Native Capital: Financial Institutions and Economic Development in São Paulo, Brazil, 1850-1920* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); and Mauricio Font, *Coffee and Transformation in São Paulo, Brazil* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010). These texts have since served as a launching pad for historians interested in illuminating the social consequences of São Paulo's economic changes, and particularly the mechanisms of labor discrimination and resulting forms of inequality. The pioneering work here is Maria Odila Leite da Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life: The Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*, trans. Ann Frost (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), which was followed by George Reid Andrews, *Blacks & Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), and Molly Ball, "Inequality in São Paulo's Old Republic: A Wage Perspective, 1891-1930" (doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2013).

those who came to be known as the founders of Brazilian modernism and who participated in São Paulo's 1922 Week of Modern Art, a benchmark in the history of Brazilian arts that scholars have all too often interpreted as a watershed in the history of São Paulo.²⁶ Scholars of São Paulo have in this manner pinned the metropolis to modernism: in cultural terms, São Paulo's transition to mass urbanity becomes a quantum leap from orthodox backwater to innovative hub. This dissertation fills in and complicates that leap, offering as a counterpoint the dozens of associational theaters and the hundreds of commercial theaters established during the first decade and a half of the twentieth century, and especially in the years around 1910. These were the spaces and this was the moment in which a metropolitan society took form, in which a diverse set of Paulistanos worked to make sense of, shape, and adapt to the rapidly growing city.

²⁶ An important exception is Elias Saliba's *Raízes do riso: a representação humorística na história brasileira: da Belle Époque aos primeiros tempos do rádio* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002), which examines the work of forgotten humorists to show that modernists were far from alone in capturing and shaping what it meant to be Paulistano (156). Morse, in *From Community to Metropolis*, practically skips over the turn of the century, a period that he characterizes as materially driven, filled with "cultural pursuits" that were increasingly "diverse" but also more "meager" and "provincial" (197). Ironically, in doing so, he falls into step with that moment's critics, with the very men who did seek to grasp (and temper) São Paulo's transformation and whom Morse claims did not exist. For Morse, full urban apprehension began in the late 1910s with the birth of a modernist movement (261) and, as he writes elsewhere, even more so with the mid-century emergence of a local school of sociology. See Richard M. Morse, "Manchester Economics and Paulista Sociology," in *Manchester and São Paulo: Problems of Rapid Urban Growth* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), 19. The latter volume's essays likewise collectively equate São Paulo's cultural fruition with modernism, encapsulated in Iumna Maria Simon's "Poetic Evolution in the Industrial Era: The Brazilian Modernists," 35–49; most of the remaining chapters are dedicated to economic analyses. To be sure, Morse does dedicate some pages of *From Community* (202–206) to the pre-1920 popularization of other cultural practices, including film, photography, sports, and cabarets, but his contraposition of these forms with "true Art" (204) leads him to dismiss popular culture as a serious lens for studying the "city in flux" (200). Even Nicolau Sevcenko, who in *Orfeu extático na metrópole: São Paulo, sociedade e cultura nos frementes anos 20* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992) is more inclined to celebrate the rise of the cultural consumer, cannot avoid the modernist pull: despite defining the "modern metropolis" as a self-conscious collectivity grounded in commercial relations (19) and situating that metropolis in the 1920s, the only uniquely post-1920 phenomenon that he examines at length is modernism's maturation.

The inchoate metropolis

Who were the men and women who constituted and altered the inchoate metropolis? Most notably, over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century an increasing percentage of arrivals to São Paulo were immigrants. There were French hoteliers and German brewers, Portuguese shopkeepers and Spanish seamstresses. By century's end, there were also Italian industrialists and factory workers and everything in between; as a national group, Italians easily outnumbered their fellow foreigners, building on several decades of subsidized immigration to the region's coffee plantations and other agricultural ventures.²⁷ After 1900, Europeans were joined by families and men from Japan, the Ottoman Empire, and other parts of South America. For the majority of those arriving from abroad between 1880 and 1914, São Paulo had initially been a portal to the riches of the countryside, a stopover to opportunity that, like so many other cities across the Americas, ultimately became a destination. In this sense and, consequently, in its high proportion of foreigners—nearly 50% at its peak in 1900—São Paulo at the turn of the twentieth century was less like its counterparts to the north, less like Rio de Janeiro and the former colonial capital Salvador, and more like Buenos Aires to the south.²⁸

²⁷ Italians became an especially contentious force to reckon with beginning in the late 1910s: in 1917, 42% of the city's foreign-owned incorporations (approximately 23% of the total number of incorporations) were registered under Italian names and, in 1920, nearly 75% of foreign-owned industrial businesses in the state were headed by Italians (Ball, "Inequality in São Paulo's Old Republic," 40). Luigi Biondi estimates that the "Italian community" (Italian immigrants and their Brazilian-born children) comprised between 35% and 50% of São Paulo's urban population in the years between 1893 and 1916. See his table in "Imigração Italiana e Movimento Operário em São Paulo: um Balanço Historiográfico," in *História do Trabalho e Histórias da Imigração*, ed. Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, Federico Croci, and Emilio Franzina (Sao Paulo: EDUSP, 2010), 25.

²⁸ Michael Hall, "Imigrantes na Cidade de São Paulo," in *História da cidade de São Paulo*, ed. Paula Porta, vol. 3, *A cidade na primeira metade do século XX* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2004), 121.

By the end of World War I, however, São Paulo City—again, like Buenos Aires before it—was a destination unto itself, a magnet for tens of thousands of urban skilled laborers and entrepreneurs: bricklayers and bakers, typesetters and tailors, musicians and machinists.²⁹ São Paulo was gaining the reputation of an industrial powerhouse, even if the majority of its industry was comprised of modest manufactories, workshops that employed fewer than a hundred pairs of hands in the production of textiles, construction materials, and glassware or the processing of foodstuffs.³⁰ Still, collectively the nascent industrial sector offered jobs to thousands of Paulistanos by 1910 and spurred the arrival of tens of thousands more who struggled or chose not to eke out a livelihood from the Paulista soil. The result was the birth of a “cosmopolis,” as chronicler Guilherme de Almeida described it, an at times overwhelming assemblage of sounds, smells, and sights that marked the city as truly cosmopolitan.³¹

That assemblage was not uniquely due to the influx of external newcomers. The same coffee boom that, beginning in the 1860s, pulled Italians and other foreigners to the countryside also slowly lured native Brazilians to São Paulo; as the coffee heartland shifted west from the Paraíba Valley, whose copper-red hills stretch between Rio and São Paulo, the processing, packaging, and financing of coffee shifted from the former to the latter city. Aided by the

²⁹ Among Italians, the initial shift from rural to urban emigrating families was in large part due to what became known as the Prinetti Decree, the 1902 prohibition by the Italian government of subsidized emigration. For the classic study of Italian immigration to São Paulo, see Angelo Trento, *Do outro lado do Atlântico: um século de imigração italiana no Brasil* (São Paulo: Nobel, 1989). Molly Ball shows in the second chapter of her dissertation, “Inequality in São Paulo’s Old Republic,” that a significant proportion of immigrants to São Paulo City after 1900, including those supposedly destined for plantations, had little or no familiarity with agricultural work nor had any intention of pursuing a rural occupation.

³⁰ Warren Dean, *The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1880-1945* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 10-13; Joseph Love, *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 59.

³¹ Almeida’s most famous series of observations, originally published in 1929 in the *Estado de São Paulo*, is collected in *Cosmópolis: São Paulo/29, oito reportagens* (São Paulo: Companhia, Editora Nacional, 1962).

development of rail lines beginning in 1867, this new economic geography positioned São Paulo at the center of a regional spoke-hub system, an entrepôt between its hinterland and the port city of Santos—a sort of (William Cronon’s) Chicago of Brazil.³² Traveling along these spokes were men and women who fluidly moved between city and countryside in the face of coffee crises and financial panics, frequent floods and the Spanish flu. Even before the full abolishment of slavery in 1888 (a series of laws gradually phased out the buying and selling of human beings during the second half of the nineteenth century), emancipated Afro-Brazilians were arriving to São Paulo from plantations and towns near and far.³³ They found work in various trades, in domestic service, or, in a few cases, in government and legal offices alongside the 10,000 or so free or enslaved men and women of color who in 1870 already called São Paulo home.³⁴ Many of their employers were also relatively new arrivals to the city, members of an expanded and enriched planter class who settled in São Paulo either as part-time residents or as merchants, financiers, lawyers, law students, or, increasingly, factory owners.

Together, these groups transformed what had once been the isolated capital of an unremarkable province—the Province of São Paulo—into the bustling capital of Brazil’s wealthiest state—the State of São Paulo. The transition from province to state was not insignificant for São Paulo City. First, as implied by the change in terms, the reorganization of the Brazilian government under the 1891 Constitution expanded the powers of states, enabling São Paulo State to collect whatever taxes it chose to impose upon the lucrative coffee trade and

³² William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

³³ The bills gradually abolishing slavery included the Eusébio de Queirós Law, which in 1850 enforced an already existing ban on the international trading of slaves; the Rio Branco Law (or Free Womb Law), which in 1871 declared that all those thereafter born into slavery would be freed at the age of 21; and the Sexagenarian Law, which in 1885 freed all slaves over sixty years old.

³⁴ Marcílio, “A população paulistana,” 268.

other economic activities conducted within state boundaries. As a result, São Paulo State became the wealthiest among its peers in the early twentieth century, a status reflected in the state's expansion of public works, services, and regulations. Second, in São Paulo State, the decentralization of decision making also extended to municipalities; a bill approved by the state congress in November of 1891 equipped local lawmakers with the revenue and legal powers necessary for molding a specifically *urban* public.³⁵ Finally, the shift from province to state marked the political ascent of both the city and state of São Paulo on the national stage. The 1891 Constitution was the consequence of the overthrow of the Brazilian monarchy in 1889, an event that ushered in the period known as the First or Old Republic (1889-1930). While the coup itself was a military affair, many of its political architects were members of the young Republican Party, which had been founded in São Paulo Province in 1873.³⁶

Paulistas—residents of the province or state of São Paulo—were thus politically as well as economically at the forefront of the First Republic, a position that, coupled with the city's dramatic material changes, fueled a bounty of exceptionalist rhetoric on the part of Paulistanos. This flurry of self-congratulatory or, in fewer cases, self-deriding activity was only further propelled by an overwhelming awareness of São Paulo's status as a secondary city, a city developing in rivalry with national and global centers. On one hand, "secondary" implied that the boomtown was somehow behind, and especially behind Paris, Buenos Aires, and Rio de Janeiro. The latter, for example, had benefited from its political significance in countless ways: as a colonial capital, the brief seat of the Portuguese Court, and then the center of the Brazilian

³⁵ State Law 16 (13 Nov 1891), also known as the Lei Orgânica dos Municípios, granted municipalities the right to set and collect taxes, as well as asserted their responsibility in regulating the maintenance, safety, and hygiene of public spaces, including roads, markets, sewage systems, cemeteries, and entertainment venues.

³⁶ James P. Woodard, *A Place in Politics: São Paulo, Brazil, from Seigniorial Republicanism to Regionalist Revolt* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 22.

Empire, Rio had long been a magnet for artists, performers, and intellectuals seeking royal patronage and other sources of support. On the other hand, São Paulo's sudden growth spurt signaled an opportunity to reinterpret what it meant to be a city, as well as what it meant to be a Brazilian city. If, as the *New York Times* insisted, São Paulo was a Yankee metropolis—industrializing, republican, organized, and functioning—then it was a surprise in Brazil. São Paulo was out of place, or, in the eyes of some Paulistanos, simply higher up the ladder of civilization, a divergence from a socially decaying nation. For the urban historian, these comparisons point not only to the wealth of sources about urbanization and the urban imaginary left behind by inhabitants of secondary cities, but also to the need for understanding the impact of a city's secondary status on its development. While acknowledging the problems of assigning urban hierarchies, this dissertation suggests that considering secondary cities as a distinct group can thus shed new light on how and by whom urban modernity was defined.³⁷

³⁷ I include as part of this group European cities such as Lyon and Manchester or the French provincial capitals examined by Lauren R. Clay in *Stagestruck: The Business of Theater in Eighteenth-Century France and Its Colonies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013). Within Latin America, we might consider Monterrey in Mexico, Medellín in Colombia, or Rosario in Argentina. Although this classification does not entirely free us from the simplifications of the center/periphery dichotomy, it at least challenges the notion that western Europe as a bloc functioned as Brazil's and Latin America's "center" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was, first of all, on just a few key cities that Paulistanos fixed their gaze and, second, as the chapters below will demonstrate, by no means were all of these cities European. The framework of the secondary city also allows for a reinterpretation (and avoidance) of Roberto Schwarz's "misplaced ideas." From the perspective of the secondary city, the uncomfortable fit of foreign ideas in São Paulo was not so much the result of their being out of place than the fact that they were being tried on in a city that could now for the first time do so. Schwarz's theorization is spelled out in "Misplaced Ideas: Literature and Society in Late Nineteenth-Century Brazil," in *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture* (London: Verso, 1992), esp. 28–29, an essay that has since led scholars to cautiously clarify and emphasize the agency of their subjects, that is, to highlight the selectivity of the adoption of thoughts and tastes. At the same time, the agency and cultural "authenticity" of Europeans and North Americans is never questioned; surely lunch at the Jockey Club was as performative in London as it was in São Paulo or Buenos Aires, the lace and stays as coarse, the rich food equally of foreign inspiration. Indeed, if there was one trait that most major urban centers at the time shared, it was

Chapter organization

To explain how and by whom an urban public was shaped in São Paulo around the turn of the twentieth century, I structure the chapters below according to groups of theater producers. The first two chapters (Part I) are dedicated to local lawmakers: I compare two theaters founded and funded by the government to explain how, during the late nineteenth century, state and municipal legislators began to conceive of an expansive urban public. Chapter 1 examines provincial legislators' 1850s-1860s defense of the São José Theater as a "public service," along with the theater's audiences, to elucidate who this public was understood to include and how a provincial theater was intended to serve such a public. Referring to provincial reports and legislative debates, along with press editorials and cartoons, I reveal that it was elite Paulistas whom lawmakers deemed to be in need of the moral and aesthetic education that the São José Theater would provide. By 1900, however, legislators had in mind a very different public, in terms of both that public's composition and what the word "public" implied. As I explain in my second chapter, when the São José burned down in 1898, those advocating its replacement saw an opportunity for stimulating the young metropolis's "cultural progress" as a complement to São Paulo's "material progress" and as a counterweight to the city's growing "crowd." What would become the Municipal Theater was central to both of these aims: the theater, proponents insisted, would not only uplift all Paulistanos, but also demonstrate São Paulo's cultural advancements to the rest of the world. Underlying this argument were two new assumptions: first, that all Paulistanos were capable of "improvement" in mind and manners, and, second, that it was in a public, but controllable, setting that such an improvement could best be attained. I

the pretension to cosmopolitanism. Secondary cities demonstrate how widespread this aspiration was, as well as how local and national circumstances affected the ways in which cosmopolitanism was envisioned and fostered.

analyze these arguments using the annals of state and municipal assemblies, as well as rely on the critiques and demands of onlookers in the mainstream press. I also turn to photographs, architectural plans, programs, advertisements, and memoirs of the Municipal Theater to assess the effectiveness of lawmakers' intentions; while the Municipal did indeed function as a rousing monument to São Paulo's civilized status, the monumentality of both the theater and its spectators precluded the attendance of the broad local public that lawmakers claimed to be enlightening.

Lawmakers were not alone in their attempts to guide São Paulo's diversifying population nor in their dependence on theaters as a tool for doing so. In the second part of my dissertation (Chapters 3 and 4), I turn to immigrant, labor, recreational, and anarchist associations between 1900 and 1924 to explain how Paulistanos from across the social spectrum thought about and sought to shape urban society in the early twentieth century. By using theaters to attract new members, strengthen existing ties, and promote a particular set of ideas and habits, associational leaders were, like the Municipal's proponents, assuming the pliability of urban society and seeking its improvement through individuals' public participation in a common culture. As Chapter 3 shows, however, associational leaders provided a variety of visions for what such a culture might entail. Using anarchist and associational periodicals, municipal event licenses, and construction permits, I assess the extent to which different organizations perceived and wielded theaters as tools for nurturing a specific community culture. If the result was a public fractured along the lines of neighborhood, nationality, race, occupation, and political ideology, associational theaters at the same time collectively fostered an urban public far more capacious than that of the Municipal Theater. In Chapter 4, I more closely examine one form of expansion: the participation of working families, and especially women, as audiences and even performers.

Building on the previous chapter's sources as well as commonly performed plays, I explain why and how associational leaders defined and programmed activities for and about the family. By inviting women and children to participate in public life, many organizers hoped not only to grow their support base but to also temper participants' immoral and irrational tendencies, to transform the theatergoing crowd into a public of respectable individuals. In the process, as we already saw above, associational leaders were legitimizing their groups' missions, cultural forms, and access to the city's public life and spaces.

While most theater entrepreneurs were unconcerned with nurturing a particular community, they, too, were looking to grow their clientele, to make the most of São Paulo's skyrocketing population. After all, theaters were a livelihood for the men who owned, financed, or managed the city's growing number of commercial auditoriums, the focus of Part III. The family unit, as Chapter 5 argues, was for many of these men a profitable unit. As a result, São Paulo's businessmen were also, like associational leaders, promoting the family as a building block of the urban public. In this chapter, I rely on a sampling of newspaper advertisements, architectural plans, municipal inspection reports, and memoirs to trace the strategies—the advertisements, architectural elements, gifts, and programming—implemented by many theater entrepreneurs to encourage the attendance of entire families. I also show how, by providing a relatively controlled space for sociability in order to attract families, impresarios were able to challenge legislators' notions of what entertainment and activities were appropriate within the urban public. Indeed, by 1910, many theater entrepreneurs were framing their events as “popular,” a term that they used to imply broad acceptability. Chapter 6 analyzes how entrepreneurs marketed theaters as either “elite” or “popular,” a fluid binary that likewise divided Paulistanos not strictly by their socioeconomic status but also by the company they viewed and

the company they kept. Utilizing sources similar to those of the previous chapter, I explain how these categories increasingly overlapped: under theater producers' guidance, "popular" became a catchall term and even a fashionable attribute, reorienting the urban public towards variety in terms of both its composition and characteristics.

The publics imagined and created by theater entrepreneurs and associational leaders incited legislative reactions in the mid 1910s and early 1920s, the topic of the dissertation's final chapter. Here I draw on legislature annals, inspection reports, newspapers, and a nascent bohemian press to examine how municipal theater regulation was made into law, enforced, critiqued, and adapted. Specifically, Chapter 7 unpacks the ways in which, over the course of the 1910s, legislators moved away from abstracting the urban public as a sum of homogenous bodies and toward differentiating audiences' minds according to gender, age, class, and nationality. These differences, the chapter argues, were used to justify expansions in the government's regulation of Paulistano public life, effectively closing in the boundaries of the urban public. This transformation laid the foundation for the 1935 establishment of São Paulo's Department of Culture and Recreation, the first of any Brazilian city, as well as the parallel emergence of the nation-state as cultural producer and manager, a process that began in 1930 with the founding of the Ministry of Education and Health under President Getúlio Vargas. Both of these changes are briefly addressed in the dissertation's conclusion. The conclusion also sketches the mid-1920s rise of radio and globally-distributed films in Brazil and, consequentially, the declining significance not only of theaters as privileged sites for forging an urban public but also of culture as the urban public's defining factor. If theaters helped São Paulo's men, women, and children acclimate to the hyper-visible life of the inchoate metropolis, other spaces, media, and aims would soon also claim the attentions of Paulistanos.

Ch. 1 A Provincial Capital and Its Provincial Public, 1854-1889

On March 12, 1854, Antonio Bernardo Quartim and Marcellino Gerard proposed the construction of a new theater to the Legislative Assembly of the Province of São Paulo (Assembleia Legislativa Provincial). In stilted prose, they waxed poetic about the need for the province's capital—the city of São Paulo—to construct a structure that would satisfy the demands of its audiences as well as the performance companies that would grace its stage.¹ Such a theater, they insisted, would suit the “actual circumstances of progress” of the province. The counterpoint to the pair's vision was the Opera Theater (Theatro or Casa da Ópera), the city's first freestanding theater. Built in the mid-1790s, the Opera was hardly deserving of its name. A simple, red wall perforated by three large doors and three upper windows marked the exterior.² Inside, rowed benches crowded the ground floor, while three tiers of balconies encircled the hall. The boxes were empty; slaves were needed to transport from home the chairs in which spectators reclined. It was in one such chair that Dom Pedro I, Brazil's first emperor, had enjoyed the festivities hastily arranged in his honor on September 7, 1822, the night of his declaration of independence along the Ipiranga River.³ This and other civic celebrations were the Opera's crowning events. Its calendar was more often occupied by law student productions and third-rate companies, whose mixed-race actors often drew the attention of travelers.⁴

¹ Antonio Bernardo Quartim and Marcellino Gerard to Provincial Assembly, 12 Mar 1854, ALESP CF54.77.2.

² Pedro de Oliveira Ribeiro Neto, “Os Primeiros Teatros de São Paulo,” *Revista do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros*, no. 7 (1969): 65.

³ J. Galante de Sousa, *O Teatro no Brasil*, vol. 1, *Evolução do Teatro no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: INL, 1960), 11.

⁴ Auguste Saint-Hilaire, *Viagem à Provincia de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Itatiaia/Edusp, 1976), 144, in Elizabeth Ribeiro Azevedo, “O Teatro em São Paulo,” in *História da cidade de São Paulo*, ed. Paula Porta, vol. 1, *A cidade colonial, 1554–1822* (Sao Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2004),

The Opera had already in 1852 been deemed unfit for audiences by Provincial President José Tomás Nabuco de Araújo, but it was not until Quartim and Gerard approached the Provincial Assembly that the project of a new theater was taken seriously. Even so, as this chapter's first section will show, the Provincial Assembly's approval of what became known as the São José Theater was far from inevitable. The theater, after all, began in 1854 as a business pitch rather than a legislative initiative. The resulting partnership between the provincial government and Antonio Quartim (1822-1888) was tenuous at best, weathering tense funding negotiations, a fraught quest for the São José's location, and charges of embezzlement on Quartim's part. By 1870, six years after the theater's first inauguration, the strains on the province's coffers and legislators' patience became too onerous to bear: Quartim's contract was repealed, leaving the provincial government scrambling for impresarios to occupy the still unfinished auditorium. In the end, it was the purse and determination of Antonio Prado, a former Assembly member and the city's future prefect, that hastened the São José's renovation, leading to the theater's second and full inauguration in 1876.

From this saga of conflicted decision-making, of the drawing and crossing of jurisdictional boundaries, of limited resources and unenforceable powers in a yet insignificant province, emerges another story: that of the public in mid-nineteenth century São Paulo. More precisely, it is the story of how the term "public" took on different meanings over the course of two decades' worth of legislative debates, bills, and negotiations and another two decades of largely uninterrupted operation. Sifting through provincial and municipal legislators' words and deeds, the chapter's first section analyzes the internal contradictions of the adjectival "public," a

531. For more on the role of law students at the Ópera, see Elizabeth Ribeiro Azevedo, *Um Palco sob as Arcadas: o teatro dos estudantes de direito do Largo de São Francisco, em São Paulo, no século XIX* (Sao Paulo: Annablume, 2000).

descriptor that preceded terms like “interest” and “service” as lawmakers weighed the merits of funding a theater’s construction. While, as we shall see, the Provincial Assembly considered multiple interpretations of “public” throughout this period, it was ultimately the concerns of the region’s leading families that Assembly members claimed to be addressing. Perhaps this is not altogether surprising: not only did the majority of legislators belong to such families, but it was along familial boundaries that divisions between the province’s Liberal and Conservative Parties were drawn. These were men typically groomed within a restricted electorate by local clientelistic networks, a patronage grounded in agrarian labor relations, military and aristocratic rank, extended kinship ties (*parentelas*), and expanded households that included dependents.⁵ In this sense, the legislative debates around the São José confirm what Richard Morse and Darrell Levi have characterized as a “politics of the family,” a politics that more often than not placed personal alliances above ideological issues.⁶

It was also the region’s leading families, along with local law students, that legislators hoped that the São José would educate and entertain. The “public” of “public service” in this case could not remain in the abstract: as a theater, the São José demanded that Assemblymen articulate some sort of vision for who would occupy the auditorium, in what ways, and for what ends. The chapter’s second half examines these visions, analyzing the arguments by lawmakers and leading literary figures for the patriotic, moral, and aesthetic instruction that a provincial theater would provide. Along the way, the section also juxtaposes these ideas with the experiences of São José spectators, and especially critical spectators. Among the latter were the

⁵ For the classic explanation of patronage in imperial Brazil, see Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

⁶ Darrell E. Levi, *The Prados of São Paulo, Brazil: An Elite Family and Social Change, 1840-1930* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 97; Richard M. Morse, *From Community to Metropolis: A Biography of São Paulo, Brazil* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 125.

aspiring intellectuals, artists, and political leaders behind the weekly humor magazine *Diabo Coxo* (Lame Devil) and its equally flippant successor, *Cabrião* (Persecutor). These men included the illustrator Angelo Agostini (1842-1910, Image 1), the Italian son of an opera singer considered to be Brazil's first cartoonist; Luis Gama (1830-1882, Image 2), a mixed-race autodidact, lawyer, and abolitionist who arrived in São Paulo as a child sold into slavery by his own Portuguese father; and Sizenando Nabuco (1842-1892), who is now remembered as the older brother of Joaquim Nabuco but was at the time known as a Recife-born playwright and lawyer.⁷ Throughout the 1860s, all three became increasingly critical of the province's ruling



Image 1 (left): Angelo Agostini. Photographer and date unknown, IMS Waldyr da Fountoura Cordovil Pires Collection.

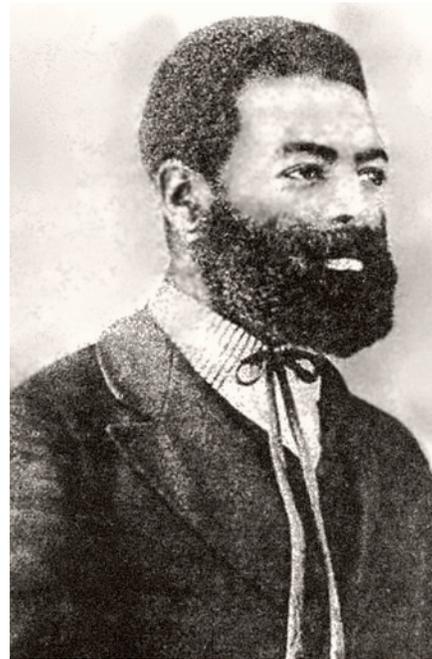


Image 2 (right): Luis Gama, ca. 1870. Photographer unknown, in “Obras resgatam habilidade do líder abolicionista Luiz Gama,” *Folha de São Paulo* (26 June 2010).

⁷ Antonio Luiz Cagnin, ed., *Diabo coxo: São Paulo, 1864-1865* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2005), 12, 16–17; Elciene Azevedo, *Orfeu de carapinha: a trajetória de Luiz Gama na imperial cidade de São Paulo* (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 1999).

Liberal Party, and together they offered Paulistanos in 1864 the city's first illustrated periodical, a rare alternative to the rhetoric and visions of São Paulo's legislators.⁸

What the editors of *Diabo Coxo* and many legislators did share, however, was the belief that mid-nineteenth century São Paulo left much to be desired, and that a new theater could satisfy some of those desires. When Provincial President José Antonio Saraiva instructed the Provincial Assembly in 1855 to consider "our growing civilization" in debating the future São José, his audience understood that this civilization was by all accounts still in its infancy.⁹ The city's infrastructure and living conditions offered plenty of fodder for *Diabo Coxo*, which poked fun at the sluggish mail service, the single daily newspaper, the rats, the strewn carcasses, and the hilly, dark, and unpaved roads.¹⁰ On top of these shortcomings, the urban population had since 1800 plateaued at approximately 30,000 inhabitants, a size that, despite São Paulo's official status as a city since 1711, could hardly have earned that rank by the 1850s. At the time, Salvador da Bahia, the colonial capital until 1763 and Brazil's most populous city until 1800, accommodated around 80,000 inhabitants, while Rio de Janeiro, in large part thanks to the Portuguese Court's presence between 1808 and 1821, boasted just over 200,000.¹¹

No wonder, then, that the majority of travelers described the provincial capital as an "academic village," a town most remarkable for hosting one of Brazil's two law schools. For

⁸ Luis Gama was, along with the abolitionist and future politician Ruy Barbosa, one of the founders of the Club Radical Paulistano. The Club's establishment in the 1860s marked one of the most decisive splits within the Liberal Party, a fissure bluntly illustrated by Agostini in the February 3, 1867, issue of *Cabrião*. See Azevedo, *Orfeu de carapinha*, 80–82.

⁹ "a Provincia, e a nossa crescente civilização," Saraiva, *Discurso* (1855), 31.

¹⁰ "Vellocidade dos nossos correios," *Diabo Coxo*, Oct 2, 1864, 5; "Parabens, oh! Paulicea," Nov 13, 1864, 3; cartoon depicting men tripping over livestock due to unlit streets, Nov 20, 1864, 4; cartoon showing passengers falling out of carriage due to hilly and unmaintained roads, Oct 9, 1864, 5; cartoon mocking the province's poor attempt to level streets, Dec 11, 1864, 5.

¹¹ Hendrik Kraay, *Days of National Festivity in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1823–1889* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 19.

some, São Paulo was a quaint but intellectual center, the site of a “refined, polished society” reminiscent of the hamlets of Switzerland, Burgundy, or Northumberland.¹² Others replaced “quaint” with the more disapproving “quiet” and “dull.” Perhaps the keenest observation was that of the law student and writer Manuel Antonio Álvares de Azevedo, who characterized São Paulo through Satan’s voice in his play *Macário*:

... that place is large as a city, dull as a town, and poor as a village. If you’re not reduced to giving yourself to debauchery, killing yourself from spleen, or being a flash in the pan, don’t enter there. It’s the monotony of tedium... The city on its hill, surrounded by grassy meadows, has steep alleys and rotten streets. The minute is rare when one doesn’t stumble against a donkey or a padre.”¹³

Just over a decade later, the scenery had not much changed. According to a *Diabo Coxo* cartoon by Angelo Agostini, most conspicuous on São Paulo’s muddy and flood-prone streets were the rough robes of a scurrying friar, the dark veils of pious women, and the top hats of law students and politicians, all alongside the ungainly stature of a grazing donkey (Image 3). Other, less well documented figures would have in real life occupied the spaces between the cartoon’s archetypes. Domestic slaves running errands, vendors hawking their wares, farmers bringing livestock and produce to the market, and washerwomen with infants strapped to their backs were, as the groundbreaking work of Maria Odila Leite da Silva Dias has shown, all part of the daily scenery of mid-nineteenth century São Paulo.¹⁴ On occasions of religious or civic festivity, that scenery

¹² Daniel P. Kidder and James C. Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians Portrayed in Historical and Descriptive Sketches* (Philadelphia: Childs & Peterson, 1857), 364–365.

¹³ Translated by Morse, *From Community to Metropolis*, 90.

¹⁴ Maria Odila Leite da Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life: The Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*, trans. Ann Frost (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 9. According to Maria Luiza Marcilio, “A população paulistana ao longo dos 450 anos da Cidade,” in *História da cidade de São Paulo*, ed. Paula Porta, vol. 1, A cidade colonial, 1554–1822 (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2004), 263, São Paulo’s slave population was relatively small during the second half of the nineteenth century, steadily dropping from about 25% of urban dwellers in 1836. The proportion of Paulistanos identified by census takers as being of African descent (*preto* or *pardo*) likewise decreased over the decades, from 35% in 1872 to 8% in 1940.



Image 3: Angelo Agostini, “What one sees most in S. Paulo,” cartoon, *Diabo Coxo*, Dec 4, 1864, 5.

became more congested as confraternities of various social stripes—rich, poor, freed, enslaved—and immigrant organizations of various nationalities—Portuguese, British, German, French—took to the city’s streets for processions, games, and music making.¹⁵

Still, the overall impression recorded by contemporaries with the means to record was one of tranquility, boredom, or backwardness, an impression and reality that local legislators

It is important to note, however, that these terms changed in meaning and application. For a lengthier discussion and bibliography of racial labeling, see Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 28.

¹⁵ Approximately 200 confraternities were registered in the city of São Paulo between 1864 and 1883 according to Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 78, fn. 44.

hoped to improve. In this sense, Agostini's cartoon captured lawmakers' deep-seated anxieties about their province's claim to civilization at the same time that it also reflected the imagined protagonists of São Paulo's metamorphosis. Civilization, in other words, rested on the shoulders of elite Paulistas, and the São José offered a new space in which these Paulistas could think about and embody that civilization. Neither the property of one family nor the shared terrain of São Paulo's outdoors, the São José was a space between home and street, offering at once intimacy and visibility among a confined crowd. It was a setting in which the top-hatted men of Agostini's cartoon could continue their conversation without the dirt of São Paulo's streets, and in which, depending on the topic, that conversation could be joined by Agostini's woman, now with veil removed. And Agostini's men and woman did indeed come: in the period between the São José's provisional inauguration in 1864 and its destruction by fire in 1898, observers marveled at Paulistanos' dedicated attendance, through days of rain or shine and times of peace or war.¹⁶ If some lawmakers intended the São José to be a secondary project, its ubiquity in *Diabo Coxo*, *Cabrião*, and other periodicals testifies to the theater's significance as a site for readers' sociability, diversion, and self-legitimation. These activities, as the pages below will explain, ultimately took on new forms inside the São José: spectators grew silent, women increasingly intermingled, and aesthetic awareness became the crux of cachet. Inside the São José, in sum, an elite public was emerging, a public that legislators hoped would, through the gentle regulation of performed works and audience behavior, contribute to and evince São Paulo's civilization. Inside the São José, an elite public would shed its provinciality.

¹⁶ According to one account, the summer storms of 1864 did not prevent locals from indulging in the "usual diversions: theater and dance" ("divertimentos do costume: teatro e baile"). In "Chronica," *Diabo Coxo*, Dec 11, 1864, 3. Three years later, in the midst of the Paraguayan War, another contributor could not help but remark that Paulistanos seemed to be at the stage of the São José rather than at the stage of battle. In *Cabrião*, March 24, 1867.

Defining “public”

When, in 1854, Quartim’s and Gerard’s proposal for a new theater was brought to the floor of the Provincial Assembly, however, the legislature’s members were far from supportive. In fact, they immediately rejected the project. While we have no record of their reasoning, later contracts signed between provincial presidents and Quartim (Gerard’s name never resurfaced after that first petition) indicate that lawmakers were most likely concerned about the province’s high costs and minimal regulatory powers as stipulated in the initial proposal. At the end of the day, after all, a theater was an expense, another number in the deficit column of the province’s accounting books. Government spending on a theater meant less spending on roads and bridges, on clinics and prisons. In defending or denouncing the establishment of a government-funded theater, provincial legislators were thus arguing over whether or not a theater constituted what they called a “public service” and whether or not such a project lay within the “public interest.” For one camp, the “public interest” demanded fiscal restraint; for another, the São José as a “public service” necessitated greater government involvement. Both insisted on the provincial government’s obligation to some sort of public, a public that, in the arguments that unfolded between the 1854 proposal and the São José’s 1876 inauguration, remained nebulous. In its adjectival form, “public” was thus polysemic, a shapeshifter that suited the needs of Assemblymen and petitioners seeking to demarcate the boundaries of the provincial government.

Antonio Bernardo Quartim (1822-1888) was all too familiar with the variability of state limits by the time that he signed the contract to erect, with the province’s support, a new theater for the city of São Paulo. In fact, his quick reversal of fortune was at least in part due to his and his family’s already long-standing involvement in local “public works.” Quartim’s father had overseen the 1827 drainage of the Tamanduateí River and the maintenance of the city’s public

garden (Jardim Público), a position that Quartim, a militia officer closely connected with the Conservative Party leadership, took over in 1851.¹⁷ It was around that time that Quartim also stepped into the role of impresario of São Paulo's Opera Theater, a role that demanded regular appeals to the Assembly for funds. Quartim's appeals finally persuaded provincial legislators in 1853 to allocate an annual sum of 3:000\$ toward the creation and maintenance of a theater company at the Opera.¹⁸ To put that sum into perspective, 3:000\$ approximated the size of the province's subsidy to the Sant'Anna seminary and was fifty percent more than what was granted to the public garden for that same fiscal year (July 1853-June 1854).¹⁹ Road and bridge repairs ranged the gamut, from 500\$ to 1:500\$ to 17:500\$.²⁰

These comparisons were not lost on São Paulo's lawmakers, who were all too aware of their province's limited resources. The government's revenue for 1853, after all, was estimated to fall just short of 440:000\$. If setting aside less than one percent of that income for an existing theater had already generated heated debate, then how could Quartim convince legislators that a new theater was worthy of 100:000\$, nearly a quarter of annual expenditures? To be sure, Quartim was unsuccessful in coaxing the province to part with such a staggering quantity all at once—only about a tenth of that figure (9:333\$333) was in 1854 reserved for the theater's construction—but his rhetorical strategies nevertheless offer a useful starting point for the legislative debate that began to unfold.²¹ As hinted in the chapter's opening paragraph, Quartim

¹⁷ Eudes Campos, "O capitão Antônio Bernardo Quartim ou o ABC da Engenharia," *Informativo AHM* 5, no. 25–26 (October 2009), <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/info/info25-26/i-estudos.htm>; Provincial Law 10 (19 Feb 1845), Art 1, §8.

¹⁸ Provincial Law 458 (2 May 1853), Art 1, §24.

¹⁹ Provincial Law 458 (2 May 1853), Art 1, §6, §7.

²⁰ Provincial Law 458 (2 May 1853), Art 1, §23. The amount allotted to public works added up to 80:002\$952, just under the totals earmarked for education (92:433\$310) and policing (103:125\$900).

²¹ Provincial Law 488 (10 May 1854), Art. 1, §21.

framed the future São José as a public service, a project that would serve the “civilized people” of São Paulo City, urban men and women who were “utterly deprived of recreations such as this.”²²

For Quartim, then, the beneficiaries of São Paulo’s new theater would be the residents of the provincial capital, and this proved to be one of the first sticking points for the members of the Provincial Assembly. As Antonio Joaquim de Sampaio Peixoto (b. 1794) noted in the Assembly’s concurrent arguments over the subsidization of the Opera Theater, the provincial government had an obligation to a provincial public. These were the “gentlemen who produce coffee and sugar,” claimed Peixoto, the men who “most paid taxes.”²³ Encouraged by his colleagues’ cheers, Peixoto pressed on, explaining the tragic irony that, despite their contributions, these were also the men who “in fewer numbers sit in houses” such as the Opera and the future São José.

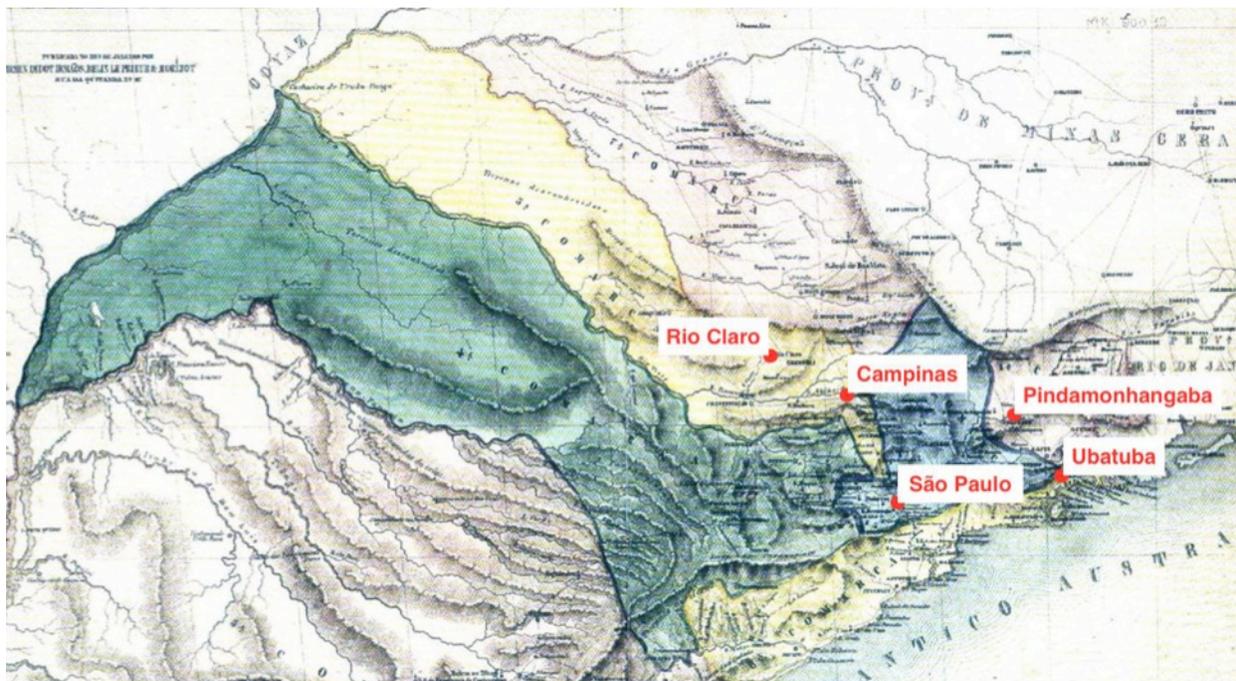
With the far-off provincial taxpayer as his imagined spectator, it was no wonder that Peixoto, who represented Campinas, São Paulo’s not so far-off economic rival, denounced the labeling of a theater as a “public service” (*serviço publico*).²⁴ Travel in the province of São Paulo was exceedingly difficult at the time: without trains and, in some regions, a maintained road system, the region’s hilly terrain could slow a horse-drawn carriage down to a snail’s pace. How could anyone beyond the provincial capital’s boundaries be expected to attend a Paulistano

²² “um povo cevelizado... uma população tão pobre de recreios como é esta,” Quartim to Provincial Assembly, 18 Mar 1854, ALESP CF54.77.

²³ “É porque infelizmente os homens que mais pagam tributos são os que em menor numero se sentam nestas casas. (Apoiados). ...os senhores que produzem café e assucar, etc., estes são os que mais pagam tributos,” Assembleia Legislativa Provincial, *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Secção de Obras D’O Estado de S. Paulo, 1854), 213.

²⁴ *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1854), 212. Information about Peixoto’s representation is derived from Marques e Irmão, *Almanak Administrativo, Mercantil e Industrial da Provincia de S. Paulo para o anno de 1858* (São Paulo: J.R. de Azevedo Marques, 1857), 272.

theater on a regular basis? Peixoto’s case, made just one month after Quartim’s second proposal for a new auditorium, was raised again a year later by Antonio Barbosa da Cunha (d. 1869), a Conservative from the coastal town of Ubatuba (Map 4), and it continued to resurface in the Assembly until at least the São José’s 1864 inauguration.²⁵ Nonetheless, Peixoto, da Cunha, and many other legislators did make the journey to São Paulo. More importantly, as Manoel Eufrásio de Toledo (d. 1872) asserted in refuting da Cunha, so did others hailing from across the province and even the empire.²⁶



Map 4: São Paulo Province, 1847, and its major centers. Colored regions indicate the province’s political subdivisions. Basemap: Lithographia Imperial de Yitarée, “Carta Topographica da Provincia de São Paulo,” Rio de Janeiro, 1847, <http://www.novomilenio.inf.br/santos/mapa36g.htm>.

²⁵ *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Secção de Obras D’O Estado de S. Paulo, 1855), 221. A concise entry about da Cunha’s political life is included in Luiz Gonzaga da Silva Leme, *Genealogia paulistana*, vol. 7 (São Paulo: Duprat & Comp., 1905), 477.

²⁶ *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1855), 225.

For Toledo, also a Conservative Party leader, it was these latter viewers who mattered most; whether or not distant Paulistas like himself would access the theater was nearly irrelevant.²⁷ Toledo, after all, was defending the construction of a new hall, not the sponsorship of dramatic activity at the Opera, and a sumptuous theater promised more than the amusement of bored countrymen. It would serve as a monument, a marker of the academic village's existing civilization. "The edification of a theater is in the public interest," Toledo argued, supplying as evidence the claim that "all civilized nations contribute in great part to the expenses of these establishments."²⁸ By "civilized nations," Toledo was most obviously referring to France, whose Comédie Française and Odéon Theaters had been managed and owned by the state since their founding in 1680 and 1782, respectively. It was in France that, during the eighteenth century, a discourse of *embellissement*—of beautification—had also framed theaters as "public utilities," justifying their construction in numerous provincial capitals.²⁹ In the process, as Lauren Clay has shown, municipal leaders were pressured to construct ornate auditoriums in order to not fall behind their counterparts elsewhere. Theaters became an arms race, symbols of civilization whose competitive construction only reinforced their status as such. While da Cunha dismissed this race as a passing fad, citing for support the liberal economist Gustave de Molinari's hot-off-the-press *Dictionary of Political Economics*, his insistence hints at the countless other lawmakers who despaired over the absence of a local hall.³⁰

²⁷ A short account of Toledo's career can be found in Athayde Marcondes, *Pindamonhangaba: apontamentos historicos, geographicos, genealogicos, biographicos e chronologicos, 1680-1906*, vol. 1 (São Paulo: Espindola, 1907), 180.

²⁸ "Os nobres deputados bem comprehendem que a edificação de um theatro é de interesse publico, todas as nações civilisadas concorrem em grande parte para a despesa desses estabelecimentos," *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1855), 224.

²⁹ Lauren R. Clay, *Stagestruck: The Business of Theater in Eighteenth-Century France and Its Colonies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 23, 39–42.

³⁰ *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1855), 221.

Indeed, Antonio Luis dos Reis França was far from alone when, in supporting funds for the Opera in April of 1854, he declared it “an embarrassment to the Province of São Paulo to not have a capable theater.”³¹ If, as Toledo claimed in advocating for the São José’s construction, “in the imperial capital and in the capitals of various provinces this public utility... has never been contested,” then it was of utmost urgency that São Paulo Province follow suit.³² True, the Opera—and the future São José—was situated in one city, but that city happened to be the capital of the province, the heart and face of the province. Moreover, as merely a provincial capital, it was a city that could not count on imperial support. Rio de Janeiro’s Royal Theater of São João, for example, owed its existence directly to Portuguese King João VI, who, after settling in Brazil, ordered the auditorium’s construction in 1810.³³ In the aftermath of Brazil’s independence in 1822, the reorganized Court continued to erect theaters in Rio as well as Salvador, the young empire’s principal cities. Excluded from the empire’s largesse, several provinces, such as Pernambuco and Maranhão, took the initiative to establish theaters and subsidize performance companies using their own purses, annually shelling out 16:000\$ and 10:000\$, if Paulista legislators are to be believed, as opposed to São Paulo’s 3:000\$ for the Opera.³⁴

If the São José’s proponents were driven by a sense of rivalry, or at least by the need to meet in the eyes of an imagined, external observer what they understood to be a universal

³¹ “É uma vergonha para a provincia de S. Paulo não ter um theatro capaz,” *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1854), 216.

³² “na capital do imperio, e nas capitaes das diversas provincias essa utilidade publica... nunca foi contestada,” *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1855), 224.

³³ Imperial Decree of May 28, 1810. A complete copy of the document can be found in Sousa, *O Teatro no Brasil*, 325. For a succinct overview of theaters in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, see Andrea Marzano, “A magia dos palcos: teatro no Rio de Janeiro do século XIX,” in *Vida divertida: histórias do lazer no Rio de Janeiro (1830-1930)*, ed. Andrea Marzano and Victor Andrade de Melo (Rio de Janeiro: Apicuri, 2010), 97–123.

³⁴ *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1854), 214.

measurement of civilization, there was another, very real rationale behind their insistence on provincial support. Erecting and maintaining a theater “worthy” of the province required a supervising body with both extensive resources and longevity. The city of São Paulo, however, faced few options for raising revenue. Brazil’s Law of October 1, 1828, and the 1834 Additional Act (Ato Adicional) had shifted local legislative power to the provincial assemblies, with the latter pulling the purse strings on virtually all local and regional projects.³⁵ It was not until after 1889, as the next chapter will demonstrate, that this balance between provincial and municipal support would be reversed. Especially given São Paulo’s status as the provincial capital, Toledo insisted, it was therefore only logical that the city’s care rested on the Assembly’s shoulders.

Not all of Toledo’s peers were easily persuaded, however. Da Cunha accused the province of already disproportionately funneling its resources toward the improvement of São Paulo City. In fact, da Cunha went on, there was no reason why a Paulistano theater should earn the province’s support if less populated and less wealthy municipalities such as Pindamonhangaba and Campinas could procure the revenue to build stately halls.³⁶ Toledo, however, flipped da Cunha’s logic on its head: if a town like Pindamonhangaba—where Toledo himself had climbed the political ladder—could construct a theater of greater splendor than São

³⁵ While on one hand the Law of 1828 gave municipal chambers the right to implement local codes (*códigos de posturas*), it required that these be approved by the provincial legislatures (“Conselho Geral” at the time). As Article 24 succinctly phrased it, “As Camaras são corporações meramente administrativas, e não exercerão jurisdição alguma contenciosa.” Article 10 of the Additional Act, among other things, specified that municipal budgets would fall under the jurisdiction of provincial assemblies and that provincial legislation regarding municipal policing and economic regulation would have precedence. For an excellent analysis of the financial relationship between municipal and provincial legislatures in the province of São Paulo, see Anne G. Hanley, “A Failure to Deliver: Municipal Poverty and the Provision of Public Services in Imperial São Paulo, Brazil, 1822-1889,” *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 3 (2013): 513–35. As Hanley distills it, “The province assumed the paternalistic role of benevolent patron, inviting municipalities to venture their opinions... but allowing and approving only what it deemed best” (517).

³⁶ Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa (1855), 222-223.

Paulo's Opera, then it was of utmost urgency that the provincial capital do the same.³⁷ Without investors like Pindamonhangaba's affluent planters, São Paulo had no choice but to depend on the aid of the Assembly and the province's treasury. On this point, da Cunha agreed, conceding that Paulistano "capitalists [were] so distrustful" that they were unwilling to initiate new ventures "as was done in other places."³⁸

It was precisely this distrust, Toledo argued, that the new theater could help resolve, setting the provincial capital on track to relying on local, private-sector support. An elegant edifice complete with a fully equipped and expanded stage would put São Paulo on touring companies' maps, which would in turn bring the city to the attention of investors beyond the province or even the Atlantic.³⁹ If, in this sense, the future São José's audience was potentially international, the "public" that the hall truly served remained provincial: by attracting external capital, the São José would stimulate the economic and infrastructural development of the region, benefiting all Paulistas in the long run. In the meantime, the partnership between the province and Quartim would forge a path for other large-scale, private-public collaborations. While da Cunha agreed, he worried about the direction in which the São José would take that path: could any project be truly of "public utility," he asked his peers, if, at the end of the day, it padded the pockets of only a single man?⁴⁰

For da Cunha, the adjectival "public" described the antithesis of the private individual; the assemblyman had no qualms about shared ownership in the form of stockholders.⁴¹ This was the strategy, after all, adopted by João VI for the São Pedro Theater in Rio, and a method that

³⁷ Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa (1855), 224-225.

³⁸ "os capitalistas são tão desconfiados que não se querem envolver em empresas como se fez em outros lugares," *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1855), 217.

³⁹ Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa (1855), 224.

⁴⁰ Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa (1855), 219-220.

⁴¹ Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa (1855), 221-222.

would be repeated or recommended to support later initiatives related to theater performance and education.⁴² Both stockholders and the province would ideally recover their investments through the theater's profits while the government would continue to manage the space. In this manner, declared da Cunha, the contract between the province and investors would adhere to the principles of "equality, of justice," granting no "exceptional favors" to Quartim.⁴³ Da Cunha was careful to note that the issue was not Quartim himself; he respected the "active and laborious impresario." Rather, it was a question of who would reap the theater's profits and in what proportion.

The question of profit became particularly urgent as provincial and municipal officials moved forward with proposals for potential sites. Around the time in which da Cunha laid out his arguments, a group of outraged property owners—three women and five men—submitted a lengthy letter to the Provincial Assembly, questioning the new theater's status as a legally defined "public good" (*bem público*).⁴⁴ Their outrage had been triggered by the recent recommendation to Provincial President José Antonio Saraiva that the buildings around the Largo do São Francisco (São Francisco Square)—that is, their property—be expropriated and destroyed in order to clear space for a new theater (Map 5). The recommendation had been made

⁴² Sousa, *O Teatro Brasileiro*, 326, 220. Additional initiatives include the 1857 Academia Imperial de Belas Artes, which received support in the form of lotteries in order to develop Brazilian opera, the result of which was Carlos Gomes's *A noite do castelo*. See Kraay, *Days of National Festivity*, 220. In 1879, Sizenando Nabuco attempted to secure funding for a Teatro Normal in the Brazilian Congress, but the bill never reached the floor.

⁴³ "um empresário activo e laborioso... mas quero que esta protecção se harmonise o mais que for possível com os principios de igualdade, e de justiça, e não que seja origem de se darem favores excepcionaes contrarios a elles," *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1855), 218.

⁴⁴ Anna Jacinta de Moraes, et al., to Assembleia Legislativa Provincial, March 1855, ALESP IO55.014.3. This understanding of a "public good" is distinct from that of economists today. By the latter's definition, the Teatro São José might be better understood as a club good: a service provided without profit and whose use by one individual does not reduce its availability to another (i.e. a non-rivalrous good). Unlike a public good, however, a club good is not available to all members of a society (i.e. it is excludable).



Map 5: São Paulo’s center, 1868. The triangle marks the historic core (Triângulo); the circle, the Largo do São Francisco (site of the Law School); and the square, the final location of the São José Theater. Basemap: Companhia Melhoramentos de São Paulo, “Planta da cidade de São Paulo, 1868,” São Paulo, 1954, APESP.

by José Profirio de Lima, an engineer hired by Quartim to evaluate the government’s options, and there, in the eyes of the propertied petitioners, lay the crux of the problem.⁴⁵ For Quartim, the theater was a long-term business venture; unlike bridges and roads, the São José would rake in revenue for its impresario long after construction was completed. How then, protested the threatened landlords, could the project truly be a “benefit directly or indirectly for the general population,” the requirement for dispossession as stipulated in Article 179, §122, of Brazil’s 1824 Constitution?⁴⁶ Moreover, the landowners continued, demonstrating their familiarity with both provincial and imperial law, theaters were not among the list of “public goods” furnished by

⁴⁵ José Porfirio de Lima to José Antonio Saraiva, 6 Feb 1855, ALESP IO55.011.2-3.

⁴⁶ “vantagem directa ou indirectamente para a população em geral,” Moraes, et al., March 1855.

Provincial Law 38 (18 March 1836).⁴⁷ Such an inclusion, the petitioners warned, would set a dangerous precedent for the province's prioritization of entertainment over property rights.

President Saraiva, however, had a different interpretation of what constituted a “benefit... for the general population.” The São Francisco plot was not the first site that Saraiva had examined, and the quick succession of options that the president considered speaks volumes to how Saraiva and many other lawmakers defined the public interest. It was with the “public interest” in mind that, in 1854, the Municipal Chamber suggested two plots on the town's outskirts that would be more affordable than Quartim's original proposition (alongside the city's Government Palace) and cheaper to build on than the steep terrain of the president's proposed site (the Barracão do Carmo).⁴⁸ While the “public interest” was perhaps merely rhetorical tact on the Chamber's part—the Barracão do Carmo was a warehouse that, incidentally, was owned by the municipality—it was nevertheless a successful strategy: President Saraiva was ultimately convinced by the Chamber's appeals to “the economy that one must observe in... every public work.”⁴⁹ Not only did he, at least in the immediate aftermath, follow the Chamber's advice, but it was also with an eye to minimizing the costs of expropriation and construction that Saraiva later, in February 1855, accepted the recommendation of Quartim's engineer.

In the end, the property owners of the Largo do São Francisco need not have worried. Their cause may not have evoked sympathy in more than a handful of Assembly members, da Cunha among them, but legislators did keenly feel the rising costs of the plaza's real estate.⁵⁰ After Saraiva and his successor, Francisco Diogo Pereira de Vasconcelos, stalled the project due

⁴⁷ Under the Ato Adicional (1834), Art 10, §3, the Provincial Legislative Assembly was given the right to dictate more specifically which cases constituted grounds for dispossession.

⁴⁸ Câmara Municipal to José Antonio Saraiva, 4 Aug 1854, APESP Ofícios Diversos.

⁴⁹ “as melhore condições de economia que se deve sempre observar na realização de toda obra publica,” Câmara Municipal to José Antonio Saraiva, 4 Aug 1854.

⁵⁰ Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa (1855), 219.

to mounting expenditures and a growing suspicion of Quartim's accounting, a third provincial president, José Joaquim Fernandes Torres, in early 1858 settled on the Largo de São Gonçalo (today's Praça João Mendes). Also known as the Largo Municipal, the square was on the town's edge; the acquisition of four lots here was estimated at about a third of the expense (14:200\$ instead of 22:000\$) of expropriating property across from the Law School in the Largo do São Francisco.⁵¹ On February 1, 1858, a new contract was signed confirming the revised site and, on historic April 7, construction finally began.⁵² In a groundbreaking ceremony complete with orators, infantry, and a band, the edifice-to-be was christened the Theatro São José, thus honoring the provincial presidents responsible for the project's initiation (José Saraiva) and realization (José Torres).⁵³

The pomp and circumstance proved to be premature. The tension between, on one hand, the "public interest" in terms of fiscal restraint and, on the other hand, "public utility" in terms of the theater's monumentality resulted in the insufficient realization of either. Perhaps Provincial President Vasconcelos, who had refused to move forward with the project, best captured this paradox when, in an 1857 report, he confessed to the "advantages of a Theater on par with the importance of this Province's Capital" but insisted that the moment was simply wrong for such an investment.⁵⁴ Adornments, high-quality cement, tiled walls, and other structural elements deemed necessary for a "par" theater, not to mention the additional labor, all demanded money,

⁵¹ "Auto da Fundação do Teatro desta Capital," 7 Apr 1858, APESP C07140a.

⁵² Contract between Antonio Bernardo Quartim and José Joaquim Fernandes Torres, 1 Feb 1858, APESP C07140a. April 7, 1858, was the twenty-seventh anniversary of Pedro I's abdication.

⁵³ "Auto da Fundação," 1858.

⁵⁴ "Não contesto as vantagens de um Teatro á par da importancia da Capital desta Provincia." Francisco Diogo Pereira de Vasconcellos, *Relatorio apresentado pelo Excellentissimo Senhor Dezembargador Francisco Diogo Pereira de Vasconcellos ao Excellentissimo Senhor Doutor Antonio Roberto de Almeida* (São Paulo: Typ. 2 de Dezembro de Antonio Louzada Antunes, 1857), 23–24, CRL.

money that the provincial treasury simply could not spare. The province, after all, as Vasconcelos pointed out, was in 1857 still struggling to deliver potable water. Three years earlier, in the context of the Opera debates, Assembly member Antonio Peixoto had made a similar case, urging his colleagues to prioritize “public services of absolute necessity” in light of the government’s limited budget.⁵⁵

If, for Vasconcelos and Peixoto, the public interest demanded that the government reduce or do away with its involvement in Quartim’s enterprises, this tradeoff was less clear for other Paulista politicians. In fact, the longer negotiations between Quartim and the Provincial Assembly wore on, the more detailed and exacting became the contracts signed between the province’s president and Quartim. Among the contracts’ stipulations—what legislators considered to be the essential components of a well executed theater—were the number and size of boxes, a designated box for the president, “comfortable and decent” seating for 350 on the ground floor, and spacious hallways and rooms for socializing, drinking, and grooming.⁵⁶ This would be no Opera Theater, and certainly no tavern or private salon. Indeed, the edifice envisioned in the early contracts was understood to be a “work of such transcendence” that the Municipal Chamber feared the theater would rob the Government Palace of its view and stature.⁵⁷

As elucidated in the Chamber’s 1854 correspondence with the provincial president, this transcendence was only to be expected if the new theater was to be on “par with [the capital’s]

⁵⁵ “Um theatro bem regido é uma escola de moralidade, mas temos serviços publicos de absoluta necessidade.” *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1854), 212, 216.

⁵⁶ Quartim to ALP, revised contract proposal, 18 Mar 1854, ALESP CF54.77.4.

⁵⁷ “uma obra de tanta transcendencia,” Câmara Municipal, 29 Jul 1854, APESP Ofícios Diversos.

civilization, wealth, and comfort of its population.”⁵⁸ This language of equivalence—of measuring the theater against the city that it would inhabit—was similar to that of Vasconcelos, and it would continue to be deployed by provincial presidents and impresarios seeking funds from the Provincial Assembly. In one of his appeals for financial assistance, Quartim remarked that a good theater was a “public necessity in the Capital of a civilized Province like that of São Paulo,” while, in 1859, President José Torres appealed for an increase in loans in order that “this enlightened Capital have a worthy monument.”⁵⁹ Underlying this discourse was the implication that the city of São Paulo was already an advanced society, that the future São José would merely be a marker of the capital’s and its province’s progress. As such, the humbler, unfinished structure of the 1864 inauguration was a tragic failure (Image 4). Its exposed bricks and bare façade instead offered a true account of the province’s limitations, an account that was difficult to ignore given the size of the São José. No wonder, then, that Provincial President João Crispiniano Soares demanded in the following year additional work and several of his successors followed suit, justifying additional funds on the basis that the theater would need to be larger, safer, and more elegant than that originally envisioned.⁶⁰ Even as the slow pace of that work and

⁵⁸ “que esteja a par de sua civilização, riqueza, e comodidade de sua população.” Câmara Municipal to José Antonio Saraiva, 29 Jul 1854, APESP Ofícios Diversos.

⁵⁹ “necessidade publica na Capital de uma Provincia civilizada como a de S. Paulo.” Quartim to ALP, 4 Feb 1857, ALESP CF57.079; “para que tenha esta illustrada Capital um monumento digno d’ella.” *Discurso com que o illustrissimo e excellentissimo senador José Joaquim Fernandes Torres, presidente da provincia de S. Paulo, abrio a Assembléa Legislativa Provincial no anno de 1859* (São Paulo: Typ. Imparcial de Joaquim Roberto de Azevedo Marques, 1859), 33, CRL.

⁶⁰ *Relatorio apresentado a Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo na segunda sessão da 15.a legislatura no dia 2 de fevereiro de 1865 pelo presidente da mesma provincia, o conselheiro João Crispiniano Soares* (São Paulo: Typ. Imparcial de Joaquim Roberto de Azevedo Marques, 1865), 81, CRL. “O Theatro em construcção,” *O Publicador Paulistano*, June 8, 1859, 4; João Jacintho de Mendonça, *Relatorio apresentado á Assembléa Legislativa da provincia de São Paulo na 1.a sessão da 14.a legislatura pelo presidente, doutor João Jacyntho*

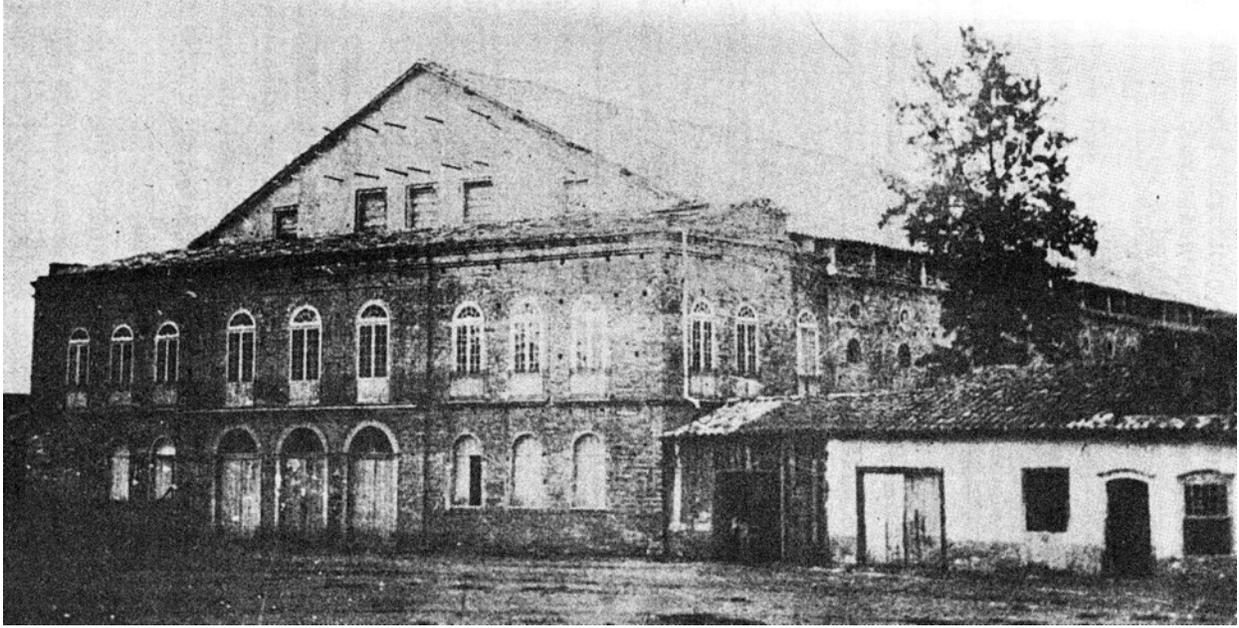


Image 4: The São José Theater, ca. 1865. Attributed to Militão Augusto de Azevedo, photograph, Arquivo Metropolitano da Arquidiocese de São Paulo.

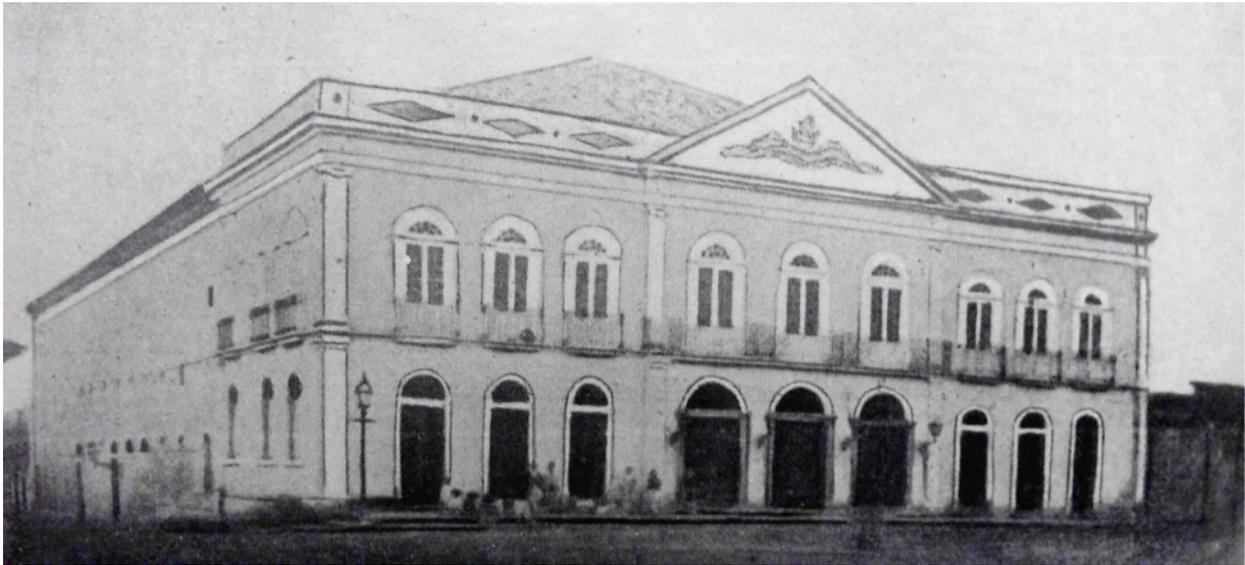


Image 5: The renovated São José Theater, ca. 1880. Photograph, in Affonso A. de Freitas, *Tradições e Reminiscências Paulistas*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editôra, 1955), 97.

de Mendonça (São Paulo: Typ. Imparcial de Joaquim Roberto de Azevedo Marques, 1862), 34, 36; Joaquim Saldanha Marinho, *Relatorio apresentado a Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo na primeira sessão da decima oitava legislatura no dia 2 de fevereiro de 1868 pelo presidente da mesma provincia, o conselheiro Joaquim Saldanha Marinho* (São Paulo: Typ. do Ypiranga, 1868), 87.

the drainage from the province's coffers of over 171 *contos* (171:000\$), well over the original allocation of 50 *contos*, eventually led some lawmakers and the press to call foul, the provincial government persisted.⁶¹ Rather than settle for a simpler São José, the Provincial Assembly in 1870 repealed Quartim's contract and, in 1873, sold the theater's assets into ten short-term bonds in order to fund renovations.⁶²

In the aftermath of the Paraguayan War, even this funding strategy proved to be inadequate, but the theater was in 1875 saved by the deep pockets of Antonio da Silva Prado (1840-1929). Already respected as a planter, industrialist, and Conservative Party leader, Prado would go on to serve as the first prefect of São Paulo, spearheading from this position, as the next chapter will illustrate, the city's remarkable physical metamorphosis.⁶³ It was no coincidence, then, that Prado voluntarily stepped in to hasten São Paulo's 1870s transformation, the period under Provincial President João Teodoro Xavier's term that became known as the capital's "second founding." This was the era of the "Versailles complex," to borrow Richard Morse's term, the desire to monumentalize São Paulo's new coffee-induced prosperity in the form of ordered greenery and widened, cobbled streets.⁶⁴ The São José's renovation was part of this rebranding, hiding the humiliations of the provincial town behind a freshly painted and pedimented façade (Image 5). Indeed, learning their lesson, lawmakers explicitly demanded

⁶¹ The precise figure was 171:045\$073. Vicente José da Costa to Vicente Pires da Motta, 23 Jul 1863, APESP Ofícios Diversos.

⁶² These bonds ranged from 700\$ to 9:000\$ in value. João Teodoro Xavier, *Relatório apresentado á Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de S. Paulo pelo presidente da provincia, o exm. sr. dr. João Theodoro Xavier em 5 de fevereiro de 1874* (São Paulo: Typ. Americana, 1874), 41.

⁶³ For more on the life, times, and powerful family of Antonio Prado, see Levi, *The Prados of São Paulo, Brazil*.

⁶⁴ Morse, *From Community to Metropolis*, 179.

“beauty” in the building’s final contract between the Provincial Assembly and Prado.⁶⁵ Prado did not disappoint: as the fledgling *Provincia* phrased it, the theater’s second inauguration was “a true resurrection,” a far cry from the “laughable and unqualified mass of bricks that only served to embarrass us.”⁶⁶

The renovated São José also no longer served to embarrass theatergoers themselves. Its interior was finally deemed appropriately matched in ornamentation to the fineries of its occupants, while a finished floor and the replacement of benches with chairs ensured that even in the pit (*platéia*)—now transformed into a proper parterre—refinement would reign (Image 6). The latter transformation was accompanied by the addition of a top-floor gallery (*galeria*), a tucked-away tier that kept out of sight lower-paying attendees. This addition meant that, over the years, law students ascended from the parterre to the gallery while women gradually descended from the boxes to the parterre. Still, despite this shift, the region’s leading families continued to occupy the São José’s boxes, seating areas that visually dominated the theater’s architecture. In showcasing these families and other bedecked theatergoers, the São José served as a monument not only to the province’s capital city but also to the province’s society, or at least to its upper crust.

Indeed, with the 1855 plan’s allocation of only 500 rowed seats to 82 boxes—a ratio that would significantly increase in future theaters—the São José left little room for the “general population” that the 1855 property owners’ letter defined to be the “public” in “public good.”⁶⁷

The rental of a box in 1876 for the performance of, say, Giuseppe Verdi’s opera *La Traviata* cost

⁶⁵ Art. 15 of contract between Prado and the Provincial Assembly, in Amaral, 164.

⁶⁶ “uma verdadeira ressurreição.... Ao certo se pôde dizer que o S. José já não é aquella irrisoria e inqualificavel mole de tijolos que só servia para nos envergonhar.” “Noticiário,” *Provincia*, March 14, 1876, 2.

⁶⁷ *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1855), 486.

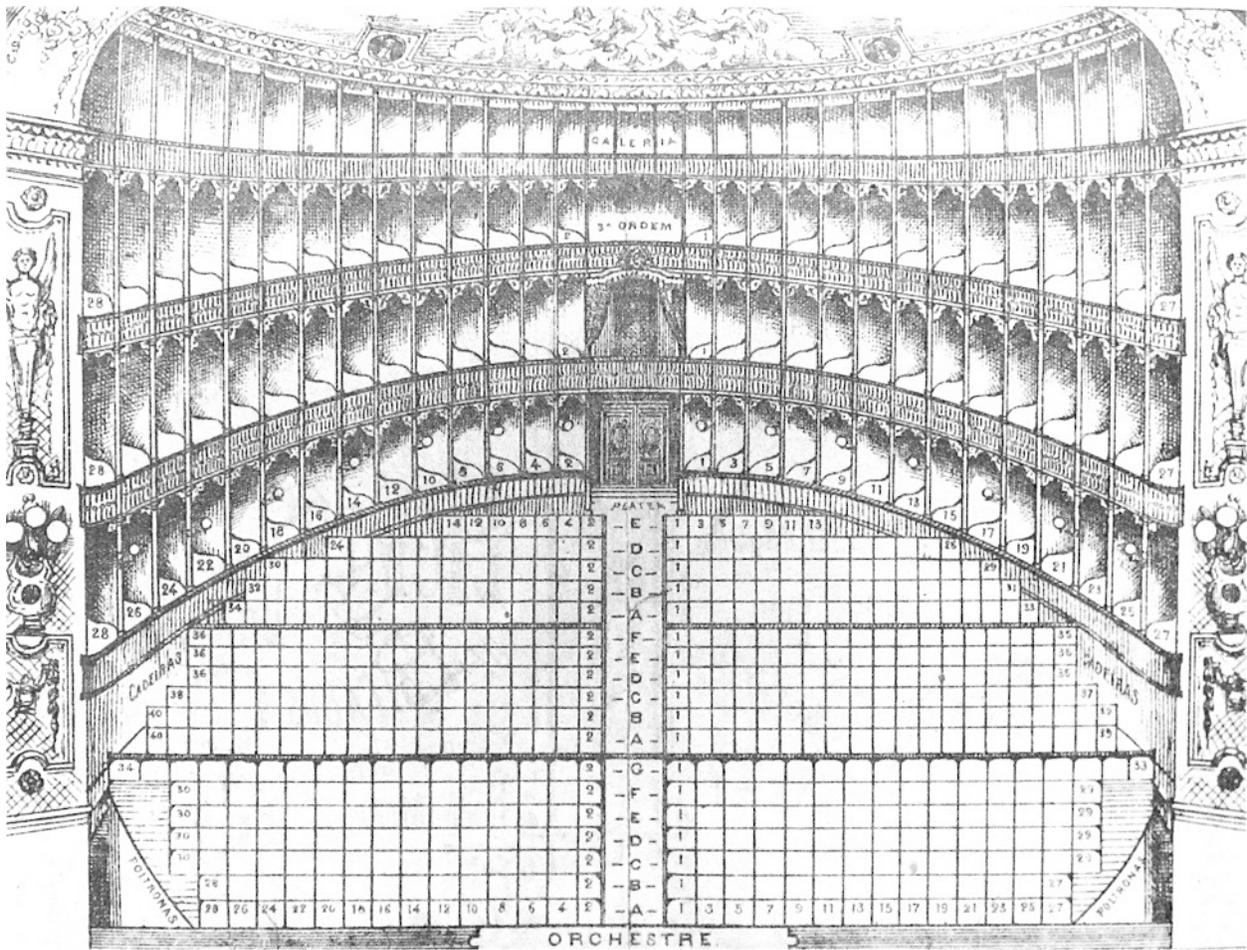


Image 6: Jules Martin's seating chart of the renovated São José Theater, printed circa 1880, shows 84 boxes distributed across three floors in addition to the provincial president's box at the center of the second level. The parterre includes 210 seats (*poltronas*) in its front section and 361 seats (*cadeiras*) in the back. It is unclear from this lithograph or other sources if the gallery included benches, chairs, or simply room for standing. In Amaral, *História dos Velhos Teatros de São Paulo*, 167.

between 8\$ and 12\$, prices that made regular attendance difficult for even a professional.⁶⁸ A physician, for example, seeking to secure the reputation and comfort of his family would have been expected to spend in a single evening a sum worth over one percent of his entire year's earnings.⁶⁹ With gallery tickets typically hovering around 1\$ or 2\$, single men would have had

⁶⁸ Advertisement, Companhia Lyrica Italiana, *Provincia*, April 19, 1876, 4.

⁶⁹ According to the 1876-1877 budget for the Province of São Paulo (Law 89, 13 Apr 1876), a physician at the Hospício de Alienados (Insane Asylum) earned an annual salary of 600\$.

an easier time affording admission to the São José, but even at this price range admission was beyond the reach of most Paulistanos. Contemporary accounts of the São José confirm what ticket costs and architectural measurements suggest: reviews in the mainstream press regularly stressed the fact that the theater accommodated the “most select gathering of spectators,” and later remembrances only reinforced this perception.⁷⁰ “The audience that flooded the theater in that epoch formed the cream of society,” one contributor waxed nostalgic on the front page of the daily *O Commercio de São Paulo* in 1902.⁷¹ The memoirist Affonso Freitas cast a less flattering light, depicting in 1921 the São José as an elitist playground that divided the population even during Carnival, during what should have been a moment of unifying merrymaking.⁷²

In many senses, then, and especially after its 1876 renovation, the São José functioned as an enlarged salon, a shared version of the elite mansion. Generally the same families and law students intermingled within both types of halls, swapping gossip, business proposals, political maneuvers, and coquetries, as the pages below will demonstrate. The primary differences were that the São José’s stage could accommodate elaborate productions and that entry required a purchased ticket rather than an invitation. Even so, many events hosted at the São José, such as the Carnival ball of Freitas’s memory, were by invitation only. This was especially true after 1876, when Law School groups found themselves competing for the São José with a growing number of elite charity, political, and artistic organizations, which took advantage of the theater’s

⁷⁰ “O theatro estava repleto da mais selecta reunião de espectadores,” “Vida nocturna,” *A Vida de Hoje*, Sep 12, 1897, 2.

⁷¹ “O publico que nessa epocha enchia o theatro formava o escól da sociedade.” Baptista Pereira, *Commercio*, July 3, 1902, 1.

⁷² Affonso A. de Freitas, *Tradições e reminiscências paulistanas*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editôra, 1955), 147. The distinction between the more luxurious Carnival balls held in theaters and their popular counterparts is also observed for late-nineteenth century Rio in Leonardo Affonso de Miranda Pereira, *O carnaval das letras: literatura e folia no Rio de Janeiro do século XIX* (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 2004), 129.

spacious rooms, “excellent restaurant,” and “magnificent panorama” for their own ends.⁷³ The Portuguese Charity Society (Sociedade Portuguesa de Beneficência), for example, secured the hall in 1877 for an event that starred the actress Emília Adelaide and counted Provincial President Sebastião José Pereira among its guests.⁷⁴ The Society sought to raise revenue for its new hospital, and similar fundraisers that took advantage of touring professional performers or local amateur actors, such as the fundraiser held by the Commerce Employees’ Humanitarian Society (Sociedade Humanitaria dos Empregados do Commercio) in 1897, continued to occupy the São José through the theater’s final year.⁷⁵ In this manner, the São José’s facilities and grandeur reinforced the theater’s characterization as a site for exclusive sociability; monumentality, which legislators had deemed essential to the São José’s public service, ironically only served to restrict that public.

Envisaging “the public”

By 1880, the São José was hardly the only public space in which the region’s leading families gathered for secular socializing. The flurry of activity at the São José was paralleled by outings to the Jockey Club, founded in 1875, or to the restaurant and ballrooms of the Grande Hotel, which in 1877 began construction in the Triângulo, the historic center. In all of these settings, ideas and social status were legitimized within a narrow circle, but the theater’s scale and stage amplified both. It was with this amplification in mind that legislators in the 1850s had turned to the São José as an opportunity for not only positively *presenting* São Paulo Province to

⁷³ “excelente restaurante... panorama magnifico,” Albert Bonnaure, *Livro de Ouro do Estado de São Paulo: Relatório Industrial, Commercial e Agrícola 1889-1914* (São Paulo: Duprat & Comp., 1914), in Heloísa Barbuy, *A Cidade-Exposição: Comércio e Cosmopolitismo em São Paulo, 1860-1914* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2006), 121.

⁷⁴ Abilo Soares to Sebastião José Pereira, 20 Sep 1877, APESP Ofícios Diversos.

⁷⁵ “Bastidores,” *Provincia*, May 14, 1897, 1.

investors, travelers, planters, and urban residents, but also to *improving* local society and, consequently, the province as a whole. A theater, after all, was distinguished from other spaces not only by its splendor, by its function as a landmark, but also by its primary purpose: that of entertaining an audience. By funding a theater, lawmakers could easily access this audience and could do so without the intervention of the Church. The content—the language, ideas, and aesthetics—of the future São José’s stage was for legislators to determine, or at least to guide, and they could use that bit of control to mold spectators into more civilized beings, at least in theory. In the same breath, then, the São José’s proponents were both celebrating and lamenting the advancement (or lack thereof) of their provincial society.

Quartim and Gerard eagerly capitalized on these contradicting sentiments in their 1854 proposal for the construction of a new theater. At the same time that, as we saw in the chapter’s opening, they flatteringly appealed for a theater appropriate for the province’s “progress,” the impresarios also reminded lawmakers of the work that remained to be done. “There is no one who does not know the utility to morality and civilization that result from these noble schools,” Quartim and Gerard declared, and their argument would soon be reiterated and rehashed by legislators in their defense of the São José.⁷⁶ This was also an argument that had been articulated by politicians, writers, and impresarios within the Brazilian and Portuguese Empires over the past century, an argument that rested on three interrelated notions of theaters as schools: the potential for the (regulated) stage and stalls to foster among theatergoers (1) patriotism, (2) moral judgment and behavior, and (3) an uplifting and discerning sense of beauty. By tracing these three lines of reasoning and their implementation, as the pages below will do, we can begin to understand whom legislators imagined to be the pupils of the São José and to what extent those

⁷⁶ “ninguem ha que desconheça sobre a utilidade que á moral e á cevelisação resultão dessas nobres escolas,” Gerard and Quartim to Provincial Assembly, 12 Mar 1854, ALESP CF54.77.2.

pupils in reality formed a learning public.

Within the lusophone world, the idea of the stage as an instrument for instilling patriotism appeared in legislation at least as early as 1771. In an edict of that year, King José I of Portugal declared that theaters, if properly controlled, functioned as schools that taught the principles of “politics, morality, love of country... and loyalty, with which they should serve their Sovereigns,” as a result burying the barbarism (and, implicitly, republicanism and anarchism) born of ignorance.⁷⁷ If mid-nineteenth century Paulistas never raised the need for expressing loyalty to their emperor, the construction of a new theater was often advocated in terms of love of nation and love of province. The Municipal Chamber, for example, admitted in its 1854 correspondence with Provincial President Saraiva that its donation of terrain for the theater would be nothing short of an act of “patriotism,” even if it was an act that the Chamber could not afford to carry through.⁷⁸ Although the Chamber’s letter did not elaborate upon this point, Provincial Assembly members like Prudêncio Geraldes Tavares da Veiga Cabral (1800-1862) did. For Cabral, a Law School director and imperial counselor who hailed from the frontier province of Mato Gross, government funding for the Opera and its successor was only logical given that theaters were crucial sites for commemorating both the Brazilian Empire and São Paulo Province.⁷⁹ Indeed, Quartim’s contracts stipulated that the São José would host

⁷⁷ “Escola, onde os Póvos aprendem as maximas sàs da Política, da Moral, do Amor da Patria, do Valor, do Zelo, e da Fidelidade, com que devem servir aos seus Soberanos: civilizando-se, e desterrando insensivelmente alguns restos de barbaridade, que nelles deixarão os seculos infelices da ignorancia,” Antonio Delgado da Silva, “Alvará de Confirmação da Sociedade estabelecida para a subsistencia dos Teatros Publicos da Corte, 17 Jul 1771,” in *Collecção da Legislação Portuguesa: desde a última Compilação das Ordenações*, (Lisbon: Typ. Maigrense, 1771), 542–543, <http://www.iuslusitaniae.fcsh.unl.pt/>, accessed Dec 4, 2012.

⁷⁸ “patriotismo... um fim de tanta utilidade,” Câmara Municipal to José Antonio Saraiva, 4 Aug 1854, APESP Ofícios Diversos.

⁷⁹ *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1854), 215. For a brief biography of Cabral, see Manuel Pinheiro Chagas, *Brazileiros illustres* (Porto: Ernesto Chadron, 1892), 110–111.

performances celebrating past and current civic events, including Independence Day, the emperor's birthday, and the annual opening session of the Provincial Assembly. Such galas were already commonplace in Rio de Janeiro, where they relied heavily on audience participation; spectators would typically sing Francisco Manoel da Silva's 1831 anthem, join the chief of police in rousing and rowdy huzzahs, and ardently recite patriotic poetry.⁸⁰

The issue at stake, then, was not that Paulistas had previously failed to express their civic pride, but rather that they were behind the times in how they did so. In order to catch up with the times, some legislators argued, in order to celebrate their nation in the style of the nation's capital, the provincial capital needed a venue fitting for festivities as grand as the Brazilian Empire. The São José could and did offer Paulistas such a space. By 1877, in fact, the theatrical gala was so thoroughly intertwined with civic celebration that one of the city's newspapers, *A Provincia de São Paulo*, remarked that government officials were neglecting their duties and instead leaving the theater's impresario to organize Independence Day festivities.⁸¹ What did the impresario have in store for his audiences? According to the *Provincia*, the show would include a choral performance of the national anthem and a musical band, courtesy of the provincial president. If the São José's programming at all mirrored those of Rio's theaters, it also most likely included a dramatic or operatic performance, possibly from the European repertoire.⁸²

In their defense of the São José's construction, several lawmakers had hoped that the new theater would also nurture a homegrown repertoire, what they and many Brazilian writers

⁸⁰ Kraay, *Days of National Festivity*, 213.

⁸¹ "Chronica politica," *Provincia*, Sep 7, 1877, 1.

⁸² See Kraay, *Days of National Festivity*, 205–239. for a closer examination of Rio's national galas. Theater announcements were not yet regularly published in the *Provincia*, preventing a detailed analysis of the São José's Independence Day galas. Moreover, the *Provincia* was not launched until 1875, and I was unable to access issues of the *Correio Paulistano* published between 1856 and 1876.

referred to as “national theater.” This was “theater” in the sense of genre, a dramatic form by and about Brazilians. For the playwright Domingos José Gonçalves de Magalhães (1811-1882), writing in the 1830s, the desire to address national themes was a reflection of Brazil’s recent separation from its metropole; Magalhães’s first produced drama told the story of one of Brazil’s early writers, the Jewish Antonio José da Silva, and his wrongful execution at the hands of Portuguese Inquisitors.⁸³ Magalhães also attributed his interest in the nation to Romanticism, the literary genre that swept Western Europe in the early nineteenth century, and to which Magalhães had been exposed while traveling through the region in 1832-1837. Paulista legislators encouraged this national turn, inaugurating the São José on September 4, 1864, with *A Túnica de Nessus* (*The Tunic of Nessus*) by the *Diabo Coxo* contributor Sizenando Nabuco de Araújo. In the coming years, the São José would continue to host works by Law School professors and students like Nabuco, Joaquim da França Júnior, Brasília Machado de Oliveira, Carlos de Meneses, and, most famously, Antonio de Castro Alves (1847-1871).⁸⁴ Their zealous activity and patronage ensured that a hefty portion of São Paulo’s relatively sparse repertoire addressed the nation’s past and future. The Paraguayan War (1864-1870) only further stimulated Law School productions as participants and lawmakers sought to rekindle Paulista patriotism—and as few performance companies found the funds to reach São Paulo.⁸⁵

To a large extent, then, “national theater” as realized at the São José was about fostering a patriotic public, about molding a citizenry loyal to both the emperor and the empire. Unlike

⁸³ The play is *Antonio José*, first performed in 1838. See João Roberto Faria, *Idéias teatrais: o século XIX no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 2001), 32.

⁸⁴ Azevedo, *Um Palco sob as Arcadas*, 18; Freitas, *Tradições e reminiscências paulistanas*, 26.

⁸⁵ For a more detailed listing of the São José’s productions during this period, see Antonio Barreto do Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo (da Casa da Ópera à inauguração do Teatro Municipal)*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2006), 169–179.

parades and pageantry, national plays moved beyond visual symbolism to tell a compelling story, connecting spectators through narrative and emotion to a particular interpretation of Brazilian history. That story, as the playwright Agrário de Meneses (1834-1863) argued in 1857, was in turn made only more urgent and understandable by the familiarity of its events, challenges, and ways of life.⁸⁶ Meneses traced this idea to Alexis de Tocqueville, to which he added the German philosopher and playwright Friedrich Schiller in concluding that theater's capacity for instructing and moralizing—that “duplo *desideratum*”—rested on the production of beauty based in the customs and traditions of a people.⁸⁷ Such a conclusion, of course, assumed that “a people” existed, that the consumers of national theater already identified with the histories and values enacted onstage. The instruction that theaters offered, if we follow Schiller's and Meneses's logic, was thus less about assimilation than it was about reinforcing or retuning a people's ideals—their manners, their principles, their politics.

If Meneses, Law School affiliates, and several Paulista lawmakers called on national theater to improve the Brazilian people, many others were convinced that such improvement could also be gleaned from foreign works. The key was filtration, the use of an apparatus to cast out moral and aesthetic impurities. It was toward this end, for the transformation of theater into a “school of good manners and of language,” that the Brazilian Dramatic Conservatory (Conservatório Dramático Brasileiro) was in 1843 founded by Emperor Pedro II.⁸⁸ Essentially a censorship board, the Conservatory banned in the name of “the grand precepts of Art” the

⁸⁶ Agrário de Meneses to Secretary of the Conservatório Dramático of Rio de Janeiro, 1857, in Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 381.

⁸⁷ Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 380.

⁸⁸ “melhoramento da cena brasileira por modo que esta se torne a escola dos bons costumes e da língua,” Artigos Orgânicos do Conservatório Dramático Brasileiro (12 Mar 1843). The complete text is included in Sousa, *O Teatro no Brasil*, 330. According to Sousa, the Conservatório was dissolved on May 10, 1864 and reestablished in 1871. The latter incarnation endured until the fall of the monarchy in 1889.

performance of distasteful expressions and topics, which an 1845 imperial resolution clarified to mean any offense to “Our Sacred Religion,” the nation and its representatives, and “public decency.”⁸⁹ An attempt to emulate the Conservatory in São Paulo was led by the lawyers and theater enthusiasts Joaquim Ribas and Paulo do Valle, but the effort was short lived.⁹⁰ The Paulistano Dramatic Conservatory did, however, succeed in organizing a competition in 1859 for the best original drama that both was “graced with morality” and addressed “the glorious episodes of our nation’s history.”⁹¹ In São Paulo, then, the celebration of Brazil went hand in hand with the improvement of manners and language; both were part of lawmakers’ and other Paulistas’ efforts to better integrate the province and its capital into the nation.

The link drawn by the Paulistano Dramatic Conservatory between patriotism and morality also hints at its leaders’ belief that new, Brazilian work was needed in order to ensure that theaters did indeed function as schools of morality. If the editorials by esteemed writers of the time are any indication, Paulistanos had good reason to place their trust in Brazil’s playwrights. Gonçalves de Magalhães proudly publicized his self-censorship, which included the omission of a particularly vile despot from his 1839 play *Olgiato* so as to avoid “discomforting spectators and offending public morality.”⁹² Two decades later, the novelist José de Alencar (1829-1877) echoed the language deployed by conservatories when he attributed his dabbling in theater to the lack of “morality and decency of language” in contemporary

⁸⁹ “contra a veneração à Nossa Santa Religião, contra o respeito devido aos Poderes Políticos da Nação e às Autoridades constituídas, e contra a guarda da moral e decência pública,” Imperial Resolution of 28 Aug 1845, in Sousa, *O Teatro no Brasil*, 315.

⁹⁰ Maria Thereza Vargas, *Da rua ao palco: notas sobre a formação do teatro na cidade de São Paulo*, Cadernos 12 (São Paulo: CCSP, 1982), 41.

⁹¹ “para o melhor drama original, revestido de moralidade, que tivesse por assunto alguns dos gloriosos episódios da história de nosso país,” as explained by Paulo Eiró in his preface to *Sangue Limpo* (1862). In Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 389.

⁹² “além de vexar o ator que o interpretasse, incomodaria os espectadores, e ofenderia a moral pública,” Magalhães, in Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 36.

productions.⁹³ Agreeing with Alencar's observation, the noted politician and journalist Quintino Bocaiuva (1836-1912) recommended in 1858 that Brazilian comedy be altered so that it could better realize its "mission to correct the customs of society through the moralistic critique of its defects."⁹⁴ Such a mission was also articulated in 1856 by Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908) for Realism, a genre that the young writer declared to be the "true means of civilizing society."⁹⁵

Machado, Bocaiuva, and Alencar, along with many Paulista lawmakers, were all reacting to the development of new theatrical forms that, in their eyes, were tearing apart the moral fiber of Brazilian society. More precisely, these forms were the new French operetta and its Portuguese adaptation, the *revista*, both of which blended racy comedy, music, dance, and exposed skin into an often flimsy excuse for a plotline. This was the genre of Jacques Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* (1858), which had introduced the cancan to Brazil's stages, and of Justiniano de Figueiredo Novaes's *As surpresas do Sr. José Piedade* (The Surprises of Mr. José Piety, 1859), the first *revista* produced in Brazil.⁹⁶ This new genre, alongside similarly "light" diversions such as magic and variety acts, was supported in Rio by two recently inaugurated theaters, the Ginásio (1855) and the Alcazar Lyrique (1859), both of

⁹³ "não primava pela moralidade e pela decência da linguagem... o riso é contagioso; porque há certas ocasiões em que ele vem aos lábios, embora o espírito e o pudor se revoltam contra a causa que o provoca," José de Alencar, "A Comédia Brasileira" (open letter to Francisco Otaviano), *Diário do Rio de Janeiro* (14 Nov 1857), in Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 471.

⁹⁴ "tem por missão corrigir os costumes da sociedade pela critica moralizada de seus defeitos," Quintino Bocaiuva, "Lance d'olhos sobre a comedia e sua critica," in *Estudos Criticos e Litterarios*, vol. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Typ. Nacional, 1858), 11.

⁹⁵ "o verdadeiro meio de civilizar a sociedade," Machado de Assis, "Ideias Vagas: a Comédia Moderna" (1856), in Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 107.

⁹⁶ Sábato Magaldi, *Panorama do teatro brasileiro* (São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, 1962), 131.

which employed French directors (Emile Doux and Joseph Arnaud, respectively).⁹⁷ While the Ginásio gradually earned esteem for its Realist dramas, the general trend in Rio was, as Hendrik Kraay explains, the shifting of the “fetishization of things European” from opera to French cocottes, from Realism to the revue.⁹⁸ This shift was much to the chagrin of those seeking to transform theaters into safe and wholesome spaces: *As surpresas* was banned by Rio’s police only three days after its premiere.⁹⁹

While, due to source limitations, censorship in São Paulo is more difficult to gauge, the city’s press makes it clear that sexually provocative pieces like *As surpresas* did make their way onto the São José’s stage. One cartoon illustrated by Angelo Agostini and published in 1867 by *O Cabrião* honed in on the “talent” and “art” that attracted to the theater Paulistanos, and particularly male Paulistanos (Image 7): delightfully bared legs. If some theatergoers enthusiastically applauded such productions, others denounced what they deemed to be immoral exhibitions. Two years after the *Cabrião*’s cartoon, the locally written musical comedy *Orfeu no mato* (Orpheus in the Brush) inspired such violent reactions among audience members at the São José that the show was shut down after only a few performances.¹⁰⁰ In the eyes of its critics, the parody of Offenbach’s *Orpheus* was uncomfortably close to the original operetta in its suggestive script and acting.

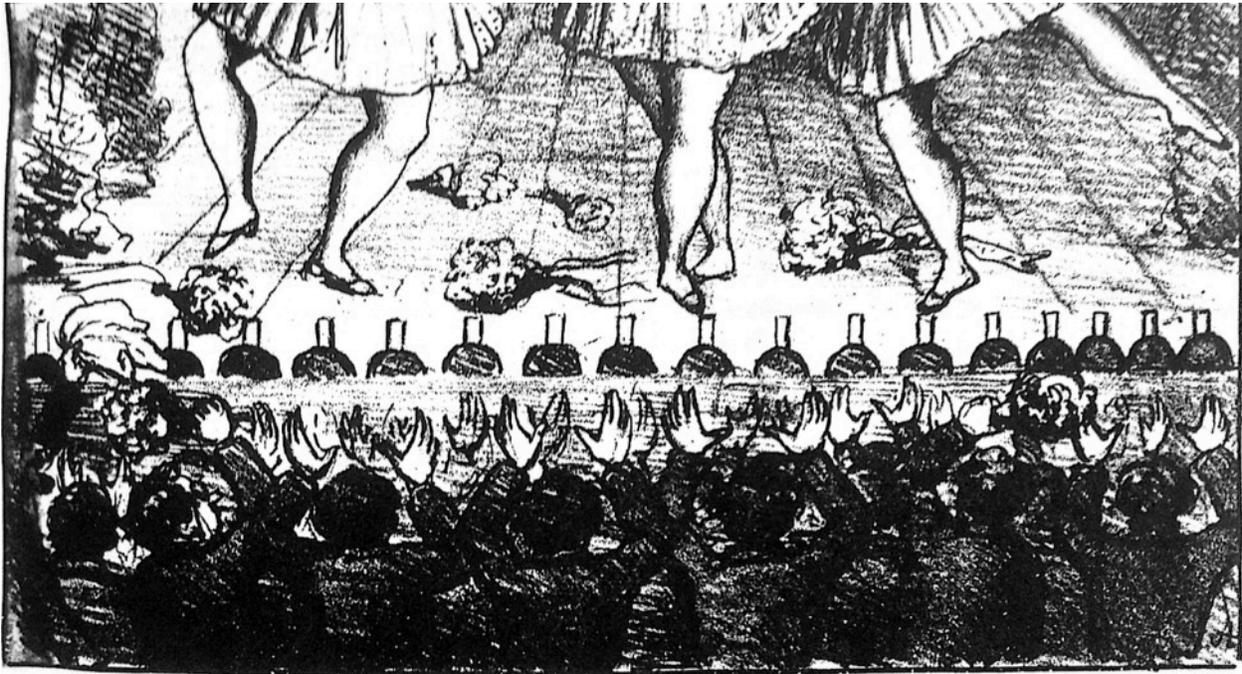
This discomfort was only heightened by the increasing presence of gentlewomen at the São José and the particular significance of the São José to the lives of gentlewomen. It was here, as Assembly member Manoel Pereira de Souza Arouca declared in 1874, that ladies and their

⁹⁷ Magaldi, *Panorama*, 75, 116; Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 85; Kraay, *Days of National Festivity*, 222; Fernando Antonio Mencarelli, *Cena Aberta: A absolvição de um bilontra e o teatro de revista de Arthur Azevedo* (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 1999), 55.

⁹⁸ Kraay, *Days of National Festivity*, 223.

⁹⁹ Mencarelli, *Cena Aberta*, 59.

¹⁰⁰ Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo*, 178–179.



O que se applaude, e merece flores, palmas, versalhada, e ovações esfondosas no theatro de S. José
Que se fará pelo talento e pela arte?!...

Image 7: Angelo Agostini, cartoon, *Cabrião*, May 12, 1867, 252. “What is applauded, and deserves flowers, applause, verses, and roaring ovations at the S. José Theater[?] What will be done for talent and for art?!...”

daughters were intended to attain “enlightenment of the noble sentiments that ought to adorn wives’ hearts,” not exposure to the vices of unchecked manhood.¹⁰¹ Arguing for the continued renovation of the São José, Arouca reminded his peers that women had few educational alternatives in the city of São Paulo, and that “since ancient times theaters have always been considered great schools for polishing, perfecting, correcting humanity’s customs.” It was of utmost importance, then, that the provincial government ensure that the São José offer such

¹⁰¹ “desde antigas épocas os theatros têm sido considerados sempre como uma grande escola de polir, de aperfeiçoar, de corrigir costumes na humanidade.... esta bonita escola para aprendizagem, para illustração dos nobres sentimentos que devem ornar os corações das esposas!” Manoel Pereira de Souza Arouca, *Annaes das Sessões da Assembléa Legislativa da Provincia de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Provincia de São Paulo, 1874), 463–464.

corrections.

Underlying the reactions of Paulista legislators, spectators, and Brazil's leading writers was a faith in the persuasive powers of the stage to mold a public that spanned both sexes. In elaborating on his support for Realism in 1859, Machado insisted that the ability of theater to offer the "naked truth... without analysis," rendered the medium "the most efficient... and most engaging means of propaganda."¹⁰² For Bocaiuva, Realist comedy was the most compelling genre of theater because of the "ease of its comprehension," both in terms of diction and plot complexity.¹⁰³ He also argued for the capacity of theater in general to sway consumers more effectively than the newspaper or podium, and he ascribed this capacity to the corporality of live performance, to its literal embodiment of emotions, its stimulation of all five senses.¹⁰⁴ In São Paulo, the newspaper *Correio Paulistano* similarly and implicitly acknowledged its own limitations when it justified the 1860 founding of the local Dramatic Institute (Instituto Dramático). Pointing to the battling ideas, passions, and temperament of a people revealed onstage, the *Correio* contributor concluded that drama was "the literary form with the most direct influence on public customs and on society."¹⁰⁵

"Public customs" and "society," if one follows the *Correio*'s reasoning, encompassed more than the prevention of sexual deviation. The 1845 imperial resolution, after all, had also targeted offenses to religion and country in its call for theatrical censorship.¹⁰⁶ Ideas, in other

¹⁰² "a verdade aparece nua... sem análise.... não só o teatro é um meio de propaganda, como também o meio mais eficaz, mais firme, mais insinuante." Machado, "Ideias sobre o teatro," in Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 492.

¹⁰³ "facilidade de sua compreensão," Bocaiuva, "Lance d'olhos," 11-12, 18.

¹⁰⁴ Bocaiuva, "Lance d'olhos," 15.

¹⁰⁵ "o drama é forma literária mais diretamente influente sobre os costumes públicos, e sobre a sociedade, porque revela as lutas do pensamento, as paixões, os sentimentos e a índole de cada povo." *Correio*, Nov 6, 1860, in Azevedo, *Um Palco sob as Arcadas*, 76.

¹⁰⁶ "contra a veneração à Nossa Santa Religião, contra o respeito devido aos Poderes Políticos da

words, mattered. Whether they mattered enough to provoke ongoing intervention by a resource-scarce provincial government is more difficult to measure, but we do have occasional reports of productions being banned or shut down. For example, in December 1877, six years after Brazil's Free Womb Law and eleven years before full emancipation, the much anticipated company of Rio's São Pedro Theater at the last minute replaced its opening show, *Cabana do Pae Thomaz* (Uncle Tom's Cabin), with *A filha do mar* (The Daughter of the Sea) and Paolo Giacometti's *Marie Antoinette*.¹⁰⁷ While the company's advertisement stated that the switch had been made due to "independent motives," speculations in the press suggested otherwise: given the drama's anti-slavery rhetoric, many suspected the influence of the provincial police, which at the time was charged with theater censorship. Indeed, one pseudonymous editorial cheekily suggested that the play *Apostolos do mal* (Apostles of Evil) similarly be prohibited for its critique of Catholicism, a problematic institution every bit as legal as slavery.¹⁰⁸

Beyond the play's message, police censors may have had another reason to discourage the performance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As the 1869 example of *Orfeu no mato* had made all too clear, the São José's audiences were hardly passive spectators or uniform in their reception; the staging of a controversial topic could incite heated responses. Police intervention, then, was as much about protecting theatergoers from themselves as it was about shielding attendees from morally dangerous material. To be sure, it was not only Paulistas who were perceived to require direction from the state. Rio's theatergoers had been subject to policing since at least 1824, when the imperial police intendant called for greater police presence inside the Royal Theater of São Pedro so as to prevent the "disorders and irregularities that deprive the peoples" of theaters'

Nação e às Autoridades constituídas, e contra a guarda da moral e decência pública," Imperial Resolution of 28 Aug 1845, in Sousa, *O Teatro no Brasil*, 315.

¹⁰⁷ Advertisements, *Provincia*, Dec 14 and 20, 1877, 4.

¹⁰⁸ Coherencia, "Os 'Apostolos do Mal,'" *Provincia*, Dec 22, 1877, 2.

potential “utility.”¹⁰⁹ With “the most civilized Nations of Europe” as its model—Paulistas were not alone in gazing longingly across the Atlantic—the edict prohibited audiences from hooting and cheering before the show began, loitering in hallways, climbing onstage, carrying weapons and canes, making announcements, and, alas, reciting poetry. The idealized theater of legal texts was a stark contrast to the chaos of street festivities, and it was this regulated environment, combined with the clarity of communication that the stage made possible, that led authorities to recommend theaters as schools of morality. Morality in this manner spanned the values and behaviors performed both onstage and among the audience: theaters would forge not only a principled public but also a well-behaved one.

While similar codes were adopted by São Paulo’s Municipal Chamber in 1850, such intentions were easier said than done.¹¹⁰ Indeed, the pupils of the São José School of Morality proved to be at least as difficult to regulate as the curriculum. Among men, performances at the São José often served as mere backdrops for business negotiations, electioneering, and, more disruptively, political speechmaking. The latter occurred frequently enough that the *Diabo Coxo* jokingly offered the title of “orator of the desert” to the reader who could explain the effect of these emphatic proclamations on the hall’s “ignorant listeners.”¹¹¹ The magazine also made it clear, however, that not all orations were warmly greeted by fellow audience members. Another inventive prize—a chunk of snow produced by spectators’ “cool indifference”—was proposed

¹⁰⁹ “para evitar deste modo as desordens e irregularidades que privam os povos da utilidade que este divertimento deve-lhes produzir quando é bem ordenado; e imitando nesta parte as providências que as Nações mais civilizadas da Europa têm adotado,” Francisco Alberto Teixeira de Aragão, Edict of 29 Nov 1824, in Sousa, *O Teatro no Brasil*, 327.

¹¹⁰ 7 Aug 1850, *Registro Geral da Câmara Municipal*, vol. 34, 2,444, in Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo*, 87–88.

¹¹¹ “o effeito das proclamações republicanas recitadas com empháse nos theatros, diante de aparvalhados hilotes, de que se compoem o nescio auditorio: uma patente de pregador do deserto.” “Premios a concurso,” *Diabo Coxo*, Sep 24, 1865, 7.

for the design of a contraption that generated false applause following patriotic declamations.¹¹² Still, if not all theatergoers appreciated these interjections, the frequency with which they were made hints at the relative intimacy of the São José, at the comfort that unofficial orators must have felt among their fellow attendees. This was a space not only for entertainment but also for forging and maintaining social and economic alliances. The São José, in this sense, more closely resembled the local school of law rather than a school of morality; those privy to the theater, and especially to certain sections of its hall, were privy to the tightly woven network that governed and financed the province.

The São José also resembled the Law School in another respect: a significant portion of its population was composed of lawyers in training. It was on the heads of these young men that generally fell the blame for particularly unruly noisemaking. As the Presbyterian missionary James Cooley Fletcher observed shortly after arriving in São Paulo in 1855, “The *genus* student is the same the world over,—full of pranks, fun, and mischief.”¹¹³ While the source of his conclusion was the havoc wreaked by law students at the Opera Theater, *bacharéis*, as the students were known, continued to terrorize audiences in the São José.¹¹⁴ Typically seated in the benches of the pit or in the theater’s upper reaches, São Paulo’s law students regularly and unabashedly competed with performers for the audience’s attention. They loudly cheered and stomped for actresses, argued with police and officials when chastised, distributed—or, from an elevated position, simply dropped—leaflets, and recited poetry so hackneyed that the *Diabo*

¹¹² “para victoria os vates e os oradores patriotas do Teatro, que já são ouvidos com gelada indiferença: uma peça de neve fundida pela opinião publica.” “Premios a concurso,” *Diabo Coxo* Oct 15, 1865, 7.

¹¹³ Daniel P. Kidder and James C. Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians Portrayed in Historical and Descriptive Sketches* (Philadelphia: Childs & Peterson, 1857), 365.

¹¹⁴ The latest account of law students’ condemnable behavior at the São José dates to 1893, when an *Estado* contributor complained of students’ mischief at the opening night of Verdi’s *Tosca*. “Palcos e Circos: S. José,” *Estado*, July 9, 1893, 1.

Coxo tongue-in-cheek deemed the verses “monumental” for their allusion to “all the poets since Homer.”¹¹⁵ Although such behavior was not limited to the theater, it was at the São José that *bacheréis* found the opportunity to publicly display and exploit their privilege in the ways that young men knew best: boisterous behavior and sexual adventures, the latter of which typically involved actresses and prostitutes as accomplices.¹¹⁶ The theater also offered a highly visible setting for rubbing in their status as the better-educated constituents of Brazil’s ruling class: tensions frequently flared, for example, between the *bacheréis* and military officers, whose conspicuous uniforms and distinct manners served as objects of ridicule for the former.¹¹⁷ Ironically, then, São Paulo’s Law School, an institution that in the eyes of many epitomized civilization, was also perceived by some Paulistas as a source of barbarism.

Of course, the São José was not only the domain of law students, nor were they the sole recipients of censure by spectators seeking silence. Another group for which the theater served as a key site of sociability and public display was elite women. As noted above, for much of the nineteenth century, women in São Paulo had limited access to public spaces if they hoped to preserve their virtue. At the time of the São José’s inauguration, these spaces were generally confined to the church, ballroom, and theater: well chaperoned settings in which the company—

¹¹⁵ “Poesias que chamarei monumentaes, por que fazem recordar todos os poetas desde Homero.” “Novidades Antigas,” *Diabo Coxo*, July 23, 1865, 7. Similar practices could be found in the theaters of Rio de Janeiro at the time. See Kraay, 213-214.

¹¹⁶ Andrew J. Kirkendall argues for students’ dallying with actresses as a status symbol in *Class Mates: Male Student Culture and the Making of a Political Class in Nineteenth-century Brazil* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 83. Despite its criticism, *Diabo Coxo* sadly observed that São Paulo was nothing but a gloomy and dull village once the *bacheréis* headed home for the holidays (“Chronica,” *Diabo Coxo*, Dec 11, 1864, 3).

¹¹⁷ A commonly cited case is the “incident of the cadet,” in which a gang of law students humiliated a cadet while waiting in line to purchase tickets at the Opera Theater (Kirkendall, 84). According to Morse, *From Community to Metropolis*, 94, this conflict began in 1854 when law students yelled at a military officer to remove his obstructing hat.

and hence courtship—could be restricted and scrutinized.¹¹⁸ Society women could also be found on the sidelines of horse races, but before the hippodrome in Moóca opened in 1876, such a setting left women bored and cold, or so claimed *Diabo Coxo*; the fields of the neighborhood of Luz were a far cry from the assumed comfort and refinement of London’s and Rio’s tracks.¹¹⁹ The São José, by contrast, offered protection from the elements and, to a lesser extent, from the uncouth. As in most theaters around the world during the 1860s and 1870s, female spectators were confined to the boxes (*frisas* and *camarotes*) that lined the auditorium’s perimeter.¹²⁰ In the boxes, women enjoyed the comfort of chairs rather than the pit’s benches, including the additional space for their voluminous dresses and the protection of their equally conspicuous reputation. From this location, at least in principle, women also could be carefully observed by guardians and those who strove to transform the São José into a school of morality.

Ample evidence, however, suggests that the occupation of boxes often had the opposite effect; visibility worked toward multiple ends. Exposed to the entire hall, theatergoing women were the object of both concealed and overt admiration—another incentive for law students’ attendance. Indeed, the archetype of the besotted male spectator was so familiar by century’s end that the magazine *FF e RR* published a parody in which a lovelorn bachelor donned binoculars solely to gaze at his latest inamorata.¹²¹ The potential of female attendance to undermine theaters’ didactic function had already been acknowledged under the reign of Maria I

¹¹⁸ Kidder and Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians*, 166.

¹¹⁹ “Chronica,” *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 6, 1864. 6.

¹²⁰ Kraay, 211, speculates that women in Rio were already present in the pit by the 1860s, but there is no indication that this was the case in São Paulo. We do know, however, that women occasionally dressed as men in order to enter the pit in eighteenth-century Paris, and that this was a likely occurrence in theaters elsewhere (Jeffrey S. Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theater and French Political Culture, 1680-1791* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 47.).

¹²¹ “Eu levo cuidadosamente o meu binoculo para o theatro só por causa della e não me canso de miral-a apaixonadamente.” Barbalho Bezerra, “No meu posto,” *FF e RR*, Jan 4, 1891, 7.

(1777-1816), when the Portuguese queen outlawed the presence of women backstage and declared that all curtains be removed from boxes.¹²² Even without curtains, however, romantic advances were difficult to avoid; men not of kin regularly called on women in their boxes and often expressed their intentions in writing when not in person or aloud.

With its partitions and moveable chairs, the box proved to be an ideal space for not only rendezvousing with paramours but also socializing among friends. Attendees were hand-selected but their relations, manners, and dress remained very much observable to the audience at large. Boxes thus functioned as semi-public salons, visible sitting rooms in which to pass the time during insufferably long intermissions (a reviewer in *Diabo Coxo* facetiously suggested the additional installment of beds).¹²³ These salons also helped some spectators pass the time during the performance itself, much to the annoyance of their neighbors. One *Diabo Coxo* contributor, for example, was left wondering in exasperation why “certain ladies” at the theater were incapable of resting their tongues for even a moment.¹²⁴ Three decades later, the *Estado* expressed surprise that, even as late as 1893, little attention was paid by the balconies’ women to the artists onstage.¹²⁵

Perhaps audiences could not entirely be blamed: for all of the rhetoric about the São José’s monumentality, the theater’s conditions hardly facilitated concentrated listening. Without windows or mechanized means for circulating air, the São José must have been suffocating on

¹²² Sousa, *O Teatro no Brasil*, 118.

¹²³ “Se a empreza continuar a offerecer-nos intervallos como aquelles, pedimos-lhe ou camas ou alguma companhia para representar dramas e comedias durante os mesmos intervallos.” Cleofas, “Chronica,” *Diabo Coxo*, Oct 9, 1864, 7. According to Kraay, 215, intolerably lengthy intermissions were also ubiquitous in Rio’s theaters.

¹²⁴ “certas senhoras, durante os espectaculos no theatro, não deixão de conversar um só momento, tornando-se importunes aos espectadores dos camarotes visinhos.” “Mais premios a concurso,” *Diabo Coxo*, Aug 27, 1865, 7.

¹²⁵ “Palcos e Circos: S. José,” *Estado*, July 9, 1893, 1.

particularly warm and wet evenings, and the hot, gas lighting could not have helped. Gas, rather than candles and kerosene, also enabled performance companies to more easily dim the house lights, a practice that, while on one hand, directed spectators' eyes to the stage, on the other hand further contributed to audience lethargy.¹²⁶ Moreover, no stipulation was made in the contracts between Antonio Quartim and the province that addressed the theater's acoustics, and it was not until the 1890s that the lack of acoustical quality became a cause for complaint in the Paulistano press.¹²⁷ As the next chapter will demonstrate, this new attention to listening bled into the debates surrounding the Municipal Theater and centrally factored into the theater's design.¹²⁸

If the ears of the São José's audiences often wandered away from the stage, so did spectators' eyes, as hinted by the story above of the love-struck, binocular-donning bachelor. The significance of seeing is illustrated in one of *Diabo Coxo's* first cartoons about the recently inaugurated theater, published in 1864 (Image 8). Upon encountering an elegantly dressed man carrying a telescope through São Paulo's streets, the bewildered protagonist asks if the passerby is on his way to observe the stars. As the reader has probably anticipated, the latter's reply is in the negative; it is not heavenly bodies that intrigue him, but rather those of the São José. This telescope-lugging gentleman, if we are to believe another of Angelo Agostini's cartoons, was far from alone (Image 9). While the image shows that not all telescopes at the São José were

¹²⁶ James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 240.

¹²⁷ The São José's poor acoustics proved to be a particularly dark mark in the theater's legacy after it burned down. See, for example, "Actualidades: Teatro S. José," *A Noite*, Feb 16, 1898. 1.

¹²⁸ Article 1 of State Law 561 (23 Aug 1898) guaranteed that the São José's replacement would meet the "modern demands of architecture, luxury, elegance, hygiene and security" ("com todas as exigencias modernas da architectura, luxo, elegancia, hygiene, acustica e segurança"), a phrase that was repeated nearly verbatim in Article 3a of Municipal Law 336 (24 Jan 1898), which initiated a call for proposals for a municipal theater. While the law authorizing the Teatro Municipal's construction (Municipal Law 643, 25 Apr 1903) was sparse, acoustical concerns were raised by legislators hammering out the final contract.



Image 8: Angelo Agostini, *Diabo Coxo*, cartoon, Oct 2, 1864, 4. "Are you going to observe the skies? / No: I'm going to the new theater."

Vas observar os astros?
Não: vou ao theatro novo.



Image 9: Angelo Agostini, cartoon, *Diabo Coxo*, Oct 9, 1864, 4. "—Grandpa, sit down in order to hear the 'Rambling.' —I already saw that 'opera': responds the paunchy citizen."

—Vovô, sente-se para ouvir o «Borboletis mo».
—Eu já vi esta «opera»: responde o gorducho cidadão.

pointed away from the stage, a fair number were, and given that the cumbersome contraptions were typically wielded by men, one can presume that a generous portion were directed at the ladies seated along the boxes' railings. When the lighter opera glasses made their way from Paris to São Paulo in the fin de siècle, enhanced viewing became accessible and fashionable for women as well, allowing female theatergoers to gaze as intently as their male peers.

Not all peeks were motivated by love or flirtation, as an 1876 complaint in the *Provincia* makes clear. Noting the São José's full house on a recent evening, the contributor lamented that the cause was not the "desire to *hear* music, but to *see*" the latest fashions and the most dashing figures.¹²⁹ The significance of attire is perceptible already in the 1850 municipal ordinances that regulated theatergoing: in addition to prohibiting certain kinds of behaviors, the codes required that spectators on the orchestra level or in the front of boxes don appropriate shoes and dress-coat or livery.¹³⁰ If such standards of appearance were understood to be part and parcel of the edification that the São José was presumed to impart, they also limited the number of Paulistas who would receive that education. Only a minority of men could afford both shoes and jacket, and certainly fewer could do so while also paying for a box or parterre seat at the São José. The legal conflation of character and appearance under the notion of demeanor in this manner helped to define the São José as an elite space, which in turn further encouraged the attention to dress and style by status-conscious spectators. The theater was offering the provincial elite new ways of literally seeing and being seen, and the outcome, to the disappointment of some, was a detraction from the lessons performed onstage.

¹²⁹ "O theatro teve casa plena... produzida antes de tudo pelo desejo, não de *ouvir* a musica, porém de *ver* as novas galas de theatro, não prestou ao merito da peça e dos artistas a devida recepção," "Noticiario: Teatro de S. José," *Provincia*, March 14, 1876, 2.

¹³⁰ 7 Aug 1850, *Registro Geral da Câmara Municipal*, vol. 34, 2,444, in Amaral, 87-88.

For the 1876 *Provincia* writer, the lesson that attendees were missing was one not of morality but rather of aesthetics. By failing to hear the music, theatergoers were failing to enhance their ability to appreciate and evaluate works of art. This belief that theaters' educational role should surpass that of disciplinarian and also encompass the cultivation and "preservation of good taste" had already been articulated by Brazilian writers and Paulista legislators in their defense of government intervention.¹³¹ It was with this end in mind that the Provincial Assembly in 1866 subsidized a dramatic company organized by Quartim on the condition that it maintain "good artistic standards."¹³² Machado de Assis expressed his support for similar efforts in Rio, writing in 1860 that "to judge the literary value of a composition is to exercise a civilizing function," particularly if such a judgment was publicly declared and acted upon.¹³³ For the poet, playwright, and Law School graduate Manuel Antonio Álvares de Azevedo (1831-1852), this meant that officials should become involved in ensuring "taste in the choice of shows, in the choice of actors."¹³⁴ Under such guidance, theater would become "a true apostolate of beauty" with the potential for inspiring the masses, who would in turn support and demand performances of a higher quality.¹³⁵

¹³¹ "conservar o bom gosto," Antonio Barbosa da Cunha, *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa* (1855), 221.

¹³² "boas condições d'arte," Provincial Law 911 (20 Apr 1866), Art. 8.

¹³³ "Julgar do valor literário de uma composição, é exercer uma função civilizadora.... Mas ganha a literatura, ganha a arte com essas análises da sombra? Ganha, quando muito, o arquivo. As análises das concepções, o estudo das prosódias, vão morrer, ou pelo menos dormir no pó das estantes." Machado, *A Marmota* (13 Mar 1860), in Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 500. For an extended analysis of Machado's promotion of aesthetic regulation, see José Luís Jobim, "Censorship and Morality: Machado de Assis, Émile Augier and the National Theater Institute," trans. Mark Streeter, *Luso-Brazilian Review* 41, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 19–36.

¹³⁴ "é preciso gosto na escolha dos espetáculos, na escolha dos atores," Azevedo, 357.

¹³⁵ "é um verdadeiro apostolado do bello. Daí devem sair as inspirações para as massas," Azevedo, 358.

If Azevedo assumed a broader audience than that imagined by Paulista legislators for the São José, he shared in their conviction that theaters were necessary for shaping an aesthetically discerning public. In delegating such a task for theaters, these men were simultaneously attempting to expunge from contemporary auditoriums what Azevedo called “shameful saturnalias... torrents of mud that splatter the faces of spectators.”¹³⁶ These were what director, actor, and author Luís Candido Furtado Coelho, who counted Machado de Assis among his admirers, denounced in 1856 as “bad pieces,” pieces that did not offer a “true school”: melodramas with their sudden plot twists or magic shows with their deceptive acts.¹³⁷ Twelve years later, Furtado Coelho had the opportunity to offer his own alternative at the São José as the director of the Eugênia Câmara Dramatic Company.¹³⁸ Not only was the company’s choice of repertoire, which included the works of Law School students, well received, but the primarily Carioca and Portuguese cast was showered with many nights of applause, earning the patronage of wealthy planters such as the Baron of Iguape, the grandfather of Antonio Prado, who would soon take charge of the São José’s renovation.

The editors of *Diabo Cixo* were more skeptical about the quality of the São José’s offerings. On one level, they attributed their disappointment to the dearth of creativity in Brazil more generally, proclaiming that the country lacked an “artist who works solely for the love of art, and who...

¹³⁶ “saturnais vergonhosas... aquela torrente de lodo que salpica as faces dos espectadores!” Azevedo, 358.

¹³⁷ “peças más... escola verdadeira... o melodrama com os seus desconchavados desatinos e descomunais peripécias” and “peças falsas, inverossímeis, as mágicas, as peças de grande espetáculo,” Luís Candido Furtado Coelho, *Correio Mercantil*, March 28, 1856, 1, in Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 89.

¹³⁸ Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo*, 176.

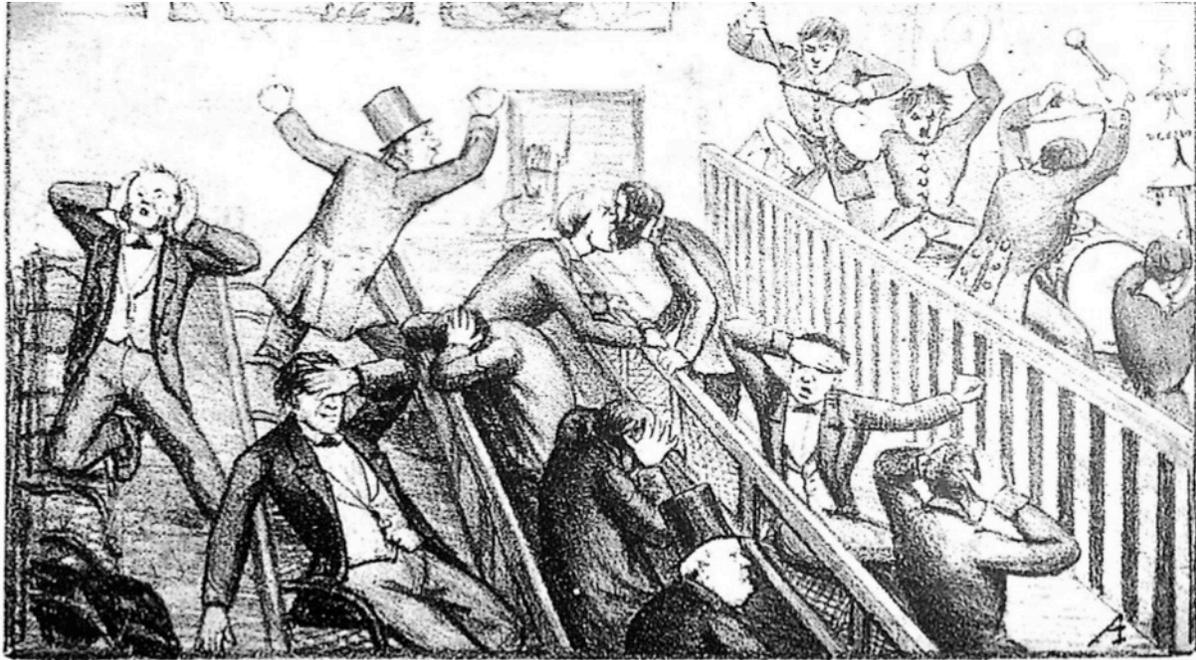
despondently breaks his instrument in the face of this society enslaved to gold and politics.”¹³⁹ Genuine passion for expressive creation—and not profit and fame—was the marker of the true artist, a variant of the nineteenth-century notion of the artist as inspired genius that arose in the midst of a commercializing art world. On another level, *Diabo Coxo* was more specifically disappointed by the commercializing art world under the leadership of Antonio Quartim. Calling on one page the São José a “house of comics, rants, and bayonets,” the magazine on another page lambasted the theater’s impresario for programming “a nauseating amalgam, a repulsive fusion of the ignorance and calculation of yore, of the infatuation and shamelessness of yesterday, of the immorality and even indecency of today.”¹⁴⁰ Among Quartim’s faults was “resuscitating old repertoire” such as *Don César de Bazan*, a five-act drama by Philippe Dumanoir and Adolphe D’Ennery first produced two decades earlier.¹⁴¹ Quartim was also blamed for his poor choice of musicians; an 1865 cartoon illustrated the agony inflicted upon the eardrums of the São José’s audiences, an aesthetic “battle” equally horrendous and fruitless as the ongoing Paraguayan War (Image 10). Other contracted performers chalked up to Quartim’s lack of taste included illusionists like J.B. Linsky, the melodramatic actor Lopes Cardoso, and the leggy dancers of

¹³⁹ “O que no Brasil não existe é... o artista que trabalha só pelo amor da arte, e que sacrifique uma vida inteira e procura um nome, quebra o seu instrumento cheio de desanimo em face d’essa sociedade escravizada ao ouro e á politica...” D. Pepito, “Chronica,” *Diabo Coxo*, Oct 30, 1864, 6.

¹⁴⁰ “Teatro. Anda em crise.... Liberdade! Contentem-se com ella nos livros, nos codigos, nos tablados, mas no theatro não, que aquillo é casa de comicos, de arengas e de baionetas,” “Chronica,” *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 13, 1864, 7; “um amalgama nojento, uma fusão ascorosa da ignorancia e do calculo de outr’ora, da enfatuação e da ousadia de hontem, e da imoralidade e até indecencia de hoje...” D. Pepito, “A Marmota do Carcamano,” *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 13, 1864, 2.

¹⁴¹ “O primeiro acto do sr. Quartim, depois dos *trinta por cento* foi fazer ressuscitar o velho repertorio do [former impresario] sr. Henrique [Luis]... Viva o velho repertorio!” “Chronica,” *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 13, 1864, 7.

Agostini's 1867 cartoon, as we saw above (Image 7)— perpetrators of precisely those “bad pieces” that Furtado Coelho had disparaged.¹⁴²



ALGAZARRA LIRICA
Lucta entre a musica do Theatro e os ouvidos dos expectadores.

Image 10: Angelo Agostini, “Lyrical Clatter: Battle between the Theater’s music and the spectators’ ears.” Cartoon, *Diabo Coxo*, Aug 6, 1865, 4.

The São José under Quartim, in short, was doing a lousy job of improving the minds and values of Paulistas, at least according to *Diabo Coxo*. To Quartim’s credit, many of the productions he oversaw did meet legislators’ expectations of an aesthetically instructive stage, and many more after Quartim’s tenure continued to adhere to the canon of European works and

¹⁴² Along with his leading lady, Gabriella da Cunha, Lopes Cardoso, a Portuguese actor reputable enough to receive a local gala in his honor, was the long-running victim of *Diabo Coxo*’s disdain, derided for his lacking French, hairline, and acting skills. One example from Lucas d’Ataúde, “Garatuja,” *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 20, 1864, 3: “—Em que lugar de S. Paulo ha cardo só? / —No theatro de S. José! / —Porque? / —Por causa do [Lopes] Cardoso.” The jokes continue in “Chronica,” *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 6, 1864, 7; “Chronica,” Dec 4, 1864, 7; D. Pepito, “Carecalogia” and “Chronicas,” Dec 11, 1864, 2, 6; and “Pilherias,” Dec 18, 1864, 3.

performers. There were occasional recitals by internationally acclaimed musicians, such as pianists Louis Moreau Gottschalk in 1869 and Judite Ribas de Sá in 1870, and, beginning in the early 1870s, one Italian opera company or another perennially occupied the São José. After the theater's 1876 renovation, a growing number of troupes, such as that of Emília Adelaide Pimentel, added Italian and French plays to the usual Portuguese and Brazilian programming and the operatic repertoire was dominated by 1850s Giuseppe Verdi, especially *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*.¹⁴³ Still, Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and other operas from the 1830s and 1840s continued to be staged and, even after *Diabo Coxo* went mute at the end of 1865, a number of these productions failed to elicit enthusiasm. Bewildered by this indifference, a *Provincia* reviewer argued in 1876 that "one could only with difficulty demand better in a provincial theater"; the best that Paulistas could expect in their far-flung capital were artists who were "agreeable and conscientious" and who chose their repertoire well.¹⁴⁴

For the men behind *Diabo Coxo*, the São José's "provincialism" had as much to do with its distance from Rio, Buenos Aires, and the Atlantic coast as it did with the nature of Paulistas themselves. As we saw above, images like that of men exuberantly applauding dancers' bared legs (Image 7) raised questions about not only an impresario's tastes but also spectators' demands.¹⁴⁵ In 1864, the magazine's writers disparaged in the same breath Brazilian audiences

¹⁴³ For a sampling of advertisements by the Companhia Italiana Lyrica that visited São Paulo in 1876, see *Provincia*, April 21, 27 and May 6, 13, 1876.

¹⁴⁴ "difficilmente se pôde exigir melhor em teatro de provincial.... Os artistas—sem serem de primeira plana—são contudo agradáveis e conscienciosos, e fazem o possível para agradecer. As operas são levadas com... boa escolha," "Secção Avulsa," *Provincia*, May 14, 1876, 2.

¹⁴⁵ Perhaps the most forthright condemnation of Quartim's disregard for audiences is offered in the magazine's seventh issue: "What lovely judgment Sir Impresario casts upon the audience of São Paulo in terms of dramatic taste...!!! Sir Impresario, gaze your eyes upon the skies and receive upon your head a few rays of light." ("Que bello juizo forma o sr. empresario da platéa de S. Paulo em materia de gosto dramatico...!!! Sr. empresario, crave os olhos no céu, e receba

along with Brazilian artists, bemoaning the inexistence within their country of “he who understands the heart of an artist.”¹⁴⁶ Within a few weeks, Agostini followed suit with his own illustrated barbs, criticizing elite Paulistanos’ overzealous approbations. One cartoon shows slaves lugging entire gardens to the newly inaugurated São José, where their masters toss the flowers with such ardor that the lauded actresses are entirely buried (Image 11). Only a pair of women gaze worriedly from their perch on the second tier of boxes. Heaped roses resurface a couple of years later in Agostini’s cartoon for *Cabrião*, this time nearly asphyxiating the pianist Arthur Napoleão and violinist Moniz Barreto (Image 12).

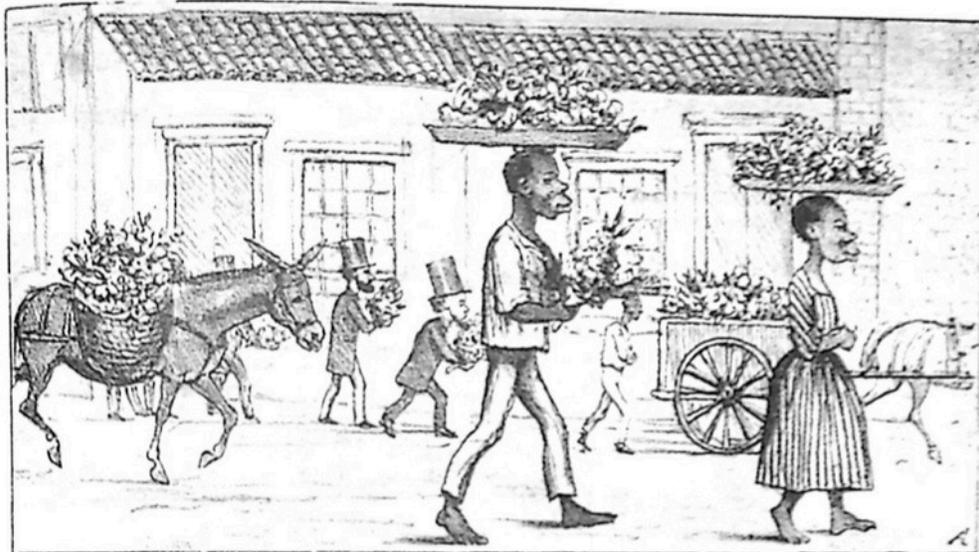
If *Diabo Coxo* and *Cabrião* teased São José spectators for their exaggerated and at times unwarranted endorsement, others were quick to praise at least some theatergoers for their aesthetic sophistication. For the law student and celebrated playwright Castro Alves, São Paulo was remarkable for its “enlightened audience,” which he attributed to the fact that it was also a largely “*academic* audience.”¹⁴⁷ As detailed in the chapter to come, it was also this young, male population that persuaded Sarah Bernhardt and other celebrities to perform at the São José toward century’s end. Despite their antics, in other words, the *bacharéis* were still credited for cultivating São Paulo’s theater scene; they singularly displayed, as one contributor to the *Commercio* recalled in 1902, a “superiority of culture in an era of preponderant illiteracy.”¹⁴⁸

sobre a sua cabeça alguns raios de luz.”) D. Pepito, “A Marmota do Carcamano,” *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 13, 1864, 2.

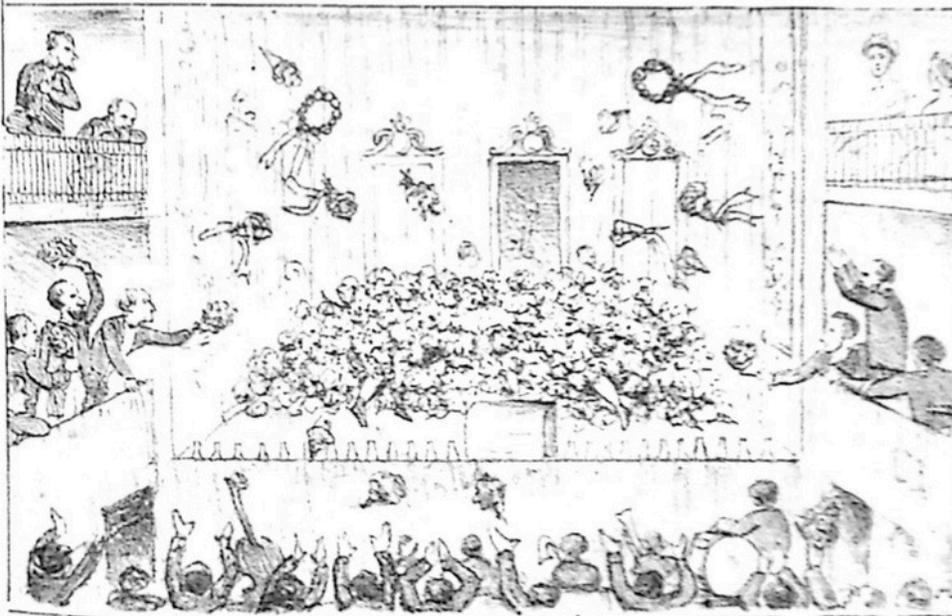
¹⁴⁶ “O que no Brasil não existe é quem entenda o coração do artista,” D. Pepito, “Chronica,” *Diabo Coxo*, Oct 30, 1864, 6.

¹⁴⁷ “Sabe que o meu trabalho precisa de uma plateia ilustrada. Precisa talvez mesmo de uma plateia *acadêmica*. O lirismo, o patriotismo, a linguagem creio que serão bem recebidos por corações de vinte anos...” Castro Alves to Joaquim Augusto de Souza Ribeiro, Sep 1868, in Faria, *Idéias teatrais*, 73.

¹⁴⁸ “superioridade de cultura numa época de preponderante illetrismo,” Baptista Pereira, “Theatro,” *Commercio*, July 3, 1902, 1.



Mudança dos jardins para o teatro de S. José.



Não se iludão : debaixo das flores é que se escondem os esninhos.

Image 11: Angelo Agostini, "Moving the gardens to the S. José Theater." Cartoon, *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 27, 1864, 5. The lower caption explains, "Do not be deceived: under the flowers is where the thorns hide."

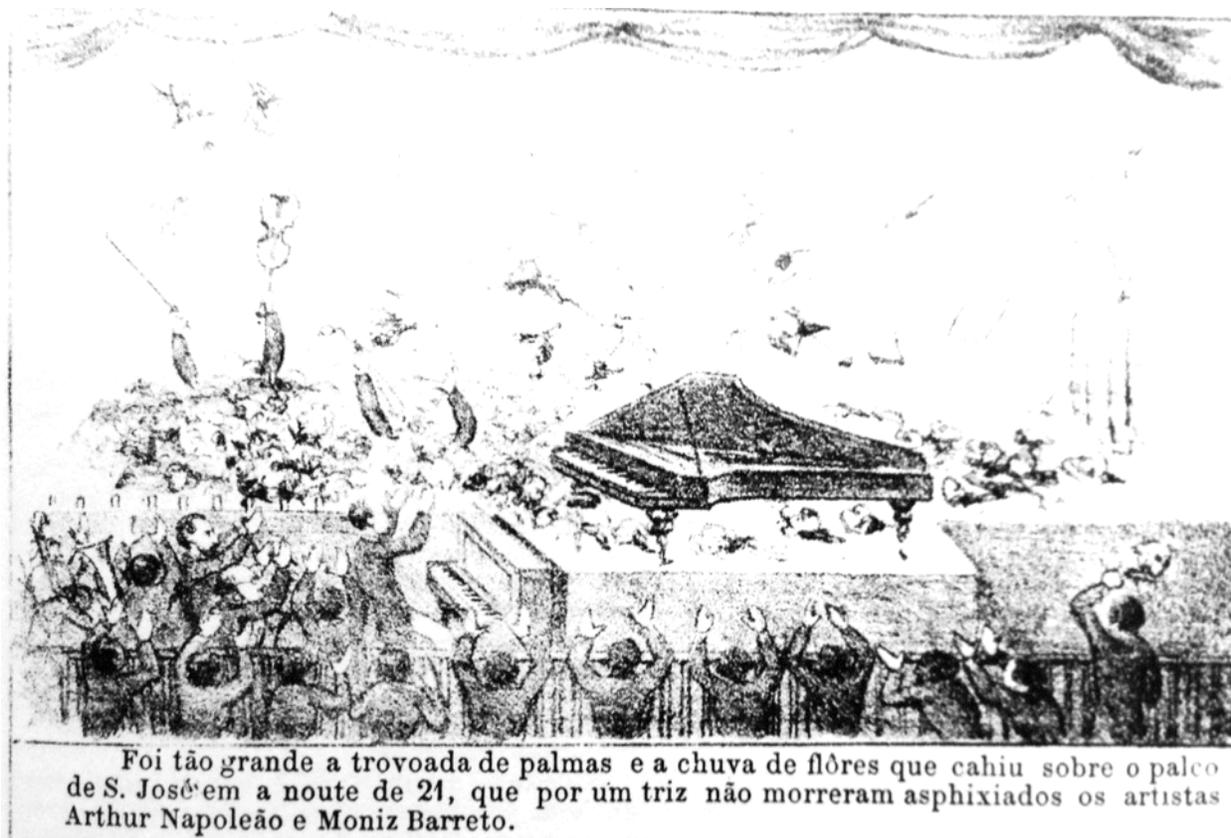


Image 12: Angelo Agostini, cartoon, *Cabrião*, Oct 28, 1866, 37. “The thunder of applause and the rain of flowers that fell on the S. José stage the night of the 21st was so heavy that only by a hair did the artists Arthur Napoleão and Moniz Barreto escape death by asphyxiation.”

Still, cultural superiority, as we have already begun to see, did not entirely make for a law-abiding spectatorship. Indeed, it was arguably aesthetic concerns that provoked much of the rowdiness at the São José and, in particular, that associated with the *partido*. The *partido* was a “party” organized not around a political cause but a performer, a rambunctious form of celebrity idolization that, in Brazil, was in full swing long before the film industry’s star system formalized and commercialized such veneration.¹⁴⁹ One of the first conflicts to flare at the São José was that between the actresses Gabriella da Cunha and Julia; the former was accused by

¹⁴⁹ In Rio, newspapers such as *O Orsatista* (for Leonor Orsat) and *O Montanista* (for Jesuína Montani) were established to promote competing actresses (Sousa, 183).

Diabo Coxo of fanning the flames despite being the latter's godmother.¹⁵⁰ The magazine's editors, whose preference veered toward the younger actress, regularly reported on the poetry praising Julia that was distributed and recited by spectators, who supposedly included "one of the most distinguished poets" of the law school.¹⁵¹ Poetry, incessant cheers, and deafening stomps all combined to form an "engaged" listening that more closely resembled the zeal of Italy's opera houses than the newly silent spectatorship of Parisian theaters. The majority of theatergoers in 1860s São Paulo, in other words, had yet to desire silence as a marker of aesthetic intelligence and thus bourgeois status.¹⁵²

Partido rivalry occasionally escalated beyond aural acclamations, however. In 1869, fierce loyalty for actress Eugênia da Câmara led to the outbreak of violence among viewers of *Orfeu no mato*, and specifically among the young men of the pit.¹⁵³ Alarmed, the provincial police force assigned to the theater entered the pit with bayonets pointing, unleashing chaos and injuring numerous spectators, including the sons of several Paulista notables.¹⁵⁴ In this case, not only the unruly, impassioned spectators but also the police force were blamed by legislators for lacking "moral force" and thus threatening the civilizing purpose of the São José. One Assemblyman, in fact, went so far as to paint the intervening police as barbarians—"men ordinarily miserable, ignorant"—who, like "wolves," pounced upon a "peaceful population,

¹⁵⁰ "Chronica," *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 20, 1864, 7.

¹⁵¹ "um dos mais distintos poetas da nossa Academia," "Chronica," *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 27, 1864, 6. According to the November 20, 1864, issue, poetry was also recited at Julia's gala on November 17.

¹⁵² Johnson, *Listening in Paris*, 3. Johnson argues that, among Parisians in the mid-nineteenth century, the proliferation of silent listening was tied to a more general trend that emphasized etiquette and the display of knowledge as markers of bourgeois status (232).

¹⁵³ The circumstances according to Amaral, 179. Other historians have blamed the play itself for inciting a riot.

¹⁵⁴ Assembleia Legislativa Provincial, *Annaes da Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Provincia de São Paulo, 1869), 207, 213.

composed entirely of the learned academic body.”¹⁵⁵ Censures of a similar tenor repeated throughout the lifespan of the São José. In 1860, Pessanha Póvoa, a law student who edited the short-lived *Revista Dramatica* (Dramatic Magazine), accused the police of “leaping upon and devouring” São Paulo’s intellectual activity and participants.¹⁵⁶ Over thirty years later, the *Estado* recounted what it perceived to be unjustified, “lamentable conflicts” triggered at the theater by the state police.¹⁵⁷ Assumptions based on class and education level lurked beneath the surface of all three of these critiques, complicating legislators’ calculations for how to safeguard morality and promote aesthetic appreciation at the São José. Just as the boxes were perceived to hold the echelon of Paulistano society more refined than the pit—a distinction, for example, made in *Diabo Coxo*’s reference to the boxes’ rather than the pit’s approval of an actress—the pit was still a notch above those entirely excluded from the audience.¹⁵⁸ How could the theater’s fragile social geography be maintained while at the same time preserving behavioral order, especially if the latter task was left in the hands of, literally, outsiders?

The perceived contrast in intelligence, appearance, and manners between policemen and São José theatergoers was only rendered in harsher relief as the region’s leading families became more active in organizing arts activities. Much like in Paris six decades earlier, but at a more modest rate, the 1880s witnessed the formation of elite concert societies that organized recitals

¹⁵⁵ “homens ordinariamente miseráveis, ignorantes, atirarem-se como lobos sobre uma população pacífica, composta em sua totalidade do ilustrado corpo academico,” Tito Pereira de Mattos, Assembleia Legislativa Provincial, *Annaes* (1869), 214.

¹⁵⁶ “O maior espantallo á intelligencia que trabalha—é a policia, harpia sedenta, que a tudo se atira e devora...um assassinato moral... o que lhe escapa das garras sahe lacerado e vertendo sangue!” Pessanha Póvoa, “Introdução,” *Revista Dramatica*, May 6, 1860, 2.

¹⁵⁷ “sem justificado motivo... lamentaveis conflictos...,” “O Estado de S. Paulo: Os estudantes e a policia,” *Estado*, July 11, 1893, 1.

¹⁵⁸ “Chronica,” *Diabo Coxo*, Nov 20, 1864, 7.

and symphonic performances by both professional and amateur musicians.¹⁵⁹ Monied Paulistas were no longer merely spectators but rather demi-experts, trained in the arts they observed and eager to display their expertise at the São José through performance in groups like the Club Haydn or recitals organized by music teachers like the Italian Luigi Chiaffarelli (1856-1923).¹⁶⁰ Chiaffarelli's presence in São Paulo was no accident: the pianist had been paid by a music club in nearby Rio Claro to cross the Atlantic specifically for the sake of instructing elite, Paulista children in the musical arts, as well as elite, Paulista adults in good taste.¹⁶¹ To be sure, an arts education did not immediately transform the São José's attendees into the reverent audience idealized by some theatergoers. A 1919 retrospective memoir in the *Estado*, for example, recalled the unnecessary gusto with which one São José spectator had loudly kept time with his

¹⁵⁹ Johnson, *Listening in Paris*, 188-192. Johnson attributes the emergence of the connoisseur-listener in nineteenth-century Paris to the rising bourgeoisie's redefinition of social status markers. Musical expertise, in other words, becomes another medallion that the *nouveau riche* attaches to its chest to affirm a position of privilege. In focusing on Paris, however, Johnson misses the practicalities necessary for the connoisseur-listener's existence. Namely, as becomes obvious in a peripheral city like nineteenth-century São Paulo, an audience capable of closely listening to and forming an original opinion about a musical performance was only possible with the existence of a local network of music educators and vendors.

¹⁶⁰ The Club Haydn's roster of patrons and performers included prominent surnames such as Prado, Mesquita, and Campos Salles (see *Annaes da Camara Municipal, 1923*, 525; Club Haydn, various programs, 1886, APESP Fundo Alfredo Mesquita, IHGSP 023). Among the founders of Club Haydn was the young Alexandre Levy (1864-1892), a pianist, conductor, and composer who would also go on to become the *Correio Paulistano's* music critic before his premature death (Affonso A. de Freitas, *Diccionario historico, topographico, ethnographico illustrado do municipio de São Paulo* [São Paulo: Graphica Paulista, 1929], 86). His family owned the city's premiere piano and sheet music shop, an important asset in the era of the parlor piano, and his music teachers included Luis Maurice, Gabriel Giraudon, George Madeweiss, and G. Wertheimer. With the possible exception of Giraudon (a Gabriel Girandou is mentioned in the *Diabo Coxo*), these musicians were relatively recent arrivals to São Paulo—only two music educators were active in the early 1860s.

¹⁶¹ Upon his death, Luigi Chiaffarelli was remembered in the Municipal Chamber for being “one of the most noble elements of [São Paulo's] artistic culture” (“um dos mais nobres elementos da sua cultura artistica”), including the mentor of brilliant pianists such as the renowned Guiomar Novaes. In *Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo, 1923 (1.o anno da 11.a legislatura)* (São Paulo: Typ. Piratininga, 1923), 525.

foot, eventually earning the scorn of his neighbors, who were already annoyed by the inept operetta company.¹⁶² Still, such a complaint reveals the extent to which, by century's end, many at the São José prized a particular kind of aesthetic appreciation, or at least the semblance of it.

Conclusion

Whether that aesthetic appreciation was sincerely, disingenuously, or inadequately expressed, it bespoke a familiarity with genres, languages, formal analysis, and instrumental technique that only a handful of Paulistas could have truly claimed in the mid nineteenth century. In this sense, the São José Theater was, by the time of its fiery end in 1898, largely successful in kindling the kind of civilization that some Paulista legislators had envisioned in the 1850s and 1860s, a civilization grounded in what local lawmakers and their critics understood to be cosmopolitan—rather than provincial—standards of morality and aesthetics. Still, this was a civilization that even, and perhaps especially, in the 1890s hardly extended beyond São Paulo's *crème de la crème*. If the São José's status as a public service was by 1876 secured, by no means did such a label entail that the public served by the theater would be a broad one. Accessibility was neither the aim nor the reality.

For the city's and province's planters, professionals, and law students, however, the São José Theater was an inescapable presence, the subject of controversy, a source of humor, and a rare venue for the performing arts. As a social, artistic, and occasionally political space for the burgeoning city's elite, the São José helped fertilize the ground in which would grow the leaders and creative visionaries of the First Republic. Just as importantly, as a perceived tool for molding that elite, the São José in both its successes and failures offered Paulistanos and Paulistas an opportunity for thinking about what the provincial capital and its elite could become.

¹⁶² Frederico Vergueiro Steidel, "A Sociedade," *Estado*, Dec 8, 1919, 4.

Through the planning and management of the São José, as we saw in the pages above, lawmakers were pushed to think more concretely about who constituted the province's "public" and what that public's place in an emerging province should be.

If, at least in the case of the São José, the provincial public only stretched as far as the top-hatted men and veiled woman of Agostini's 1864 cartoon (Image 3), over the decades those absent from both theater and cartoon became increasingly difficult for lawmakers to ignore. Among them were men like the São José's police force, whose judgment and actions alarmed elite Paulistas. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, these invisibles also included a growing number of foreigners and Afro-Brazilians, who in search of employment flocked to São Paulo City from the farms and villages of Brazil and Europe. Together, they constituted a different kind of cosmopolitanism, a hodgepodge of attires, beliefs, and behaviors that, especially when combined in the form of the newly theorized crowd, threatened to destabilize the purportedly universal civilization groomed at the São José. Ironically, in other words, the "ignorant" men and women excluded from the São José were, by lawmakers' definition, those most in need of the lessons that the theater offered. By 1900, as we shall see in the following chapter, this irony had begun to dawn on many Paulista legislators, shaping expectations for what would become the Municipal Theater.

Ch. 2 A Municipal Theater for an Urban Public, 1886-1916

On the morning of February 15, 1898, the São José Theater burned down. No one knew precisely what had happened, only that the fire had begun backstage and had been fueled by a violent wind and the gas of the stage lights.¹ By the time the fire squad doused the flames, São Paulo's elite had lost its premiere theater and leisure space. As we saw in the previous chapter, the São José was no grand opera house; it had been built for a town of 30,000, a provincial capital of little consequence. Nevertheless, it had been the "heart of the city," the stage to renowned actress Sarah Bernhardt as well as homegrown musicians Alexandre and Luiz Levy.² As one reporter lamented, the flames of that windy summer morning had robbed the state capital of its only theater suitable for world-class companies and, implicitly, world-class audiences.³

That same reporter went on to argue for a solution to the city's loss: a municipal theater. Unlike the São José, which had been the product of a contract between the province of São Paulo and a private investor, this new theater would be initiated and at least partially funded by the municipality of São Paulo. The idea was hardly original. Since 1895, the Municipal Chamber had approved various bills authorizing the construction of a theater that would improve upon the acoustic, hygienic, and aesthetic defects of the São José. The latter's destruction, however, added new urgency to, as well as glared a new spotlight on, the municipality's halted efforts. Suddenly, journalists and state legislators, under whose jurisdiction sat the smoldering São José, were weighing in. The politics of theaters had been reignited.

¹ "O Incendio do Theatro S. José," *A Noite*, Feb 15, 1898, 1.

² Afonso Schmidt, *São Paulo de meus amores* (São Paulo: Clube do Livro, 1954), 107; Club Haydn, "XXX Reunião: Anniversario Natalicio de Joseph Haydn, 1782-1809" (31 Mar 1886), Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo (APESP), Fundo Alfredo Mesquita, IHGSP 023.

³ "Theatro S. José," *A Noite*, Feb 16, 1898, 1.

The context of this renewed politics, however, had radically changed since the São José's proposal in 1854. It was no coincidence that what would become the Municipal Theater was an entirely municipal endeavor, a project that ultimately was funded and implemented by the city of São Paulo with the city as the intended benefactor. In other words, what had begun as a Paulista project ended as a Paulistano achievement, a monument to, by, and for the city. This outcome was in part due to the altered political landscape of the First Republic. The military coup that in 1889 overthrew the empire led to the decentralization of national decision-making, with the 1891 Constitution granting greater administrative and financial powers to governments at the provincial—now known as state—level. In the process, what had been São Paulo's Provincial Assembly was divided into two legislatures, the State Senate and Chamber of Deputies, whose members were directly elected by the roughly 1-3% of Paulistas who voted.⁴ Decentralization also translated into the expansion of municipal chambers' jurisdictions, along the way enabling the creation of a local executive branch, the prefecture. Along with establishing schools, widening roads, and levying taxes, it was now legally possible for the municipality to plan, fund, and manage its own theater, a new right that, as we shall see, did not take long for the reconstituted Municipal Chamber to strive to exercise. The Chamber's efforts, though, would have been toothless had its coffers been empty. Fortunately, the city's rapid demographic and economic growth in the 1880s and 1890s made the vision of a municipal theater also financially viable. So did the fact that the state treasury now directly collected taxes on exports and other

⁴ Joseph Love, *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), xv. The direct election of legislators at all government levels was first enacted with the 1881 Saraiva Law, which also added literacy as a requirement for voting while no longer demanding that all those eligible to vote do so.

transactions conducted within the boundaries of São Paulo State, enabling state and local governments to spend more heavily on services than in other parts of Brazil.⁵

The establishment of a theater as monumental as the Municipal was not simply the consequence of fortuitous political and economic circumstances, however. The late nineteenth century witnessed a global shift in perceptions of the city. As urban centers swelled and collapsed under the weight of the new masses, the city became a problem to solve. By 1900, London, Paris, New York, and even Buenos Aires had surpassed one million inhabitants, and the sheer density of human bodies was putting a strain on the cities' survival in terms of employment, housing, food, and health. At the same time, after a half century of battling epidemics through the construction of sewage systems, the drainage of swamps, and eventually the enforcement of vaccination, municipal leaders around the world brandished a new confidence in the power of man to eliminate, or at least alleviate, urban blight. The resulting frenzy of local infrastructural projects and public services around the turn of the century came to characterize what some historians now refer to as a global Progressive Era—a bit of an oxymoron given the label's US roots.⁶

⁵ For example, São Paulo State's spending on education per capita between 1901 and 1925 was higher than that of any other Brazilian state (this excludes the city of Rio de Janeiro) and more than eight times as much as some of its counterparts in the Northeast. See especially Tables 2 and 3 in André Martínez Fritscher, Aldo Musacchio, and Martina Viarengo, "The Great Leap Forward: The Political Economy of Education in Brazil, 1889-1930" (Working Papers, Banco de México, December 2010), <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/83747>.

⁶ The examination of the Progressive Era's transatlantic roots, in terms of the circulation of both social policy ideas and practices, can be traced to Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Harvard University Press, 1998). However, the concept of a global Progressive Era, the dates of which roughly span between 1890 and 1914, has remained largely confined to US historians, in part because of the term's US origin despite the origins elsewhere of Progressivism's defining traits. In contrast, historians of Latin America's transatlantic connections more commonly refer to the period as the Belle Époque, thus emphasizing the region's specifically French links.

In terms of an expansion of public works, and the related extension of the state, São Paulo was hardly an exception. From parks and public transportation to electricity and irrigation, the municipality began to take an increasingly proactive role in contracting engineers and planners of both local and foreign training.⁷ Yet, as Mauricio Tenorio has argued for Mexico City, Paulistano urban reform was far from a reaction to “catastrophic change.”⁸ The city’s population had certainly multiplied—by fourfold in the 1890s alone, in fact—but its total of approximately 250,000 was a mere third of Rio de Janeiro’s.⁹ Moreover, in part due to its more temperate climate and relative isolation, São Paulo had been largely spared the cycle of epidemics that wracked Rio throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Nor was its industry sufficiently developed in 1900 that factory smoke blackened skies and lungs, or that factory conditions reddened laborers’ hearts and minds.

Still, if in 1900 São Paulo’s decision makers were not responding to a local manifestation of the “social question,” they were nevertheless seeking its prevention. They did so, as this chapter argues, by turning to the creation of an urban public through aesthetics, that is, through the appreciation and creation of beauty. If the growing city made public interactions and events

⁷ São Paulo’s turn-of-the-century reengineering is relatively well studied among urbanists. For a few examples, see Candido Malta Campos, *Os rumos da cidade: urbanismo e modernização em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Senac, 2002); Luiz Augusto Maia Costa, *O ideário urbano paulista na virada do século: o engenheiro Theodoro Sampaio e as questões territoriais e urbanas modernas (1886-1903)* (São Carlos, SP: RiMA, 2003); Denise Sant’Anna, *Cidade das águas: usos de rios, córregos, bicas e chafarizes em São Paulo (1822-1901)* (São Paulo: Senac, 2004); and Marco Sávio, *A cidade e as máquinas: bondes e automóveis nos primórdios da metrópole paulista, 1900-1930* (São Paulo: FAPEMIG, 2010).

⁸ Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, “Mexico City 1910: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (February 1996): 86.

⁹ Prefeitura de São Paulo, “População nos Anos de Levantamento Censitário: Município e Região Metropolitana de São Paulo, Estado de São Paulo e Brasil, 1872 a 2000,” accessed February 24, 2012, <http://sempla.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/historico/tabelas.php>.

¹⁰ Sidney Chalhoub, *Cidade febril: cortiços e epidemias na corte imperial* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996).

inevitable, then beauty would at least “elevate” such experiences, fostering social harmony in the process of intellectual and spiritual improvement. It was not only, then, to the pathologic rhetoric deployed by metropolitan reformers that local legislators turned but also to “cultural progress,” offering the latter as a counterweight to São Paulo’s economic and physical advancements and arguing that material progress alone did not make a civilized city. Underpinning these claims was an unshakable confidence in São Paulo’s capacity to join the ranks of the world’s leading cities, and thus its need to behave and appear as one. The interest in cultural uplift, as the second half of this chapter will explain, was also rooted in São Paulo’s leaders’ anxieties about reforming a population that was increasingly diverse along class, national, and racial lines. Folded into these anxieties was the assumption and hope that all could indeed be acculturated, that a homogenous, civilized culture was achievable.

In this sense, the Paulistano Belle Époque was inseparable from the Progressive Era; theaters were about more than urban beautification or the self-legitimation of elites, as Jeffrey Needell argues for Rio de Janeiro.¹¹ Calls for a new theater emerged out of existing debates about São Paulo’s civilized status and civilizing capacity, and they were justified against the city’s other public works, including schools and sanitation projects. Justification was indeed necessary; the 2.300:000\$ originally allotted to the Municipal Theater’s construction was approximately half of the Municipal Chamber’s estimated expenditure for the year, and the 4.500:000\$ actually spent between 1903 and 1911 was not far behind total spending on “services and works” during the same period.¹² In planning the São José Theater’s replacement, Paulista

¹¹ Jeffrey D. Needell, *A Tropical Belle Époque: Elite Culture and Society in Turn-of-the-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹² Specifically, 2.308:155\$820 was approved by the Municipal Chamber in Law 643 (25 Apr 1903). Another 1.232:503\$000 and 684:770\$606 was authorized under Laws 1060 (18 Dec 1907) and 1296 (12 Mar 1910), respectively. Spending on the Municipal’s construction is

policymakers were consciously constructing an identity for their capital, a place-making narrative that was first and foremost concerned with the city rather than the state or nation. As a result, the desire to transform São Paulo into an artistically vibrant center emerged well before the Modern Art Week (Semana de Arte Moderna), which in 1922 situated the city as Brazil's nucleus for modernist innovation.

The men who sought to transfigure this brave, new world—this chapter's protagonists—were, along with São Paulo City, also altered. While many still rose through rural political ranks, belonged to landholding families, and relied on a countryside machine politics known as *coronelismo* (literally, colonel-ism, in reference to political bosses who were called “colonels”), turn-of-the-century legislators were committed to, and in some cases literally invested in, the city's development. As Republicans at the epicenter of Republicanism, a significant number chose to permanently reside in the state capital as lawyers, journalists, and financiers rather than pursue political posts in other corners of the nation, as had been common during the imperial period. State Deputy Eugenio Egas (1863-1956), for example, launched his law career in the town of São Carlos do Pinhal, but went on to help establish cultural institutions in the city of São Paulo.¹³ Júlio Mesquita (1862-1927), a native of Campinas and a two-term member in the Chamber of Deputies, was the owner of the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* and an important patron in São Paulo's theater scene. In the Municipal Chamber, Pedro Augusto Gomes Cardim (1865-1932) wrote comedies and founded the Dramatic and Musical Conservatory of São Paulo. Gomes Cardim, Egas, and Mesquita had enjoyed the São José as law students during the

documented in Municipal Acts 197 (26 Jan 1905), 228 (4 Jun 1906), 241 (13 Nov 1906), 250 (11 Jan 1907), 259 (1 Mar 1907), 278 (8 Oct 1907), 280 (5 Nov 1907), 291 (27 Jan 1908), 324 (16 Mar 1909), 349 (17 Mar 1910), and 350 (19 Mar 1910).

¹³ Álvaro Weissheimer Carneiro, “A Vida de Eugenio Egas,” ALESP, accessed September 2, 2013, <http://www.al.sp.gov.br/web/acervo2/egas/index.htm>.

theater's prime, as had many of their peers in the state and municipal legislatures. Most of their colleagues had also gathered at the São José the night of November 18, 1889, to pledge support to the new republic.¹⁴

In prescribing a new theater as antidote, these men differentiated between two sets of publics, a distinction that grounds this chapter's organization. First was a global audience, an idealized cosmopolitan elite whose members' experience, education, and influence rendered them judges of taste and harbingers of modernity. These were travelling socialites, fellow urban reformers, and large-scale investors whose collective opinion was understood to make or break a city's reputation. As this chapter's first section illustrates, many politicians in São Paulo were eager to meet the demands of this transnational spectator and critic, justifying the construction of the Municipal Theater on the basis that its elegant façades and world-class performers would attest to and promote the city's civilized status. The second public that lawmakers imagined—the subject of this chapter's second half—was a local public: the growing number of Paulistanos, and especially those without the means to attend performances that met legislators' standards for high artistic caliber. The moral and aesthetic lessons that the São José was designed to offer were now expanded to the commoner of São Paulo; with an already civilized local elite, the Municipal's social utility would lie in its enlightenment of the future masses, the taming and ennobling of the crowd. A municipal theater, in short, would help forge legislators' idealized urban public, bridging the gap between imagined and real city and, in the process, transforming São Paulo into Brazil's most modern center, an enviable second city.¹⁵

¹⁴ “Ata de reunião popular no Theatro São José,” 18 Nov 1889, APESP caixa E01664.

¹⁵ By “second city,” I refer to the term's use in US history, one which proves helpful in understanding urban centers around the world: a city that develops in rivalry with its nation's politically and economically dominant metropolis. In the case of Brazil, that rival was Rio de Janeiro.

The global public: envisioning the artistic capital

After wrapping up performances in the city in 1886, Sarah Bernhardt declared São Paulo the “artistic capital of Brazil.”¹⁶ While the renowned French actress’s utterance was less than accurate, the label would be both celebrated and challenged by Paulistano elites and artists, that is, the city’s self-proclaimed cultural guardians. As the *Provincia de São Paulo* reported, the phrase had caught like wildfire, so often repeated in the press that already by 1889 it had ceased being a “kindness of the highest honor” and become instead an “axiomatic cliché.”¹⁷ It was a powerful cliché, however, one that would motivate and guide São Paulo’s development through the next three decades, leaving a profound resonance that no scholar has before interrogated. More than the tale of a global star’s romp through exoticized backlands, the story of Bernhardt’s tours and its context offers a lens for understanding how a secondary city forged its identity in the face of a now global public. The rest of this section thus uses the case of Bernhardt and her phrase to examine the place of theaters in the emergence and justification of elite Paulistanos’ claim to their city’s civilization. We begin with an overview of the importance attributed to Bernhardt’s label of “artistic capital”; continue with the counterpoint to this epithet, that is, the realities of the city at the turn of the twentieth century; and finish with an analysis of how theaters were viewed as bridges between the real and imagined city. Specifically, theaters were perceived to be an ideal medium for realizing the civilized city through their potential to publicize and nurture the city’s cultural progress, incorporating Paulistanos into the transnational circulation of performers, tastes, and ideas as both consumers and producers.

¹⁶ Much of this section is based on my article, “Sarah Bernhardt en São Paulo: Uma musa para la ‘capital artística’,” *Istor* 14, no. 53 (Summer 2013): 11–22.

¹⁷ “E a nossa imprensa não se cansa de repetir em todos os tons, impando de satisfação, esse asserto, que, á força de ser batido, deixou de ser uma amabilidade honorosissima, para entrar na categoria das chapas axiomáticas,” “Otello,” *Provincia*, Nov 8, 1889, 1.

When Bernhardt blessed São Paulo as the nation's artistic capital, she offered the city's leaders an imagined future, a direction for the rapidly growing city's energies. The slogan had struck a chord, and it had done so in large part due to the status and influence of its creator. As the *Provincia* contributor explained with some irritation, Paulistas' "provincial pride felt sweetly flattered by the consecration of the eminent actress."¹⁸ These were the words of the period's most celebrated thespian, arguably the first international superstar—her audience was the audience to whom São Paulo's leaders hoped to appeal in refashioning their city. True to what would later be termed the star system, Bernhardt had built her following on her talent, beauty, and intrigue. Born in 1844 to a Jewish courtesan, Bernhardt began acting professionally in the state-owned Comédie Française, which she left by the age of twenty after giving birth out of wedlock.¹⁹ Her career accelerated when she joined the Odéon Theater, where her success earned her a new contract with the Comédie Française and a significantly augmented salary. A series of sold-out performances and mounting tensions with the company, however, led Bernhardt to once again leave the Comédie in 1880. From then on, Bernhardt was a commercial actress, the director, manager, producer, and star of her own troupe, as well as, over the years, the owner of several Parisian theaters. At her company's helm, Bernhardt toured much of Europe, the United States, Egypt, Turkey, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, and, of course, Brazil.

¹⁸ "somos a capital artistica, diz o publico paulista, cujo orgulho provinciano sentiu-se docemente lisongeadado pela consagração da eminente atriz," "Otello," *Provincia*, Nov 8, 1889, 1.

¹⁹ According to Joanna Richardson in *Sarah Bernhardt and Her World* (New York: Putnam, 1977), 15; Suzanne Schwarz Zuber in Carol Ockman and Kenneth E. Silver, *Sarah Bernhardt: The Art of High Drama* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 167; and Robert Gottlieb, in *Sarah: The Life of Sarah Bernhardt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 2, Bernhardt's mother was the Dutch or German Judith/Julie/Youle Van Hard. For Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale in *The Divine Sarah: A Life of Sarah Bernhardt* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 10, she was the Dutch seamstress/musician-turned-courtesan Julie Bernard.

It was thus no small matter that a woman of nearly global recognition and respect had singled out a city of 60,000 for its artistic merit. In 1886, São Paulo's boomtown status had yet to catch the world's notice, and more than a few Paulistanos hoped that Bernhardt would help correct this ignorance. Ironically, it was São Paulo's existing reputation, or rather lack thereof, that may have propelled the actress to praise the city after its residents' surprisingly warm reception. After all, Bernhardt's first visit was no small or inevitable feat; São Paulo was absent from her original South American itinerary and she herself saw no pressing reason for making the 14-hour journey from Rio, newly possible by train.²⁰ "We leave in a few days for a small place called São Paulo," she wrote from the Brazilian capital. "They call it the Switzerland of Brazil, and say it's extremely cold there."²¹ Nor was the Parisian newspaper *Le Temps* encouraging, describing São Paulo as simply a "small town in the vicinity of Rio," a portrayal that irritated the *Provincia* editorial board.²² Bernhardt's presence in São Paulo was thus in itself a momentous occasion. Ecstatic crowds greeted her arrival in June of 1886 and a plaque was later erected in the actress's honor at the entrance to the São José Theater, where she first performed.²³

The city's press corps and other leaders were particularly sensitive to foreigners' dismissal—and Bernhardt's potential to alter that attitude—given São Paulo's status as a rising second city. São Paulo was certainly not Rio de Janeiro in terms of size, beauty, economic activity, or cultural vibrancy, but it was nevertheless, at least in the eyes of its residents, the

²⁰ "Annuncios: Volta ao mundo de Sarah Bernhardt," *Provincia*, June 10, 1886, 2.

²¹ Sarah Bernhardt to Ponchon, 27 May 1886, in Gold and Fizdale, *The Divine Sarah*, 225.

²² "Saint-Paulo, *petite ville des environs* de Rio de Janeiro," in "Scenas de toda a parte: Sarah Bernhardt," *Provincia*, Sep 19, 1886, 1.

²³ Frederico Vergueiro Steidel, "A Sociedade," *Estado*, Dec 8, 1919, 4.

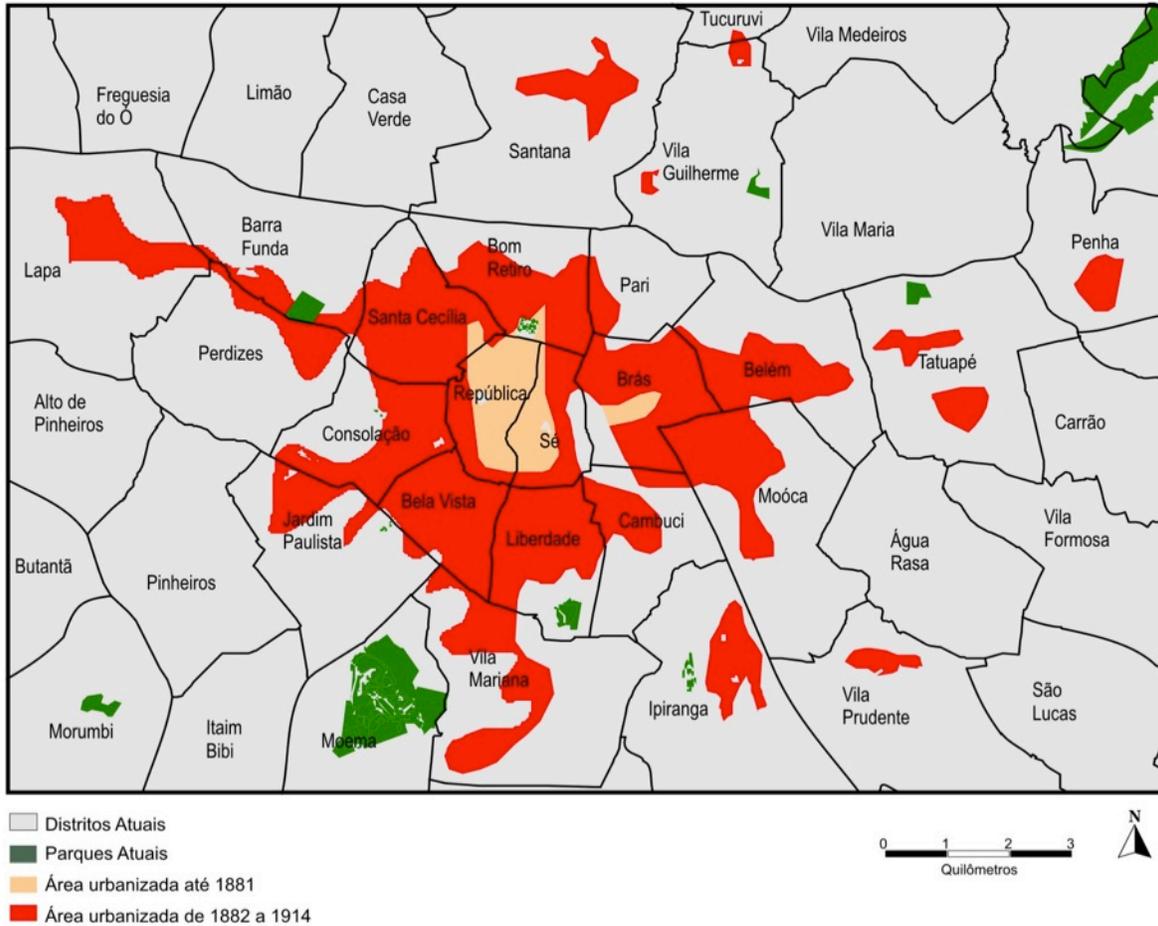
“capital of the most advanced Brazilian province.”²⁴ This was especially true in terms of economic growth; the shift in coffee production from the Paraíba Valley into the province’s northwestern interior, combined with the development of regional railroads in the 1870s and 1880s, had placed the city of São Paulo at the distributional crossroads of a lucrative market.²⁵ Situated between hinterland and port—the Chicago of Brazil—the city of São Paulo transformed into a bustling entrepôt, a center of agro-industry and financial institutions, as well as the administrative seat of an increasingly wealthy state. The city’s “advanced” standing was also true in terms of political leadership after the 1889 coup, when the region’s deep-seated Republicanism propelled its politicians to the frontlines of national government. Even in terms of population, São Paulo had by 1900 surpassed all other state capitals thanks to the artisans, shopkeepers, and manufactory laborers, many of them foreign-born, who rapidly swelled the number of inhabitants to nearly 240,000.²⁶ There was no doubt, in short, that by 1900 São Paulo had blossomed, in the words of Deputy Eugenio Egas, from “a tiny city” into “one of the great capitals of Brazil.” There was also no doubt, as the visiting son of a Swiss consul remarked, that this was a capital “destined to be the most magnificent of all South America.”²⁷

²⁴ “O Rio de Janeiro é o Rio de Janeiro e nós somos a capital da mais adeantada provincial brasileira.” “Otello,” *Provincia*, Nov 8, 1889, 1.

²⁵ For more on the economic development of São Paulo, see Warren Dean, *The Industrialization of São Paulo, 1880-1945* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), and Anne Hanley, *Native Capital: Financial Institutions and Economic Development in Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1850-1920* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

²⁶ Directoria Geral de Estatística, Ministerio da Agricultura, Industria e Commercio, *Anuario estatístico do Brazil, 1o anno (1908-1912)* (Rio de Janeiro: Typ. da Estatística, 1927), 256.

²⁷ “que transformou em dez annos uma pequenina cidade numa das grandes capitães do Brazil,” Eugenio Egas, Câmara dos Deputados do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Ordinária de 1900* (São Paulo: Estado de São Paulo, 1901), 735. “...esta cidade está destinada a ser a mais magnifica de toda a America Meridional,” Henrique [Henri] Raffard, “Alguns dias na paulicéa,” *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* 55, no. 2 (1892): 160.



Map 6: Urbanized area, 1882-1914. Empresa Paulista de Planejamento Metropolitano (Emplasa), Prefeitura de São Paulo: Histórico Demográfico do Município de São Paulo. District boundaries and parks (in green) are present-day.

To observers, São Paulo’s leap to second city was especially striking in its physical expansion. As Map 6 illustrates, between 1882 and 1914 (area in red), the state capital dramatically spread in what many called a “tentacular” fashion, following railroad lines to the south, east, and west as it absorbed or avoided the *chácaras* (small farms) that dotted the hilly landscape. Already in 1891, a state sanitation committee report called São Paulo a “new city,” noting its “constant renovation” and classifying two-thirds of the now “modern city” as recently

built.²⁸ In the following decades, the rate of construction only increased, with the number of registered buildings doubling between 1900 and 1913 from 21,656 to 43,940.²⁹ For Deputy Augusto Miranda de Azevedo, this breakneck pace was a wonder to behold: “[São Paulo’s] urban area increases in extraordinary fashion... we watch with surprise, without any exaggeration, how new neighborhoods sprout from the earth every month.”³⁰ A similar sentiment was expressed a decade later by José Agudo’s fictional, small-town prefect Leivas Gomes, who at each month’s visit found delight in the capital’s visible improvements.³¹ The city’s rapid transformation fueled the confidence of Paulista legislators and fattened the pride of Agudo’s satirized (and aptly named) Juvenal, the young, urban socialite who happily declared São Paulo no longer the “ancient burg of students and *beatas*.”³²

At the same time, the city’s advancements made even its peppiest cheerleaders more conscious of its shortcomings, specifically in the realm of what contemporaries called “cultural progress.” Certainly, as we saw in the previous chapter, the 1880s was a fertile moment for the performing arts in São Paulo, with classical music societies and lessons flourishing and the number of visiting opera and theater companies slowly rising. Many elite children were learning to play an instrument and most households that could afford a piano proudly displayed one. Indeed, the Casa Levy, a hub for the musically inclined founded in 1860 as a piano store, now

²⁸ Comissão de Saneamento e Aformoseamento, “Relatorio dos estudos...,” (São Paulo, 1891), translated in Richard M. Morse, *From Community to Metropolis: a Biography of São Paulo, Brazil* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 183.

²⁹ *Memória urbana: a grande São Paulo até 1940*, vol. 3 (São Paulo: Emplasa; Arquivo do Estado/Imprensa Oficial, 2001), Map 5, Comissão Geographica e Geologica, *Planta geral da cidade de São Paulo com indicações diversas*.

³⁰ “diariamente a area urbana augmenta de um modo extraordinario. É assim que vemos com surpresa, sem exaggeração nenhuma, como que surgirem do solo bairros novos todos os mezes.” Câmara dos Deputados do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Ordinária e Extraordinária de 1898* (São Paulo: Estado de São Paulo, 1899), 365.

³¹ José Agudo, *Gente rica: scenas da vida paulistana* (São Paulo: O Pensamento, 1912), 29–30.

³² *Ibid.*, 144.

had competition: the Estabelecimento Musical Gonçalves & Leal and Guimarães & Companhia.³³ Bookstores, important cultural centers in their own right, were also on the rise, with the Casa Garraux no longer São Paulo's only supplier of civilization, a distinction that had once been the subject of an 1867 *Cabrião* cartoon.³⁴ São Paulo could even now boast a museum, the Museu Paulista, which was inaugurated in 1895 both as a natural history museum and a monument to the nation's independence.

Still, by no measure could São Paulo claim to be Brazil's artistic capital, especially if "artistic" were confined to high art. According to the newspaper *A Noite*, an artistic capital was a "progressive center of Art" in which could one could regularly find "lyric and dramatic theater, operettas, a national conservatory, equestrian circuses, and salons for concerts."³⁵ Yet, as an exasperated *Provincia* reviewer contended, São Paulo was far from rivaling Rio de Janeiro on these terms: "It is ridiculous that we forcefully strive to convince humanity that we are more artistically educated than the capital of the Empire, which is, at the end of the day, from where, by short train ride, all the opera, drama, and operetta companies come."³⁶ These were the

³³ Jorge Seckler, *Almanaque da Provincia de São Paulo, 7o anno* (São Paulo: Jorge Seckler, 1890), 49, 185. A more comprehensive list of stores selling sheetmusic and/or instruments that opened their between 1860 and 1920 can be found in José Geraldo Vinci de Moraes, *As sonoridades paulistanas: a música popular na cidade de São Paulo, final do século XIX ao início do século XX* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1997), 162.

³⁴ Seckler (1890, p.187) lists three additional bookstores. The cartoon of the Casa Garraux is in *Cabrião* 1, no. 25 (24 Mar 1867): 196, <http://www.brasiliana.usp.br>. For more on the Casa Garraux, established in 1863, see Marisa Midori Deaecto, "Anatole Louis Garraux e o comércio de livros franceses em São Paulo (1860-1890)," *Revista Brasileira de História* 28, no. 55 (June 2008): 85–106.

³⁵ "centro progressivo da Arte, dispondo de theatro lyrico, dramatico, para operettas, conservatorio nacional, circos equestres, e salões para concertos, contando-se tambem com os já existentes." Aladino, "Capital artistica," *A Noite*, July 13, 1898, 1.

³⁶ "É ridiculo que tormemos por força em convencer a humanidade de que temos mais educação artistica do que a capital do Imperio, que é, no fim de contas, donde nos vêm, em curta viagem, pela Estrada de ferro, todas as companhias de opera, drama e de opereta," "Otello," *Provincia*, Nov 8, 1889, 1.

companies that produced true Art, the type created by trained practitioners in adherence to standards of beauty determined by European artists, critics, and informed audiences. In Rio, these companies could be found on four stages in 1886. In São Paulo, they were restricted to the São José and the erratic Provisorio Theater, whose structure and management, as the name implied, had been designed for only provisional use. The Club Germania and the Gymnasio occasionally hosted more intimate performances, such as recitals by Paris Conservatory winners, but these were halls that primarily served the clubs' members; providing theater and music to Paulistanos was not their primary function.³⁷ In the 1890s, these small auditoriums were joined by the more musically oriented Steinway and Progedior, discussed in greater detail in the chapter to come, as well as the for-profit Polytheama Theater, the site of Sarah Bernhardt's final performances in 1905. Even so, São Paulo's press found plenty of opportunities for disparaging the "utter lack of theatrical events" that left one chronicler with nothing to do but "cross his arms and wait."³⁸

Bernhardt's label of "artistic capital" was thus particularly poignant and provocative when it reached Paulistanos' ears in 1886: such an exceptional identity had yet to be asserted and, in the eyes of many, had yet to be earned. The relatively limited scale of the city's cultural offerings was especially apparent to contemporaries when contrasted with São Paulo's economic and demographic development. In one sense, this discrepancy was thrown into sharper relief because of the attention that São Paulo demanded as a result of its material advancements. As Deputy Eugenio Egas proudly maintained in 1900, São Paulo had become the focal point of

³⁷ "Salão do Club Germania" and "Theatro Gymnasio," advertisements, *Provincia*, June 6, 1886, 3.

³⁸ "apóz de uma semana tão falta de acontecimentos theatraes, o chronista crusa os braços e espera," "Chronica Theatral," *Auctoridade*, Feb 2, 1896, 3.

Brazil thanks to its “modern improvements” and “always increasing development.”³⁹ For Alderman Pedro Augusto Gomes Cardim, who was briefly introduced at the start of this chapter, this spotlight was particularly worrisome because Paulistas had yet to disprove to the world that they were “indifferent to the cult of art in... its most elevated manifestations.”⁴⁰ In a similar vein, a *Provincia* editorial lamented that São Paulo still needed to demonstrate that it was as “loving of material progress as it was appreciative of the arts, as prompt in raising capital for a railroad line... as it was inclined to favor and value art.”⁴¹

With the eyes of the world upon them, or at least imagined to be so, Paulistanos thus strove to transform their city into a London or, ideally, Paris, the “cosmopolitan temple of Art,” rather than a Manchester or Lyon.⁴² The latter—working, secondary cities—were certainly successful in their own right, but it was the former—artistic capitals—that glittered on the global stage, that modeled and defined modernity. Moreover, as scholars have observed for other booming cities, many of São Paulo’s aspiring reformers understood material success not to be an end in itself but rather the means to a greater purpose, the sustenance of a larger civilizing

³⁹ “uma capital dotada de todos os melhoramentos modernos... que desperta em todo o Brazil a maior atenção pelo seu desenvolvimento sempre crescente...” Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 735.

⁴⁰ “No intuito de dotar esta capital com um estabelecimento, onde se atteste que os paulistas não são indifferentes ao culto da arte, em uma das suas mais elevadas manifestações, como seja a arte dramatica e acompanhando o espantoso progresso deste Estado, patentear que, entre nós, o desenvolvimento material é acompanhado de perto, senão expedido pelo engrandecimento moral e intelectual,” Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Actas das sessões da Camara Municipal de S. Paulo*, 1896, 31.

⁴¹ “Basta que provemos, primeiro a nós mesmos e depois ao mundo, que S. Paulo é uma cidade civilisada, tão amante do progresso material como apreciadora das artes, tão prompta em levantar capitaes para uma estrada de ferro, que é a conductora da luz, como disposta a favorecer a arte e a estimal-a, o que é o brilhante distinctivo dos povos adeantados.” “Otello,” *Provincia*, Nov 8, 1889, 1.

⁴² “Sarah Bernhardt,” *Provincia*, July 6, 1886, 1.

project.⁴³ As the *Provincia* contributor envisioned, São Paulo's claim to "civilized city" thus hinged on attributing equal weight to the railroad and to art, on striking a balance between economic potency and cultural achievement. Both were necessary components for the advancement of mankind, beacons upon which the modern society relied—the railroad a figurative "conductor of light," while art was "the distinctive brilliance of advanced peoples." Gomes Cardim pushed this argument a step further, tipping the scale in favor of art. It was not only a matter of developing the arts alongside the state's "startling progress," but rather ensuring that further economic advances could continue to be made. The arts, in other words, offered the "moral and intellectual elevation" necessary for material progress.

Not all Paulista lawmakers followed Gomes Cardim's reasoning. For State Deputy Antonio Mercado, the idea of the arts as a measurement of a city's development was laughable. After all, no "discovery had ever resulted from a dance or an operetta..." he insisted. "Human progress has other demands, obeys other necessities."⁴⁴ Yet, even if the arts were not the means to civilization as Gomes Cardim and others claimed, most legislators assumed that the growing number of visitors to São Paulo expected art to at least be one of civilization's end products. Put simply and practically, art would entertain and dazzle travelers and potential investors. Again, the juxtaposition of the city's boom with its lagging cultural offerings was inevitable. "São Paulo, the artistic Capital, is a large city with many streets and an uncountable number of houses,"

⁴³ Daniel M. Bluestone makes this argument for Detroit, concluding that the city's new cultural institutions therefore were perceived as both "an implicit critique of and an apology for commercial life." See "Detroit's City Beautiful and the Problem of Commerce," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 47, no. 3 (Sep 1988): 247.

⁴⁴ "Não me consta que jamais descoberta alguma saisse de um bailado ou de uma operetta... O progresso humano tem outras exigencias, obedece a outras necessidades, a outras inspirações." Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 729.

one observer remarked, “but, unhappily, it does not possess at night any spot for diversion.”⁴⁵

With businessmen, tourists, and even ministers of the “principal nations of Europe” crowding the city’s new hotels, it became unacceptable for São Paulo to leave its discerning visitors with no choice but to quaff Antarctica beer at the Progedior.⁴⁶ As state Senator Frederico Abranches asserted, “When the foreigner visits us, one of the things that most leaves an impression is the lack of a theater.”⁴⁷ In a prototype of the “tourist city” argument, this statement was extended to mean that the arts, by attracting nonresident consumers and investors, would boost both urban and regional economies.⁴⁸

Whether the end goal was material or cultural progress or both, theaters were the key, Abranches suggested, to transforming São Paulo into an artistic capital. Especially after the burning of the São José, a “worthy” theater became increasingly linked to the project of forging a

⁴⁵ “São Paulo, a Capital artística, é uma grande cidade, tem muitas ruas e um sem-número de casas, mas infelizmente não possui à noite nenhum ponto de diversão.” Rabiscos, *Commercio*, Nov 27, 1899, 1, cited in Aline Mendes de Oliveira, “O Teatro Politeama: Uma visão múltipla do teatro, do circo e do cinema na São Paulo do Final do Século XIX” (master’s thesis, USP, 2005), 45.

⁴⁶ “o centro de visita dos ministros plenipotenciarios das principaes nações da Europa,” Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 735; Raffard, “Alguns dias na paulicéa,” 161; Fregoli, “Theatros e Clubs,” *O Bilontra*, June 6-7, 1900, 3.

⁴⁷ Senado do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Ordinária de 1900* (São Paulo: Typ. do Diario Official, 1901), 143.

⁴⁸ Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 363. Only in 1926, however, did state legislators make the explicit connection between the performing arts and surrounding businesses. A Municipal Chamber report in that year argued that subsidizing a national opera company would bring new business to the city’s clothiers, tailors, jewelers, milliners, and cobblers, in addition to hotels, restaurants, and public transit system. Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo: 1926* (São Paulo: Estabelecimento Graphico Ferrari & Losasso, 1926), 243. The “tourist city” model—revitalizing the urban core in terms of space and business through tourism and, more broadly, a service-based economy—became popular among urban planners and scholars in the early 1990s. See Bernard J. Frieden and Lynn B. Sagalyn, *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989); Dennis R. Judd and Susan S. Fainstein, eds., *The Tourist City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); and Dennis R. Judd, *The Infrastructure of Play: Building the Tourist City* (Amonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

culturally vibrant city. In the press and assembly halls, advocates of a new theater deployed Bernhardt’s phrase as a rallying cry, accentuating the gap between real and imagined city. “[T]he *artistic capital*, which [Bernhardt] prophesied as a cradle of progress..., dies from one day to the next,” lamented the pseudonymous Aladino in *A Noite*. “It is necessary that S. Paulo do justice to its title of *artistic capital* and take better care of its name, building the temple of Art that is now destroyed.”⁴⁹ In the state’s Chamber of Deputies, Miranda de Azevedo, José de Azevedo Marques, and João Álvares Rubião Júnior similarly proclaimed that, as a recognized “artistic city,” São Paulo desperately needed a new theater in order to stand shoulder to shoulder with European cities, that the absence of a theater was a “flaw in the progress and civilization of S. Paulo.”⁵⁰ Many of their counterparts in the state senate agreed, with Abranches concluding that such a theater was a “necessity imposed upon any people eager to cultivate the fine arts, and above all upon São Paulo, which the genius of Sarah Bernard [*sic*] named the ‘artistic capital of Brazil!’”⁵¹

⁴⁹ “a *capital artistica*, que ella prophetizou como berço do progresso..., morre de dia para dia.... É preciso que S. Paulo faça jus ao título de *capital artistica* e cuide mais do seu nome, constituindo o templo da Arte, que se acha derrocado.” Aladino, “Capital Artistica,” *A Noite* (12 Jul 1898): 1.

⁵⁰ “não é demais, já não é mesmo cedo, que a capital artistica deste adeantado Estado tenha ou vá ter em breve um theatro digno della,” “porque a cidade de S. Paulo foi classificada como uma cidade artistica, motivo pelo qual devemos mostrar que ella é digna de figurar ao lado das cidades européas,” Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 362, 366; “É uma falha no progresso e civilização de S. Paulo a falta de um theatro,” Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 736.

⁵¹ “necessidade que se impõe a todo o povo que se presa de cultivar as bellas letras e sobretudo a São Paulo, que o genio de Sarah Bernard [Bernhardt] denominou a ‘capital artistica do Brazil!’” Frederico de Araújo Abranches (14 Aug 1900), Senado, *Annaes, 1900*, 127. After plans for the Teatro Municipal were approved, the label of “artistic capital” continued to be used by legislators in the attempt to secure funding for a School of Fine Arts (Francisco Sodré, Câmara dos Deputados do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Ordinária de 1910* [São Paulo: Estado de São Paulo, 1911], 525), to protect musicians from job cuts due to the takeover of silent film by talkies (Ulysses Coutinho, Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo: 1929* [São Paulo: Gianotti & Losasso, 1929], 421), and even for infrastructural improvements (“A iluminação da cidade,” *Estado*, Oct 9, 1909, 3).

In demanding the construction of a government-funded theater, proponents were following the examples of cities around the world. Europe's peripheral metropolises had inaugurated opera houses approximately one decade after Paris's Palais Garnier (1875), and would be followed two decades later by the new generation of Latin American theaters.⁵² In other words, theaters, and especially opera houses (Brazilians did not distinguish between the two in their terminology), had become the latest fashion for displaying a city's refinement, a competitive matter of civic pride and "Paulista patriotism."⁵³ Through the visible patronage of such a "center of art," São Paulo—along with Prague, Odessa, Buenos Aires, and Rio—thus strove to place itself on equal footing with the principal cities of France, Germany, Austria, and Italy.⁵⁴ These were nations esteemed for their cultural output and, relatedly, whose governments heavily invested in the construction and management of theaters. As Deputy Eugenio Egas explained, "we can no longer remain detached from civilization. There is no country in Europe that does not subsidize theaters."⁵⁵ In the state senate, Abranches ticked off the most reputable of these theaters—Paris's Opéra and Comédie-Française, Milan's La Scala, London's Covent Garden—to argue that "all cultured peoples have their theaters."⁵⁶ Not all Paulistas were on board, however. State Senator Ezequiel Paula de Ramos, for example, accused his Republican colleagues of imitating monarchies rather than following the leads of democracies such as

⁵² Budapest's opera house was inaugurated in 1884, Odessa's in 1887, and Prague's in 1888, while the new Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires opened its doors in 1908 and Rio's Teatro Municipal in 1909, just two years before São Paulo's.

⁵³ "patriotismo paulista," José Manoel de Azevedo Marques, Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 362.

⁵⁴ "centros de arte," Azevedo Marques, Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 362.

⁵⁵ "nós não podemos permanecer por mais tempo afastados da civilização. Não ha paiz da Europa que não subvencione theatros." Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 735.

⁵⁶ "todos os povos cultos têm os seus theatros," Senado, *Annaes, 1900*, 126.

Switzerland and the United States, where, he insisted, theaters were private affairs.⁵⁷ In an echo of the previous chapter's Antonio Peixoto, Ramos scoffed at the peer pressure of even Brazilian cities, declaring that it was of little import to him that "other States of the Union have their theaters, have committed this error."⁵⁸

Still, few agreed that a visible homage to art could be an error, especially if the edifice itself reflected and celebrated to a global public the city's "progress and civilization," the buzzwords of the day.⁵⁹ Just as the São Paulo of 1900 was much more than the village of 1854, the São José's replacement would be much more than its predecessor: monumental and modern. As we saw in the previous chapter, monumentality in terms of size was necessary to accommodate and appeal to world-class performers, especially as opera companies and sets became larger and more complex. There was also monumentality in terms of aesthetics, the 1870s emphasis on geometric harmony and adornments to celebrate the advancements and wealth of an up-and-coming province. In the 1890s, however, "elegance" became the newly specified requisite, the word of choice for legislators. Much like their counterparts in the City Beautiful movement of the United States, lawmakers insisted on the need for adding beauty to the city's landscape, for the importance of the physical theater to serve as an ennobling work of art in itself.⁶⁰ In this manner, Abranches argued, even when the theater was not functioning, it

⁵⁷ Senado, *Annaes*, 1900, 140.

⁵⁸ "Que importa a mim, que importa a nós representantes do Estado que outros Estados da União tenham os seus theatros, hajam comettido esse erro?" Senado, *Annaes*, 1900, 145.

⁵⁹ Legislators invoked these two traits countless times in their justification of a new theater. A few examples: "afirmando sempre o cunho do progresso e da civilização," José Manoel de Azevedo Marques, Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes* 1898, 362; "um teatro digno da nossa civilização e do desenvolvimento," Eugenio Egas, Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes* 1900, 736; "homenagem prestada ao progresso e á civilização da capital do Estado," João Álvares Rubião Júnior, Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes* 1900, 974; "um teatro digno de seu progresso o civilização," Frederico Abranches, Senado, *Annaes*, 1900, 126.

⁶⁰ The City Beautiful movement was grounded in the idea that urban societies could be

would “always have value” as a “great edifice.”⁶¹ This great edifice would also, of course, strike the eye of visitors and photographers, uniting São Paulo with the image of a prosperous, civilized center, as postcards of the Municipal Theater eventually did.⁶² Legislators hoped the new theater would impress indoors as well, with Gomes Cardim’s 1896 bill calling for dance and banquet halls of “elegance and luxury” and cafés and bars “with taste and comfort.”⁶³ Two years later, luxury and elegance were among the Municipal Chamber’s top considerations in judging entries for its theater design competition.⁶⁴

The prefecture’s eventual delegation of the project to Francisco de Paula Ramos de Azevedo, the architect behind most of the city’s Beaux-Arts public buildings, attested to the prioritization of monumentality.⁶⁵ The final product would not disappoint: a nod at Charles Garnier’s Paris Opéra, the Municipal was a lavish mass of balustrades, columns, stained glass, and ornamentation (Image 13). Its tapestries were shipped from Milan, its crystal from Bohemia, and many of its sculptures from Germany. These and other fineries adorned the building’s 3,609

improved—made more economically productive and civically virtuous—through the beautification of their settings. While I have yet to find direct reference in São Paulo to the turn-of-the-twentieth-century planners in Chicago, Detroit, Denver, and other US cities who promoted and applied the movement’s ideas, similar assumptions were articulated by lawmakers and engineers in São Paulo. For the authoritative overview of the City Beautiful movement, see William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

⁶¹ “quando mesmo o theatro não seja uma fonte de renda, será um grande edificio... que terá sempre valor.” Senado, *Annaes*, 1900, 188.

⁶² For a study of the city’s postcards, see João Emilio Gerodetti and Carlos Cornejo, *Lembranças de São Paulo: a capital Paulista nos cartões-postais e albuns de lembranças*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Solaris, 1999).

⁶³ “com elegancia e luxo,” “com gosto e conforto,” *Actas das sessões da Camara Municipal de S. Paulo*, 1896, 31-32.

⁶⁴ “Concorrencia publica para a construcção de um theatro municipal,” *Estado*, Feb 18, 1898.

⁶⁵ For more on Ramos de Azevedo and the legacy of his firm, see Cristina Peixoto Mehrtens, *Urban Space and National Identity in Early Twentieth Century São Paulo, Brazil: Crafting Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).



Image 13: The Municipal Theater, ca. 1912. Postcard, APESP, Viver em São Paulo: Galeria de Fotos, <http://www.arquivoestado.sp.gov.br/viver/galeria/galeria.php>.

square meters (38,847 ft²), which included a foyer, entrance hall with grand staircase, restaurant, bar, ballroom, dressing rooms, offices, cupola, and an auditorium that seated 1,816.

A theater suitable for a successful, modern city would have to be more than fashionably colossal and elegant, however; it would also need to adhere to the latest standards in sanitation and civil engineering. As we shall see in the chapters below, the “modern demands of... hygiene, acoustics, and safety” were over the years increasingly micromanaged by the government, whether in the number of toilets, the size of aisles, or the replacement of gas with electric lighting.⁶⁶ Again, none of these elements were indicated in the São José’s 1855 contracts, nor,

⁶⁶ “com todas as exigencias modernas da... hygiene, acustica e segurança,” State Law 561 (23 Aug 1898), Art. 1. Similar language was used in the 1896 bill presented in the Municipal Chamber by José Roberto Leite Penteadó, a member of the Justice and Hygiene Committees: the

despite the state's 1894 Sanitation Code, were they enforced in the city's privately owned theaters.⁶⁷ Indeed, both the Polytheama (1892) and Apollo (1896) were disparaged in the press for not being "true theaters"; the Polytheama was little more than an oversized "shack" of corrugated metal and wood, the Apollo hardly better.⁶⁸ Their "embarrassing" designs were problematic not only for aesthetic and acoustical reasons, as *A Noite* pointed out, but also for their capacity to guarantee the health and safety of their hundreds of spectators and performers.⁶⁹ Fires were a particularly worrisome threat to fin-de-siècle policymakers; while the São José's combustion was not fatal, the fiery end of theaters in Paris, Vienna, Chicago, and Porto had horrifyingly led to the death of hundreds.⁷⁰ No wonder, then, that after the São José's destruction, a state decree enumerated in detail the means by which the new theater would minimize fire and panics.⁷¹

If São Paulo's lawmakers were particularly concerned about legislating the new theater's structure, ensuring its monumentality and modernity, they did not altogether ignore the

theater would be "revestido de todas as condições de segurança e hygiene, e em condições artisticas para que nelle possam funcionar companhias lyricas de primeira ordem, sendo a luz electrica a illuminação obrigatoria." In Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Actas*, 1896, 19.

⁶⁷ The regulation of commercial theaters will be addressed at length in Chapter 7. The Sanitation Code of March 2, 1894 (State Decree 233), devoted twenty-one articles to the regulation of theaters (Chapter IX). Six of these dealt with the prevention of fire, four with emergency evacuation, six with ventilation, two with the stage's dimensions, and three with the general comfort of spectators and performers, including the quantity and quality of bathrooms, dressing rooms, and social spaces.

⁶⁸ "theatro verdadeiro," Aladino, "Capital artistica," *A Noite*, July 12, 1898, 1.

⁶⁹ "nenhuma condição possuem de acústica... envergonhando-nos com aquelle barracão de madeira," Aladino, "Capital artistica," *A Noite*, July 12, 1898, 1.

⁷⁰ Kristen McCleary, "Inflaming the Fears of Theatergoers: How Fires Shaped the Public Sphere in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1880-1910," in *Flammable Cities: Urban Conflagration and the Making of the Modern World*, ed. Greg Bankoff, Uwe Lübken, and Jordan Sand (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 258.

⁷¹ In Decree 624 (7 Dec 1898), State President Fernando Prestes de Albuquerque elaborated that the new theater would need to include, among other things, rectangular staircases that did not obstruct hall entrances; high quality masonry, marble, and roof tiling; a metal curtain and other fire blockers; ventilation equipment; a sufficient number of toilets away from sight and smell.

implications of the theater's activity on the city's status as an artistic capital. Theaters were more than trophies, superficial affirmations of civilization; at the turn of the twentieth century, they were dynamic nodes of cosmopolitanism, regional hubs through which continuously flowed artists, audiences, repertoire, and ideas from across the globe. By possessing a theater that could accommodate and attract the best of these, São Paulo would become better integrated into the inter-urban cultural network that crisscrossed the Atlantic. In other words, according to the new theater's defenders, an active municipal theater would not only secure the global public's approbation of São Paulo, but, moreover, place Paulistanos within that public. Residents and visitors would listen to and see the same stars, sets, and repertoire that Parisian or London audiences saw and heard, contributing their opinions in dialogue with the critics of *Le Figaro* and *The Times*.

The case of Sarah Bernhardt offers a closer look at the effect that foreign entertainers were understood to have on São Paulo's urban imaginary, and specifically its reputation as a culturally advanced city. First, as a destination for Bernhardt's South American tours in 1886, 1893, and 1905, São Paulo joined the ranks of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires as an urban center significant enough to attract a world-famous celebrity. As one *Provincia* contributor argued in 1886, Bernhardt's arrival was evidence of the "height of fame" that São Paulo enjoyed.⁷² Another, just before Bernhardt's final tour, declared retrospectively that "no one denies the glory that Sarah Bernhardt brought São Paulo" upon her first visit to the then "great academic city of Brazil."⁷³ By gracing the city with her presence and, moreover, publicly

⁷² "Que a capital e as duas primeiras cidades da provincial mais uma vez se mostrem na altura da fama de que gosam," "Noticiario: Sarah Bernhardt," *Provincia*, June 10, 1886, 2.

⁷³ "Creio que ninguem me contesta a gloria de ter levado a S. Paulo a Sarah Bernhardt e o Coquelin, da primeira vez que estas celebridades foram a essa capital.... a grande cidade academica do Brasil," G.S., "A vida portugueza," *Estado*, Apr 24, 1905, 2.

approving of it, the star placed São Paulo under the radar of the global public as a desirable city to visit and inhabit, a destination suitable for even the most urbane of Europeans. It also signaled to other artists that São Paulo could offer the kind of performance space and audiences that even celebrities expected. By 1896, a decade after Bernhardt's first visit, the chronicler, critic, and novelist Machado de Assis (1839-1908) could write from Rio that São Paulo was "de rigueur... the obligatory stop" for performers. As equal halves, São Paulo and Rio formed, "like Buda-Pest, artistically speaking, a single capital."⁷⁴

By constructing a theater that attracted reputable companies, São Paulo's decision makers also intended to prove that Paulistanos were sophisticated consumers. Bernhardt's repertoire, after all, was entirely in French, meaning that listeners needed to understand the language if they hoped to follow the plot's nuances. By attending French plays, Paulistanos thus claimed a level of fluency in what was perceived to be the speech of the cultured man. They were also demonstrating (or gaining) familiarity with the era's pantheon of performers and pieces, displaying their cultural knowledge and appreciation. Reviews of Bernhardt's performances in São Paulo reinforced this characterization, frequently alluding to plays and actors that readers were expected to recognize, citing and combatting well-known Parisian critics, and occasionally reproducing in French the most moving lines from the previous night's production.⁷⁵ Paulistanos' dedication to Art was also measured in the contrast between Bernhardt's first receptions in Rio and São Paulo. In the latter city, the diva was greeted at the train station by a "delirious" crowd, was waited upon at her hotel by a throng of law students, and her performance was watched by

⁷⁴ "é de rigor. São Paulo é estação obrigatória, é metade do Rio de Janeiro, se estas duas cidade não formam já, como Buda-Peste, artisticamente falando, uma só capital." Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, *A Semana*, July 5, 1896), in Nicolau Sevcenko, "A capital irradiante: técnica, ritmos e ritos do Rio," in *República: da Belle Époque à era do rádio*, ed. Nicolau Sevcenko, vol. 3, *História da vida privada no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998), 565.

⁷⁵ e.g. *Provincia*, June 11, 1886, 1; July 6, 1886, 1; *Estado*, July 7, 1893, 1; July 19, 1893. 1.

spectators in “religious silence and nearly ecstatic rapture.”⁷⁶ As one law student at the time later recalled, his peers’ devotion was largely motivated by the desire to prove a greater love of French theater than that demonstrated by the *carioca* public.⁷⁷ They may have made their point; at least according to the former law student, it was this difference in reception that led Bernhardt to call São Paulo, rather than Rio, the “artistic capital of Brazil.”

In attending Bernhardt’s 1886 performances, Paulistanos were indicating their admiration for not only French plays, but specifically contemporary French plays. As an increasing number of European companies made the inland trek to São Paulo, the city’s audiences joined an exclusive group of theatergoers privy to recently written works. In this manner, São Paulo’s spectators became consumers of the latest trends in the performing arts just as they were of the latest fashions in clothing or furniture. This desire to see the hottest star or hear the newest symphony can to some extent be attributed to the “consumer fetishism” that Jeffrey Needell observes for the elite of Rio de Janeiro, a reworking of Marxian commodity fetishism in which the symbolic value of a good lay in its cultural implication—namely, its European origin—rather than class identification.⁷⁸ Yet, for Paulistanos looking to boost the reputation of their city, it also mattered that their fellow residents were *discerning* consumers. In the words of one reviewer of Verdi’s *Otello*, it was certainly “an honor” that the opera had arrived in São Paulo only two years after “dazzling Italian audiences and the world,” but even more important was Paulistanos’ response.⁷⁹ By applauding the opera “with conviction and enthusiasm,” listeners

⁷⁶ “verdadeiro delirio,” “religioso silencio e o enlevo quasi extatico,” “Sarah Bernhardt,” *Provincia*, July 6, 1886, 1.

⁷⁷ Frederico Vergueiro Steidel’s speech at a Law School lunch in his honor, in “A Sociedade,” *Estado*, Dec 8, 1919, 4.

⁷⁸ Needell, *Tropical Belle Époque*, 163-164.

⁷⁹ “Dois annos dépois que esse phenomenal *spartito* de Verdi deslumbrou o publico italiano e o mundo, ouvimol-o em S. Paulo, o que é uma honra, e applaudimol-o convictamente e

had demonstrated their ability to express their “own opinion,” to judge in “good taste,” to be an “intelligent and well educated” audience.

The construction of a world-class theater would give Paulistanos the opportunity to not only consume Art, a key component of civilized culture, but also to produce it. According to proponents, the new theater would enable local artists, playwrights, and composers to apply their talent by offering them a new workspace and an expanding audience. As a site for original artistic creation, São Paulo would become a true artistic capital, a participant rather than observer in setting cultural trends and calibrating aesthetic tastes. It was for this reason that Gomes Cardim included in his 1896 bill a resident theater company and a conservatory, a school that would provide music, composition, and acting lessons, as well as regular opportunities for students to perform within the new theater.⁸⁰ While the Dramatic and Musical Conservatory of São Paulo in the end materialized as a private endeavor, lawmakers nevertheless perceived the future municipal theater as a space that would foster local and national productions, many of which were already being subsidized by the state or national government.⁸¹ The state of São Paulo, for example, funded young Paulistas’ studies in music and the visual arts in Europe, an effort that began at least as early as 1892 and was formalized in 1912 as the Pensionato Artístico

enthusasticamente, o que é uma gloria.... Honra, porque S. Paulo foi julgado digno de fazer parte da longa lista de centros musicas, que fazem timbre de prestar homenagem ao altissimo rei da opera contemporanea; gloria porque, si S. Paulo, que tambem tem opinião propria, admirou a ultima producção de Verdi, o entusiasmo que a consagrou foi uma consagração do nosso bom gosto.... não póde ser apreciado sinão por um publico intelligente e bem educado.” “Otello,” *Provincia*, Nov 8, 1889, 1.

⁸⁰ Pedro Augusto Gomes Cardim, Bill no. 8, 14 Jan 1896, Câmara Municipal, *Actas, 1896*, 31.

⁸¹ As one editorial later observed, “The protection of the arts is one of the phrases most invoked among us to promote our advancement, our level of civilization.” (“A protecção ás artes é uma das phrases mais invocadas, entre nós, para farfar o nosso adeantamento, o nosso grau de civilisação.”) *A Cigarra*, June 7, 1915, 41.

(Artistic Fellowship).⁸² Aligned with this mission, the future Municipal Theater was envisioned as Europe's cultural embassy, the stage upon which Paulista emissaries of civilization, such as the eminent pianist Guiomar Novaes (1895-1979), further honed and shared their talents developed overseas. More pragmatically, a municipal theater was needed to attract local talent back to São Paulo—a return on the state's investment. As an *A Noite* contributor explained, with the São José gone, no theater remained that could lure soprano Clotilde Maragliano and other Paulistas accustomed to the splended stages of Italy and France.⁸³

In short, if São Paulo were to be an artistic capital—a cosmopolitan center for the high-quality production and consumption of the arts—then the construction of a monumental and modern theater could not be delayed. A new theater was thus part and parcel of the city's place-making narrative spun by its leading voices in the press and assembly halls. For these men, São Paulo's fame as a prosperous entrepôt at the fin de siècle was insufficient. Material progress went hand in hand with cultural progress, and both were necessary in presenting a civilized city to the global public. Sarah Bernhardt's bestowal of "artistic capital" upon São Paulo in 1886 thus offered Paulistano decision makers an aspiration that moved the city beyond its identity as an academic village in 1880 or as an uncultured boomtown in 1900. By 1910, the *Estado* was ready to herald the city's cultural maturation, noting São Paulo's "dazzling" artistic progress.⁸⁴

A decade later, the paper confirmed that São Paulo was continuing to "uphold, more or less well,

⁸² Examples of the state's funding artists' training abroad include Law 90 (12 Sep 1892); Decree 1,017 (22 Mar 1902); Law 955 (15 Sep 1905); and Decree 2,234 (22 Apr 1912), which created the Pensionato Artístico do Estado de São Paulo.

⁸³ Aladino, "Capital artistica," *A Noite*, July 12, 1898, 1. Maragliano's success in the Milan conservatory and her birth in Taubaté, São Paulo, is stated in the *Jornal do Povo de Taubaté* (21 Aug 1889), cited in Almanaque Urupês, "21 de Agosto de..." 21 Aug 2013, accessed September 30, 2013, <http://www.almanaqueurupes.com.br/portal/?p=3705>.

⁸⁴ "Na parte artistica, por exemplo, o progresso é deslumbrante. O povo paulista sustenta alto o renome da Paulicea como capital artistica do Brasil," "S. Paulo moderno," *Estado*, Dec 18, 1910, 4.

the title conferred to it by Sarah Bernhardt.”⁸⁵ While the magazine *Terra Paulista* disagreed, arguing that Bernhardt’s approbation had “filled the heads of almost a generation” with complacency rather than action, the critique nonetheless suggests the grip that the identity of “artistic capital” continued to hold on Paulistano lawmakers, journalists, and artists.⁸⁶ To a large extent, as the final section of this chapter will argue, the Municipal Theater did advance this identity, increasing the quantity and quality of the city’s performances and, notably, serving in 1922 as the site of the Modern Art Week. Still, if a new theater could convince the global public of São Paulo’s civilization, its utility with respect to the local public remained less evident. It is to this latter group that we now turn, unpacking the local public and its relation to the municipal theater as articulated by São Paulo’s writers and legislators.

The local public: civilizing the new masses

When Paulistanos voiced the desire to transform their city into an artistic capital, they also implied that such a capital would include inhabitants capable of enjoying, understanding, and supporting the arts. Still, the question remained as to what extent a municipal theater would nurture that public rather than simply satisfy its demands. In other words, would a theater merely reflect the civilized city, as explained in the pages above, or could it also serve as a civilizing space in itself? As we saw in the previous chapter, legislators and the press had been regularly airing the notion that theaters were schools of morality and aesthetics since at least the 1850s. For much of the second half of the nineteenth century, however, theaters’ pupils were assumed to be the province’s leading families, law students, and wealthy individuals. This was

⁸⁵ “S. Paulo vae ratificando, mais ou menos bem, o titulo, que lhe conferiu Sarah Bernhardt, de ‘capital artistica.’” “Artes e Artistas,” *Estado*, Apr 21, 1920, 4.

⁸⁶ “uma idéia condenável a da grande trágica francesa em dar-nos aquele honroso qualificativo o nome distinto que encheu de dedos, durante muito tempo, quasi toda uma geração,” “Palcos e Telas,” *Terra Paulista* 1, no. 8 (1920), in Martins, *Revistas em revista*, 508.

the imperial elite, a group that for the most part was clearly demarcated by its aristocratic titles and ties to the nation's most profitable sector, export agriculture. As the population of the city of São Paulo increased in number and diversity, many elites began to view theaters' pedagogical function as relevant to a broader audience. Rather than an exclusive status marker, theatergoing became a necessary experience, a lesson in sociability, civic duty, ethics, and aesthetics applicable to all Paulistanos. In this sense, the Municipal Theater was a typical Progressive Era project: through the inclusion of a broadened local public, the theater would mold the new masses into civilized men and women, thereby upholding the city as a civilized and civilizing site.

The notion that the civilizing of São Paulo was an inclusive endeavor, at least on the receiving end, came at a moment in which distinctions among the city's social strata were rapidly shifting. In terms of its elites, to borrow from José Luis Romero, São Paulo transformed at the fin de siècle from a "patrician" town into a "bourgeois" metropolis.⁸⁷ First, as Needell has shown for Rio de Janeiro, the end of the Brazilian empire also spelled the end for the Brazilian nobility, meaning that imperial titles no longer served to mark prestige. While São Paulo's elite had never been as attached to the royal court as that of Rio, many planters in the region had been granted titles and served as ministers and congressmen under the empire. Second, the gradual shift from agriculture toward industry at the start of the twentieth century signaled the entrance of urban entrepreneurs into São Paulo's upper class, a welcome that was reinforced through business and familial partnerships. Perhaps the quintessential (and best studied) example of

⁸⁷ José Romero, *Latinoamérica: las ciudades y las ideas*, 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1976). Romero's monograph has since been translated into English and published online as *Latin America: Its Cities and Ideas* (Washington, DC: OAS, 1999), http://www.educoas.org/Portal/bdigital/contenido/interamer/interamer_59/index.aspx?culture=en.

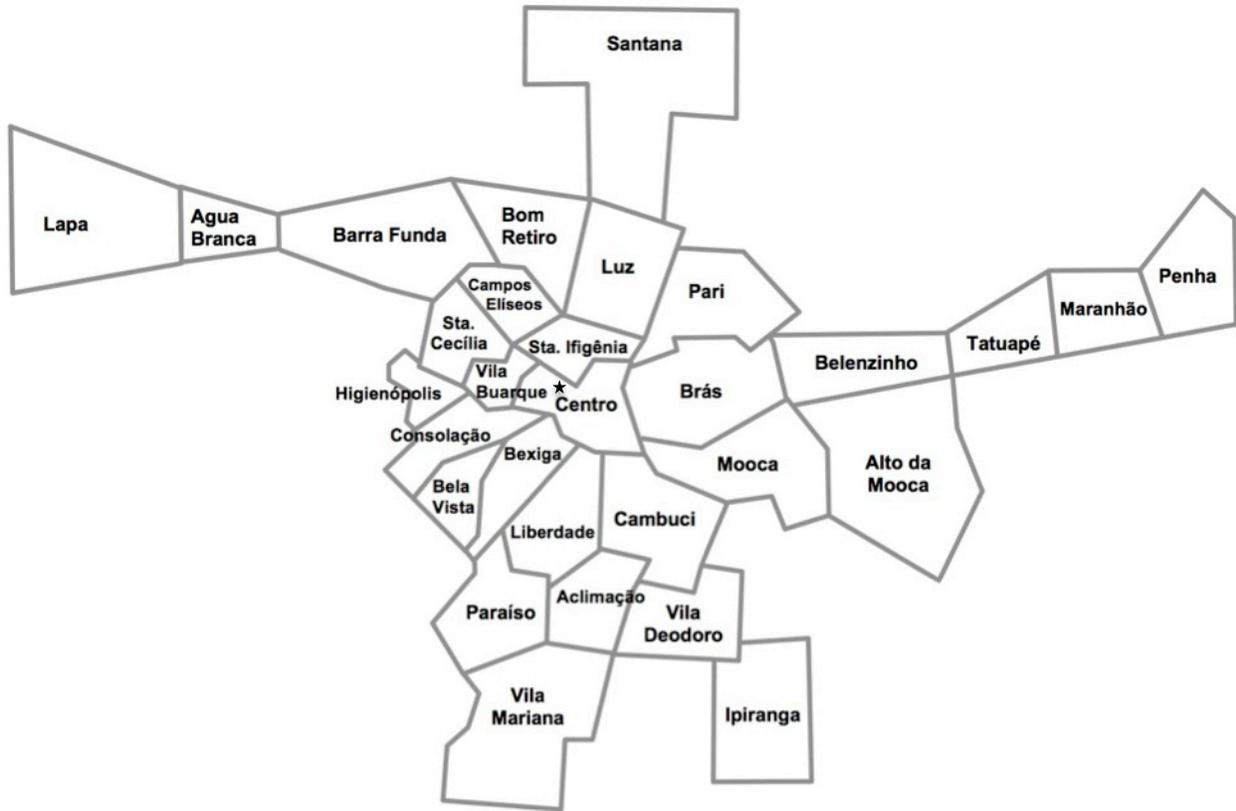
these two changes was the Prado family, whose leadership over the second half of the nineteenth century changed hands from the Baron of Iguapé to the planter, industrialist, and financier Antonio Prado.⁸⁸ Antonio was joined in his endeavors by those of less blue blood, thanks to the city's growing economy. Among the *nouveau riche* were immigrants such as Francisco Matarazzo, a petty trader who had arrived from Italy in the 1880s and went on to become one of Latin America's greatest industrialists.⁸⁹

In contraposition to this elite were what its members referred to as São Paulo's "popular sectors," a broad category that included both middle and lower classes. Among the former were small industrialists, shopkeepers, petty merchants, public servants, and professionals, including journalists, lawyers, engineers, and teachers—the men who could afford to purchase for their families a sturdy, ornamented *sobrado* (two-story house) with a modest garden. At the turn of the century, these families were predominantly Brazilian and Portuguese, although immigrants from Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, and the Ottoman Empire counted among their ranks. Their growing number helped expand and make denser the city's core, especially Santa Ifigênia, Santa Cecília, Bom Retiro, and Consolação (Map 7).⁹⁰ European immigrants also crowded the streets and tenements of more working-class neighborhoods. In the lowlands of Brás, Moóca, and Belenzinho, Spanish and especially Italian could be heard and read as frequently as Portuguese. Small shops, manufactories, and the city's hippodrome formed the backdrop for peddlers and

⁸⁸ Darrell E. Levi, *The Prados of São Paulo, Brazil: An Elite Family and Social Change, 1840-1930* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987).

⁸⁹ James P. Woodard, *A Place in Politics: São Paulo, Brazil, from Seigneurial Republicanism to Regionalist Revolt* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 26.

⁹⁰ Hilário Dertônio, *O Bairro do Bom Retiro* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura/PMSP, 1971), 12–13; Máximo Barro and Roney Bacelli, *Ipiranga, História Dos Bairros* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura/PMSP, 1979), 91, 107; Repartição de Estatística e Arquivo de São Paulo, *Anuário Estatístico do Estado de São Paulo, 1901* (São Paulo: Typ. do Diário Oficial, 1904), 136.



Map 7: Simplified map of São Paulo’s neighborhoods, ca. 1910. The small star in the Centro (central district) marks the Municipal Theater.

street sweepers, while two railroad lines carried goods and laborers from across the region in and out of São Paulo’s denser core. Railroads also spurred the development of outlying working-class areas such as Vila Mariana to the south and Lapa to the west, while offering employment to another slice of the city’s “popular sectors”: those skilled in the construction of railways, roads, and other infrastructural projects. Many of these skilled workers were native Brazilians and, especially among those from the central neighborhood of Bexiga, a relatively high proportion were of African descent.

São Paulo’s rapidly changing demographics on both elite and popular levels contributed to the viability and urgency of culture as a framework for measuring and implementing urban

reform. The relative fluidity and diversity of São Paulo's elite, along with the demise of an imperial aristocracy, implied that a family's or individual's influence was secured through wealth, culture, and the display of both, in addition to the traditional strategies of marital alliances and patronage. By "culture," urban elites meant "taste," that is, the capacity to judge the aesthetic or intellectual quality of a person, performance, or object. The scale on which quality was measured, however, was determined by elites themselves, and usually based on standards imported from France or, less often, other parts of Europe or the United States. In this sense, as Needell and Romero argue and as Pierre Bourdieu theorizes, taste served to reinforce class difference.⁹¹

Yet, culture also stood in as a substitute for racial and geographic difference in the discourse of leading Paulistanos, and in this case taste was an acquired attribute that could transcend class boundaries.⁹² Borrowing from a long-established canon, São Paulo's most vocal citizens regularly asserted the cultural supremacy of the city over its hinterland.⁹³ As the *Estado* correspondent Euclides da Cunha made it clear in his bestselling monograph on the 1896-1897 military campaigns in Canudos, Brazilians were split along a rural-urban divide, a barrier that prevented the racial unification and thus political and social harmony of the nation.⁹⁴ That

⁹¹ Romero, *Latin America: Its Cities and Ideas*, 107; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

⁹² I have yet to find evidence for this period that cultural difference along *regional* lines served as a discursive substitute for racial difference, as Barbara Weinstein argues for 1930s São Paulo in "Racializing Regional Difference: São Paulo versus Brazil, 1932," in *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*, ed. Nancy Appelbaum (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 237–262. Perhaps this is not so surprising given that references to the Northeast as a single entity only began to appear around 1920.

⁹³ In Latin America, this canon was headed by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism* (1845).

⁹⁴ Euclides Da Cunha, *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign*, trans. Elizabeth Lowe (New York: Penguin Books, 2010). Originally published in 1902 under the title of *Os Sertões*.

harmony, however, was not unattainable, and for most Paulistano legislators it could be achieved through the diffusion of urban culture, and specifically an urban culture grounded in western European morality and taste. Civilization, in other words, rested in the city, the two blending together in their shared origin: the Roman *civitas*, a social body united by common laws and values.

In assuming that an individual's culture could be improved, leading Paulistanos adopted more fluid categories for distinguishing between social groups. Specifically, legislators and the press during the first decade of the twentieth century increasingly depended on the binary of "elite" and "popular," which they interchangeably used to describe either a particular population or a certain type of cultural practice. This conflation of demographic and artistic classification was not coincidental nor inconsequential. First, this overlap meant that the categorization of repertoire often relied upon a piece's audiences; if an audience was presumed to be elite, the object of its viewing would also assume that label. In this manner, the same piece might in one case be labeled by reviewers as "popular" and in another as "elite," although, as we shall see in Chapter 6, other contextual factors—the space, performers, and moment in time—mattered as well. For lawmakers at the start of the century, "popular culture" was thus not today's indication of a piece's marketability nor yet a nod to its authenticity, a pure form of national expression recorded and celebrated by 1930s folklorists. Second, by defining audiences according to their entertainment preferences, observers allowed for mobility between "popular" and "elite." Unlike biological race or nationality, one's cultural grouping was not determined at birth, and unlike socioeconomic class, this status rested not on material resources but on one's ability to learn,

adapt, and perform. As George Bernard Shaw cynically suggested from the other side of the Atlantic, any flower girl could be taught to play the part of a duchess.⁹⁵

The crux lay in how the flower girl would receive that education. By definition, São Paulo's "popular sectors" were those lacking training in the arts, letters, manners, and style—the antithesis of "erudite," an adjective that frequently accompanied "elite" in the city's press. From the viewpoint of the self-identified elite, this erudite-ignorant divide mapped onto the city's class structure. Certainly there were those critical of Paulistanos regardless of their socioeconomic background; one grouch in the mainstream *A Noite* decried the "aesthetic level" of all São Paulo's theatergoers as "deplorably crass and low."⁹⁶ Yet, for the most part, the neediest pupils of culture imagined by legislators were the city's lower classes. After all, while primary education was available at little or no cost, no governing body in São Paulo was yet offering an affordable "artistic education."⁹⁷ Theaters and other forms of leisure, as Agudo professed with a wink in *Gente Rica*, demanded a "wallet filled with good paper money."⁹⁸ In this light, the cultural deprivation of poor Paulistanos was in part viewed as an understandable, if unfortunate, consequence of their meager incomes.

Toward this end, lawmakers debating the need for a new theater at the turn of the century raised a point of contention entirely absent only a few decades before: the necessity of organizing performances accessible to all Paulistanos. This intention was already clear in the first attempt to replace the São José Theater by the state Chamber of Deputies, which envisioned

⁹⁵ This was the premise of Shaw's *Pygmalion* (1912), in which, on a bet, a phonetics professor successfully trains a Cockney-accented flower girl to speak, behave, and dress like an aristocrat.

⁹⁶ "o nível geral esthetico das nossas platéas é deploravelmente grosseiro e baixo,"

"Actualidades: Arte Dramatica," *A Noite*, Mar 26, 1898, 1.

⁹⁷ "A falta geral de educação artistica..." "Actualidades: Arte Dramatica," *A Noite*, Mar 26, 1898, 1.

⁹⁸ "carteira recheiada de bom papel moeda," Agudo, *Gente rica*, 129.

an audience spanning “all social classes.”⁹⁹ For the bill’s authors, this broad public meant that the new theater would need to be centrally located and alongside transit lines, within reach of the “general mass of the population” that was dispersed along the city’s periphery. While geographic access had been a concern during the planning of the São José, the group that legislators worried about excluding in 1854 were the province’s planters, that is, the regional elite rather than the popular, urban sectors. The increasing presence of the latter, however, forced a discussion of accessibility that moved beyond the proposed theater’s location to adopt an explicit language of class. State Senator Ezequiel de Paula Ramos, for example, challenged the project by questioning its intended beneficiaries, claiming that the theater would only serve the “rich and powerful class that can... in luxurious attire... attend the boxes of the theater.”¹⁰⁰ Several of Ramos’s counterparts in the Chamber of Deputies were of a similar mind, denouncing the proposed theater as a “work of luxury,” a diversion for the city’s few “*desoeuvrés*... unfamiliar with the acridity of labor.”¹⁰¹

At the dawn of the twentieth century, however, these accusations were taken with offense, provoking the theater’s defenders to emphasize the inclusivity of the intended audience. “I do not agree with those who consider the theater as an exception made in favor of the rich,” Senator Carlos Guimarães insisted. He went on to explain that the São José’s replacement would have “different levels, different prices, and therefore accommodation for all social classes.”¹⁰² In

⁹⁹ “as casas de espectáculos, obrigando e atraindo pessoas de todas as classes sociaes, que habitam em todas as zonas do perimetro urbano, devem ser locadas nos pontos mais accessiveis para a massa geral da população,” Bill 48, Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 279.

¹⁰⁰ “classe rica e poderosa que pode... com luxuosas vestimentas... concorrer aos camarotes dos theatros,” Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 139.

¹⁰¹ “Obra de luxo,” Eduardo Canto, Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 973; “É para a classe pouco numerosa dos *desoeuvrés*, dos *felizes*, que não conhecem as agruras do trabalho,” Antonio Mercado, Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 731.

¹⁰² “... não penso tambem como os que consideram o theatro como uma excepção feita em favor

other words, compared to the São José, what would become the Municipal Theater was planned to accommodate an expanded and more finely gradated social geography, to borrow Jeffrey Ravel's term, through a seating hierarchy ranging from boxes to gallery.¹⁰³ The cost of entry would reflect this variation thereby, in the words of Senator José Luiz de Almeida Nogueira, making "space for all social classes," albeit a segregated space.¹⁰⁴ In addition, Senator Frederico Abranches suggested, government subsidies could reduce rates further so that attendance for at least selected performances could be "within reach of all purses."¹⁰⁵

Why did Abranches, Nogueira, and their colleagues care enough about the new theater's accessibility to engage in debate over the issue and even propose further funding? For those more critical of the future Municipal Theater, a government project in the republican era needed to adhere to republican principles. In the eyes of Deputy Antonio Mercado, this meant ensuring that all Paulistas shared in the "benefits of the common effort," even if such an end necessitated the eradication of privileged classes.¹⁰⁶ Others were less radical in their motivation for accessibility, more closely following the logic of their counterparts abroad. In Chicago, for example, businessman Ferdinand Peck had spearheaded the 1889 opening of the Auditorium Building, a multipurpose theater explicitly designed "for the masses" in its muted décor, high capacity (a whopping 4,200 seats), and relative lack of boxes and tiers.¹⁰⁷ Chicago's patriarchs

dos ricos; ha no teatro diferentes ordens, preços diferentes e, portanto, cabimento para todas as classes sociais." Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 175.

¹⁰³ Jeffrey S. Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theater and French Political Culture, 1680-1791* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 68.

¹⁰⁴ "logar para todas as classes sociaes." Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 140.

¹⁰⁵ "ao alcance de todas as bolsas." Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 186. As we shall see in Chapter 7, however, legislation specifying the organization of performances at "popular prices" would not come until the 1920s.

¹⁰⁶ "ventagens do esforço commum," Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 972.

¹⁰⁷ Ferdinand Peck, "Annual Report of the President to the Stockholders of the Chicago Auditorium Association," 7 Dec 1889, in Joseph M. Siry, "Chicago's Auditorium Building:

were in part reacting to a recent turn of events: labor strikes and the Haymarket riot had shaken the city, and the Auditorium, Peck exclaimed on its inaugural night, enabled both rich and poor to “meet together upon common ground and be elevated... by the power of music.”¹⁰⁸ The Auditorium’s equal access, in other words, was not a matter of principle—an ideological devotion to egalitarianism—but rather the means to ensuring that the theater would serve as a tool for social reform.

While São Paulo’s class tensions had yet to erupt in 1900, its lawmakers were already attuned to the “social question” plaguing cities around the world.¹⁰⁹ Newspapers tracked developments in social politics and conflict and advertised the sale of treatises tackling the same topics from a “scientific” perspective.¹¹⁰ This perspective was the relatively young field of sociology, which inspired the increasing number of studies seeking to explain Brazilian society.¹¹¹ Among these was Da Cunha’s abovementioned *Os Sertões*, which, despite the rural setting of its subjects, was grounded in conservative French sociology-cum-social psychology concerned with the urban crowd.¹¹² Social scientific explanations were sweeping the globe,

Opera or Anarchism,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57, no. 2 (June 1998): 135.

¹⁰⁸ “Dedicated to Music and the People,” *Chicago Tribune*, Dec 10, 1889, 2.

¹⁰⁹ One state deputy went so far as to claim in 1892 that the “social question of the proletariat happily does not exist in Brazil (*cheers*) because in this country the laborer makes himself a capitalist” (“questão social do proletariado, que não existe felizmente no Brasil, (*apoiados*) porque neste paiz o operario faz-se capitalista,” Alfredo Pujol, “Congresso Paulista: Camara dos Deputados,” *Estado*, May 5, 1892, 1. Note that, before emancipation in 1888, “questão social” was frequently used by Brazilians to refer to the issue of slavery in addition to the condition and actions of the urban lower classes.

¹¹⁰ The Haymarket affair was belatedly covered, and the possibility of its replication in Brazil fretted about, in “Noticias estrangeiras,” *Estado*, June 26, 1886, 1. For example, “Recentes publicações scientificas e democraticas,” *Provincia*, May 13, 1886, 4.

¹¹¹ *O Estado de São Paulo* readers received a concise introduction to sociology by way of Isidor C. Gomes, “A Sociologia,” *Estado*, Mar 10, 1898, 1.

¹¹² The irony of Da Cunha’s “scientific” grounding is examined in Dain Borges, “Euclides Da Cunha’s View of Brazil’s Fractured Identity,” in *Brazil in the Making: Facets of National*

popularized (some, like the Le Bon scholar Robert Nye, would say “vulgarized”) by bestselling authors such as Gustave Le Bon, whose *The Crowd (La Psychologie des Foules, 1895)* was quickly translated into sixteen languages.¹¹³ Le Bon’s and other racial and crowd theories were increasingly alluded to in the mainstream press and in fiction as São Paulo’s urban population rapidly expanded in quantity and variety.¹¹⁴ By 1899, the *Estado* was ready to fold into the category of “social question” the issue of immigration, and a decade later, the state’s Labor Department was ready to declare that São Paulo faced the issues “agitating the advanced nations of Europe.”¹¹⁵ As the traveler Pierre Denis observed in 1909, São Paulo, more so than Rio, was the place to find the Brazilian crowd.¹¹⁶

The crowd was a frightening specter for Paulista legislators in 1900 not only because of its remarkable record of disruption in Europe over the last century, but also because of its implications for the city’s and region’s future.¹¹⁷ Italian criminologist Scipio Sighele had already

Identity, ed. Carmen Nava and Ludwig Lauerhass, Jr. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 34-35.

¹¹³ Robert A. Nye, “Introduction,” in Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, ed. Robert A. Nye (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 11. Marcia Cristina Consolim, “Gustave Le Bon e a Reação Conservadora às Multidões” (presented at the XVII Encontro Regional de História - O lugar da História, ANPUH/SP-UNICAMP, Campinas, SP, 2004), 1.

¹¹⁴ José Agudo, in *Gente rica*, 106, joked that the actions of his fictional, garrulous newspaper owner Dr. Araujo Reis “confirmed the philosophical theory of Le Bon” (“confirmavam a theoria philosophica de Le Bon”).

¹¹⁵ Departamento Estadual do Trabalho de São Paulo, “Boletim Do Departamento Estadual Do Trabalho,” 1912, 169.

¹¹⁶ A. Grandis, “Cartas da Italia,” *Estado*, Aug 2, 1899, 3; Morse, *From Community to Metropolis*, 209.

¹¹⁷ For more on intellectual and political articulations of the crowd, see Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Jaap van Ginneken, *Crowds, Psychology, and Politics, 1871-1899* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); J. S McClelland, *The Crowd and the Mob: From Plato to Canetti* (London; Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Clark McPhail, *The Myth of the*

argued in *La Folla Delinquente* (1891) that the aggregation of individuals transformed the latter into criminals. Building on existing assumptions about social degeneration and human psychology, Le Bon went further to claim that the submergence of individual, conscious personality to a collective, unconscious mind undermined any sense of moral obligation and thus hastened civilization's decay.¹¹⁸ Civilization, in other words, necessitated social order, which could be secured through the triumph of the individual's rationality over the crowd's passion and servitude. While Le Bon advised the appointment of an enlightened leader to temper the crowd, São Paulo's republican lawmakers, like their counterparts in France, leaned more favorably toward what Le Bon skeptically referred to as the "dominant idea of the present epoch": the notion that education could improve a people.¹¹⁹

The question was how such an education would be provided. For Antonio Mercado, the state deputy who passionately defended the Municipal's equal access, it was the role of government to foster the "development of all citizens."¹²⁰ A truly "modern society," Mercado argued, was a "great syndicate directed by the State."¹²¹ In the decentralized First Republic, it was thus the duty of the state or municipal legislator to provide for his constituents' education in accordance with the people's welfare and, in positivist fashion, with "the teachings of

Madding Crowd (Transaction Publishers, 1991); and Robert A. Nye, *The Origins of Crowd Psychology: Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic* (London; Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1975).

¹¹⁸ Le Bon, *The Crowd*, 43–44, 50. This splitting of minds maps onto what Jan Goldstein calls the "vertical fragmentation" of the self between the unconscious and conscious mind. See Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 3.

¹¹⁹ Le Bon, *The Crowd*, 112.

¹²⁰ "desenvolvimento de todos os cidadãos," Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 972.

¹²¹ "A sociedade moderna é um grande syndicato gerido pelo Estado," Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 737.

science.”¹²² In this conviction Mercado was no outlier. São Paulo’s press had long offered suggestions for government-implemented educational reforms, and in their rhetoric, reports, and bills, lawmakers paid close attention to the social policies of other nations and cities.¹²³ What they saw was an expanding state, nations increasingly concerned with providing services and regulatory measures in the name of improving their citizens’ well-being. Moreover, it was a paternalist state that moved beyond public works and sanitation—what State Senator Abranches called “material improvements”—to promote the intellectual advancement of its denizens. The “development of the arts, letters, and industries” were government’s new obligations, Abranches declared.¹²⁴ “Man does not live by bread alone—*nec solum panem vivit homo*.”¹²⁵

In placing the arts, letters, and industries side by side, Abranches argued for more than the education that could be acquired in a traditional schoolhouse. This was an education that encompassed “moral progress,” a “taste for the arts,” and a “sense for beauty.” It was an education that was already being offered by cultural institutions around the world—by museums, libraries, orchestras, and other organizations that sought to shape and uplift the minds and spirits of urban residents.¹²⁶ Brazil experienced its own “golden age” of museums in the last quarter of

¹²² “com os ensinamentos da sciencia,” Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 972.

¹²³ e.g. “Ao ex-ministro da justiça,” *Estado*, Apr 25, 1891, 1. By 1911, the state government was tracking and reporting on European “social legislation” in its Department of Labor bulletin. See *Boletim do Departamento Estadual do Trabalho* (1912), 169.

¹²⁴ “desenvolvimento das artes, das letras, das indústrias,” Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 140.

¹²⁵ “não é só de pão que vive o homem—*nec solum panem vivit homo*. Não bastam os melhoramentos materiaes. Ao Estado... salienta-se como um dos primeiros deveres o de promover a desenvolução da intellectualidade de seus associados, applicando suas forças no desenvolvimento do progresso moral, acoroçoando o gosto pelas artes, imprimindo na população o sentimento do bello,” Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 142.

¹²⁶ The literature on the rise of nineteenth-century cultural institutions is now substantial and growing. A sampling includes Jens Andermann, *The Optic of the State: Visuality and Power in Argentina and Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007); John Spitzer, ed., *American Orchestras in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

the nineteenth century, with São Paulo lagging slightly behind the national capital with its Museu Paulista (1895) and the Pinacoteca (1905), the state's natural history and art galleries.¹²⁷ As in many US cities, however, the majority of São Paulo's early spaces for arts education were private initiatives that received limited support from government agencies. These included the School of Arts and Crafts (Liceu de Artes e Ofícios) and the Dramatic and Musical Conservatory of São Paulo (Conservatório Dramático e Musical de São Paulo), which opened their doors in 1882 and 1906, respectively.

The two-decade span between the School and the Conservatory hints at the relative controversy that the Municipal's proponents faced in defending the theater as an educational space. In other words, while creating and viewing the visual arts were accepted as productive and morally sound activities in 1900 São Paulo, the assumed lifestyles of performers, the habits of audiences, and the raciness of much repertoire left some doubtful about the value of the performing arts. This schism reflected that between leisure and entertainment, a dividing line that urban reformers across the globe were busily drawing.¹²⁸ The gradual shortening of the workday made both possible, but entertainment was equated with distraction, vice, and commercialized culture, whereas leisure was free time with a purpose: the moral, intellectual, and physical development of the individual. For Deputy Mercado, the genres most successful at the box office, the operetta and *revista* (the Brazilian equivalent of the comedic French revue), fell into the former category. These were theatrical forms that held spectators' attention through short bursts of "rough" humor, wonder, and dramatic shock, usually spiced with a dash (or more)

¹²⁷ Maria Margaret Lopes, *O Brasil descobre a pesquisa científica: os museus e as ciências naturais no século XIX* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1997), 24.

¹²⁸ This stands in contrast to present-day scholars' fusion of the two, as in Roger Spalding's definition of leisure as the "temporal location of entertainment." See Roger Spalding, "Introduction: Entertaining Identities?," in Spalding and Alyson Brown, ed., *Entertainment, Leisure and Identities* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 1.

of sexual innuendo.¹²⁹ However, the repertoire was not the only problem; in the eyes of Senator Ezequiel Ramos, the combination of crude performances and crowded auditoriums inevitably resulted in the “perversion of mores” and the loss of “good habits.”¹³⁰ Mercado also worried that theatergoing encouraged ostentation, the wasteful obsession with silks, pearls, and other “seductions that might please, but that do not civilize, educate, nor contribute to true happiness and the people’s well-being.”¹³¹ From this perspective, the theater was a hindrance to progress, a distraction from thought, work, and a good night’s rest.

A government-funded theater was also a budgetary distraction. Man may not live from bread alone, as Abranches had argued, but he nevertheless needed bread to survive.¹³² He also needed clean water, a sewage system, hospitals, schools, and roads—all expenses that drained the state and municipal coffers. Coasters were particularly depleted after over-speculation, dropping coffee prices, and intensive population growth wracked the region in the 1890s. No wonder, then, that in 1900 Mercado stressed fiscal caution, adopting an economist’s lexicon to assert that theaters would only augment consumption, the “producer of economic crises.”¹³³ Senator Jorge Miranda similarly worried that São Paulo’s “new public necessities” were already endangering the state’s treasury and credit.¹³⁴ For Miranda, a theater was a poor excuse for an educational institution and thus of relatively little “utility,” especially given that the state lacked a faculty of medicine or engineering or even a school of fine arts. As merely “recreation...

¹²⁹ Mercado wryly characterized the operetta and *revista* in euphemistic language as “peppered sketches, more or less spicy, more or less rough” (“trechos apimentados, mais ou menos picantes, mais ou menos escabrosos”), Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 730.

¹³⁰ “perversão dos costumes... habitos bons.” Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 140.

¹³¹ “seduções, que podem agradar, mas que não civilizam, mas que não educam, mas que não contribuem para a felicidade real, nem para o bem estar do povo.” Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 734.

¹³² Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 972.

¹³³ “queremos crear mais um meio de augmentar o consumo, productora das crises economicas,” Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 728.

¹³⁴ “novas necessidades publicas,” Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 182, 184.

simply aesthetic culture,” a theater had no place in a state buckling under the weight of its expanded responsibilities.¹³⁵ In the words of Mercado, true Paulista pride rested not in satisfying local vanity but in emerging from hardship debt-free.¹³⁶

Yet, the majority of Mercado’s and Miranda’s peers had a different notion of what constituted Paulista pride and progress. As we saw in the previous section, the idea of “cultural progress” was taken seriously by many of São Paulo’s lawmakers, especially in light of new challenges that accompanied the city’s demographic expansion. With the number of entertainment venues quickly increasing, as Chapter 5 will detail, legislators worried that Paulistanos would stray from what they perceived to be wholesome leisure. Of particular concern were the gambling halls and sports centers cropping up throughout the city, in some cases even taking over existing theaters. While the Polytheama’s bowling alley was advertised in 1898 as a “new genre of sport appreciated... in the cultured countries of Europe as well as America,” many in São Paulo’s press and assembly halls bemoaned the temporary loss of yet another respectable theater.¹³⁷ “Such diversions reduce the national character,” Deputy Augusto Miranda de Azevedo insisted, employing the widely held assumption that character, or a people’s collective sentiments, defined a nation and its level of civilization.¹³⁸ “A more

¹³⁵ “não traduz utilidade; traduz recreação. É simplesmente a cultura esthetica mas não passa disso,” Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 185.

¹³⁶ Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 739.

¹³⁷ “novo genero de sport tão apreciado e introduzido nos paizes cultos tanto da Europa como da America,” “Theatro Polytheama,” *A Noite*, Mar 19, 1898, 3; Aladino, “Capital artística,” *A Noite*, July 13, 1898, 1.

¹³⁸ “divertimentos esses que tanto abatem o caracter nacional. Julgo que um dos meios mais moralizadores, para combater a falta de educação do povo, é justamente o teatro,” Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 363. Gustave Le Bon defined national character—the bedrock of his *Lois psychologiques de l’évolution des peuples* (1894)—as the “aggregate of psychological elements observable in all the individuals of a race.” In *The Psychology of Peoples* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1898), 6.

moralizing means to combat the people's lack of education," Azevedo continued, "is precisely the theater."

This was especially true if a theater's lessons were morally grounded, and one way to guarantee such an outcome was through the construction of a government-regulated venue. São Paulo's lawmakers, in this sense, would be the city's guardians of taste, a beneficent elite enlightening an ignorant but eager populace. "If the public sees poorly," suggested an *A Noite* contributor, "let us seek, in wisdom and earnestness, to teach it to see better."¹³⁹ Like proponents of the São José Theater five decades before them, Paulista legislators expected the new theater's supervised offerings to tune moral compasses through the delineation of vice and virtue. As Senator Abranches explained, borrowing from the seventeenth-century poet Jean-Baptiste de Santeul, "The theater is a pastime that, while diverting, castigates social mores."¹⁴⁰ Through the viewing of a carefully chosen play or opera, spectators' manners were "corrected" and, in turn, a "national character" was better honed.¹⁴¹ For Abranches, this character was also honed through the onstage articulation of political virtue, particularly through the championing of democracy. Playwrights such as Molière, Racine, and Corneille, the senator argued, had eroded "inveterate superstitions," offering audiences the chance to breathe the "aroma of liberty."¹⁴² Theaters' function as the "harbinger of great ideas" was especially pertinent given the intended audiences of the Municipal Theater. If the theater were to be truly accessible, illiterate and semi-literate

¹³⁹ "Se o publico vê mal, procuremos, beneditinamente, ensinal-o a ver melhor." "Actualidades: Arte Dramatica," *A Noite*, Mar 28, 1.

¹⁴⁰ "*Ridendo castigat mores*. O theatro é um passa tempo que, divertindo, castiga os costumes." Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 143.

¹⁴¹ "onde os costumes são corrigidos, onde a virtude é galardoada e o vicio punido.... caracter nacional" Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 125-126.

¹⁴² "superstições inveteradas.... Arauto das grandes idéas... o aroma da liberdade." Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 125.

Paulistanos would count among its spectators, a fact that did not escape Abranches when he cited Voltaire's dictum that the "theater instructs more than the book."¹⁴³

Illiterate Paulistanos could also learn modern morality by example. A government theater, legislators believed, would uniquely offer models of audience behavior in a highly visible, stratified, and thus relatively controllable setting. Though a hierarchy of segregated levels, the new theater's seating arrangement would foster socialization through the mixing, but not intermingling, of distinct populations. In this schema, working Paulistanos in the gallery's heights would observe, and gradually adopt, the customs and fashions of the more civilized citizens below. To ensure that audiences remained civilized, the state continued to build on legislation that, as we saw in the previous chapter, had been in effect since at least 1824. During the First Republic, these decrees detailed the dress, noise, and actions of spectators but, as Chapter 7 will explain, increasingly differentiated between the occupants of a theater's gallery and those of the boxes and parquet. State laws also provided for additional policing in the form of a civic guard so that these new regulations could be enforced.¹⁴⁴ With this ability to secure the elevation of a people's "moral level," theaters were institutions "of the highest social importance," insisted Deputy Azevedo Marques, worthy investments since the dawn of civilization in Athens and Rome.¹⁴⁵

Yet, more so than their predecessors, Azevedo Marques and his peers stressed another component of morality: that of aesthetic rectitude. Beyond a school of etiquette and ethics, the

¹⁴³ "E Voltaire proclamava que o theatro instrua mais que o livro," Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 125.

¹⁴⁴ Law 491 (29 Dec 1896), Art. 41; Law 522 (25 Aug 1897), Art. 84; Washington Luis P. de Sousa, *Relatorio apresentado ao Dr. Jorge Tibiriçá, Presidente do Estado, pelo Secretario da Justiça e da Segurança Publica* (São Paulo: Typ. Brasil de Rothschild & Comp., 1906), 36.

¹⁴⁵ "nivel moral... mais alta importancia social," Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 361-362.

theater was a crucial “school for artistic taste,” as Senator Almeida Nogueira phrased it.¹⁴⁶ For Deputy Egas, this meant that the new theater would be a space where hard-working Paulistas could find “improvement and education” through the enjoyment of “great works of artistic genius.”¹⁴⁷ The theater, in other words, would teach audiences to judge and appreciate art in “its most elevated manifestations,” contended Alderman Gomes Cardim.¹⁴⁸ This was Kant’s art that produced a universally accepted beauty, Schiller’s art that replaced “caprice, frivolity, and coarseness” with “great, noble, and ingenious forms.”¹⁴⁹ By being able to discern and thus consume beauty, the spectator would in turn develop his or her own intellectual and moral capacities. The aesthetic experience, in other words, was in itself moralizing.¹⁵⁰

While local elites never offered a precise rubric for measuring beauty, we can piece together a few assumptions. First, a performed work and ideally the performer needed to have been vetted and approved by the audiences of Europe’s leading theaters.¹⁵¹ Precedence and reputation mattered, although technical mastery helped as well; critics in the mainstream press were not always kind to renowned artists.¹⁵² Alternatively, if the performer, author, or composer

¹⁴⁶ “eschola para o gosto artistico.” Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 140.

¹⁴⁷ “grandes obras do genio artistico... aperfeiçoar e educar,” Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 735.

¹⁴⁸ “suas mais elevadas manifestações,” *Actas das sessões da Camara Municipal de S. Paulo*, 1896, 31.

¹⁴⁹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment* (1790), in Alexandre Sesonske ed., *What is Art?: Aesthetic Theory from Plato to Tolstoy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 200-201, 205; Friedrich Schiller, *On the aesthetic education of man* (BiblioBytes, 1794), Letter IX, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/schiller-education.asp>.

¹⁵⁰ Schiller rationalizes this conclusion in Letter XXIII of *Aesthetic Education*: “... there is no other way to make a reasonable being out of a sensuous man than by making him first aesthetic... for it is alone in the aesthetic state, and not in the physical state, that the moral state can be developed.”

¹⁵¹ Rio’s critics were hesitant to support the 1889 production of Carlos Gomes’s opera *Lo Schiavo*, for example, because it had yet to receive the “artistic consecration” (“consagração artistica”) of Italian and French audiences (“Theatros e Festas,” *Gazeta da Tarde*, July 22, 1889).

¹⁵² Critics were disappointed, for example, by Sarah Bernhardt’s performance in her second São Paulo tour, “Palcos e Circos: S. José,” *Estado*, July 9, 1893, 1; July 13, 1893, 1; July 16, 1893, 2;

was Brazilian, his or her style or genre would have to adhere to the same standards of respectable European audiences. Shakespeare, Hugo, and Molière were thus hailed as “centers of light, true geniuses,” to quote Deputy Eugenio Egas, while the operas of Verdi, Wagner, and Brazilian composer Carlos Gomes were likewise extolled.¹⁵³ Variety acts, magic shows, and most operettas and *revistas*, however, were not. The latter forms, explained *A Noite*, failed to “educate the public taste” because they sacrificed elegant prose, sophisticated orchestration, or near-perfect execution—signs of training by both the piece’s creator and performer—for the sake of immediately and repeatedly satisfying audiences.¹⁵⁴ Similar principles were also applied to a theater’s architectural beauty, which was captured in the symmetry, ornamentation, and constancy of the Beaux-Arts form. As Deputy Mário Tavares declared, citing Tolstoy, Art with a capital “A” was greater than a “distraction, pleasure, or consolation”; it was “the organ of life of humanity, transmitter of the feeling of human conscience.”¹⁵⁵

Creating true Art, however, came at a high cost, a cost that not all legislators were willing to entirely bear. The São José Theater, after all, had been a joint endeavor between province and private investor, and it was the São José’s final contractor, José Nabor Pacheco Jordão, who initially offered to negotiate the theater’s reconstruction with the state. Yet few in São Paulo’s congress were persuaded by Senator Ramos’s argument that a new theater would be a venture so risky that only the private sector could shoulder its burden.¹⁵⁶ Certainly, as we saw above, some lawmakers were concerned about a theater’s urgency in a period of unbalanced ledgers. Others,

July 18, 1893,1; July 21, 1893, 1.

¹⁵³ “focos de luz, verdadeiros genios,” Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 734.

¹⁵⁴ “educar o gosto do publico,” “Actualidades: Arte Dramatica,” *A Noite*, Mar 28, 1898, 1.

¹⁵⁵ “não era simples distracção, nem um prazer ou uma consolação, mas alguma coisa de maior, o orgam da vida da humanidade, traductor do sentir da consciencia humana,” Mario Tavares (6 Nov 1911), Câmara dos Deputados do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Extraordinária e Ordinária de 1911* (São Paulo: Estado de São Paulo, 1912), 313.

¹⁵⁶ Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 139.

meanwhile, worried that a government theater would hinder entrepreneurs. The 1891 state law granting municipalities the right to promote artistic development implicitly stipulated that such efforts not “impede individual initiative.”¹⁵⁷ In competing with tax-paying theaters, asserted Deputy Mercado, a publicly funded theater would do just that, “killing private industry” as it quashed one of liberalism’s sacred tenets.¹⁵⁸

Mercado’s invocation of economic principles once again, however, failed to withstand reality. By 1900, the contract with Jordão had fallen through, as had several attempts to secure investors and architects through competition.¹⁵⁹ Some legislators blamed the lack of interest on the high standards, and thereby costs, that a new theater would have to uphold.¹⁶⁰ Given the 4.500:000\$ eventually spent on constructing the Municipal Theater and a record of unsteady theater profits in the 1890s, it was little wonder that no individual was willing to lay his bets.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ The initial draft of State Law 16 (13 Nov 1891), Art. 54, included the text “não concedendo, pore[m], privilegios que tolham a iniciativa individual,” but the latter four words were struck after Deputy Paulo Egydio successfully argued that simply “privilegios” captured the phrase’s intention.

¹⁵⁸ “O projecto fere um dos principios mais conhecidos em economia politica—o do afastamento completo do Estado a toda concorrência com a industria privada.... É um crime contra os bons principios querer matar a industria particular,” Deputados, *Annaes 1900*, 733.

¹⁵⁹ Municipal Laws 200 (20 Feb 1896) and 336 (24 Jan 1898). This competitive approach was hailed as “liberal and reasonable” for the capital of Republicanism (Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 364), but its only outcome was a 1901 contract between the prefecture and Giacomo Leoni, who unexpectedly passed away while scouring Europe for funds. See Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Actas das sessões da Camara Municipal de S. Paulo, 1901*, vol. 83 (São Paulo: Typ. Espindola, Siqueira & Comp., 1903), 240; Antonio Barreto do Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo (da Casa da Ópera à inauguração do Teatro Municipal)*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de Sao Paulo, 2006), 392.

¹⁶⁰ Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 280.

¹⁶¹ Specifically, 2.308:155\$820 was approved by the Municipal Chamber in Law 643 (25 Apr 1903). Another 1.232:503\$000 and 684:770\$606 was authorized under Laws 1060 (18 Dec 1907) and 1296 (12 Mar 1910), respectively. Spending on the Municipal’s construction is documented in Municipal Acts 197 (26 Jan 1905), 228 (4 Jun 1906), 241 (13 Nov 1906), 250 (11 Jan 1907), 259 (1 Mar 1907), 278 (8 Oct 1907), 280 (5 Nov 1907), 291 (27 Jan 1908), 324 (16

Senator Abranches and Deputy Egas were more skeptical, declaring that “laissez faire, laissez passer” simply did not produce adequate results.¹⁶² For Egas, the attempt to privatize the sewage system in the neighborhood of Brás had proven a disaster, while state commissions for public buildings had so far rendered masterful works by the Ramos de Azevedo firm.¹⁶³ For Abranches, the problem of private ownership lay in the theater’s future management; profit-seeking individuals could not be entrusted to offer quality performers, reasonable pay, and affordable ticket prices.¹⁶⁴

Was Abranches justified in his fears? That is, did the complete funding and management of a theater render it a more accessible and effective tool for the advancement of a local public? One means by which we can venture an answer is through the comparison of the Municipal and Colombo Theaters. Both were founded with the support of the municipality and with the aim of morally and aesthetically educating São Paulo’s growing popular sectors, but differences in their planning and management led to varying results. What would become the Municipal Theater was initiated by the Municipal Chamber in 1895, but it was only eight years later, with the appointment of a committee of architects by Prefect Antonio Prado, that the project translated into blueprints and funding. The final attempt at a municipal theater was thus entirely directed and funded by the city, with the assistance of the state in the form of expropriated territory.¹⁶⁵ The Colombo, on the other hand, more closely resembled the model originally envisaged for the Municipal: ownership by the city and management by a long-term lessee. In this case, it was the

Mar 1909), 349 (17 Mar 1910), and 350 (19 Mar 1910). For more on 1890s opera profits, see Paulo de Oliveira Castro Cerquera, *Um século de ópera em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Empresa Gráfica Editôra Guia Fiscal, 1954), 28.

¹⁶² Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 142.

¹⁶³ Deputados, *Annaes 1898*, 364.

¹⁶⁴ Senado, *Annaes 1900*, 186.

¹⁶⁵ Municipal Laws 627 (7 Feb 1903), 643 (25 Apr 1903), State Law 861-A (16 Dec 1902).

latter who proposed transforming an existing market into a permanent theater, and in 1906 a contract was signed between the prefecture and Pedro França Pinto.¹⁶⁶ As a lessee, Pinto had the option of managing and subletting the theater as he chose, as long as he took full responsibility for maintaining the building and regularly paid installments on the twenty-year lease. The Colombo's renovation also depended entirely on private resources: Pinto acquired a loan from the Companhia Antarctica Paulista, an industrial brewery that already had its hands in the local theater business and whose chilled beers are to this day enjoyed throughout Brazil. According to the prefecture, the loan of 100:000\$ turned out to be more than enough to transform the old market into a viable theater by 1908.¹⁶⁷

Indeed, the Colombo was more than simply viable. It was a colossus that, like the Municipal, occupied an entire block and towered over a spacious plaza. True, limited funds meant that the theater could claim neither the renowned architect nor the opulent design of the Municipal. In this sense, its architectural beauty fell somewhat short of what legislators imagined to be spiritually and intellectually uplifting. The Colombo could not boast the Municipal's stained-glass windows, marble, statuary, and arcades, nor its cupola, automobile entrance, and several salons (Image 13). Yet, if the Colombo's elegance was more subdued, it nevertheless aspired to Classical forms. A simple portico of Doric columns and pediment marked the main entrance, a pattern that was repeated for the entire length of the building in the form of alternating pilasters and large but crude windows (Image 14). These were possibly holdovers from the former market, as was the theater's size. Certainly a new addition, however,

¹⁶⁶ Município de São Paulo, *Registro de Alvarás-Licença: Diversas Atividades*, vol. 762 (São Paulo, 1908), 25, Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo (AHSP), Fundo CMSP/INTDM/PMSP, Série Assuntos Diversos (1598-1955).

¹⁶⁷ José Inácio de Melo Souza, "Colombo," *Salas de cinema de São Paulo: Inventário dos espaços de sociabilidade cinematográfica da cidade de São Paulo (1895-1929)*, 2009, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/bases/cine.htm>.



Image 14: The Colombo Theater, ca. 1920. Photograph, Cinemateca Brasileira, *Salas de cinema de São Paulo*.

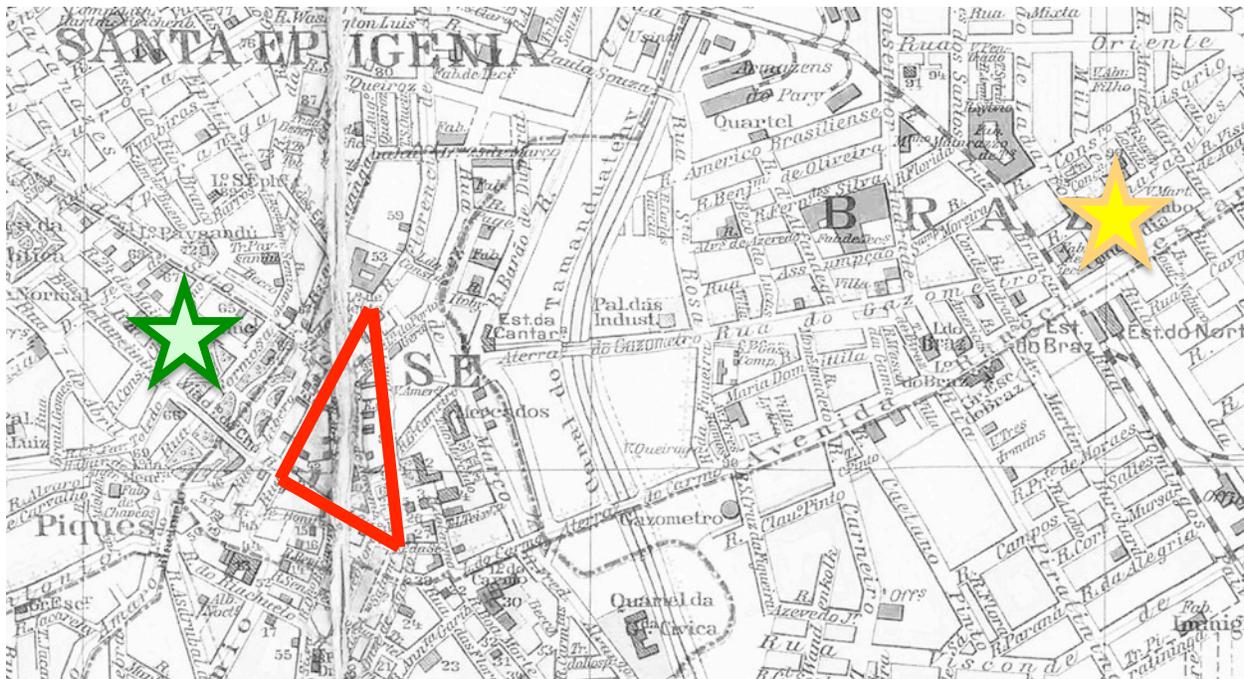
was the imposing stage house, the width and height of which enabled visiting performance companies to use a variety of backdrops and lighting designs, as was expected of higher quality productions.¹⁶⁸ The Colombo's interior also belied the theater's origins. Inside were many of the amenities and safety features found in the Municipal, including electric lighting, a restaurant and bar, ample dressing rooms, imported furniture (from Austria, by Thonet), and delicately painted ceilings.¹⁶⁹ The Colombo was in fact so impressive in its "comfort and elegance" that the *Commercio de São Paulo*, one of the city's leading dailies, remarked that the new theater "should be located at a point other than the neighborhood of Brás."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ The stage house refers to the stage and the area above it where lights, backdrops, and curtains were hung and stored. In Image 14, it is the large box that rises above and to the left of the auditorium roof.

¹⁶⁹ Souza, "Colombo," *Salas de cinema de São Paulo*.

¹⁷⁰ "Todas as comodidades, enfim, encontrarão os freqüentadores do novo teatro que, pelo seu conforto e elegância, devia estar em outro ponto que não o bairro do Brás." Cited in "O Comércio e o Colombo," *Folha do Povo*, Mar 18, 1908.

The *Commercio*'s statement hints at the social meanings attributed to a theater and its location in early twentieth-century São Paulo. Phrased simply, the Municipal was situated in the city's center, fit for residents of upper-class Higienópolis and their visiting guests (Map 8). The Colombo, however, was across the Tamanduateí Canal to the east—on the wrong side of the proverbial tracks—in the city's first industrial zone where much of São Paulo's working class, and especially its Spanish and Italian sectors, resided. The Municipal was perched atop a hill, overlooking a graceful esplanade carved into the slope and recently drained marsh below. The Colombo sat facing the Largo da Concórdia, an uninspiring park in the heart of the flat and flood-prone neighborhood of Brás. The Municipal was an unmistakable landmark: a frequent



Map 8: The Municipal and Colombo Theaters in their neighborhoods. The Municipal is indicated by the green star on the left/west and the Colombo by the yellow star on the right/east. The red triangle marks the historic center (Triângulo). Striped lines on the right signify regional railroad tracks, while the light, double lines surrounded by open space in the map's middle is the Tamanduateí Canal. Basemap: Companhia Lithographica Hartmann-Reichenbach, "Planta da Cidade de São Paulo," 1913, Prefeitura de São Paulo: Histórico Demográfico do Município de São Paulo.

subject of postcards, a monument to the newly expanded and thriving downtown.¹⁷¹ The Colombo was a landmark for the city's new masses, not tourists passing through. Its neighbors were not stately government offices but factories and small businesses. Intersected by train and streetcar lines, Brás was an ideal location for a theater seeking to attract men, women, and children from across the city. Between the Colombo's opening in 1908 and the start of World War I, over a dozen theaters, cinemas included, were established in Brás, transforming the area into a veritable entertainment district under the helm of primarily Italian entrepreneurs.

The families that frequented this budding district and packed the Colombo's auditorium could not have been more different from those of the Municipal Theater. As evident in photos published in *A Cigarra* (The Cicada), a society magazine, the Colombo's attendees were of modest or, at best, middle-class means (Image 15). Even on an occasion meriting a photograph, boys and men donned caps, jackets, and neckties rather than canes, tailcoats, and bowties. Likewise, the garb of the few women visible in the photograph hardly drew attention: dresses were of modest cut and simple stitching. Reviews of the Municipal's inaugural night, September 12, 1911, painted a starkly opposing picture: cars crowded the surrounding avenues, champagne flowed, men in starched shirts talked business, women gossiped behind elegantly gloved hands. A photograph at the Municipal also taken by *A Cigarra* reinforces the contrast between the two theaters' audiences (Image 16). Not only do the attires differ, but so does the camera lens. For the magazine's readers, the faces, postures, and styles of Municipal attendees were worthy of

¹⁷¹ In the words of one columnist in *A Vida Moderna* (Sep 30, 1911, 93), "... how much our civilization and progress owe to the execution of this grandiose monument, that imposingly shows off at the summit of the old Anhangabaú's esplanade, like a gigantic mark signifying a new era of aristocratic and artistic conquest for our State" ("quanto devem a nossa civilização e o nosso progresso, à execução desse monumento grandioso, que se ostenta imponentemente no alto da esplanada do antigo Anhangabaú, como um marco gigantesco, para significar o início de uma nova era de conquista aristocrática e artística, para o nosso Estado").



Image 15: Colombo spectators at a show organized by Empresa João de Castro. *A Cigarra*, October 1, 1921, 29.



Image 16: In the foyer of the Municipal Theater. *A Cigarra*, September 30, 1915, 19.

closer inspection, worthy of knowing, scrutinizing, perhaps imitating. The Colombo's audience, by contrast, remained a distant mass, a sea of faces more impressive for its dimensions than its details. After all, as a *Cigarra* columnist half-sardonically proposed, the Municipal was where one could find "the best faces of São Paulo, the best *toilettes*, the best jewels and the best smiles."¹⁷² It was the scene, in short, of the "rebirth of refined sociability."¹⁷³ The Municipal was thus less a school of Art and morality, another society magazine earnestly explained, than it was "a school of fashions and manners" for São Paulo's "jeunesse dorée," its golden youth.

Despite the rhetoric of São Paulo's legislators, in other words, the beneficiaries of the Municipal's civilizing crusade were an exclusive lot. This was in part the result of high ticket prices that made the theater inaccessible to most Paulistanos on most nights of the year. Entrance to a typical show at the Colombo cost 1\$ for benches and standing room, 2\$ for a chair, 10\$ for a second-tier box for five (2\$ per person), and 12\$ for a first-tier box (2\$400 per person).¹⁷⁴ For one of the city's coachmen, this meant that an outing to the Colombo with his entire family of five was worth nearly four days' wages, or two if they were willing to stand or sit less comfortably.¹⁷⁵ The Municipal offered no such alternative; "amphitheater" seats at the very top of the fourth balcony began at 4\$ each and the choicest boxes went for the sum of 100\$, well over a coachman's monthly salary.¹⁷⁶ The exorbitance of these prices led to no end of

¹⁷² "os melhores rostos de São Paulo, as melhores *toilettes*, as melhores joias e os melhores sorrisos." "Chronica," *Cigarra*, Sep 1915, 7.

¹⁷³ "renascimento de sociabilidade fina, essa escola de modos e de maneiras à nossa jeunesse dorée," *Vida Moderna*, Sep 30, 1911, 93.

¹⁷⁴ "Una Causa Celebre," Sociedade Beneficente e Recreativa Fior della Giuventú, flyer, 6 Nov 1909, AHSP PAH 38.

¹⁷⁵ A coachman for the Municipal Depository earned 80\$ per month according to the 1910 Municipal budget, Law 1258 (30 Oct 1909).

¹⁷⁶ Luiz Alonso to Prefect, permit request, 8 Aug 1912, AHSP PAH 81. See Julio Lucchesi Moraes, "São Paulo, Capital Artística: a cafeicultura e as artes na Belle Époque (1906-1922)"

criticism in the literary press. A review in *O Pirralho*, for example, scolded policymakers for promising shows at “popular prices” and offering instead seats at a whopping 18\$.¹⁷⁷ The accusation still rang true in 1915, when *A Cigarra* exclaimed that true art, like all imports, continued to be expensive, “the monopoly of the privileged of fortune.”¹⁷⁸

The Colombo’s pricing was not only more affordable but also smaller in range, and its architecture reflected this relative homogeneity. The plans filed by Pinto recorded 62 boxes, 750 chairs, three benched sections of 216 occupants each, and standing room for 260—a total of 1,968 audience members across only three floors.¹⁷⁹ The Municipal’s spectators were more vertically organized; a complex hierarchy of seats and boxes, including a president’s box, spanned five floors, and a higher portion of auditorium space—about a quarter, in contrast to the Colombo’s sixth—was dedicated to boxes (Image 17).¹⁸⁰ The Municipal also lacked standing room and generally distributed its audiences more comfortably. As the *Cigarra* photo of the Colombo demonstrates, spectators were crammed into the spacious auditorium, with some boxes nearly spilling over with bodies and the 636 ground-floor seats—a third more than at the Municipal—tightly squeezed together (Image 18).¹⁸¹ Still, if seating at this level was cozy, at

(iniciação científica, Universidade de São Paulo, 2007), 179, for an analysis of Teatro Municipal prices and Table AE2 for an extensive list of theater ticket prices

¹⁷⁷ “Mas que injustiça! dirá alguém, pois não houve espetáculos a preços populares? —Sim, é verdade, mas a dezoito mil réis a cadeira...” “Theatros,” *O Pirralho*, Oct 7, 1911, 6-7.

¹⁷⁸ “Infelizmente para os apreciadores do bel-canto, a arte, entre nós, continua a ser um monopólio dos privilegiados da fortuna. Como todo o artigo de importação, a arte no Brasil é cara.” “Chronica,” *Cigarra*, Sep 1915, 7.

¹⁷⁹ Município de São Paulo, *Registro de Alvarás-Licença: Diversas Atividades*, 762: 25, AHSP.

¹⁸⁰ This calculation assumes that the majority of the Municipal’s boxes could seat five, with the exception of two that sat ten. The resulting fraction is thus the number of boxes multiplied by five and divided by the theater’s total capacity.

¹⁸¹ The Colombo’s tight seating was censured in an inspection by municipal engineer José Sá Rocha on July 11, 1917 (AHSP, PAH 254). According to Rocha’s report, the Colombo’s rows were spaced less than the minimum 80cm apart, the chairs had yet to be fixed to the floor, and the aisles were far too narrow.

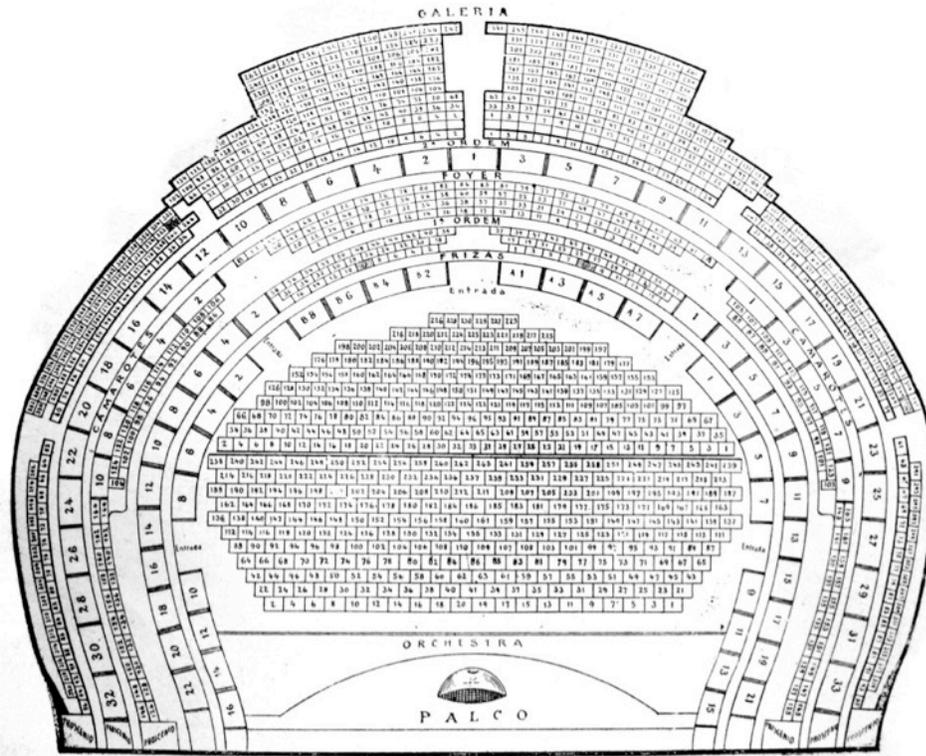


Image 17: Seating chart of the Municipal Theater. In program for Henry Bernstein's *L'assaut*, 22 July 1912, Biblioteca Jenny Klabin Segall.

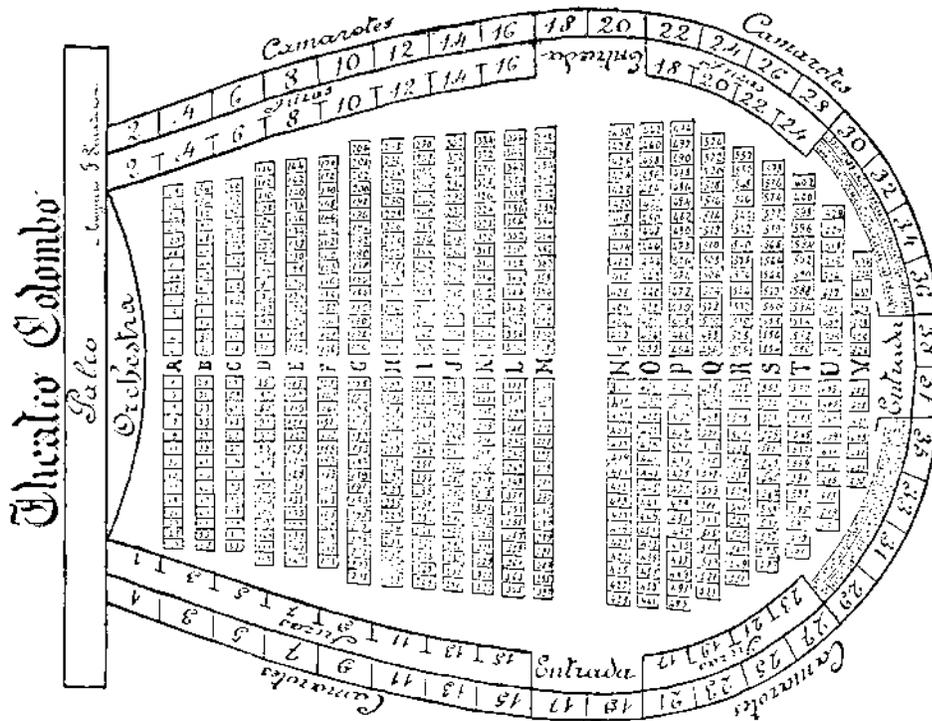


Image 18: Ground floor seating chart of the Colombo Theater. Cinemateca Brasileira, *Salas de cinema em São Paulo: 1895-1929*, <http://www.cinemateca.gov.br>.

least there were chairs with backs to ensure decency and comfort for all theatergoers. Gone was the overcrowded, rowdy, and exclusively masculine pit of the early São José. As reflected in the shifting terms of the English-speaking world at the time, the pit had become the parquet, even in the theaters of Brás.

If the Colombo approached legislators' aspirations for the Municipal in its comfort, safety, and audience composition, its programming was often less agreeable in their content and performance quality. To some extent, this was due to the frequency of Colombo productions organized by anarchist, immigrant, and recreational associations. The lower monetary and bureaucratic costs of renting the Brás hall, like many of the neighborhood's other halls as the chapter to come will show, made the Colombo a particularly appealing space for these organizations. Whereas the Colombo could be leased directly from its contractor, occasionally at a discount, the Municipal required several stamps of approval, each of which came with a fine attached.¹⁸² It is hardly surprising, then, that the Municipal was in most cases rented to elite groups such as the Automobile Club, which in 1914 hosted an invitation-only gala in honor of aviator Eduardo Chaves, or a 1912 carnival committee spearheaded by the "distinguished ladies of São Paulo's highest society."¹⁸³ In contrast, the Colombo was more commonly occupied by middle and working-class Italian amateur troupes known as *filodrammatici*, among them the

¹⁸² For example, Francisco Serrador, one of the Colombo's contractors, offered to cover the permit fee for the Sociedade Dramatica Almeida Farrett's production (Sociedade Dramatica Almeida Farrett to Prefect, permit request, 11 Aug 1908, AHSP PAH 28). By contrast, as one editorial complained, any rising artist interested in arranging a recital at the Municipal Theater had to first surmount all of the "possible and imaginable fees" charged by the Municipal Chamber: the rent, the seal, the professional tax, etc. ("Si pensa em dar um concerto no Municipal, não com fins de lucro, mas apenas para se revelar, a camara cobra-lhe todas as taxas possiveis e imaginaveis: a do aluguel, a do sello, a do imposto profissional, etc." *Cigarra*, June 7, 1915, 41).

¹⁸³ *Correio*, July 24, 1914; "distinctas senhoras de mais alta sociedade Paulistana," B. de Cerqueira Cesar, Antonio Teixeira Leite, Jr., to Prefect, permit request, 21 Dec 1912, AHSP PAH 81.

Centro Dramatico Italiano, Club Filodramatico Dante Alighieri, and the Sociedade Beneficiente e Recreativa Fior della Giuventú.¹⁸⁴ Spanish, Portuguese, and Syrian recreational and mutual aid societies also regularly utilized the Colombo for fundraising, typically in support of an ill member, the victims of a crisis in their homeland, or the establishment of a local school. Befitting such an event, the repertoire usually consisted of melodramas in the group's native language pierced by comedic sketches, children's recitations, and national hymns.

As these performances hint, the difference of producer altered a theater's accessibility not only in terms of ticket and rental costs but also in terms of content. Relatively obscure and often featuring overt tones of labor rights, the plays performed by amateur actors at the Colombo would have never entered the programming organized by the Municipal's seasonal contractors. When they did make their way onto the Municipal stage, as in the case of *O Assalto* in 1918, a different audience was expected; that production's advertisement in the anarchist newspaper *O Combate* indicated a starting price of 1\$100 for admission and specified that the usual dress code would not be in effect.¹⁸⁵ For the most part, however, the Municipal was reserved for the perceived masters of Art, the playwrights, composers, and performers whose work had been blessed and sanctioned by the great European theaters. Verdi's *La Traviata*, Puccini's *La Bohème*, or Rossini's *Barber of Seville* comprised the typical fare of the Municipal in its opening years, and it was not uncommon for the operas to star world-famous singers such as Titta Ruffo, Amelita Galli-Curci, and even, in 1917, Enrico Caruso. Operas were not barred from the Colombo by any means; according to municipal records, 36 operas and 52 operettas were

¹⁸⁴ Permits granted by Prefect in Município de São Paulo, *Alvarás-Licença: Diversas Atividades*, to the Centro Dramatico Italiano (20 Oct 1908), 59; Club Filodramatico Dante Alighieri (10 Dec 1908), 60. Sociedade Beneficiente e Recreativa Fior della Giuventú to Prefect, permit request, 6 Nov 1909, AHSP PAH 38.

¹⁸⁵ *Combate*, Apr 23, 1918.

performed at the Colombo in 1911 alone.¹⁸⁶ Nor were touring companies a rarity, as advertisements in the mainstream press suggest. Still, reviewers in the mainstream press regularly deemed these companies second-rate, the singers' names unrecognized, the scenery and costumes hardly noteworthy. The difference, then, was one of fame and, questionably, quality. There was also the issue of genre. While *verismo* and Romantic operas straddled both the Colombo and Municipal during their first decade, operettas were performed with far less frequency in the latter. Theater and dance were even more segregated. The plays of Alexandre Dumas, fils, never made their way to the Colombo while Spanish *zarzuelas* and circus acts were barred from the Municipal. The grace of Vaslav Nijinsky, Anna Pavlova, and Isadora Duncan was reserved for Municipal spectators, while the Colombo's audiences instead enjoyed tango, polka, and *maxixe*, the latter of which one critic specifically hoped to prohibit from the Municipal.¹⁸⁷

Yet, despite the Municipal's purportedly superior offerings, the pedagogical program that justified the theater's construction was far from successful. As in most theaters around the world, disgruntled spectators were quick to note the distractions of fellow audience members, the attentions paid to their peers rather than to performers. Municipal patrons commonly passed the time spying on fellow spectators through binoculars, admiring the auditorium's décor, chatting

¹⁸⁶ Repartição de Estatística e Archivo de São Paulo, *Anuario estatístico de São Paulo (Brasil), 1911* (São Paulo: Typ. Siqueira, n.d.), 274–275.

¹⁸⁷ “E como na mor parte das vezes teem pouco escrupulo os emprezarios, justo seria que houvesse um poder superior que não auctorisasse a representação das obscenidades que frequentemente vêmos em scena.... Não vamos nós ter um theatro bom como edeficio, para que n'elle se represente quanto maxixe immoral nos apparece, afugentando das casas de espectaculos as pessoas decentes e de bom gosto.” “Actualidades: Arte Dramatica,” *A Noite*, Mar 26, 1898. *Maxixe* is often referred to as Brazilian tango because of its blend of intimate partner dancing of European origin with a bouncier rhythm attributed to Afro-Brazilian influences. *Maxixe* is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

with neighbors, falling in love, and, inevitably, sleeping.¹⁸⁸ Even a Caruso performance was insufficient to absorb the attention of some theatergoers; one wit declared his relief that the renowned tenor had chosen an opera that allowed for casual listening, leaving the spectator's eyes and mind free to roam.¹⁸⁹ The realities of both the Colombo and Municipal, then, accentuate the contradictions and limitations of legislation and its related rhetoric. While, in the end, the municipality was able to restrict programming at the Municipal Theater in order to offer what it considered a moral and aesthetic education, it was at the Colombo that the heterogeneous audiences intended for the Municipal could be found. In this manner, the Municipal ironically failed to accommodate and thus "civilize" the average Paulistano, leaving the task of social transformation, in the eyes of many legislators, at the mercy of a profit-hungry industry. With the Colombo as one of its anchors, that industry would soon come to challenge existing notions of leisure and specifically theaters' social utility, a conflict that we will watch unfold in the dissertation's final three chapters.

Conclusion

If the Municipal Theater did not in practice uplift São Paulo's masses as local legislators at the start of the twentieth century had claimed to desire, the theater did succeed in broadcasting to a much broader audience the city's advancements. Through the dissemination of postcards of the Municipal, through the attention paid to the theater by the press beyond São Paulo State, and through the occupation of the theater's stage by world-famous performers, the Municipal Theater helped to shine a global spotlight on the growing metropolis. This was a spotlight that directed eyes toward not only São Paulo's material progress but also its flourishing culture—or what

¹⁸⁸ "Ha dias, no Municipal," *Cigarra*, Aug 28, 1918, 15.

¹⁸⁹ The opera in question was Donizetti's *Elixir of Love*. "Palcos e Circos," *Estado*, Sep 26, 1917, 6.

legislators were hoping would become a flourishing culture. It was also a spotlight that hid from observing eyes cultural forms that, for the city's leaders, were antithetical to the (European) aesthetics that the majority of elite Paulistanos around 1900 assumed to be universally accepted as cosmopolitan and refined. The qualities of a world-class city, in this sense, necessarily transcended the Palais Garnier-inspired shell of the Municipal Theater; cultural progress was also marked by the progress of a people, by the tastes and manners and ideas of a society. The urban public, as forged within the Municipal Theater, was about more than rationality or the curbing of the crowd: it was about acculturating Paulistanos in the presumed ways of the modern, urban world. While not all Paulistanos agreed with legislators' notion of the modern, urban world, many other groups did articulate a similar faith in culture as a means for social change. In some cases, as the chapter below will illuminate, this shared faith translated into overlapping visions for the urban public. Grounded in familial morality, aesthetics, and sociability, these visions materialized within São Paulo's dozens of associational theaters—a scale that far surpassed the reaches of the Municipal Theater.

Ch. 3 Associational Theaters and Their Plural Publics, 1900-1924

It was March 24, 1923, and the Celso Garcia Hall was once again teeming with restless children, exhausted parents, and bright-eyed young men. The marches and mass meetings of the late 1910s had all but disappeared, as had the rowdier crowds of the previous month's Carnival, but São Paulo's working class was still abuzz. That night, members of the Café Employees' Union and their families gathered for a somewhat more contained soiree, traveling by streetcar or foot to the modest auditorium of the Laboring Classes Association (*Associação das Classes Laboriosas*), a mere block from the city's historic heart. Publicized as an indoor "festival," the evening featured an assortment of games and drinks, a family dance, amateur variety acts, and the premiere of a three-act drama performed by men and women of the May 1st Dramatic Group (*Grupo Dramático 1º de Maio*).¹

The play, *The Anarchists* (*Os libertarios*), had been written by Felipe Gil, a local affiliate of the play's eponymous group who was also known among unionists by his last names, Souza Passos.² A server by trade, Souza Passos directed and contributed to the periodical of the Café Employees' Union, *The Voice of the Union* (*Voz da União*), and it was probably he who crafted the paper's review of the union's festival. Published a week after the event, the review noted that Gil's play had "provoked general contentment among the laborers," but criticized its interpreters for their rushed pronunciation and vague expression.³ Even more worrying to the columnist was the evening's failure to produce a coherent program, a common and

¹ "Festival União dos Empregados em Cafés," *Voz da União*, March 1, 1923.

² Antonio Arnoni Prado and Francisco Foot Hardman, eds., *Contos anarquistas: antologia da prosa libertária no Brasil, 1901-1935* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985), 131. In Portuguese, as in Spanish, the term "libertário" (literally, "libertarian") was used interchangeably with "anarchist."

³ "provocou agrado geral entre os trabalhadores," "O festival da 'União,'" *Voz da União*, April 1, 1923.

comprehensible message in “harmony with the criteria of our ideas.” To rectify this shortcoming, the reviewer called on his comrades to dedicate themselves to the creation of an “art genuinely ours,” an art that would “do justice to our conscience as anarchists.”⁴

While few anarchists were as critical as Souza Passos of aesthetic quality, he was far from alone in his search for an art organic to and emblematic of his cause. By 1923, festivals hosted by groups such as the Café Employees’ Union were frequent events in São Paulo’s theaters and had been for two decades. Organized around occupational, political, national, racial, or recreational affiliations, the city’s associations formed a counterpart to the nightlife of the Municipal Theater, a constellation of social spaces and activity that spanned the entire city and its inhabitants. Many groups rented the same theaters, hired the same performers, commissioned similar repertoire, and occasionally collaborated on the same event. Moreover, in organizing theatrical soirees—or *festas*, as they were typically called—their most urgent objective was largely the same: to raise funds, usually to support schools or the families of imprisoned or deceased members. It was for the latter reason, to aid the bereaving widow and daughter of former member Ricardo Cipolla, that the Café Employees’ Union gathered in the Celso Garcia that March night.⁵

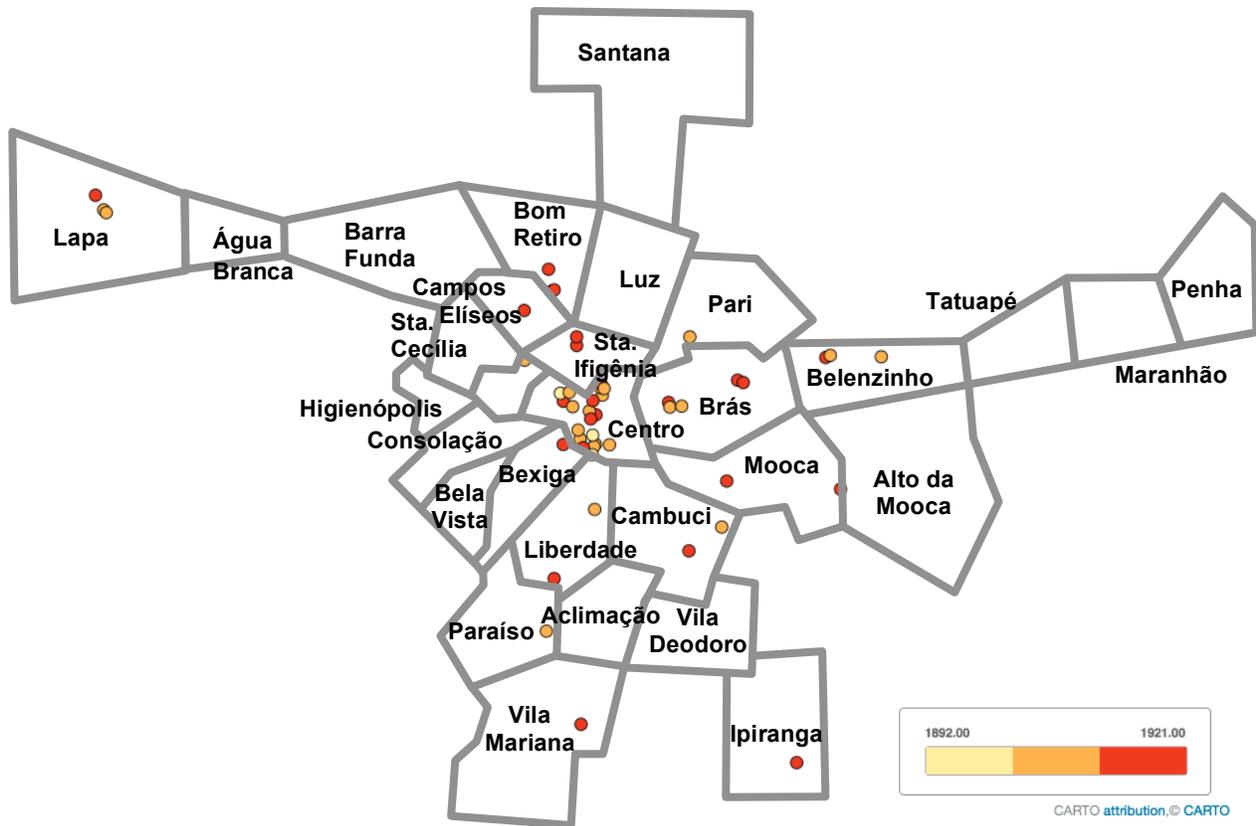
Despite the parallel in purpose and program with those of other Paulistano associations, the café workers’ festival was, at the end of the day, centered around its participants’ occupational identity. It was the Café Employees’ Union that had produced the event, and it was primarily its membership that consumed the evening’s entertainment. Unlike the São José or Municipal Theaters, where spectators sometimes shared little in common beyond their ability to

⁴ “harmonia no criterio das nossas idéas... arte genuinamente nossa... fazendo jús a nossa consciencia de libertarios,” “O festival da ‘União,’” *Voz da União*, April 1, 1923.

⁵ “Festival União dos Empregados em Cafés,” *Voz da União*, March 1, 1923.

purchase admission, associational theaters—the large halls in which non-profit groups mounted *festas* and other performances—enabled the creation of more specifically categorized audiences. Every theater and every event was an opportunity for organizers to forge a community, a unique public with its own set of ideas, practices, and people. In this sense, associational theaters shattered legislators’ visions of a standardized urban public, a citywide public stratified according to lawmakers’ understanding of cultural hierarchy. The nascent metropolis may have brought together thousands of men, women, and children, but neither geographic proximity nor municipal attempts at cultural education, as we saw in the case of the Municipal Theater, were sufficient adhesives.

This chapter examines the fractured reality of Paulistano society through the lens of associational theaters, unpacking the roles that these new spaces played and were perceived to play in the formation of an urban multiplicity. Some of these halls doubled as venues for commercial entertainment, while others were almost exclusively utilized by a variety of organizations. Between 1900 and 1924, approximately fifty of the latter auditoriums were established throughout São Paulo’s neighborhoods, with the vast majority opening their doors during the century’s first decade (Map 9). These sites, I argue in the pages below, enabled a broad spectrum of São Paulo’s residents not only to contribute to the city’s cultural production but, moreover, to rethink and redefine the axes around which Paulistanos participated in secular public life. In other words, as São Paulo’s population swelled at the turn of the century, associational leaders utilized the city’s theaters to encourage men, women, and children to leave the home and experience public life within the framework of a common culture. For some organizers, this entailed the production of a program as ideologically and aesthetically coherent as that advocated by Souza Passos. For others, it meant fostering a sociability that reflected and



Map 9: Associational theaters (1900-1924) according to year in which inaugurated. Yellow indicates theaters established before 1897; orange, 1897-1906; red, 1907-1921. As the map demonstrates, the first few years of the twentieth century witnessed the most intense development of associational theaters in São Paulo. Choropleth equal values map generated in CartoDB. Interactive map can be accessed at https://aialalevy.carto.com/viz/b2d5c230-503d-11e6-a2b4-0e3ebc282e83/public_map.

reinforced the values and traditions of a particular social group. For most, the participation of public life within a community also implied the tempering of attendees’ immoral and irrational tendencies. Theaters were in this sense perceived by associational leaders to be crucial spaces for developing the individual’s propriety and intelligence, as well as, especially for anarchists, creativity and self-worth—the latter two being the primary motivations behind Souza Passos’s censure of anarchism’s lacking aesthetics.

Along with Souza Passos, the protagonists of this chapter were members of what both they and legislators called the “popular sectors.” These were São Paulo’s new masses, men and

women of modest or middling means and often foreign birth. Yet, as this chapter shows, the masses were by no means a single, lumped mass, perfectly smoothed and ready for molding. Moreover, their classification as “popular” rather than “elite” did not imply a radically different agenda when it came to leisure and the regulation of public life. Indeed, what Margareth Rago has called the “business of moralization” was hardly the exclusive command of lawmakers and industrialists, nor did it only commence in the 1920s.⁶ As we saw in the previous chapter, the notion that leisure could and should be productive was central to legislators’ arguments for a municipally funded theater at the turn of the century. While working Paulistanos pinned leisure to the clock, defining it as the time between work and sleep, many agreed that these hours should be spent in uplifting spirits and minds. São Paulo’s growing number of theaters allowed associational leaders to offer on a large scale a reformed leisure, a moral or otherwise fulfilling alternative to what they too perceived as the corrupting temptations of urban life. In creating a public space for productive leisure, São Paulo’s associations also created a space in which women and children could participate in the city’s public life. As this and the following chapter will demonstrate, no longer would the thinking, urban public be confined to grown, white men, nor would its advancement be directed by the city’s religious or elite institutions and confined to the city’s center.

The creation of an alternative world of leisure by Brazil’s working classes has been the subject of academic inquiry since, arguably, the 1983 publication of Francisco Foot Hardman’s *Nem pátria, nem patrão!*⁷ With a few exceptions, labor historians have since followed in Foot Hardman’s footsteps, seeking to understand the overlap between political and cultural practices

⁶ “empresa de moralização,” Margareth Rago, *Do Cabaré ao Lar: A Utopia da Cidade Disciplinar, Brasil 1890-1930* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1985), 12.

⁷ Francisco Foot Hardman, *Nem pátria, nem patrão!: vida operária e cultura anarquista no Brasil*, 3rd ed. (São Paulo: UNESP, 2002).

while carefully distinguishing between leaders and followers.⁸ For the scholar of labor, in other words, leisure was another form of political organizing, another means by which to gain (and for the historian to assess the extent of) political agency and forge a “counterpublic” to the Habermasian bourgeois and literate public sphere.⁹ Yet, as I argue in this chapter, more than a political voice, popular associations offered many Paulistanos for the first time a public voice and an accessible space in which to develop it.¹⁰ Whether or not their end goal was political change, women, children, and men emerged from their homes and intermingled as spectators and

⁸ See, for example, Angelo Trento, “Organização Operária e Organização do Tempo Livre entre os Imigrantes Italianos em São Paulo (1889-1945),” in *História do Trabalho e Histórias da Imigração*, ed. Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, et al. (Sao Paulo: EDUSP, 2010), 233–66; Uassyr de Siqueira, “Clubes recreativos: Organização para o lazer,” in *Trabalhadores na cidade: cotidiano e cultura no Rio de Janeiro e em São Paulo, séculos XIX e XX*, ed. Elciene Azevedo et al. (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 2009), 271–312; and, most recently, Leonardo Affonso de Miranda Pereira, “Anjos da Meia Noite: Work, Leisure and Rights in the Rio de Janeiro of the First Republic,” *Revista Tempo* 19, no. 35 (December 2013): 97–116. Outside of Brazilian history, a seminal text for anarchism is Juan Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia: Anarchist Culture and Politics in Buenos Aires, 1890-1910*, trans. Chuck Morse (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2010). Emilio Franzina, on the other hand, uses working-class leisure to understand the connections and migration patterns between Argentina and Brazil in “Festas Proletárias, Imigração Italiana e Movimento Operário na Argentina e Brasil entre os Séculos XIX e XX,” in *História do Trabalho*, ed. Carneiro et al., 205–31.

⁹ It is specifically in this capacity—that is, by examining the power structures and objectives, but less so the actual leisure activities, of relevant groups—that labor historians not primarily concerned with leisure have incorporated working-class cultural practices. See Luigi Biondi, *Classe e nação: trabalhadores e socialistas italianos em São Paulo, 1890-1920* (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 2012); Edilene Toledo, *Travessias revolucionárias: idéias e militantes sindicalistas em São Paulo e na Itália (1890-1945)* (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 2004). For a deeper debate on Jürgen Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962) and alternatives to his “public sphere,” see Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 209–142..

¹⁰ The relation between urban space and working-class culture is the subject of Claudio Batalha’s “A geografia associativa: Associações operárias, protesto e espaço urbano no Rio de Janeiro da Primeira República,” in *Trabalhadores na cidade*, ed. Azevedo et al., 251–69, as well as Maria Thereza Vargas’s *Teatro operário na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, Idart, 1980). Interestingly, while Batalha argues that Rio’s workers claimed the city’s center as a political space, Vargas stresses the geographic marginality of São Paulo’s labor theater.

even performers, all within a setting deemed respectable by organizers. On one hand, then, theater events helped enable otherwise marginalized Paulistanos to be viewed as true members of urban society through their participation in the urban public. On the other hand, associational theaters illuminate just how fractured that public was, and, as Chapter 7 will further demonstrate, how fractured it was increasingly perceived to be. While both associational leaders and legislators perceived culture as the means and theaters as the space in which to shape a quickly changing Paulistano society, working-class, and especially immigrant, leisure renders in stark relief how projects such as the Municipal Theater failed to do so on a citywide scale. Instead, it was “popular” organizers who, with minimal government intervention, gathered and divided the city’s new masses into distinct communities, who relied on a range of cultural practices to stress social difference, integration, or a bit of both.

A typology of those communities structures the remainder of this chapter. In the first section, we will explore how the fundraising activities that took place in associational theaters helped forge a community of benefactors, a group financially committed to a common cause. The second section turns to the city’s expanding neighborhoods and the ways in which associations used theaters in the *bairros*—those neighborhoods within São Paulo’s urban limits but beyond the historic center—to construct a community of neighbors. In immigrant São Paulo, neighborhood ties often coincided with national ties, another axis around which associational audiences were gathered and the subject of the third section. At the same time, as the chapter’s fourth part explains, some organizations worked to overcome such national divides, which often were also racially defined, by stressing participants’ shared identity as laborers. Still other associations emphasized the commonalities of all Paulistanos as thinking human beings, and the tension between group activity and individual self-development is unpacked in the final section.

In all of these ways, associational leaders brought together Paulistanos under different but also frequently overlapping umbrellas. A single person might belong to or participate in the activities of several groups, and a single group might make claims to multiple categories of identity. When mapped onto the city's theaterscape, these borders become even fuzzier: the same theater could one day house a classical music society, the next week an Italian mutual aid society, and the following month an anarchist *festa*.¹¹

To understand the multiplicity and fluidity of the publics shaped within associational theaters, I rely on a range of primary and secondary sources. Unlike São Paulo's lawmakers, the city's popular associations left few records of their decision making. While a number of local editorials, like that of Souza Passos, and circulating seminal texts are suggestive of the motivations behind the activities of associational theaters, more often than not, such information must be gleaned from the activities themselves. My methodology therefore combines an analysis of published ideas with that of petitions for municipal performance permits and tax exemptions, memoirs, relevant songs and plays, and advertisements and reviews from labor periodicals spanning the linguistic, occupational, and political spectrum. I also read the spaces themselves for clues as to their intended and actual use, and for this I depend on photographs, construction plans and permits, and the scrupulous work of theater and film historians. From these sources emerges the story of São Paulo's vibrant associational theaters, which, despite the funds and labor needed to sustain them, did succeed in thriving and shaping the ways in which the entire gamut of Paulistanos participated in public life.

¹¹ This was, with no exaggeration, the case of the downtown recital hall known at different moments as the Steinway, the Ibach, and the Carlos Gomes. The first two names refer to the most prized piano brands available in São Paulo, while the last belongs to Brazil's most famous composer at the time.

Benefactors

When men, women, and children came together in the Celso Garcia that March night in 1923, their social boundary was clear: if spectators varied in age, gender, and nationality, they all could claim some sort of affiliation with the Café Employees' Union. If nothing else, *festas* and other theater events were a means for São Paulo's many associations to congregate constituents and perhaps attract recruits. Even if an event was open to the general public, the activities of associational theaters by definition revolved around and were circumscribed by the mission and membership of the organizing group. By purchasing a ticket, then, attendees were literally buying into this mission, or at least tacitly supporting the evening's objectives. Ticketholders, in other words, were more than merely spectators: they were members of a community of benefactors. In this sense, associational theaters were the early twentieth century's equivalent of crowdfunding, a platform for uniting urban dwellers around a single purpose and with the expectation of a reward in return for financial support.

Instead of imploring emails, Paulistanos were bombarded with flyers and assertive headlines in the working-class press: "Pro scuola libertaria Germinal" (in Italian, Benefiting the Germinal Anarchist School), "Pró Mártires da Russia" (Benefiting the Russian Martyrs), "Festival pró 'Alba Rossa'" (Festival Benefiting *Alba Rossa*, an anarchist weekly).¹² As the headlines suggest, the causes that brought audiences together were at least as varying as the organizations themselves. On some occasions, funds were accrued for an educational center such as an anarchist library, an acting school, or a school for children of Syrian immigrants.¹³ In

¹² "Pro scuola libertaria Germinal," *Battaglia*, Sep 11, 1904; "Pró Mártires da Russia," *Amigo* Aug 6, 1904; "Festival pró 'Alba Rossa,'" *Plebe*, Sep 19, 1919.

¹³ "Grande festival," *Voz da União*, Oct 13, 1922; Sociedades Dramaticas Romanticismo e Stella d'Italia to Prefect, 3 Sep 1908, AHSP PAH, caixa 28; Salim Salomão (Sociedade Syria

this manner, the fundraising event might have helped establish a long-term community that was dedicated to the institution's creation and potentially sought to benefit from its establishment. On other occasions, the night's proceeds benefited a less enduring issue: a botched revolution across the Atlantic or a struggling periodical right at home.¹⁴

Perhaps the most common fundraising cause around which associations rallied in theaters was the assistance of injured members or the families of imprisoned or deceased members, as we saw in the case of the Café Employees' Union. Such a purpose served to not only bring together Paulistanos in commemoration of an individual, but also to remind audiences that they, too, could benefit from membership should a similar tragedy someday befall them. Paying for admission was in this manner an investment in one's own future, a contribution to a (less than reliable) security fund. Indeed, as we shall see below, several groups that made use of the city's theaters were mutual aid associations and many more cited mutual aid as a secondary concern. In serving that end, the organizations that raised funds in São Paulo's theaters functioned as secular, or at least nondenominational, equivalents to local confraternities and religious charities.

Why did Paulistanos turn to theaters for raising the funds necessary to support such aims? After all, these spaces were hardly free of cost, nor was organizing an event without its burdens. Performers had to be hired, or, if amateur, at least scheduled and hydrated; budgets published in *Alba Rossa* indicated that the latter alone could add 4\$-7\$ for a small band, on top of the 40\$-

Mocidade de Homcié) to Prefect, 6 Oct 1911, 9 September 1912, and 18 Feb 1913, AHSP PAH, caixas 68, 81, and 107.

¹⁴ For example, the Grupo Filodramático Libertario's performance on April 30, 1906, raised funds for Russian "revolutionaries" (*Battaglia*, April 22, 1906), while the group La Propaganda's show exactly a year later aimed to support the publication of *Terra* and a series of pamphlets ("Festa Libertária," *Terra*, April 15, 1907).

70\$ already spent on the band's remuneration.¹⁵ More elaborate productions additionally demanded props, backdrops, and costumes, and prizes had to be acquired if the performance was accompanied by a raffle, auction, or carnival games. There were also the costs associated with printing raffle, lottery, game, and admission tickets, as well as printing flyers and posters to advertise the event. Advertising an event came with its own set of municipal fees after 1904, and beginning in 1914, the municipality levied an additional tax on advertisements in a foreign language.¹⁶ Finally, before exemptions were granted in 1905 to fundraisers for "establishments offering charity or free education, or for aiding the victims of any disaster or misfortune," all theater organizers were required to pay an event tax that varied according to the type of entertainment offered.¹⁷ Given such expenses, it was no wonder that many evenings ended in the red. Even reports of high earnings, such as the 173\$200 netted by the Youth of the Future Center (Centro Juventude do Futuro), belied the extent of the association's spending—in the Center's case, 397\$900, or about half of what a textile worker earned in an entire year.¹⁸

Still, theaters had their benefits, and most halls were within organizing groups' budgets.

The variety of spaces in São Paulo, especially by 1910, meant that nightly theater rentals could

¹⁵ "Festa de 4 de Novembro," *Alba*, May 1, 1921; "Resultado do Festival 'Pro Alba Rossa,'" *Alba*, Jan 22, 1921.

¹⁶ Municipal Law 790 (17 Nov 1904), Art. 22; Municipal Law 1,826 (27 Oct 1914).

¹⁷ The event tax, or operating license, could cost anywhere from 10\$ for an acrobatic act at a pub to 100\$ for a full-scale opera—balls, magic shows, and bullfights fell in between (Municipal Law 493, 26 Oct 1900, Art. 35). In 1904, the municipality acknowledged the harsh fiscal reality of the city's associational theaters and lowered the tax for events in such spaces to a flat 10\$ per performance or 100\$ per trimester (Municipal Law 790, 17 Nov 1904, Art 21). The exemption for charity events ("os espectaculos e festejos que se realizarem em beneficio de estabelecimentos de beneficencia ou instrucção gratuita, ou como auxilio ás victimas de alguma calamidade ou desgraça") was established under Municipal Law 862 (19 Nov 1905), Act 23. To this list were added in 1914 lectures and any diversion in a non-profit venue ("Conferencias literarias, scientificas, ou de qualquer outra natureza," Municipal Act 701, 11 July 1914, Art. 8). Government fees for operating theaters are addressed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

¹⁸ "Balancete do festival pró-'A Plebe', realizado a 29 de janeiro," *Plebe*, Feb 19, 1921.

start as low as 90\$—the cost of a box at the Municipal Theater—for the Teatro Real (Royal Theater) in 1920 and reach as high as 250\$ for the more spacious Celso Garcia in 1921.¹⁹ Some associations, like the Club Germânia and the Luso-Brazilian Dramatic and Musical Society (Grêmio Dramático e Musical Luso-Brasileiro), were even able to construct or purchase their own auditoriums, thereby also generating revenue from the space's rental. In exchange, organizations received a site whose four walls at least momentarily demarcated a particular community, with the theater's entrance functioning as a filter when necessary. If the Celso Garcia and the majority of halls used by the city's groups could boast no more than a shallow stage with a few backdrop screens, no stage wings, and no dressing rooms, it at least had a stage, a roof, four walls, and room for an audience—enough for an event featuring an orator, a band, and perhaps even a choir.²⁰ Walls and a roof likewise enabled *festas* to last well into the wee hours of the morning, and protected participants, instruments, scenery, and equipment from São Paulo's summer rains, chilly winter nights, and suspicious policemen. The Celso Garcia also had chairs, which allowed spectators to at minimum tolerate all of these entertainments in a single evening. Theater *festas* thus developed the notion of a program, with each community type boasting a fixed set of performance formats that, in some cases, rivaled the Catholic mass in its standardization and length. In all of these ways, São Paulo's halls were particularly useful spaces for enabling on a mass scale face-to-face interactions—whether between performers and spectators or among audience members—that fostered associational ties.

That scale also meant that each attendee could pay a minimal amount for admission while their collective contribution still generated earnings. Hosting groups, after all, relied on their

¹⁹ *Plebe*, June 5, 1920; Jan 22, 1921. The Municipal box was for a performance of Anna Pavlova's dance company (advertisement, *Combate*, May 28, 1918).

²⁰ Vargas, *Teatro operário*, 23.

members' collective largesse; in most instances, no single affiliate could afford to bankroll an event or float the association during hard times. Attracting a sizable audience was therefore essential, and a low cost of admission helped make that possible. Entry to the 1909 Social Studies Center (Centro de Estudos Sociaes) soiree, for example, cost between 1\$ and 3\$ per person depending on the participant's location—well below the expense of attending the Municipal, if not necessarily that of the city's more popular theaters.²¹ This relatively wide range of ticket prices reflected the variety of seating options at the Center's chosen theater, the Polytheama. More commonly rented by commercial performance companies, including that of Sarah Bernhardt in 1905, the Polytheama's hierarchical seating arrangement, as we shall see in Chapter 6, was designed to maximize profits.²² *Festas* at single-tiered auditoriums like the Alhambra or the Carlos Gomes, on the other hand, typically charged a flat fare of 1\$.²³ Their stackable and somewhat less comfortable chairs were of equal value, but more could always be squeezed in to allow for a greater number of spectators and thus greater revenue. Whether single or multi-tiered, theaters thus functioned as the collective pots into which attendees deposited their support.

Neighbors

For what purpose, however, did those benefactors come together? One relevant reason at the turn of the twentieth century was residential proximity, that is, audiences' shared belonging to a particular neighborhood. As foreigners and Brazilians flocked to the city and rural areas were filled and given life, the distinction between *centro* (center) and *bairro* (neighborhood) was

²¹ Flyer, Centro de Estudos Sociaes, AHSP PAH, caixa 38.

²² State Chief of Police Augusto de Meirelles to Cesare Ciacchi, performance license, 10 Oct 1905, APESP caixa E01622 doc 34.

²³ "Em beneficio do grupo La Propaganda," *Battaglia*, July 8, 1906; "Grande soirée familiare," *Battaglia*, Sep 11, 1904.

increasingly articulated by Paulistanos.²⁴ The majority of those that fell under the latter category were working and middle-class areas, including Vila Mariana, Cambuci, and Ipiranga to the south; Belenzinho and Moóca to the east; Bom Retiro, Barra Funda, and Santana to the north; and Lapa, Perdizes, and Vila Pompeia to the west (Map 9).²⁵ *Bairros* were the subunits by which Paulistanos identified, and theaters, along with churches and plazas, served as key landmarks that differentiated one *bairro* from another. This link between neighborhood and theater was in several cases reflected in the auditorium's name, as in the cases of the Cinema Belém in Belenzinho and the Cambuci Theater or the halls of the Social Study Group of Bom Retiro (in Italian, Grupo de Studi Sociali do Bom Retiro) and the Dramatic Guild of Lapa (Grêmio Dramático da Lapa).

Most of the neighborhoods above sprang up around railroad tracks and the manufactories that took advantage of these pipelines between hinterland and entrepôt. The availability of jobs and relatively cheap real estate drew families, as well as single men and women, to São Paulo's outskirts, which by the mid 1910s was connected to the city through electric streetcars and

²⁴ This distinction is also raised in Maria Thereza Vargas's *Teatro operário*, where she describes labor theater and for-profit theater as “two worlds diametrically opposed” (“dois mundos diametralmente opostos”) not only in terms of function and content, but also with respect to their spatial situation within the city (Vargas 7, 14). However, while it is true that few amateur troupes linked to the labor movement performed within the city center, the geographic polarity Vargas invokes was blurred over time as cinemas and large performance spaces developed a significant presence in São Paulo's *bairros* as well.

²⁵ Vila Mariana, Belenzinho, and Santana, along with Brás, were already considered municipal districts (*districtos de paz*) by the state in 1901; Cambuci was added in 1906; Bom Retiro, Lapa, and Moóca joined the pack by 1912; Ipiranga was on the list in 1919; and Perdizes finally made it in 1920. See Repartição de Estatística e Archivo de São Paulo, *Anuario estatístico de São Paulo, 1901* (São Paulo: Typ. do Diario Official, 1904); *Anuario estatístico de São Paulo (Brasil), 1906* (São Paulo: Typ. Espindola & Comp., 1908); *Anuario estatístico de São Paulo (Brasil), 1912* (São Paulo: Typ. do Diario Official, 1914); *Anuario estatístico de São Paulo (Brasil), 1919*, vol. 1, Movimento da população estatística moral (São Paulo: Typ. Piratininga, 1923); and *Anuario estatístico de São Paulo (Brasil), 1920*, vol. 1, Movimento da população estatística moral (São Paulo: Typ. Piratininga, 1923).

cobbled roads. If the São Paulo Light and Power Company was eager to extend its electric tentacles, other services were often lacking in peripheral *bairros*. Lapa, which hung to the city by the bare thread of the São Paulo Railway, was one such area in 1909, when a local drama group proposed raising funds for the establishment of a neighborhood elementary school.²⁶ Also along the São Paulo Railway track, but on the opposite end of the city, was Ipiranga, which sprouted around the Museu Paulista, the Bom Pastor Asylum, a handful of manufactories, and the streetcar line that connected the otherwise isolated *bairro* to downtown (Image 19). Here, the Ipiranga Center (Centro Ipiranga), founded in 1910, operated day and night schools that served approximately 100 students from the area and, on weekends, screened films to raise funds and offer recreation.²⁷ Whether they established their own auditoriums or utilized those already



Image 19: The still semirural neighborhood of Ipiranga, ca. 1920. Photograph, Eletricidade de São Paulo S.A, *A Cidade da Light, 1899-1930 = The city of the Light Company, 1899-1930: edição bilingüe português-inglês comemorativa dos 5,000,000 de ligações*, vol. 1 (São Paulo: ELECTROPAULO, 1990), 205.

²⁶ Giovanni Gallo to Prefect, 9 Feb 1909, AHSP PAH, caixa 38.

²⁷ José Inácio de Melo Souza, "Centro Ipiranga," *Salas de cinema de São Paulo: Inventário dos espaços de sociabilidade cinematográfica da cidade de São Paulo (1895-1929)*, 2009, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/bases/cine.htm>.

in existence, associations seeking to fill their *bairro*'s infrastructural vacuum turned to theaters as spaces in which to bring together neighbors for the sake of local improvements.

While, in developing regions, the neighborhood theater was among the few spaces available for residents to congregate by the dozens, and typically the only indoor and secular space for doing so, theaters functioned as important centers for the *bairro*'s public life even in neighborhoods that had long comprised the urban core. Among the latter, and most significant for lower-income Paulistanos, were Brás and Bexiga. The flatlands of Brás, as we saw in Chapter 2, had attracted workshops and then factories since the mid nineteenth century, earning the reputation of São Paulo's first industrial zone (Image 20). Housing approximately a third of the urban population in 1910, Brás appeared to be, to quote an *Estado* reporter writing in 1919, "a different city, like another people and another life."²⁸ This difference was especially striking on Sundays, when, in contrast to the silent streets of São Paulo's other neighborhoods, men, women, and, "above all, children in incalculable numbers" flooded the shared spaces of Brás. They were packing parks and plazas like the Largo de Concórdia, cheering on or more solemnly accompanying religious processions, and flocking to churches, eateries, and bars as well as theaters. By 1925, this "checkerboard of races and peoples" was, in the words of mason-turned-journalist Sylvio Floreal, "an amphitheater in combustion" in which industrialists apathetically rubbed elbows with beggars while the "strident" sounds of the crowd "chloroform[ed] the ears and drill[ed] into the nerves."²⁹

²⁸ "parece outra cidade, como outra gente e outra vida... crianças, sobretudo crianças em número incalculável," P., "O Brás," *Estado*, Jan 28, 1919, 5.

²⁹ "xadrez de raças e povos... estridente que cloroformiza os ouvidos e verruma os nervos." Sylvio Floreal, *Ronda da meia-noite: vícios, misérias e esplendores da cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2002), 25–26.



Image 20: The cobbled, tree-lined, and occupied streets of Brás at the intersection of Av. Rangel Pestana and Rua Piratininga in 1911. A billboard on the right side of the avenue marks a modest cinema, most likely the Cinema Popular. Taken by the Light and Power Company, the photograph deemphasizes human presence in order to capture the installation of an electric streetcar track, also prominently displaying the neighborhood's power lines and utility poles. Photograph, *A Cidade da Light*, 223.

If Brás acquired the reputation of a chaotic, crowded, immigrant district, it was hardly alone in impressing on outside observers the sensation of stumbling upon a different world. Bexiga, situated southwest of the Triângulo, likewise acquired a “popular” identity at century’s end as wealthier residents migrated to higher and presumably healthier lands in Higienópolis and along the new Avenida Paulista (Image 21).³⁰ Many of those residents left behind were Afro-Brazilian; during the mid-nineteenth century, before being swallowed by the growing city, the

³⁰ Siqueira, “Clubes recreativos,” 289.



Image 21: Rua Manuel Dutra, Bexiga's undulating and less verdant east-west thoroughfare, in 1920. Photograph, AHSP Dicionário de Ruas.

steep hillsides of Bexiga had served as an ideal site of refuge for runaway slaves.³¹ Those same hills later impeded the encroachment of trains and factories into the neighborhood, leaving much of Bexiga residential and at the mercy of slum lords. Afro-Paulistanos, Italians, and other immigrants squeezed into available lots and tenements (*cortiços*), transforming Bexiga into one of São Paulo's densest *bairros*. With no parks, it was in Bexiga's churches, streets, and dance halls that a small Afro-Paulistano music scene began to develop.

The Bexiga resident Haim Grunspun recalls in his memoirs that, by 1920, the *bairro's* religious processions, fairs, and services were competing with theaters and dancehalls (*gafieiras*)

³¹ José Geraldo Vinci de Moraes, *As sonoridades paulistanas: a música popular na cidade de São Paulo, final do século XIX ao início do século XX* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1997), 64.

as the neighborhood's "pulse and perhaps sensation of how to live as people."³² Indeed, as Grunspun remembers and the more patronizing *O Estado de São Paulo* confirmed, the absence of parks and recreational centers in his neighborhood left only a few possibilities for mass gatherings: streets, churches, and privately owned theaters.³³ The centrality of these theaters' role in the public life of the *bairro* is difficult to overlook in the accounts of another memoirist, Jacob Penteadó, who writes of his childhood in Belenzinho. For Penteadó, the 1911 inauguration of the Belém, which hosted films and amateur performances, was a "sensational event."³⁴ As the area's only entertainment hall, it continued to draw crowds through the 1910s, uniting the neighborhood on a regular basis and defining its public in terms of a geographic community.

Compatriots

Neighborhood was not the only form of geographic community forged within São Paulo's associational theaters. Immigrant networks had in many areas established settlement patterns that connected a *bairro* or its segment to a particular nationality. This fracturing along ethnic and national lines created by 1929 what the writer Guilherme de Almeida called a "cosmopolis," a city of many worlds.³⁵ These worlds were reflected in São Paulo's theaterscape. The Turnerschaft, a German theater, sat across a Protestant church in the nationally diverse

³² "centro da... vibração e talvez sensação de viver como gente." Haim Grunspun, *Anatomia de um Bairro – O Bexiga* (São Paulo: Livraria Cultura, 1979), 102.

³³ Grunspun, *Bexiga*, 19, 25, 102. *O Estado de São Paulo* insisted that, given the lack of public spaces, the "active and laborious" ("ativa e laboriosa") inhabitants of Bexiga deserved the municipality's support in the form of public parks, including gazebos for outdoor concerts (P., "Coisas da Cidade: O Bexiga," *Estado*, Aug 15, 1919).

³⁴ "acontecimento sensacional," Jacob Penteadó, *Belenzinho, 1910: retrato de uma época* (São Paulo: Martins, 1962), 189, 195.

³⁵ Guilherme de Almeida, *Cosmópolis: São Paulo/29, oito reportagens* (São Paulo: Companhia, Editora Nacional, 1962), 32.

neighborhood of Bom Retiro, which additionally housed the Germânia Brewery and, in Almeida's words, bar after bar overflowing with beer and pianos.³⁶ Bom Retiro was also home to Portuguese and native Brazilian members of São Paulo's middling classes, and their shops and small manufactories lined Rua da Graça on either side of the theater of the Luso-Brazilian Dramatic and Musical Society. On the other end of town, the hall of the Loyal Oberdan Society (in Italian, Società Leale Oberdan), whose name honored one of the "martyrs" of Italian unification, was situated in Brás, the district that first earned the reputation of São Paulo's equivalent to New York's Little Italy.³⁷ Brás also featured the highest concentration of Spanish immigrants, whose Spanish Federation (Federação Espanhol) and Spanish School (Liceo Español) likewise boasted auditoriums that were commonly used for working-class performances.³⁸ As immigrants settled in new *bairros* such as Alto da Moóca, nationally or ethnically defined associations like the Sociedade Italiana soon followed with their theaters, often opening the first public halls in these neighborhoods.

In a city of immigrants, nationality thus competed and overlapped with neighborhood affiliation in defining the communities within which working Paulistanos participated in public life. While only a few theaters catered exclusively to a single immigrant group, dozens of the associations that used these spaces did restrict their membership along national or linguistic lines. Such a restriction generally reflected the mission of these groups, which built on existing immigrant ties to function as communal savings accounts, in this manner offering a safety net for those still without deep roots or purses. The Ettore Fieramosca Italian Mutual Aid Society

³⁶ "Festa pró Escola Moderna," *Lanterna*, April 2, 1910; Hilário Dertônio, *O Bairro do Bom Retiro*, História dos Bairros (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura/PMSP, 1971), 12.

³⁷ Vargas, *Teatro operário*, 23. This reference also frequently appears in *A Lanterna* and *A Plebe*.

³⁸ Demographics based on birth statistics in *Anuario Estatístico de São Paulo*, 1901, 136, and 1906, 68.

(Sociedade Italiana de Beneficencia Ettore Fieramosca), for example, made use of the Salão Carlos Gomes to raise funds for an ailing member, while the Dante Alighieri Society (Sociedade Dante Alighieri) organized a performance to support the construction of an Italian children's asylum.³⁹ Educational institutions for specific immigrant communities were also frequent recipients of funds raised in São Paulo's theaters. Groups such as the German School Association (Associação Escola Allemã) and the Youth of Homs (Mocidade de Homicié) hosted soirees in the downtown Santana Theater and the Colombo, respectively, appealing to their compatriots from across São Paulo by means of language-specific presses and networks.⁴⁰

Both the beneficiaries of theater *festas* and the events themselves served to promote a constituency's cultural traditions. Among these was a rich repertoire of theater, dance, and music, including Spanish *zarzuelas* and *sainetes* and Italian operettas and short plays. The latter were performed by *gruppos filodrammatici*, or *grupos filodramáticos* as they came to be known in Portuguese, amateur theater groups with a long history of participation in Italian religious and political festivals. Italians were not alone, however, in fostering troupes along national lines; along with the philodramatic societies named after Italian icons Giuseppe Garibaldi and Stella d'Italia were the Spanish Grupo Dramático Cervantes, the Portuguese Grêmio Dramático Lusitano, and many others. Common across the Americas in cities like Buenos Aires, New York, and Chicago, these groups met regularly on a weeknight or Sunday afternoon to prepare a set of pieces, often but not always in their mother tongue, for performance at multiple *festas*.⁴¹ They also typically advertised in their own language, distributing flyers and selling tickets in shops

³⁹ Sociedade Italiana de Beneficencia Ettore Fieramosca to Prefect, 13 March 1909, AHSP PAH, caixa 38; Sociedade Dante Alighieri to Prefect, 17 June 1911, AHSP PAH, caixa 68.

⁴⁰ Henrique Hamberg (Associação Escola Allemã) to Prefect, 10 Aug 1910 and 21 Dec 1914, AHSP PAH, caixas 56 and 121; Salime Salomun (Mocidade de Homicié) to Prefect, 18 Feb 1913, AHSP PAH, caixa 107.

⁴¹ "Riunioni," *Amigo*, Sep 20, 1902.

and cafés affiliated with their compatriots, as well as hanging posters that, in one case, even went so far as to translate the Colombo Theater as the “Teatro Colón.”⁴² A proliferating immigrant press further promoted these troupes’ activities, reinforcing the link between the events of associational theaters and specific national communities.⁴³

That link also served to separate part of the public life of immigrants from that of Brazilian nationals. Such segregation was often mutual and defined by more than country of origin. Just as a Portuguese-speaking Afro-Brazilian would not have likely picked up the Italian *La Battaglia* or *Avanti!*, probably few Italians, if any, would have subscribed to another expanding set of periodicals: São Paulo’s so-called black press (*imprensa negra*).⁴⁴ Emerging in the mid 1910s, publications like *O Xaute* and *O Bandeirante* were largely the product of a small black middle class eager to provide a public forum for Afro-Brazilians and their social, political,

⁴² Grupo Dramático Cervantes, poster, 6 Nov 1906, AHSP PAH, caixa 38.

⁴³ In 1906, the state’s statistical bureau registered in the city of São Paulo four Italian periodicals, four Arabic, three German, one Polish, and one Spanish (*Annuário Estatístico de São Paulo*, vol. 2, 256-257). Six years later, the national bureau recorded twelve Italian papers, three German, three Spanish, three Arabic, and one French. See Directoria Geral de Estatística, Ministerio da Agricultura, Industria e Commercio, *Annuário estatístico do Brazil, 1o anno (1908-1912)* (Rio de Janeiro: Typ. da Estatística, 1927), 466. Many publications were too short-lived or underground to be registered, and an increasing number of immigrant papers also began to be published in Portuguese at this point (the number of Portuguese serials leaped from 43 in 1906 to 318 in 1912).

⁴⁴ More detailed analyses of the *imprensa negra* and its discursive evolution are offered in Roger Bastide, “A imprensa negra no estado de São Paulo,” in *O negro na imprensa e na literatura*, ed. José Marques de Melo (São Paulo: Escola de Comunicações e Arts, 1972), 50–78; Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Regina Pahim Pinto, “O movimento negro em São Paulo: Luta e identidade” (Doctoral dissertation, USP, 1993); Petrônio J. Domingues, *A nova abolição* (São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2008); and Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011). Following Bastide, the majority of these signal 1923 as a turning point in which periodicals produced by self-identified black Paulistas shifted from encouraging racial harmony, especially through cultural assimilation, to denouncing its absence, and particularly what they understood to be increasing racial discrimination in the face of an influx of European immigration.

and economic marginalization.⁴⁵ This was a geographically and socially mobile group that, like its counterparts in the Great Migration communities of the United States, was adjusting to an industrializing society of which it was still a small fraction. In São Paulo, however, that fraction decreased rather than increased during the first few decades of the century. While historians have estimated that the total population of color in the city grew from approximately 11,000 to 52,000 between 1890 and 1920, the number of foreigners easily outpaced this rate, leaving those considered by census takers to be *preto* (black) or *pardo* (of mixed African European descent) at a mere 8% of the urban population by 1940.⁴⁶

São Paulo's black press was thus a reflection of its members' collective status as a minority, one group among many struggling to defend its right to belong—to work, to enjoy, to assemble—in the city. The (primarily) men behind the black press, however, also felt themselves to be a particularly marginalized minority. While, in the 1910s, anarchism and labor strikes were beginning to erode the credibility of European immigrants in local lawmakers' eyes, the region had witnessed numerous efforts throughout the nineteenth century to replace black labor with imported white hands, and such preferences continued in São Paulo's factories.⁴⁷ Moreover, the discrimination that many Afro-Brazilians faced at the workplace extended into their hours of leisure, including within associational life. For example, the bylaws of the Vila Buarque Recreational Center (Circulo Recreativo Vila Buarque) and the City of Rome Dramatic and Recreational Circle (Circulo Dramatico e Recreativo Città di Roma) banned membership to anyone “of color,” and exclusion not formally dictated undoubtedly was undoubtedly

⁴⁵ An early exception is *O Baluarte*, which was first printed in 1903. For more on the men behind São Paulo's black press, see Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, 30–35; George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888–1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 129.

⁴⁶ Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, 28.

⁴⁷ Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*.

implemented on a regular basis.⁴⁸ In counterpoint—and, in some cases, explicit opposition to—this forbidden sphere, Afro-Paulistanos formed their own web of organizations. Included in this web were, to name a few, the Kosmos Dramatic and Recreational Group (Grêmio Dramático e Recreativo Kosmos), the São Paulo Federation of Men of Color (Federação dos Homens de Cor de São Paulo), the Smart Recreational Center (Centro Recreativo Smart), and the September 28th Dramatic Group (Grêmio Dramático 28 de Setembro), named in honor of two laws that in 1871 and 1885 had moved Brazil toward full emancipation.⁴⁹ A few groups, such as the August 18th Dramatic and Recreational Guild (Grêmio Dramático e Recreativo 18 de Agosto), barred those without Brazilian citizenship from joining, reinforcing the divide between immigrant and black Paulistanos.⁵⁰

In this manner, theatergoers were faced with two parallel, but not always entirely segregated, worlds of leisure that defined their public according to a complex confluence of race and nationality. Like their Italian, Portuguese, or German counterparts, São Paulo's black associations organized *festas*, dances, and lectures in the city's theaters, concentrating much of their activity in Bexiga's International Hall (Salão Internacional) and the downtown Itália Fausta.⁵¹ Also like their counterparts, Afro-Brazilian associations used these halls in order to strengthen community ties, although with more of an eye toward racial equality than financial support. Their very act of organizing leisure activities, after all, was part of the fight for a more

⁴⁸ Siqueira, "Clubes recreativos," 286.

⁴⁹ Siqueira, "Clubes recreativos," 288, 293–294. "Chronica Mundana," *O Xaúter*, May 16, 1916; "Pelas Associações," *O Bandeirante*, Aug 1918.

⁵⁰ Siqueira, "Clubes recreativos," 287–288.

⁵¹ Uassyr de Siqueira, "Entre Sindicatos, Clubes e Botequins: Identidades, associações e lazer dos trabalhadores paulistanos (1890-1920)" (Doctoral dissertation, UNICAMP, 2008), 130.

racially inclusive urban public.⁵² Not all entertainment venues welcomed black Paulistanos; the creation of an alternative space in which Afro-Brazilians could openly gather and be merry was thus a contentious undertaking.⁵³ Even an exclusively black event was prone to draw the attention and suspicions of other social groups, as evident by the racially charged coverage of a Paulistano Recreational Center (Centro Recreativo Paulistano) *feira* that ended in violence.⁵⁴

At the same time, the organization of theater events was in most cases also an act of conformity, a means of socializing black men and women through the same activities and with the same moralizing intentions as the majority of São Paulo's other associations.⁵⁵ Just as in the Municipal Theater, dancing or listening to maxixe was for some groups far from an acceptable activity. Rather than embrace the genre's Afro-Brazilian origins, many self-identified black Paulistanos, as the chapter below will further explain, understandably chose to distance themselves from a practice regularly condemned in the city's press as the path to prostitution, in this manner assuring observers and policemen of their respectability.⁵⁶ The men and women who called themselves São Paulo's "class of color," after all, comprised what Paulina Alberto describes as an "upper echelon" of Afro-Paulistanos: their families were headed by teachers, clerks, and low-level military officers whose employment depended on connections with those beyond their race and class.⁵⁷ Their aim in organizing soirees, pageants, and other theater activities, then, was as much about proving Afro-Brazilians' place among the thinking urban

⁵² In this sense, I differ from Andrews, who interprets black associations' focus on leisure as an indicator of their being "noncombatant" (143).

⁵³ Andrews, *Blacks and Whites*, 150.

⁵⁴ "Facadas e tiros: Grande charivari em um baile," *Combate*, Dec 29, 1919.

⁵⁵ The strict moral codes and membership requirements of many Afro-Brazilian associations are examined by Siqueira in "Clubes recreativos," 296.

⁵⁶ Siqueira, "Clubes recreativos," 299; Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 72.

⁵⁷ Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, 30.

public to those beyond the theater's walls as it was about drumming support among those within for the fight against racial discrimination.⁵⁸

Laborers

Not all associations “of color” represented an aspiring black middle class, however. Indeed, it was under the banner of labor that the occasional Afro-Brazilian group joined forces with immigrant organizations in the city's theaters.⁵⁹ As a growing number found employment in the city's industrial sector, working Paulistanos of varying nationalities and skin colors fought to shorten the workday and ensure a fair wage. In this manner, the issue of racial discrimination in the workplace was subsumed under the demands of class, if at all addressed, especially as workers increasingly organized along professional lines in the late 1910s and early 1920s.⁶⁰ Among those who formed unions were laborers of the city's press (União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos), bakeries (Liga dos Manipuladores de Pão), textile manufactories (União dos Operários em Fábricas de Tecidos), construction projects (Liga Operária da Construção Civil), and, as we saw at the start of this chapter, cafés.⁶¹

For these groups, São Paulo's theaters were not merely spaces of entertainment and sociability; halls like the Celso Garcia, the Gil Vicente, and the Oberdan also doubled as sites in which all members could assemble to discuss workplace concerns, plan actions, and vote. These were not impenetrable sanctuaries: government forces did enter theaters in order to shut down

⁵⁸ Alberto cites Frederico Baptista de Souza, an orator and writer affiliated with the Smart Recreational Center, the Kosmo Recreational Club, and a number of periodicals, as the leading proponent of this idea in the late 1910s (Alberto, 34).

⁵⁹ For example, a representative of the Italian Grêmio Vittorio Emmanuele was invited to speak at the anniversary celebrations of the Grêmio Recreativo 6 de Maio (“Gremio Recreativo 6 de Maio,” *Bandeirante*, Aug 1918).

⁶⁰ Andrews, 61. See also Joel Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

⁶¹ “Movimento Operario,” *Plebe*, Nov 5, 1921.

what they considered to be treasonous activity. A 1907 coffee packers' meeting at the Eden Club, for example, ended unexpectedly in arrests at two o'clock in the morning—hardly a paradisaical conclusion.⁶² Nevertheless, the Eden Club's four walls did enable hundreds of workers and possibly their families to meet and make noise regardless of the hour or weather, at least for a brief period of time. In that capacity, theaters became crucial organizing spaces during the strikes that shook the city in 1907—the context of the coffee packers' gathering—and the late 1910s.⁶³ While capturing the attention of all Paulistanos demanded group visibility on the city's streets, orchestrating and funding these feats necessitated the privacy of a theater's closed doors, although this privacy was afterwards often extended through the reports of anarchist, socialist, or union presses to include a much larger audience.⁶⁴

During less troubling times, theaters offered a venue in which labor associations could host more cheerful events designed to nurture solidarity among workplace colleagues or, as implied by newspaper announcements like “Proletarian Festival” (“Festival Proletario”), as a class.⁶⁵ The Printers' Union, for example, hoped that its *festas* would foster the “associative spirit” necessary for the “growing and indispensable Harmony of the printing family of S. Paulo.”⁶⁶ That sense of family was encouraged by the seating layout of the small theaters typically used by—and affordable for—unions. Halls like the Celso Garcia or the Federação Esphanola were multipurpose auditoriums with little, if any, vertical division in their seating

⁶² “Noticias Diversas: Movimento operario,” *Estado*, May 16, 1907.

⁶³ The strikes of 1907 are cataloged in Biondi, *Classe e nação*, 233–234.

⁶⁴ For the case of the 1907 strikes, Biondi (*Classe e nação*, 244) cites the review by the Italian, socialist *Avanti!* (Jan 17, 1907) of a fundraising event at the Steinway organized by the Seamstresses' League, an event that was also covered by the *Estado* (“Um baile de costureiras,” Jan 14, 1907, 2).

⁶⁵ “Festival proletario,” *Plebe*, Sep 23, 1919.

⁶⁶ “espírito associativo.... para a crescente e imprescindível Concordia da família graphica de S. Paulo.” “Festival de propaganda,” *Graphico*, Dec 13, 1925.

arrangement; indeed, the Celso Garcia's narrow balcony was a rarity. With all or most of their seating on the ground floor, small theaters placed audience members on the same level literally and figuratively, encouraging intermixing and discouraging straying eyes. The theaters rented or owned by labor groups were also typically of humbler construction, described by observers and memoirists as *barracões de zinco*, wooden structures with corrugated metal roofing and perhaps a minimally adorned stone façade.⁶⁷ Their austere interiors reflected the simple dress of their audiences, as well as reminded occupants of the more pressing matters at hand; unlike the city's new movie palaces, these were not spaces for fleeting distractions or bourgeois aspirations.

At a labor *feira*, the matter at hand was always the advancement of the working class. Union organizers in this manner encouraged Paulistanos to participate in the city's public life not merely as consumers of entertainment, but as fighters for a noble cause. The reputation of some theaters as hotbeds of labor activity helped direct spectators toward the evening's mission as they stepped through the door. Foremost among these halls was the Celso Garcia; its name paid homage to the journalist and orator Afonso Celso Garcia da Luz, who earned the respect of São Paulo's lower classes for his work in defense of the labor movement. By 1923, the Celso Garcia had been labeled the "General Assembly of the [working] class," and the government had even banned its rental to labor groups and periodicals for a brief moment in 1920.⁶⁸

Even when not linked to direct political action, the activities within the Celso Garcia and theaters like it reinforced audiences' ties to the working-class cause. In most cases, the beneficiary of the night's proceeds was the union itself. Unions were especially likely to host

⁶⁷ e.g. Ernani Silva Bruno, *História e tradições da cidade de São Paulo*, vol. 3 (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1954), 1237; Grunspun, 28; Nino Nello, "Grandezas e Misérios do Teatro (o teatro em São Paulo nos últimos 50 anos)," *SBAT: Revista de Teatro* (May-June 1956): 19; Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 189.

⁶⁸ "a Assembléa Geral da classe," "O grande comício do salão Celso Garcia," *Graphico*, March 1, 1923; *Plebe*, June 26, 1920.

these fundraising *festas* on the anniversaries of key victories or their founding, such as the Printer's Union commemoration of the 1923 minimum wage strike, thereby reminding members of the successes of the community to which they belonged.⁶⁹ Organizers also hoped to remind spectators of the support that they, in turn, needed from their membership base. After a poor turnout at an event of the Café Employees' Union, the group's *Voz da União* pleaded with its readers to attend the next *festa*—and to do so “without laziness or yawns”—so that the union could continue to be “useful and beneficial.”⁷⁰ Such laziness and yawns may have been permissible at a commercial production, where the chief aim was presumably passive amusement, but the working-class *festa* potentially had real-world consequences: higher wages, fewer working hours, a respectful and healthy workplace environment, perhaps even a share in ownership of the means of production. Within theaters, disenfranchised workers were thus able to come together to create an audible and visible force for change, an activist public that, in conjunction with strikes and other tactics, gradually improved conditions in another area of public life: work.

Thinkers

According to the *Voz da União*, another way in which the Café Employees' Union and its festival could be of use was by introducing members to the principles of anarchism. While, in its proponents' eyes, anarchism was *the* “Idea,” the diffusion of a broad spectrum of ideologies served as the motivation behind many associations' theater activities. In this senses, organizers utilized theaters not only to prepare for future action or create communities grounded in an occupational or geographic identity, but also to forge a public rallied around a particular set of

⁶⁹ “O festival do dia 9 no salão Celso Garcia,” *Graphico*, Feb 7, 1924.

⁷⁰ “sua existencia é util e proficua.... sem indolencias, sem bocejos, hein?” *Voz da União*, June 30, 1923.

principles—a community of ideas. These ideas may not have been entirely in line with what the Municipal’s founders hoped to teach, but both legislators and associational leaders shared the assumption that theaters could function as spaces of teaching and learning, especially of lessons of vice and virtue. For Souza Passos and his Café Employees’ Union, morality entailed revolution, the eventual toppling of social structures and institutions deemed oppressive—justice was the measurer of vice and virtue on the scale of mankind. The names of various philodramatic societies reflected these broad aims, borrowing anarchist catchphrases to unite members in a common mission: Those Without Patria (Os Sem Pátria), Lovers of Progress (in Spanish, Amantes del Progreso), New Civilization (in Italian, Nuova Civiltà), and so on. Other groups championed specific issues such as anticlericalism, pacifism, women’s liberation, or the eight-hour workday, occasionally raising funds to support these ideas’ defenders, whether periodicals or prisoners.⁷¹

Organizers’ favorite teaching tool at working-class *festas* was the social drama.⁷²

Typically between three and five acts, these plays were heavy on message and light on literary innovation. Their function, after all, was to clearly articulate and argue for an idea, and clarity often got in the way of what the Municipal’s patrons might have deemed artistic quality. Still, the social drama was not a lecture, an instructive monologue that often shared the program with other performance types: by bringing to life emotions and situations with which spectators could empathize, theater was a particularly powerful form of pedagogy. “As the teacher communicates

⁷¹ e.g. *Lanterna*, April 1, 1911; “Pró ‘A Plebe’: Grande festival de propaganda,” *Plebe*, April 30, 1921; *Plebe*, Oct 2, 1920.

⁷² For analyses and anthologies of specifically anarchist dramas, see Maria Thereza Vargas, ed., *Antologia do Teatro Anarquista* (São Paulo: Martins Fonte, 2009); Vera Maria Chalmers, “Boca de cena (um estudo sobre o teatro libertário, 1895-1937),” *Cadernos AEL* 1, no. 1 (1992): 105–118; and, in Spain, Lily Litvak, *Musa libertaria: arte, literatura y vida cultural del anarquismo español (1880-1913)* (Barcelona: A. Bosch, 1981).

to his disciples the inventions of scholars,” explained Romualdo Figueiredo in the anti-clerical *Lanterna*, “the actor transmits to the popular strata the life of societies, the play of passions, the psychological determinants of characters.”⁷³ On one hand, passion worked to both attract pupils to the playhouse and keep them there, as evident by one poster’s emphasis on the “thrilling scenes,” “truly surprising dramatics,” and “deep study of the [human] psychology” in Cezar Vitaliani’s *O amor (Love)*.⁷⁴ At the same time, a play’s emotions helped make its message more compelling, transforming the work into a forceful call to arms whose effect extended beyond the theater’s boundaries. Mota Assunção, for example, defended in the anarchist paper *O Amigo do Povo* the passion of Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* by claiming that he had witnessed several young men leaving the theater “burning with unfamiliar flames.”⁷⁵

It was those flames that led anarchist Emma Goldman to write in her widely circulated 1914 treatise that social drama was a “dynamite that undermines superstition, shakes the social pillars, and prepares men and women for the reconstruction” of society.⁷⁶ The (somewhat exaggerated) reenactment of everyday struggles, in other words, brought Paulistanos together not only as a passive community of ideas, but also as a community willing to take action upon those ideas, at least in principle. To Goldman’s and others’ credit, the dramas of the stage occasionally did have tangible effects. Perhaps the clearest link between theater and reality was the case of the São Paulo premiere of *Electra*, a five-act drama written by the Spaniard Benito Pérez Galdós. The piece had caused a stir in Spain due to its emotionally charged critique of the Catholic clergy

⁷³ “Como o professor comunica aos discípulos as invenções dos sábios, o ator transmite às camadas populares a vida das sociedades, o jogo das paixões, as determinantes psicológicas dos caracteres.” Romualdo Figueiredo, “O Teatro e a Igreja,” *Lanterna*, Feb 28, 1916.

⁷⁴ “scenas palpitantes, dramaticas verdadeiramente surprehendedentes e pelo estudo profundo da psicologia.” Sociedade Beneficente Esperança to Prefect, 8 Jan 1910, AHSP PAH, caixa 56.

⁷⁵ “abrasados por flamas desconhecidas,” “Do teatro,” *Amigo*, March 14, 1903.

⁷⁶ Emma Goldman, *The Social Significance of Modern Drama* (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1914), 8.

and, in particular, Jesuits' sexual exploits.⁷⁷ On April 6, 1901—on Easter Eve—*Electra* found its way onto the stage of the downtown Santana under the auspices of a children's company, according to the *Estado*.⁷⁸ Benjamin Mota, the lawyer and director of *A Lanterna*, was scheduled to speak after the final act but was at the last minute barred by the police from doing so. The roused public took to the streets, transforming into an unruly crowd of 500 to 600 people, as estimated by *A Lanterna*.⁷⁹ Mota was urged to speak, and his words further incited the “popular mass,” which then made its way to the São Bento Monastery—the city's founding institution—and proceeded to hurl stones and break windows. Attributing the damage and the wandering mob to the passions of Galdós's work, the police prohibited its further performance.

Electra soon enough reappeared in São Paulo's theaters, and in the meantime countless other social dramas with similar messages took its place. Indeed, passions and characters were often recycled from one play to the next with only minor alterations, in this manner establishing a set of recurring themes—workplace exploitation, police oppression, rural starvation, and implicit rape, among others—that shaped the lessons of the *feira*'s primers, the gospels of the *feira*'s secular liturgy. Like the Christian gospels, many of these dramas circumnavigated the globe to create a truly transnational canon. If we extend the metaphor, its four apostles perhaps best corresponded to Italian criminologist Pietro Gori, Spanish novelist and playwright Joaquín Dicenta, French writer Octave Mirbeau, and Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen—all public intellectuals sympathetic to the laborer's plight.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ “Electra,” *Lanterna*, April 6, 1901.

⁷⁸ “Palcos e Circos,” *Estado*, April 7, 1901.

⁷⁹ “A Lanterna,” *Lanterna*, April 20, 1901.

⁸⁰ To this list, Mota Assunção added the German playwright Hermann Sudermann and the Norwegian Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (“Do teatro,” *Amigo*, March 14, 1903).

As in the Catholic Church, these gospels did not need to be read, a boon in a city where approximately 30% of residents fifteen years of age or older were considered illiterate by the state census in 1920, and where a significantly larger portion were far from fluent in Portuguese.⁸¹ Instead, the repetition of images and themes, in some cases articulated in Italian, Spanish, German, or Arabic, enabled audience members to glean morals from the succinct dialogue of a play. Play titles also helped in this regard, often conveying the central message or plotline in a few words: the Spanish playwright José Fola Igúrbide's *La libertad caída* (*Fallen Liberty*) told of Russians' attempt at overthrowing tyranny, while *Os ladrões da honra* (*The Thieves of Honor*) accused the Catholic Church of robbing the average man.⁸² Relatable circumstances, as in Dante Silva's *Los mártires* (*The Martyrs*), which narrated the struggles of an immigrant family in Buenos Aires, further rendered the drama intelligible and its message more compelling.⁸³

The lyrics of a hymn or the stanzas of a straightforward poem similarly served to feed listeners ideas in digestible, bite-size portions. Like theater pieces, these too were frequently repeated from one *feira* to another and on both sides of the Atlantic, preserved, translated, and regularly republished by the labor press.⁸⁴ Among the most commonly sung were the “International” (Internacional) and the “Workers’ Song” (Canto dos Trabalhadores), both of which made clear that the restitution of justice rested on the shoulders of their singers. They began their verse with a direct call to action—“On your feet! Oh, victims of hunger!” and, referring to both sexes, “Comrades! / Stand up!”—and continued to unite all participants under a

⁸¹ Prefeitura da Cidade de São Paulo, *Histórico Demográfico do Município de São Paulo, Tabelas*, <http://sempla.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/historico/tabelas.php> (accessed 1 Dec 2009).

⁸² “Grupo ‘El Sembrador,’” *Plebe*, June 16, 1927; “La nostra festa,” *Alba*, May 1, 1920.

⁸³ “Centro Juventude do Futuro,” *Plebe*, Aug 14, 1920.

⁸⁴ e.g. VV.AA, *Hymnos e canticos libertarios e indicador das associações operárias* (Rio de Janeiro, 1923).

common “we” (“nós”) as “the children of work” (“os filhos do trabalho”).⁸⁵ That “we” was reinforced by the collective unison of dozens, if not hundreds, of voices. Audience members were in many cases invited to sing along, to amplify and diffuse through their bodies melodies that moved hearts and rousing lyrics that swayed minds. Despite her place in the theater’s stalls, a *feira* attendee was thus more than a spectator: she was a participant, an active member of a larger entity. In this sense, theaters approximated what, in the Greek tradition, French anarchist and geographer Élisée Reclus called the agora: a necessary space in which “all who are animated by a common passion can meet together.”⁸⁶

Yet, not all met on equal footing. At labor and anarchist *feiras*, spectators participated in public life as pupils, at least in the eyes of organizers. For many of the latter, theaters were classrooms, not agoras. This division between, on one end, audiences and, on the other end, performers and the association’s directorate was reified by theaters’ architecture. Rowed seats distinguished the public’s space from that of performers, a dichotomy that in theaters with a fixed stage, like the Itália Fausta or the Federação Espanhol, was reinforced by the proscenium arch. This separation helped to clarify and emphasize the performance space; as the direction of the seats indicated, the responsibility of the audience was to focus its attention on the entertainment. Even with a rowdy public, of which reviewers in labor periodicals occasionally complained, no competing distraction undermined the centrality of the events onstage. Jeers or shouts of “Viva A Plebe!” were reactions to a villainous character or the words of an orator, not competition for the entertainment.⁸⁷ In assuming their role as pupils, those taking their seats in the theater’s house furthermore accepted the norm of withstanding, at least momentarily,

⁸⁵ “A pé! ó victimas da fome!” “A Internacional,” *Plebe*, May 10, 1910; “Companheiros! Companheiras! / Levantai-vos!” “O Canto dos trabalhadores,” *Terra*, May 1, 1906.

⁸⁶ Élisée Reclus, “The Evolution of Cities,” *Contemporary Review* 67 (January 1895): 264.

⁸⁷ “A festa Pró-‘A Plebe,’” *Plebe*, March 27, 1920.

whatever the stage or screen presented. Every evening featured a packed schedule of songs, a short drama, variety acts or a comedic sketch, poetry recitations, and perhaps a piano recital or brief lecture, each serving an instructive function alongside the others.

While, on one hand, such a curriculum was intended to uplift audiences, on the other hand, it left little room for attendees to think independently. In this sense, the regimented programs of associational theaters, like those of the Municipal, complicated the notion that theater events could forge a community of thinking individuals, a public rather than a crowd. Independent thinking, after all, was what many anarchist leaders advocated at their *festas* and what their social dramas aimed to inspire; this was the true “dynamite” of Emma Goldman’s theater. To promote individual rationality, many anarchists in São Paulo and elsewhere encouraged their followers to not only learn about “the Idea” but also to digest and articulate it in writing or onstage. Anyone, anarchists insisted, could and should be a lecturer, a writer, and an artist; all possessed what the anarchist and journalist Afonso Schmidt called “artistic necessities.”⁸⁸ For this reason, many leaders in São Paulo were playwrights and poets as well as orators and organizers: Neno Vasco, Gigi Damiani, Giulio Sorelli, and Octavio Brandão all had plays and songs performed in the city’s theaters.⁸⁹ Indeed, Brandão’s “Libertarian Hymn” (“Hymno Libertario”) began with “Hosannas to... Science / To Truth, to Beauty, to Perfection,” stressing the relation between aesthetic and intellectual pursuits and the improvement of the self

⁸⁸ “necessidades artísticas,” Afonso Schmidt, *São Paulo de Meus Amores* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2003), 172.

⁸⁹ To list a few examples, Vasco’s comedy, *O Pecado de Simonia*, was performed at least three times at the Celso Garcia in the year between May 1913 and April 1914 (“Grande Festa Operária,” *Lanterna*, May 10, 1913; “Grande Festa Operária,” *Lanterna*, Aug 2, 1913; “Festa de Propaganda,” *Lanterna*, Mar 14, 1914); Damiani’s four-act, Italian comedy, *La Repubblica*, was premiered on January 13, 1912, at the Salão Germânia (“Festas de Propaganda,” *Lanterna*, Jan 6, 1912); and Sorelli’s two-act drama in Italian, *Giustiziere!*, had its first showing on October 18, 1902 (“As nossas festas,” *Amigo*, Oct 25, 1902).

and society.⁹⁰ Souza Passos, the Café Employees' Union member who authored the play performed in this chapter's opening vignette, took that relation a step further, arguing that artistic creation was the "most free expression of individualism" and thus "essentially anarchic."⁹¹ Once every woman, child, and man was a master of her or his mind and heart, the anarchist revolution would be imminent.

Conclusion

Still, if on paper anarchists encouraged participation in public life as individuals—as free expressions of the self untied from any larger unit—there was no denying that the community was a crucial entity at anarchist *festas* and other associational theater gatherings. Through the organization of a wide range of events in São Paulo's theaters, associational leaders worked to ground leisure experiences outside the home in particular cultural practices. As we saw in the pages above, these practices in some cases corresponded to a community of neighbors, in other cases to a national or racial group, and in yet others to a class, occupation, or set of ideas. While activities, rules of decorum, and even repertoire did not always significantly vary from one association's event to another, ultimately audiences' shared experience in support of a specific cause—spectators' common membership in a community of benefactors—helped to carve São Paulo's "popular sectors" into multiple and overlapping publics. Amidst the demographic upheavals that accompanied urbanization, in other words, associational theaters served as a means for reorganizing the urban public. At the same time that theater events upheld or challenged certain social divisions, they also collectively encouraged the incorporation into the urban public of Paulistanos from across the social spectrum. A key element in making that

⁹⁰ Octavio Brandão, "Hymno Libertario," *Obra*, July 14, 1920, 10.

⁹¹ "essencialmente anárquica... a expressão mais livre do individualismo," Felipe Gil de Souza Passos, "O anarquismo como expressão artística," *Verve*, Oct 2006, 212.

possible was the preservation of what legislators and others called “order” and “decency,” two standards that, as we shall see in the chapter to come, were wielded by associational leaders not only to legitimate associational theaters but also to attract a legitimating audience: women and children.

Ch. 4 The Family as Public Unit, 1900-1924

A decade and a half before the Café Employees' Union *feira* at the Celso Garcia, a very different group of workers crowded into the nearby Steinway Hall (Image 22). As the *Estado de São Paulo* did not fail to point out in its coverage of the event, the Steinway was not customarily occupied by laboring Paulistanos, and certainly not the Seamstresses' League (Liga de Costureiras). The latter was a new organization, having been founded toward the end of 1906 by a group of primarily Italian women, and it took advantage of the Steinway to host a fundraising ball on the muggy night of Saturday, January 12, 1907.¹ According to the *Estado* reporter, the city's workers were so thrilled to stretch their legs in the space where “many times the



Image 22: The interior of the Steinway Hall (Salão Steinway), ca. 1900. The photograph was included in the *Revista Industrial*, an album prepared by Jules Martin that showcased São Paulo State at the 1900 Paris Universal Exposition. In Heloísa Barbuy, *A Cidade-Exposição: Comércio e Cosmopolitismo em São Paulo, 1860-1914* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2006), 112.

¹ Luigi Biondi, *Classe e nação: trabalhadores e socialistas italianos em São Paulo, 1890-1920* (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 2012), 234, 244.

bourgeoisie” had done the same that by ten o’clock no additional body could be squeezed in.² As one tune after another wafted from the stage, men enthusiastically led single and married women to the dance floor with an “air of social grandeur,” an air that in its unfamiliarity elicited peals of laughter from their dance partners, or at least so understood the *Estado* reporter. Suddenly, around two o’clock in the morning, the decorum inspired by the Steinway’s elegance ruptured. Upon the announcement of the final dance, all conversation “degenerated immediately into conflict, an enormous brawl,” as overzealous attendees expressed their opposition. By the time a police delegate arrived, hats, blood, and fainting women were strewn across the theater’s floor.

The disastrous ending to the seamstresses’ night helps explain why the ball was granted substantial space among the *Estado*’s columns. While the newspaper did regularly cover Steinway events, which typically took the form of musical recitals, it rarely paid attention to the leisure activities of São Paulo’s labor groups—the myriad of activities examined in the chapter above. To be sure, the start of 1907 did give journalists a reason to keep an eye on working-class Paulistanos: a growing number of strikes were sending shockwaves throughout the city’s manufactories and assembly halls. However, it was not economic or political upheaval that drew the *Estado* reporter to the seamstresses’ ball. Rather, his description centered on the evening’s disorder in multiple senses of the word: the damage to property, bodies, and women’s sensibilities, all of which encapsulated the lack of discipline that many in the mainstream press feared was inevitable in the crowding and increasingly foreign-born city.

² “tantissimas vezes a burguezia distendeu as pernas... ar da grandeza social... uma discussão que degenerou imediatamente em conflicto, uma pancadaria enorme.” “Um baile de costureiras,” *Estado*, Jan 14, 1907, 2.

Yet, the night had not begun in chaos, and the propriety to which the Seamstress's League and many of its guests aspired hints at the widespread consensus among Paulistanos as to what "order" implied. As the *Estado's* account and this chapter demonstrate, order was a classed sense of respectability, a set of rules of behavior and dress for each gender at least in part determined by the standards of elite society. The occupation of a reputedly elite hall was not necessary for such standards to be promoted; as we shall soon see, a wide variety of São Paulo's associations utilized an almost equally wide variety of theaters to host events that emphasized modesty, courtesy, and sobriety. Whether these associations were defined by their members' nationality, race, occupation, or politics, the intersection of gender and age with other social categories shaped the ways in which participants understood and strove to maintain order within São Paulo's auditoriums. More precisely, women and children, and especially their combination with men as a family, were seen as essential to both justifying and enforcing respectability at associational soirees. Under the familial gaze and within the theater's four walls, men and women were able to publicly and, in principle, respectably intermix, in this manner expanding a *festa's* spectatorship while legitimizing an organization's activities. Although the case of the Seamstresses' League shows that familial attendance was not always a recipe for orderly success, in many other instances associational theaters did function as a public version of the virtuous home, a magnification of the parlor that so few working families could afford.

This chapter explains why and how associational leaders framed theaters as public spaces appropriate for the family. As we saw in the chapter above, the designation of families and schools as recipients of an event's proceeds helped shape *festas* as familial gatherings. Yet, there were several other ways in which associational leaders extended an invitation to families regardless of an evening's cause. First, families were on many occasions welcomed as audiences

of performances explicitly deemed appropriate for all children, women, and men. Second, they were encouraged to socialize in spaces and through activities that accommodated and engaged all family members. Finally, with the designation of such events as family friendly, women and children were in many cases welcomed to the stage alongside men without raising eyebrows; being a “public woman” no longer solely translated into prostitution. In fostering within theaters what they assumed to be wholesome familial ties, this chapter argues, São Paulo’s associations expanded the urban public to include not only working men, but also women and children from across the social spectrum. Gone were the days when reputable women walked São Paulo’s streets with faces hidden behind veils.

In this chapter, then, I examine the leisure of laboring Paulistanos to better understand the place of women, children, and the family in São Paulo’s transition to urbanity. While the history of working women in São Paulo and Brazil can be traced to the mid 1980s, it has since largely been restricted to the study of women as workers, and especially informal workers.³ An exception is the branch that stemmed from the interest in urban women as prostitutes and, in more recent years, has done much to illuminate the legal construction of womanhood during the First Republic.⁴ If in Rio, as Rachel Soihet argues, gendered notions of morality and honor were

³ The foundational text here is Maria Odila Leite da Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life: The Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*, trans. Ann Frost (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), originally published in Portuguese in 1984 as *Quotidiano e poder em São Paulo no século XIX – Ana Gertrudes de Jesus*. Other works that have since followed include Margareth Rago, *Do Cabaré ao Lar: A Utopia da Cidade Disciplinar, Brasil 1890-1930* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1985); Rachel Soihet, *Condição feminina e formas de violência: mulheres pobres e ordem urbana, 1890-1920* (Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1989); and the essays of Barbara Weinstein and Theresa R. Veccia in John D. French and Daniel James, eds., *The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Women Workers: From Household and Factory to the Union Hall and Ballot Box* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

⁴ Grounded in Michel Foucault’s readings of power, discourse, and sexuality, Martha de Abreu Esteves’s *Meninas perdidas: os populares e o cotidiano do amor no Rio de Janeiro da belle*

imposed by the state and bourgeoisie, the activities that took place within São Paulo's associational theaters reflected the hegemonic end of the Gramscian scale: it was theater organizers who promoted and enforced the standards for gender and respectability in which they believed.⁵ As Paulina Alberto has already observed for the case of São Paulo's associations of color, it was associational leaders who understood respectability, grounded in familial morality, to be the key to broader social approval and mobility.⁶ Still, as we shall see in the pages to come, while in many cases these standards closely resembled the norms upheld by São Paulo's lawmakers, there were exceptions.⁷ After all, women and girls who took the stage to lecture, sing, recite, and act were hardly living the role of the private and passive family woman.⁸ Moreover, as the example of anarchist *festas* make especially clear, overlapping ideas about gender and order often served radically different aims. If the purpose of a theater soiree varied from one organization to another, however, these events shared at least one result in common: by encouraging Paulistanos to spend their leisure hours in the company of relatives, dependents, and intimate friends, associational leaders helped redefine the urban public as respectably heterosocial.⁹ In this sense, associational theaters fostered a new type of sociability, one in

époque (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1989) and Margareth Rago's *Os prazeres da noite: prostituição e códigos da sexualidade feminina em São Paulo, 1890-1930* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1991) paved the way for later studies such as Sueann Caulfield's *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth Century Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

⁵ Soihet, *Condição feminina e formas de violência*, 20.

⁶ Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 39–40.

⁷ A rejection of Gramsci's cultural hegemony is also made in Joel Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 5.

⁸ The historiographic definition of the Latin American family woman is analyzed in Sueann Caulfield, "Women of Vice, Virtue, and Rebellion: New Studies of Representation of the Female in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review* 28, no. 2 (January 1, 1993): 167.

⁹ I borrow the term from Kathy Peiss, who uses "heterosocial" to make a similar argument for

which wage-earning Paulistanos and Paulistanas could publicly intermingle and, in some cases, even advocate political change—a sociability that set the stage for the massive street strikes and marches that shook São Paulo beginning in 1907.¹⁰

Performing the family-friendly

As others have already shown, São Paulo's associations were not alone in their efforts to bring together the family unit in public. In cities around the world, the men's clubs of the mid-nineteenth century gave way, without entirely disappearing, to organizations that invited both sexes to participate.¹¹ On a practical level, inviting women and children meant a larger audience.

New York City in *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 16.

¹⁰ Early studies of sociability—that is, patterns of social interactions, particularly within associational settings, that reflect and influence larger historical changes—approached the subject as a lens for examining political culture. From this angle, sociability by default served political ends and especially nation building during the nineteenth century. See Maurice Agulhon, *Le Cercle dans la France bourgeoise: 1810-1848, étude d'une mutation de sociabilité* (Paris: A. Colin : École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1977), and the work he inspired for Latin America: Sandra Gayol, *Sociabilidad en Buenos Aires: hombres, honor y cafés, 1862-1910* (Buenos Aires Argentina: Ediciones del Signo, 2000); Pilar González Bernaldo de Quirós, *Civilidad y política en los orígenes de la nación Argentina: las sociabilidades en Buenos Aires, 1829-1862* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001); and Maikel Fariñas Borrego, *Sociabilidad y cultura del ocio: la élites habaneras y sus clubes de recreo (1902-1930)* (Havana: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 2009). In all of these cases, sociability was linked to notions of masculine virtue and the civility of a nation's people. For historians of women in the early twentieth century, however, a politically consequential sociability was possible in many contexts, including, as Nan Enstad argues for US working-class women, within spaces of popular culture and consumption. See Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 4.

¹¹ The creation of a more heterosocial public life through leisure by and for the working class has long been analyzed by historians of mass culture in the United States, especially Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*; David Nasaw, *Going out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1993); and John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). In France, Vanessa R. Schwartz ties the development of a mass, visual culture to the democratization of the *flâneur* in *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

Not only did sheer numbers increase, but, the assumption went, so did the likelihood of regular attendance: if the content and environment were deemed family friendly, mothers would tow along husbands and children. It was partly for this reason that impresarios in the United States had smoothed out vaudeville's rough edges a couple of decades earlier, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, that in the 1910s São Paulo's film exhibitors followed local impresarios' lead in organizing children's matinees.¹² Imitating these strategies, many Paulistano associations marketed their events in language that explicitly welcomed families. Advertisements in the labor and immigrant press rallied readers to São Paulo's theaters with headings and descriptions such as "family soiree" (*soirée familiar*), "Propagandistic Family *Festa*" (*Festa Familiar de Propaganda*), or, in Italian, "Large Family Celebration" (*Grande Festa Familiare*), leaving no doubt as to the intended audience.¹³

In borrowing businessmen's vocabulary, associational leaders were competing with commercial theater producers for the familial audience. Yet, as hinted by the efforts to refashion specific forms of entertainment as family friendly, this appeal to families was about more than growing a group's membership or treasury. It was also about creating a morally grounded entertainment, one which would uplift, reform, and inspire—or, at the very least, not corrupt—all Paulistanos. As Chapter 7 will detail, this notion of productive leisure rested on the presumption that audiences, and especially children, were dangerously impressionable. In the eyes of many associational leaders, that danger was multiplied by the rising number of commercial theaters

¹² See especially the first two chapters of Robert W. Snyder, *The Voice of the City: Vaudeville and Popular Culture in New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). For more on film matinees, a good place to start is Richard deCordova, "Ethnography and Exhibition: The Child Audience, the Hays Office, and Saturday Matinees," *Camera Obscura* 8, no. 23 (May 1990): 90–107.

¹³ "Soirée Familiar," *Battaglia*, June 26, 1904; "Festa de Propaganda," *Lanterna*, Sep 26, 1914; "Grande Festa Familiare," *Alba*, Aug 30, 1919.

that lured men, women, and even children with their low price of admission and thrilling, bawdy, and, in the eyes of some, offensive acts. Echoing the concerns of the Municipal Theater's proponents, one member of the Luso-Brazilian Congress (Congresso Luso-Brasileiro) lamented in the group's short-lived magazine, *A Arte* (The Art), that São Paulo's stages were no longer the sites of "true and extraordinary artistic manifestations," but rather platforms for "exhibitions more or less burlesque... absolutely without value."¹⁴ As an amateur theater troupe that aimed to promote Portuguese-language theater, the Luso-Brazilian Congress was particularly alarmed by the city's diversifying productions, but it was by no means alone. By 1919, a decade after commercial theaters first outnumbered their associational counterparts, anarchists of the daily *A Plebe* (The Populace) warned that they were losing the city's popular sectors to "cheap theaters where the pieces performed are even cheaper."¹⁵

For both the *Plebe* and *Arte* critics, the quality of a theatrical entertainment was measured not only in its capacity to disseminate ideas, as we saw in the chapter above, but also in its appropriateness for the sensibilities of women and children. In this sense, performances in associational theaters often resembled in their moral self-censorship those found within churches. On one level, a consideration for familial sensibilities meant the absence of visible sexuality. It was not without reason that both *A Arte* and *A Plebe* deployed the term "pornography" in their condemnations. Bared legs and bosoms, sheer fabrics, suggestive lighting, and implicit (and occasionally explicit) gestures often did more than feed erotic fantasies in São Paulo's theaters. Sensibilities could also be offended by a performance's aural components. In addition to sexual references were crass diction, aggressive remarks, and what the Luso-Brazilian Congress

¹⁴ "verdadeiras e extraordinarias manifestações artisticas... exibições mais ou menos burlescas ... sem valor absolutamente," "A Arte," *A Arte*, July 8, 1900.

¹⁵ "teatros baratos onde se representam peças mais baratas ainda..., um cano de exgotto de pornographia barata; sem Ideia nem beleza." "Palcos, Telas e Arenas," *Plebe*, Sep 10, 1919.

denounced as “free phrases”—raunchy lines that appealed to spectators’ sense of humor above their sense of dignity or justice. There was also the question of the suitability of the storyline itself. For example, a reviewer in the anarchist periodical *O Amigo do Povo* (The Friend of the People) insisted that the one-act play *Proximus Tuus* (in Latin, Your Neighbor) by Italian criminologist Pietro Gori was “excessively tragic for children.”¹⁶ Children’s inability to comprehend adult situations and emotions, the columnist argued, rendered “happy and light” sketches much more suitable for “good propaganda” among young audiences.

If *Proximus Tuus*, burlesque, and the more vulgar operettas were inappropriate, what did São Paulo’s associational leaders consider to be family-friendly content? For the most part, organizations concerned with championing a particular cause were willing to forego the *Amigo* contributor’s advice, opting for heavier material in order to propel viewers into action. From war and revolution (*Guerra e Revolução*) to tragic love (*Tristi Amori*), many of the topics addressed by Paulistano associations were far from sunny even in cases in which children were expected to be among the audience.¹⁷ In 1916, for example, the General Workers’ Union’s (União Geral dos Trabalhadores) “family show” featured the three-act drama *Lo inevitable* (The Inevitable) in Spanish, the one-act Italian piece *La Canaglia* (The Scoundrel), and the Portuguese *Maldição Paterna* (Paternal Curse).¹⁸ Not only did these plays address the complex realities of working-class adults, they also collectively made an enormous demand on family members’ attention spans given their multiple languages. Most spectators, and especially children, were inevitably excluded from full comprehension of at least one piece. At the same time, this blend of

¹⁶ “excessivamente trágica para crianças. Para ellas, querem-se coisas alegres e ligeiras, com as quais tambem se pode fazer boa propaganda,” “Crônicas: Filodramaticos em scena,” *Amigo*, July 25, 1903.

¹⁷ “Festa Familiar de Propaganda,” *Lanterna*, Dec 19, 1914; “I Tristi Amori,” *Battaglia*, Aug 30, 1914.

¹⁸ “Pelo Operariado: Espectaculo familiar,” *Combate*, April 12, 1916.

languages may have allowed performers to speak to multiple generations. For example, the program for a Modern School (Escola Moderna) fundraiser, which would have included immigrant children and parents among its spectators, featured a drama and lecture in Portuguese and a comedy in Italian.¹⁹ The former would have been the language in which the school's pupils were taught, while the latter the mother tongue of many pupils' older relatives.

Regardless of their native language, audiences would have been able to latch onto the archetypes and clear conclusions of these works, along with many others that flattened characters and plots in order to ease comprehension. In this sense, the reduction of emotions in social dramas, as illustrated in the previous chapter, helped achieve the *Amigo do Povo* reviewer's goals despite the somberness of the subject matter. One widely performed example is that of *Primo Maggio* (in Italian, First of May), another of Pietro Gori's one-act plays. A standard of the international anarchist repertoire, the piece repeatedly circled the Atlantic world to enthusiastic applause and made its way into many of São Paulo's family-oriented *festas*.²⁰ Through eight short scenes, Gori confronted his audience with the challenges of love and death, exploitation and labor, and tradition and rebellion.²¹ Yet the didactic aims of the piece are never undermined by heart-thumping plot twists or moral complications: the romance between Ida and Jovem is hardly perceptible until the latter's death, and his death hardly comes as a surprise. As implied by their names, these are characters with clear functions and lessons; if their destinies were predictable, their actions were probably inspiring for at least some spectators. Jovem (Youth) is a young and sickly landlord who sympathizes with his farmworkers' plight but,

¹⁹ "Festa de Propaganda," *Lanterna*, March 14, 1914.

²⁰ For example, "Grande Festa Familiar," *Alba*, Aug 30, 1919.

²¹ A Spanish version of *Primo Maggio* that circulated in Chile at the time, and the version on which my analysis is based, can be found in Pedro Bravo Elizondo, *Cultura y teatro obreros en Chile, 1900-1930* (Madrid: Libros del Meridion, 1986), 183–200.

caught between two worlds, is doomed to perish. *Ida* (Departure), by contrast, is the idealized peasant girl who manages to leave home in pursuit of a more just world. Their thoughts and intentions are simply but eloquently articulated, and their encounters with a series of other workers allow for their ideas to be repeated and, by audiences young and old, fully digested. By employing these literary techniques also common in children's stories, Gori's and similar plays performed in São Paulo's associational theaters were intended to function as teaching tools for the entire family.

They also often succeeded, or at least were perceived to succeed, in their pedagogic strategies and goals. The power of *Primo Maggio* to impose radical ideas upon the minds of susceptible spectators was presumed to be threatening enough for the state police to interrupt its performance at the Casino Penteado in 1902, frightening the many women and children who were among the audience.²² The disruption and arrest of three participants did not discourage other groups from later staging the play for familial audiences: a mere three months later, the Anarchist Philodramatic Troupe's (Filodramático Libertário) rendition of *Primo Maggio* was, alongside lectures and a family dance, on the bill for a *festa* that offered free admission to women and children.²³ For associations that sought to inculcate young audiences with specific moral, political, or aesthetic principles, in other words, social dramas were a crucial part of the program. The effectiveness of the genre comes through in interviews of former working-class theater spectators conducted by Maria Thereza Vargas during the 1970s: according to Vargas,

²² Maria Thereza Vargas, *Teatro operário na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, Idart, 1980), 80.

²³ "Reuniões e Conferências," *Amigo*, Sep 9, 1902.

the majority of her elderly subjects still remembered the morals of the plays they had watched as children.²⁴

On a few occasions, the evening's morals were specifically about the family. A 1913 event organized in the Celso Garcia Hall by the Francisco Ferrer Social Studies Circle (Círculo de Estudos Sociais Francisco Ferrer) featured a lecture, possibly in Italian, on "La famiglia," alongside Gori's *Gente Honesta* (Honest People), a comedic sketch, carnival games, and a dance.²⁵ Before his execution, the anarchist Francisco Ferrer (1859-1909) had founded the first Modern School in his native Spain, launching an education reform movement that quickly crossed the Atlantic. As many as three Modern Schools functioned in the early 1910s in the city of São Paulo, where few public schools existed and many religious groups founded their own institutions of education. It was the latter, and particularly Catholic seminaries, that Ferrer and his followers opposed. In their vision, the seminary's antithesis was a "rationalist" curriculum, a pedagogy that stressed students' understanding of the arts and sciences through "experimentation" and "objective" deduction.²⁶ Theatrical gatherings such as that hosted by the Ferrer Social Studies Circle were an essential part of this aim. As one Modern School board explained in the anti-clerical *A Lanterna* (The Lantern), not only did *festas* contribute to students' artistic and intellectual development, but they also encouraged parents' positive involvement in that process. In this sense, the city's theaters functioned as halfway points between school and home, bringing parents together with teachers and students to celebrate children's academic progress and to ensure the full support of such progress outside of the classroom.

²⁴ This is astutely observed by Luiza Faccio in "Teatro Libertário," *Cadernos AEL* 1, no. 1 (1992): 123, based on Vargas's *Teatro operário na cidade de São Paulo*.

²⁵ "Festa de propaganda," *Lanterna*, Nov 8, 1913.

²⁶ "Escola Moderna N. 2," *Lanterna*, Nov 8, 1913.

The family-friendly audience

Associational theaters were particularly appropriate spaces for accommodating both children and parents. First, the availability of affordable seating allowed entire families to more comfortably endure the entertainment screened or performed. Whereas professional productions in the city's larger theaters charged at minimum 2\$ for the worst seat in the house, a chair could be acquired at the Alhambra, for example, for only 1\$ for men and, in some instances, at no cost for women.²⁷ The very ability to sit down enabled the attendance of Paulistanos of all ages and physical capacities. Moreover, the spacing imposed by rows of seats allowed women to rest weary feet without the threat of unwanted promiscuity—or without earning a reputation for unladylike behavior. As opposed to the crowded standing galleries of the Avenida or the Boa Vista, seated bodies in these smaller theaters could be observed in isolation, even in the semidarkness of a film screening. That semidarkness was rendered somewhat brighter by theaters' transition to electric lighting during the first decade of the twentieth century. The Mafalda in Brás, for example, was by 1920 decked with 180 bulbs, while the larger Colombo was brightly lit by over 1,000 lights (the Municipal Theater, by contrast, sported 2,300).²⁸ Electric lamps illuminated dark corners without the noxious fumes of gas, kerosene, or limelight, setting a theater apart from the dingier spaces associated with male audiences. More light also meant that a watchful eye could be kept on children, whose roaming and mishaps were contained by the theater's four walls. Associational theaters in this manner doubled as childcare centers where parents mingled and children played in a setting deemed respectable, even late into the night.²⁹

²⁷ “Grupo Filodramático Libertário,” *Battaglia*, Dec 17, 1905.

²⁸ Anuario estatístico de São Paulo, 1920, 286, 288.

²⁹ Peiss makes the same observation for New York City (*Cheap Amusements*, 150), and,

The presence of women among the audience was understood by many associational leaders to be crucial in ensuring this respectability. If women were more discerning judges of morality than men, as embodied in the character of Ida in Gori's *Primo Maggio*, then their willingness—and especially that of mothers—to sit through the evening's production was a sign of its suitability for the entire family. Women's presence in itself was also thought to uplift audiences: feminine temperance would serve as a model for rowdier male spectators and discourage questionable behaviors. A better behaved audience in turn encouraged the attendance of reputable women, in this circular manner reinforcing an association's good name. The result was, in principle, an evening that blended fun and decency in a mixed gender setting and, consequently, attracted even more spectators ripe for reform, as evident by the packed Salão Steinway on the night of the Seamstresses' League event in 1907. Fifteen years later, the power of female theatergoers to attract fellow spectators was still observed by the local Graphic Workers' Union (União dos Trabalhadores Gráficos de São Paulo). The group's periodical, *O Trabalhador Graphico* (The Graphic Worker) emphasized in 1922 the "highly valuable" participation of the "feminine element" in its *festas*, noting that recent "dancing festivals" had been particularly effective in rallying workers around the association's cause.³⁰ In the context of a male organization, then, political agency was not necessarily assigned to nor claimed by the female attendees of an associational soiree; above all, at least in the eyes of male union leaders, theirs was a supporting role.

although in the context of a commercial film screening, Jacob Penteado recalls in his memoirs how entire families would attend the Cinema Belém together before age restrictions were implemented (these restrictions are analyzed in Chapter 7). See Jacob Penteado, *Belenzinho, 1910: retrato de uma época* (São Paulo: Martins, 1962), 195.

³⁰ "festivaes dançantes," "o elemento feminino... o seu valiosissimo concurso." "Os nossos festivaes," *Graphico*, Nov 1922.

As implied by the inclusion of dancing in many theatrical *festas*, attendees were rarely expected to quietly sit in their seats the entire night. Socializing—swapping news with friends, splitting a snack, or twirling a partner—was a common, expected, and valued component of the activities possible inside associational theaters. Indeed, the interactive aspect of the *festa* was regularly highlighted by headings such as “Social Festival” (“Festival Social” in Portuguese and “Festa Sociale” in Italian), while the Graphic Workers’ Union regularly publicized its festivities for “members and their families” as “sociability gathering[s].”³¹ On one level, these ads imply, sociability was part of the entertainment, another form of wholesome amusement that satisfied what was perceived to be man’s basic needs as a social being and that, in turn, encouraged attendance. It was in this sense that the self-ascribed actor Romualdo Figueiredo defended associational theaters in the pages of *A Lanterna* as an essential “element of the social life of a people,” a space for sociability far more welcoming than the church.³² On another level, as analyzed in the chapter above, associational leaders additionally understood that striking up conversation was a means of building a community. Yet, for many groups, this community was not only about cementing bonds and strengthening networks; sociability was also about molding character, a crucial step in the “perfection of individuals,” to quote the October 16th Family Union Society (Sociedade União Familiar 16 de Outubro).³³ Embracing the scientific lingo of the day, the Society’s first newsletter issue explained that the interaction of “social molecules” would “push them toward the practice of courtesy, chivalry, all that charms, pleases, and

³¹ “Festival Social,” “Festa Sociale,” *Alba Rossa*, May 1, 1920; “reunião de sociabilidade,” “Festival de Propaganda,” *Graphico*, Nov 9, 1923.

³² “elemento da vida social de um povo,” Romualdo Figueiredo—(Artista dramático), “O Teatro e a Igreja,” *Lanterna*, Feb 28, 1916.

³³ “o aperfeiçoamento dos indivíduos, que são moléculas sociais... instiga-os á pratica de gentilezas, de cavalherismos, o que tudo encanta, deleita e educa.” “O Bogari,” *Bogari*, Aug 6, 1898.

educates.” To be in public, in other words, was to function as a small part of a harmonious whole, to learn how to be among others, a lesson that only experience could teach.

Such sociability was expected to occur before and in between (but ideally not during) performances, with many theaters offering rooms designated for the casual, momentary congregation of audiences. Some, like the Eros in Moóca, which doubled as a for-profit cinema, featured modest foyers that functioned as transitional spaces between street and auditorium, allowing audiences to likewise make the transition between pedestrian and spectator (Image 23). Larger, primarily commercial halls like the Colombo in Brás or the two Santana Theaters in downtown additionally boasted concession stands, bars, toiletry rooms, and multiple lobbies, all of which served as gathering spots for exchanging gossip and making acquaintances. Even in theaters free of such amenities, men, women, and children clustered in the aisles or, if seats were not attached, moved chairs aside to transform the auditorium into a fairground or dance hall, that wondrous arena for sociability that offered so much more than conversation. In this manner,

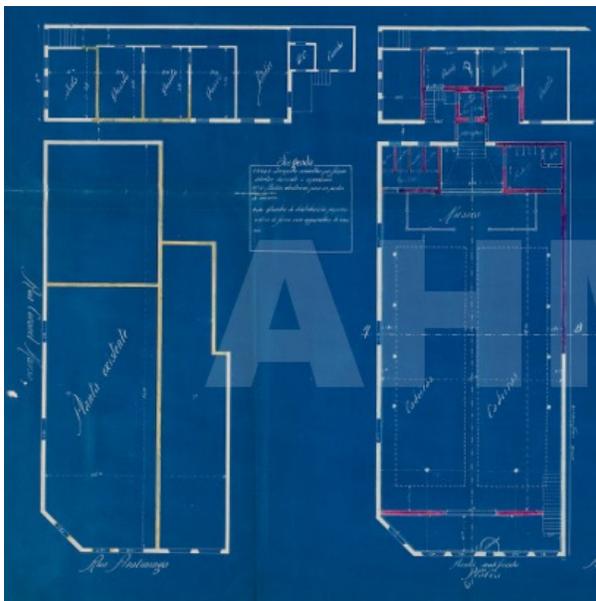


Image 23: Blueprint of renovations at the Eros, 1916. The addition of a small lobby to the Eros, under the ownership of Fernando Taddeo, is indicated by the red lines toward the bottom of the plan on the righthand side. December 6, 1916, *Salas de cinema de São Paulo*, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/bases/cine.htm>. On the left is the floor plan of the Eros before its renovation. The existence of a lobby in 1924 is noted by Alderman Luiz Fonseca in Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo: 1924* (São Paulo: Escolas Profissionaes Salesianas, 1924), 229.

associational theaters functioned as, to borrow Kathy Peiss's apt phrase, "extensions of street life," albeit with the comfort and security of a roof and four walls.³⁴

That comfort and security were key to establishing family-centered sociability. Just as some associational leaders strove to attract entire families through careful programming, they also often sought to ensure that *festa* socializing revolved around the family unit. To that end, comfort and security had more than physical applications; for some organizations, they were also the standards by which social interactions were regulated. In order to maintain peace and respect among its attendees, the 1902 statutes of the Artistic Recreation Society (Sociedade Recreio Artístico) prohibited "heated discussions about Politics and Religion"—the same two topics, as we saw in the previous chapter, that police censors paid attention to in their reviews of plays.³⁵ Even several labor unions, whose aims were arguably political, aimed to restrict conversations about politics and religion during what they termed recreational activities.³⁶ Noncontroversial sociability—socializing for socializing's sake—was thus for some groups at least as important as rallying audiences around a cause. While these limitations were in all likelihood difficult to enforce, the presence of women was probably thought to be of help; the presumed subjects of feminine conversation—fashion, family, and the lives of others—were hardly expected to incite riots, even if a few furrowed their brows at the sound of what they considered fruitless frivolity. Mixed-gender sociability was, in other words, perceived by some associational leaders as

³⁴ Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 149.

³⁵ "discussões acaloradas sobre Política e Religião, de modo a não perturbarem o bom funcionamento do Recreio Artístico." Sociedade Recreio Artístico, statutes, 14 Jan 1902, APESP Polícia, caixa 3002, cited in Uassyr de Siqueira, "Clubes recreativos: Organização para o lazer," in *Trabalhadores na cidade: cotidiano e cultura no Rio de Janeiro e em São Paulo, séculos XIX e XX*, ed. Elciene Azevedo et al. (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 2009), 284.

³⁶ Two examples can be found in the February 27, 1909, bylaws of the Granite Cutters' Union (União dos Canteiros em Pedra Granito do Estado de São Paulo) and the August 21, 1919, statutes of the Metallurgical Workers' Union (União dos Operários Metalúrgicos). See Siqueira, "Clubes recreativos," 284-285.

promoting respectability not only in terms of orderly behavior but also in terms of discussion topics that welcomed participants of all ages and backgrounds.

In preserving familial ties, organizers furthermore hoped to offer an alternative social life to that of commercial dance halls or the mostly male bar, ball court (*frontão*, for Basque pelota), and, increasingly, soccer field, not to mention underground gambling dens and brothels.³⁷ Not only would families be brought together after spending long workdays and leisure hours apart, but their members would emerge better human beings from this bonding. For one thing, from the viewpoint of some associational leaders, working men would be less tempted to waste hard-earned wages on cards and booze—condemnations of cocaine and opium abuse were reserved, at least among labor and anarchist circles, for bohemians and wealthier society men.³⁸ Many groups, including the Artistic Recreation Society, prohibited in their bylaws illicit diversions and instead offered structured social activities such as raffles, lotteries, auctions, and bingo.³⁹ These and other games provided the same thrill of unknown luck and rivalry but under the supervision of a wife, mother, or dutiful friend. Such supervision was also hoped to moderate the consumption of alcohol, if it was at all offered; like their prohibitionist counterparts around the world, many anarchist groups and recreational societies denounced the beverage for luring men away from their duties at home and in the workplace. If any organizer or participant did have qualms about the availability of alcohol and games at family-friendly events, at the very least

³⁷ Gambling and its effects on public life around the turn of the twentieth century are analyzed for Rio by Amy Chazkel, *Laws of Chance: Brazil's Clandestine Lottery and the Making of Urban Public Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

³⁸ A catalog of the city's vices in the early 1920s is offered by Sylvio Floreal, *Ronda da meia-noite: vícios, misérias e esplendores da cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2002). According to Nelson Schapochnik in the 2002 edition's introduction, Floreal was the pseudonym for Domingos Alexandre, a bricklayer from Santos whose education was largely formed in the evening classes of an anarchist center.

³⁹ Siqueira, "Clubes recreativos," 280.

these could be justified as fundraisers. After all, by purchasing a beer or a 1\$ raffle ticket—the cost of an overpriced glass of port at the more upscale Skating Rink—attendees were supporting a noble organization and its cause.⁴⁰

That same argument, among others, was made in defense of the “family dance,” a staple of anarchist and labor *festas* and the principal attraction of many recreational societies. In the early years of São Paulo’s labor movement, opponents of dancing questioned its instructive and political utility, arguing that the time and energy of young men and women could be better expended in the pursuit of social revolution.⁴¹ Rather than seeking pleasure like “beasts,” José Postigo in 1906 preached in the anarchist *A Terra Livre* (The Free Land), the youth of São Paulo should return to their studies, learn their rights, and find their dignity and self-worth.⁴² As the city’s dance halls multiplied and filled during the 1910s, critics also became alarmed by the sexual implications of what they perceived to be a passion-driven activity. Pressed bodies and the improvisational, fast-paced, and intimate movements of the maxixe, tango, and recently imported “tough dances” rankled the sensibilities of political elites and anarchists alike, with members from both groups denouncing dance as a perverting “gateway to prostitution.”⁴³ Indeed, the Smart Recreational Center (Centro Recreativo Smart) was so wary of dancing’s dangers—and reputation—that in 1920 it suspended member Marieta Araújo for swaying her hips to maxixe melodies in several Bexiga locales.⁴⁴

The 60-day suspension of Marieta Araújo reveals not only the kind of leisure and urban public that the Smart Recreational Center envisioned, but also how far consensus about the

⁴⁰ Vicente de Paula Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1981), 317; “Em favor d’ ‘A Plebe’ e d’ ‘A Comuna,’” *Plebe*, June 26, 1920.

⁴¹ For example, “O Baile,” *Terra*, Feb 23, 1907.

⁴² “bestas,” José Postigo, “Aos jovens,” *Terra*, Oct 23, 1906.

⁴³ “porta de prostituição,” Zejo Costa, “A Dança e o Foot-ball,” *Plebe*, Oct 30, 1917.

⁴⁴ Siqueira, “Clubes recreativos,” 299.

family-friendly form had spread. Unlike José Postigo and his anarchist colleagues, the directorate of the Smart was comprised primarily of women.⁴⁵ Moreover, they were women who identified as Brazilians of color and whose activities were regularly covered in São Paulo's black press. As we saw in the chapter above, many leaders of the Smart and other groups featured in this press were concerned with asserting respectability. Respectability, their reasoning went, would ensure their group members' right to gather in the city's public spaces without government or other disruption and to be treated as individuals with dignity, as full members of the urban public despite the pigment of their skin and their lack of legal citizenship. For those contributing to São Paulo's black press in the late 1910s, respectability meant the avoidance in public of all immoral acts, most notably kissing and "licentious" dancing.⁴⁶ Such censure was reinforced by the bylaws of the Smart and other associations of color, which included qualities like "good civil and moral conduct" in their stipulations for membership.⁴⁷ The fact that almost identical wording also appeared in the bylaws of immigrant groups adds another layer to the story: it reveals the extent to which Marieta Araújo's suspension was in part a matter of class. Organizers in both Afro-Brazilian and immigrant communities were seeking to distinguish themselves from the multitude, to defy the negative stereotypes and accusations aimed at their race or nationality by making claims to a higher rung on the social ladder. In São Paulo's black press, this rung was termed "the class of color," a label that, at least through the mid-1920s, the Smart Recreational Center and its peers adopted to characterize their membership base.

⁴⁵ "Pelos Associações," *Bandeirante*, Aug 1918, 3.

⁴⁶ Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, 40 (see especially fn. 67).

⁴⁷ Siqueira, 296. For Federação dos Homens de Cor de São Paulo, 1914.

At bottom, then, the “politics of respectability,” to borrow Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham’s term for the United States, was about keeping up appearances.⁴⁸ Respectability depended on a common understanding of what propriety entailed, an understanding that necessarily extended beyond the affiliates of the Smart Recreational Center. Dancing, kissing, or drinking were most problematic when visible, when judged, and for many of those judging in the mainstream press in 1920, maxixe was a problem. The dance incorporated close embraces, dips, and complicated hand maneuvers that, within Bexiga’s dance halls, scandalized and mesmerized journalists, politicians, and foreigners in Brazil.⁴⁹ Maxixe’s libidinous reputation was so strong, in fact, that in 1907 the Brazilian Minister of War banned the music from official occasions.⁵⁰ Seeking to explain this raw sensuality, many Paulistanos looked for blame beyond the boundaries of their city. Some, with an eye to Argentine tango, pointed to prostitution, and especially to the brothels of Rio de Janeiro. Others, like São Paulo’s leading newspaper, *O Estado de São Paulo*, went further back in time and outside the urban realm, denouncing maxixe as “the genuine product of slave quarters.”⁵¹

The *Estado* writer was not entirely wrong; maxixe as a musical form is thought to have emerged in the 1870s out of the blend of Afro-diasporic and European genres performed throughout the country. More troubling for members of the Smart were the article’s insinuations that such an origin could only be backward, “barbaric,” even dangerous. Maxixe, the *Estado* warned, was an epidemic that left its “aristocratic, fine, and delicate” victims “extremely

⁴⁸ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 187, 193.

⁴⁹ John Charles Chasteen, *National Rhythms, African Roots: The Deep History of Latin American Popular Dance* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 17.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵¹ “De aristocrática, fina e delicada, se fez plebeíssima, sensual e bruta.... produto genuíno da senzala,” “A Sociedade: As danças e os bailes,” *Estado*, April 17, 1920, 4.

plebeian, sensual, and brutish,” and the newspaper’s lament demonstrates not only the gendered and classed dimensions of defining respectability—evident in the Seamstresses’ ball, as well as the Smart’s chic name—but also its racialization.⁵² By intertwining the dance’s immorality with its African roots, with what in the imagination of a large number of Paulistanos were mysterious rituals and carnal celebrations, the *Estado* was reinforcing existing notions of race-based cultural inferiority that all too often translated into other realms.⁵³

For Marieta Araújo, these accusations were compounded by her context. By entering the dance halls of lower-class Bexiga, and especially by doing so as a dark-skinned female, Marieta Araújo had positioned herself as a *maxixeira*, a desperately poor, “public woman” who relied on maxixe and men to survive. It was a classification nearly impossible to escape: in the popular imagination and on many stages, *maxixeiras* were equated with the *mulata* temptress, a caramel-colored, voluptuous siren both admired and bemoaned in countless songs and *revistas* of the time.⁵⁴ In Marieta Araújo’s embodiment of maxixe, the form acquired its most licentious connotation in the eyes of others. No wonder, then, that despite maxixe’s brief ballroom success abroad and its popularity among a set of elite Paulistanos, the Smart’s board strongly opposed the dance’s adoption among its members.⁵⁵ Like Araújo, their own visible intersection of race, gender, and class in all likelihood sensitized the group’s female directors to any potential threat

⁵² “De aristocrática, fina e delicada, se fez plebeíssima, sensual e bruta.... produto genuíno da senzala,” “A Sociedade: As danças e os bailes,” *Estado*, April 17, 1920, 4.

⁵³ For example, several Afro-Paulistano festivities were banned by the Catholic Church as a result. See José Geraldo Vinci de Moraes, *As sonoridades paulistanas: a música popular na cidade de São Paulo, final do século XIX ao início do século XX* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1997), 99, 101.

⁵⁴ The sensual pleasure uniquely attributed to the *mulata* is explored through Rio’s *revistas* in Tiago de Melo Gomes, *Um espelho no palco: identidades sociais e massificação da cultura no teatro de revista dos anos 1920* (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 2004), 250–254.

⁵⁵ The history of maxixe’s circulation and sanitation overseas is examined by Micol Seigel in the second chapter of *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

to their and affiliates' virtues, and, by extension, to the reputation of the club and the race it represented.

If maxixe was among some circles an impermissible pastime, more than a few organizations were willing and eager to host dances by promising a morally acceptable setting. These were "family dances" (*bailes familiares*), balls advertised as such in the labor and immigrant presses and that, even before dance halls dotted São Paulo, were designed to encourage the attendance of women and children. In the eastern neighborhood of Belenzinho circa 1910, organizers of the International Pearl Recreational and Dancing Society (*Sociedade Recreativa e Dançante Pérola Internacional*) donned formalwear to deliver invitations to families in their homes, directly situating the upcoming ball within virtuous domesticity.⁵⁶ Deliverers' selectivity in attire and participants also served to distinguish the Pearl's events from the bedlam of the bar, equating from the start the group's events with respectability. During the dance itself, as the journalist Jacob Penteadó recalls in his memoirs, the musical selection was limited to Viennese and Brazilian waltzes, polkas, quadrilles, and the occasional schottische or mazurka, all of which followed set patterns and minimized physical contact. As at the Seamstresses' event, male dancers ceremoniously asked waiting ladies for the honor of a dance, and their partners carefully concealed bosoms and ankles.

To be sure, these measures did not always keep scandal at bay. One case recounted by Penteadó involved a young man from outside the neighborhood who sought more intimacy than that granted by the music. Again, maxixe was to blame, at least in the memory of Penteadó, but this time no young woman's reputation was tarnished. Indeed, through a succession of steps, decorum was quickly enforced. The first step was awareness by elders in the hall, by

⁵⁶ Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 173-176.

“respectable daddies and mommies [who] began to murmur and exchange reproaching glances at the sight of that shameless man.”⁵⁷ Parents’ worried gazes translated into action on the part of the designated bouncer (*fiscal*), who, with the approval of the club’s president, warned the offending lad: “Young man, moderate yourself. This here is a family dance.”⁵⁸ The advice fell on deaf ears, however. Left with no other choice, the *fiscal* forcibly removed the bold guest from the dance floor and, in the hall’s garden, conveyed with words and fist that the Pearl was no wild dance hall (*frege*). While Penteadó’s account was most likely embellished, his repeated distinction between “public dances” and the sociability of associational theaters is telling. If urbanity made possible uncomfortable encounters with strangers, the preservation of familial bonds within the context of a recreational club set in motion mechanisms—an unwritten protocol—for protecting members’ virtue.

In Penteadó’s eyes, this level of “rigor” united the members of the Pearl into “a single family,” a tightly knit web that ensured the preservation of each of its nodes.⁵⁹ A decade later, a reviewer in the anarchist *A Plebe* expressed a similar feeling of being “as if among family, among brothers.”⁶⁰ This celebration of fraternity was echoed elsewhere in the newspaper’s pages, as well as in those of other periodicals at the time. In the heyday of the Old Republic and in the immediate aftermath of World War I, the ideals of the French Revolution—liberty, equality, fraternity—were widely extolled and applied to advance a number of causes, including, within São Paulo’s black press, cross-racial fraternity.⁶¹ As São Paulo’s population rapidly grew

⁵⁷ “Os respeitáveis papais e mães começaram a murmurar e a trocar olhares de reprovação, ante aquela pouca-vergonha.” Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 175.

⁵⁸ “Môco, procure moderar-se. Isto aqui é baile familiar.” Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 175.

⁵⁹ “uma família,” Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 176.

⁶⁰ “a harmonia e a boa ordem... alto espirito de moralidade e... alto sentimento de sociabilidade. É como se estivesse em família, entre irmãos.” “A festa Pró-‘A Plebe,’” *Plebe*, March 27, 1920.

⁶¹ Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion*, 40–45.

and diversified, then, it was familial intimacy that served as a model for knitting together a cohesive urban society. All in principle were welcome to join this fabric, that is, all who were capable of expressing in a public setting what a family ought to enable and ought to be: the “high spirit of morality” and “high feelings of sociability” that, according to the *Plebe* reviewer, had fostered “harmony and good order” at the newspaper’s 1920 soiree.

By programming socializing around the family unit, complete with parental supervision, associational leaders were able to foster this combination of morality and sociability, and in turn offer Paulistanos a respectable space for leisurely, mixed-gender interactions not tied to the church. In this sense, associational theaters and the interactions they made possible helped transform, at least in theory, the anonymous and impassioned crowd into a rational, upright, and cooperative family. While, as we saw in Chapter 3, this family often failed to—and rarely was intended to—span multiple nationalities, classes, races, neighborhoods, or political ideas, most organizers nevertheless hoped that out of many families there would be one. Some also hoped that out of many families there would be more; Penteado noted that the parent-approved dance was the setting in which many budding youths met their future spouses.⁶² Family-friendly sociability, in other words, tamed and thus legitimated romantic encounters, making the associational theater the ideal environment for perpetuating a society founded on the family.

The family-friendly stage

The explicitly family-friendly atmosphere of many associations’ events legitimated additional actions that in any other public setting would have raised eyebrows. While public

⁶² Penteado, *Belenzinho*, 174. A century and a half earlier, Jean-Jacques Rousseau made a similar observation, praising balls as more wholesome and cost-effective alternatives to the theater precisely because they encouraged the creation of new families. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter to D’Alembert and Writings for the Theater*, ed. Allan David Bloom, et al. (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2004), 344.

performance by women and children was frowned upon in many circles, inside a theater and among the company of friends and family, children and women of the stage were distinguished from children and women of the street. In more elegant halls such as the Germânia and Steinway, children, and especially young women, exhibited their talent at the piano or violin to the ears and eyes of their families as well as strangers. Typically organized by music teachers like Luigi Chiaffarelli or Alfredo Belardi, these performances often benefited not only the young musicians in their development, but also educational institutions such as the School of Arts and Crafts (Lyceo de Artes e Officios) and the Women's Mutual Aid and Educational Association (Associação Feminina Beneficente e Instructiva de São Paulo).⁶³ These dual aims, as opposed to the monetary pursuits of professional performers, helped justify public demonstrations by children. So did the fact that the musicians lived at home with their families—not with entertainers of questionable backgrounds and lifestyles—and dabbled in performance strictly under the guidance of a qualified expert and the supervision of an older relative. There was usually no doubt, in other words, that children's recitals were instructive and wholesome experiences. This was "culture," a set of skills and habits whose public display was soon also encouraged in the pages of magazines like *A Cigarra* (The Cicada), which in 1922 ran a competition for São Paulo's "most cultured woman."⁶⁴

If the performance of classical music is a more obviously innocuous activity in the eyes of today's reader, it was not the only situation in which children and women shared the limelight with men, especially by the late 1910s. In 1920, an amateur troupe named The Modest Ones (Os Modestos) occupied the Celso Garcia's stage alongside several young adults, the majority of

⁶³ "14^o Concerto da Escola de Musica," program, 1895, APESP, Fundo Alfredo Mesquita, IHGSP 023, Dossiê documentos de Esther Mesquita; "Registo de Arte: Audição de violino e piano," *Correio Paulistano*, Oct 31, 1912; *Vida Moderna*, Jan 1, 1904, 8.

⁶⁴ "mulher mais culta," *Cigarra*, Oct 1, 1922.

them female.⁶⁵ The group's name, as well as its decision to forego a post-performance social dance, more than hinted at the *feira*'s pretension to propriety. Within this safe frame, the door was opened to the poetic recitations of "Senhoritas" Virgínia Palácios and Atea Tommasini, as well as Senhorita Ida Meneghetti's arias and folksongs. Like the Steinway recitals, the evening was billed as a fundraising and educational event, a "Large Artistic and Literary Festival" that in this case would support the anarchist magazine *A Obra* and develop performers and audiences into free-thinking individuals. Instead of Schumann and Chopin, the young ladies and their male counterparts used the music of Verdi and the words of several Brazilian and Portuguese poets to urge "Rebellion" ("Rebeldia" by Ricardo Gonçalves) and denounce institutional "Vampires" ("Os vampiros" by Raimundo Reis).

Although women were in São Paulo a rare presence among anarchist leadership, through poetry, drama, and music they were at least able to take to the stage for a political cause, not to mention perform and rehearse for hours alongside men outside of their intimate circles. This was no minor feat: a decade prior to The Modest Ones' *feira*, women's presence both onstage and in political gatherings had been opposed by a number of vocal anarchists. In the name of respectability, editorials in the anarchist press of the early 1910s ironically echoed local lawmakers' rhetoric in their insistence that women remain "priestesses of the home, the priestesses of morality."⁶⁶ If anarchists were attempting to legitimize their politics in the eyes of conservative Catholic workers or in those of an aspiring middle class, the equation of home with morality also had its practical motivation: women's cheaper labor, as Joel Wolfe points out, was viewed by many militant men in São Paulo and other urban centers as detrimental to their own

⁶⁵ "Grande Festival Artístico e Literário," *Plebe*, Sep 11, 1920.

⁶⁶ Belém Sárrage de Ferrero, *Lanterna*, April 22, 1911, cited in Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men*, 12.

employment.⁶⁷ At the same time, feminine domesticity was in others' eyes a menace to the anarchist cause, a magnet that pulled potential activists away from marches and meetings.⁶⁸ From this perspective, the participation of mothers and wives, even if only as artistic muses, could be beneficial in getting the entire family aboard the train to anarchist revolution.

It was with this end in mind that children likewise found room to perform at politically oriented *festas*. In some cases, they did so as members of an Italian philodramatic society like L'Attore Infantil (literally, "The Child Actor").⁶⁹ In 1903, the latter pulled together a production of Pietro Gori's *Primo Maggio* at the Casino Penteado, a small theater adjoined to the Penteado Factory in Brás. Perhaps the innocence of its interpreters rendered the play less hostile to supervisors in the factory next door, or perhaps the latter dismissed theater as harmless entertainment, as merely a valve for releasing the tensions of city and industrial life. Either way, the group's young actors must have found emotional support in the familiar faces watching and applauding, as well as acoustical support for the soft child voice—a common challenge before electric amplification—inside the relatively intimate indoor space. In venues like the Édén Teatro in Brás and the Celso Garcia Children, children could also often be found on stage alone, reciting monologues and poetry.⁷⁰ The latter theater hosted several children's performances to raise funds for the city's new Modern School, an institution that in turn encouraged pupils' onstage presence. In 1915, for example, two of São Paulo's Modern Schools joined forces for a packed *festa* at the Oberdan in Brás. A student choir sang anarchist tunes, including local

⁶⁷ Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men*, 12; Joel Wolfe, "Anarchist Ideology, Worker Practice: The 1917 General Strike and the Formation of Sao Paulo's Working Class," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 71, no. 4 (November 1, 1991): 818.

⁶⁸ In 1900, the Italian anarchist periodical *Il Diritto* called married women "an enemy of the social movement" because they presumably persuaded husbands to "desert the struggle." Cited in Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men*, 13.

⁶⁹ "Pequenas notas," *Amigo*, April 11, 1903.

⁷⁰ "Festa Social," *Luta Proletaria*, Feb 1, 1908; "Pro-Escola Moderna," *Lanterna*, Jan 22, 1910.

anarchist Neno Vasco's "Song of the Workers" (Canto dos Operários), and boys and girls recited poems, all prepared under the tutelage of their teachers at school.⁷¹ Audiences and performers alike were invited to join in for hymns titled "Woman" (A Mulher), "To the Little Children" (Às Criancinhas), and "Schooling" (A Instrução), which reaffirmed children's and women's place onstage and within the anarchist movement.

Among some circles, associational theaters offered women a site in which not only to sing the praises of a cause, but also to advance it. Like Ida in Gori's *Primo Maggio*, women were seen by several groups as essential agents of change outside the home as well as within it. In 1904 at the Eldorado, a few blocks from what were still barely the foundations of the Municipal Theater, a founding father of Brazilian anarchism, Oreste Ristori, expatiated on the necessity of women's participation in the reformation of human society.⁷² For Ristori, that participation remained largely grounded in women's roles as mothers and educators, and it was in these capacities that women in São Paulo's associations first made their way to the stage not merely as performers but as leaders.⁷³ Within the anarchist movement, Elisabetta Valentim could in 1902 be found at the head of Bom Retiro's Teatro Andrea Maggi, lecturing as part of the first anniversary celebrations of the Germinal Anarchist Educational Circle (Circolo Educativo Libertário Germinal).⁷⁴ In the same spirit, Josephina Stefani Bertachi shared a few words with spectators at the Celso Garcia in 1910 in her position as an organizer of the Ladies' Society for Modern Education (Sociedade Feminina de Educação Moderna).⁷⁵ Bertachi's brief

⁷¹ "A nossa festa," *Início*, Sep 4, 1915.

⁷² *Amigo*, May 14, 1904.

⁷³ In this sense, Joel Wolfe's depiction of anarchist conservatism around the issue of gender, including the resistance to female leadership, cannot be viewed as the entire.

⁷⁴ Francisco Foot Hardman, *Nem pátria, nem patrão!: vida operária e cultura anarquista no Brasil*, 3rd ed. (São Paulo: UNESP, 2002), 314.

⁷⁵ "Sociedade Feminina de Educação Moderna," *Lanterna*, April 30, 1910.

address, however, was overshadowed by Ricardo Figueiredo's lengthier speech on women and free thought.

The celebration by men, ironically, of women's significance to public life was hardly restricted to anarchists or proponents of Modern Schools. *O Bandeirante* (The Pioneer, in reference to São Paulo's iconic colonial frontiersman), a monthly paper that advocated for the "class of men of color," applauded in 1918 the accomplishments of several groups largely directed by women, including the Smart Recreational Center, the Elite Flower of Liberty (Elite Flor da Liberdade), and the Lily of the Youth Recreational Guild (Gremio Recreativo Lyrio Flor da Mocidade)—all names that spoke to their members' claims to respectability and, in turn, to a burgeoning middle class.⁷⁶ Yet, while a female officer of the Elite Flower was invited to speak at a commemorative event for the activist Joaquim Gambará, the toasts and talks at the Smart's anniversary gala were confined to male orators. As in the Modern Education soiree, the gala's speeches addressed the role and successes of "Woman," and, as was saw above, all of the Smart's officers were indeed female—that is, all except the organization's president. The third group, the Lily of the Youth, was inaugurated with a ball, and no orations were mentioned by *O Bandeirante*. Still, Afro-Paulistanas did occasionally find their way into the spotlight as speakers, as in the case of Luiza de Lima, whom *O Bandeirante* referred to as the lone female orator (*oradora*) of the May 6th Recreational Guild (Grêmio Recreativo 6 de Maio).

If many of São Paulo's anarchist and black associations restricted in the name of respectability the political leadership of female members, plenty of Paulistanas found other contexts in which to stand atop the soapbox. As exemplified by the Seamstresses' League, female employees were by 1907 active in organizing for better working conditions, often in the

⁷⁶ "Joaquim Gambará," "Pelos Associações," *Bandeirante*, Aug 1918.

form of commissions specific to their place of work. Over the next decade, the sight of women delivering labor-related speeches became more common throughout the city, although it must have still been unusual enough in 1915 to capture the attention of a *Cigarra* photographer (Image 24). Still, it was female textile workers who initiated the 1917 strikes that eventually shut down much of the city, and as a significant portion of the industrial labor force, women would continue



Image 24: “The Festival of Labor.” Photograph, *A Cigarra*, May 11, 1915, 12. The sight of a woman worker addressing a seemingly endless sea of hats, both masculine and feminine, probably left a strong impression on the photographer and affluent readers of *A Cigarra*. The photograph’s heading refers to the May 1st rallies and celebrations that annually crowded the streets of many Latin American and European cities.

to play a major role in the numerous strikes and May Day rallies that followed.⁷⁷ In this sense, associational theaters were not unique incubators of political female leadership, although, as the case above of Elisabetta Valentim illustrates, they were crucial spaces for Paulistanas' earliest forays into militant speechmaking.

By the mid 1920s, women were with greater frequency playing leading roles in planning, overseeing, and speaking at associational events in São Paulo's theaters. A pioneering figure in this shift was Maria Lacerda de Moura, the educator and daughter of freethinkers from the neighboring state of Minas Gerais.⁷⁸ An amateur musician and painter, Moura was active in organizing arts events, which she used to promote educational reform and women's rights. After moving to São Paulo, she also contributed to *A Plebe* and other anarchist papers, penned several treatises and monographs, and in 1923 founded her own magazine on "art and thinking," *Renascença* (Renaissance). Her writings served as her entry into the lecturing circuit, the span of which encompassed feminist societies, anarchist circles, and the all-male Printers' Union, which in 1922 lauded the "very beautiful speech" given by the "illustrious author."⁷⁹ Associational theaters in this manner offered Moura and, gradually, a limited number of other women a protected space in which to project their own voice so that it could reach the ears of both men and women, rich and poor, young and old.

Ironically, at the same time that family-friendly associational activities affirmed theaters as spaces appropriate for women's bodies and voices, women's presence onstage, whether as orators or performers, did in some ways challenge the notion that such events would in turn promote familial union. Moura herself never married, spent time on a commune, and ardently

⁷⁷ Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men*, 16.

⁷⁸ Edgar Rodrigues, *Os libertários: José Oiticica, Maria Lacerda de Moura, Neno Vasco, Fabio Luz* (Rio de Janeiro: VJR, 1993), 67.

⁷⁹ "ilustre escriptora... bellissima conferencia," "Os nossos festivaes," *Graphico*, Nov 1922.

championed female financial and intellectual independence so that matrimony would be a choice and not an obligation. Her role in the public eye was motivated by anarchism's emphasis on self-development, on the need to participate in public life as a thinking and expressing individual. According to some leading anarchists, and as the previous chapter elucidates, such individualism needed not be confined to the explicit articulation of revolutionary ideas: women and children who acted, sang, and played were likewise developing their ability to think and feel freely. Stepping onto the stage, placing one's body and voice under public scrutiny, in other words, was part of the process of self-perfection, a process that did not necessitate the family.

Conclusion

If anarchist self-perfection did not demand the family, women's membership in the urban public did. Surrounded by her family, in what many Paulistanos assumed to be her natural role as mother and guardian of the hearth, the married woman's reputation remained unquestioned. Under the protective gaze of relatives, the eligible young woman's virtue remained intact. In both cases, the respectability attained through the presence of families made it possible for a woman to be in public without being a "public woman." As this chapter has argued, a key setting in which women emerged under the public eye was that of associational theaters, halls in which a variety of organizations provided affordable leisure grounded in the family. Whether ensuring that the performances onstage were morally and aesthetically appropriate for women and children or hosting activities that encouraged familial sociability, associational leaders transformed theaters into family-friendly spaces. It was in these spaces, and not the cafes and salons of the Habermasian public sphere, that a wide range of Paulistanas grew accustomed to the crowd, and a few grew accustomed to facing the crowd as amateur performers and orators. By no means, however, was this transition necessarily fueled by a desire for female emancipation

or other social or political change. In fact, it was often by employing public practices that elite reformers or religious leaders deemed orderly, that is, by subscribing to middle and upper-class respectability, that groups like the Seamstresses' League made public leisure accessible and appealing to working women and their children. In the next chapter, we shall see how a different set of theater producers took advantage of this link between socioeconomic aspiration and the public assertion of morality to similarly encourage the attendance of families. The establishment of the family as the urban public's building block, we will soon discover, was hardly the monopoly of São Paulo's associations.

Ch. 5 The Family as Profitable Unit, 1900-1916

It was February 18, 1911, and the entire neighborhood of Belenzinho was eagerly awaiting the opening of the first cinema in the rapidly developing region between Brás and Penha. According to the journalist Jacob Penteadó, writing of his childhood, the cinema's operator had begun distributing flyers days in advance, and a band stationed in front of the hall's doors drew in additional passersby. At the demands of the swelling crowd, the band changed its tune, mixing into its repertoire military marches, polkas, and maxixes. Before long, couples formed and the "select audience," as the Cinema Belém's flyers characterized them, erupted into a "wild *rebolado*," a fervent dance party on the sidewalk. At the manager's signal, the doors were flung open and spectators "invaded" the auditorium, hastily claiming unassigned seats. A few of those who had purchased admission to the "general" tier, the standing-room space that ringed the parterre (Image 25), attempted to grab a parterre chair as well, but their trespassing was cut short by the security guard's wallop. "The inauguration of the Cinema Belém..." Penteadó would later conclude, "constituted, truly, a sensational event for the period."¹

The rambunctious chaos of the Belém was a far cry from the respectability with which the Seamstresses' League's ball had begun four years earlier. It was also a different tone from that of the 1923 *feira* of the Café Employees' Union, or at least different from how the union's

¹ "A inauguração do Cinema Belém... constituiu, na verdade, um acontecimento sensacional para a época.... E tanto entusiasmaram a 'seleta assistência' que os pares foram surgindo, aos poucos, iniciando um furioso rebolado, ali mesmo, na calçada." Jacob Penteadó, *Belenzinho, 1910: retrato de uma época* (São Paulo: Martins, 1962), 189. Additional information is provided by José Inácio de Melo Souza, "Belém," *Salas de cinema de São Paulo: Inventário dos espaços de sociabilidade cinematográfica da cidade de São Paulo (1895-1929)*, 2009, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/bases/cine.htm>.

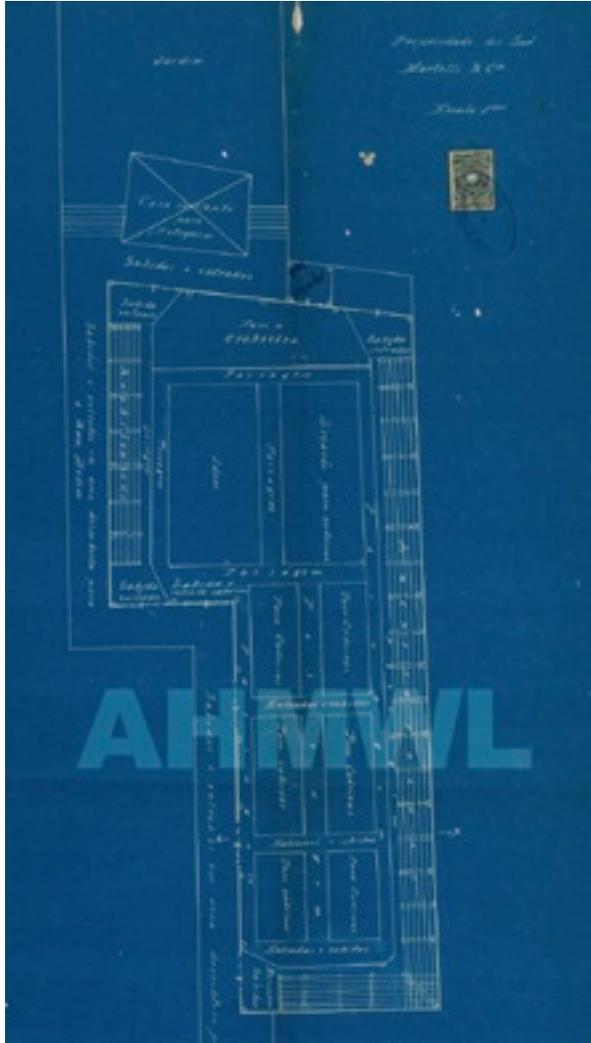
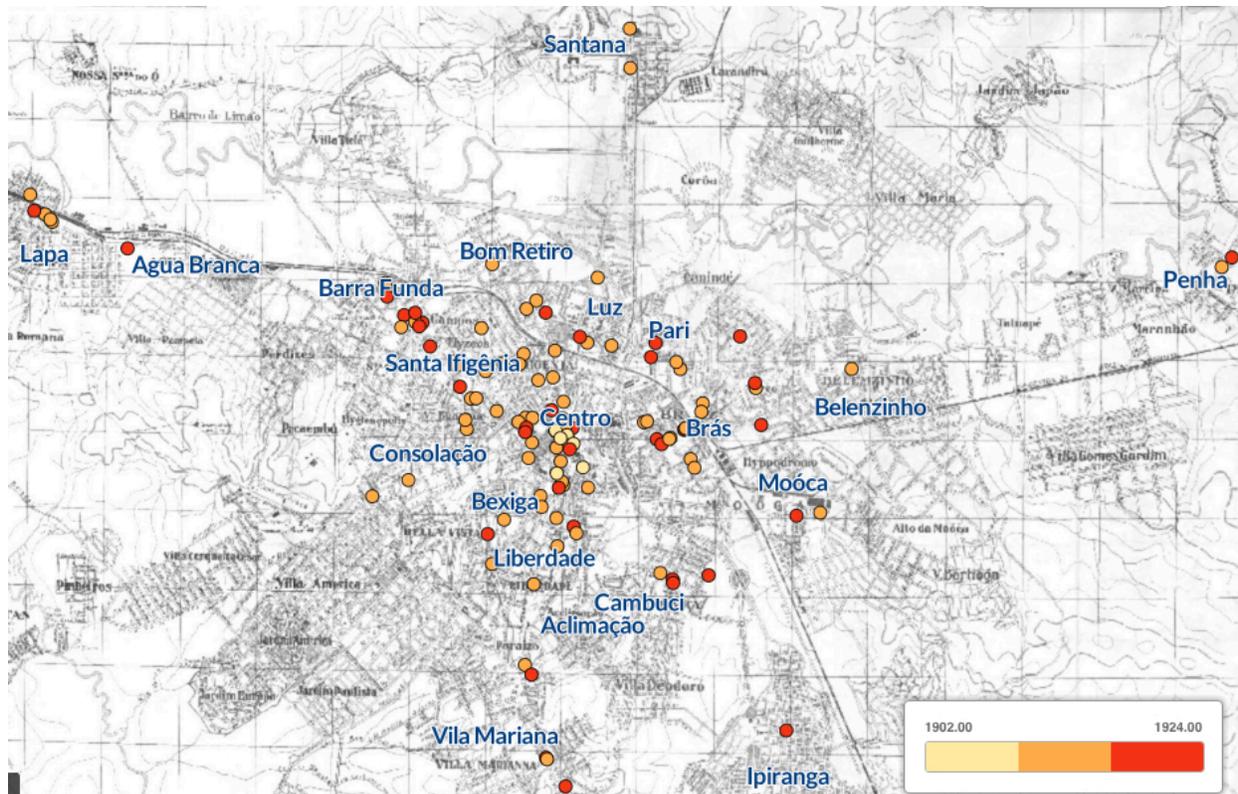


Image 25: Floor plan of the Cinema Belém. Submitted to the Prefecture by Martelli e Cia. near the end of 1910 (*Salas de cinema de São Paulo*, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/bases/cine.htm>). The set of closely spaced lines surrounding the cinema's center represent the steps on which “general” spectators stood.

leaders chose to record the celebration. To be sure, as Penteadó noted, the Belém was not without its *fiscal*, that preserver of order whom we saw in the chapter above meting justice at an International Pearl dance. Yet, the duty of the Belém's *fiscal* was above all to maintain financial order, to ensure that customers received the product for which they paid—and that the film exhibitor received his payment. Preserving a minimal peace, in other words, was necessary for preserving profits, and this formula, combined with enticing programming and attractive architecture, must have worked: if the Belém was no Steinway Hall, it nevertheless secured the enthusiastic patronage of Belenzinho's families for several years to come.

How did commercial theaters like the Belém succeed as venues for public, familial leisure, especially in the face of frequent criticism by municipal, religious, and associational leaders? This chapter begins to answer that question by examining theater entrepreneurs, the men who owned, financed, or organized entertainment within the city’s burgeoning commercial auditoriums. Specifically, we will look at the strategies that these businessmen used to appeal to different publics, including a theater’s architecture, programming, and additional services and activities, all of which were ballyhooed by entrepreneurs through advertising. By 1911, posters and handouts featuring performers’ images and programs could be found in many corners of the city, and most theater fronts were buried under enormous billboards proclaiming the entertainment inside (see, for example, Image 29). The first installation of a film projector in 1907 intensified the competition for spectators, initiating what I call São Paulo’s theater rush—the frenzied moment between 1907 and 1914 in which nearly one hundred theaters opened their doors, and in which a third of those doors closed within a matter of months (Map 10). Moreover, as the state capital’s population boomed, so did a business sector that offered for sale what contemporaries called “diversions”: every night, the handful of halls featuring films or live acts or both vied for Paulistanos’ purses against dozens of cafés, bars, shops, and a growing variety of sports centers.

In competing for those coins, São Paulo’s theater entrepreneurs offered new activities and spaces for public life, and also new arrangements for the urban public. From the businessman’s viewpoint, the urban public meant a consuming public, an audience willing to exchange a *mil-réis* (or several) for a few hours of programmed diversion. Not all consumers were equal, however. Whether catering to as broad of an audience as possible or tailoring their wares to a specific group, cultural producers categorized and responded to spectators’ age, gender, class,



Map 10: Commercial theaters (1890-1924) according to year in which inaugurated. Yellow indicates theaters established before 1905; orange, 1905-1912; red, 1913-1924. In this case, the period of most intense development and outward expansion is that around 1910. Choropleth equal values map generated in CartoDB. Basemap: “Planta da Cidade de S. Paulo,” Rio de Janeiro, 1924. Interactive map can be accessed at https://aialalevy.carto.com/viz/78fb1508-5045-11e6-b7b9-0ecd1babbde5/public_map.

nationality, and race.² Like the legislators who envisioned theaters as socializing spaces and the associational leaders who saw such a task as legitimizing their mission and existence, some theater entrepreneurs donned a moralizing cloak in order to encourage the attendance of women and children. Ironically, in other words, by embracing moral and aesthetic standards that they hoped would appeal to entire families, and thus to a greater number of spectators, businessmen were buying into and further propagating urban reformers’ worldview—at least on the surface.

² By no means, though, were theater entrepreneurs employing the sophisticated marketing techniques developed in the mid-twentieth century. For more on advertising in São Paulo in the early twentieth century, see Marcia Padilha Lotito, *A cidade como espetáculo: publicidade e vida urbana na São Paulo dos anos 20* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2001).

What theater entrepreneurs did not promise, as many lawmakers and associations did, was an educational experience. If in 1874 Provincial Deputy Joaquim Celidônio defended São Paulo's first commercial theater, the Provisorio, as an essential medium for women's intellectual and moral progress, the Provisorio's impresarios were more concerned with the progress of their purses.³

One outcome of entrepreneurs' moralistic appeals, as this chapter will explain, was the distinction between a familial and a male, homosocial public. At the same time that some impresarios organized family-friendly productions, others specialized in adult entertainment, with "adult" implying teenage and grown men. While, on one hand, the establishment of family-friendly theaters enabled women and children of all backgrounds to be entertained in the company of both acquaintances and strangers, on the other hand, this demarcation implied that any theater not designated family-friendly was beyond the virtuous woman's or child's reach. In this sense, theaters provided a means by which assumptions about women's and children's need for moral protection could divide São Paulo's public across class boundaries; as more Paulistanas participated in commercialized leisure, working-class women became less immune to bourgeois gendering of public spaces and activities. Still, standards for family-friendly content, architecture, and sociability varied from one hall to another. In this manner, the city's commercial theaters stretched elite urban reformers' notions of what constituted wholesome recreation, that is, what constituted the activities and behaviors of an urban public.

This dual effect of both broadening the Paulistano public and, in many spaces, segregating its parts complicates historians' explanations that the commercialization of culture resulted in the "democratization" of public life. Arguing against the criticism of Theodor

³ Assembleia Legislativa Provincial, *Annaes das Sessões da Assembléa Legislativa da Provincia de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Provincia de São Paulo, 1874), 467.

Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and their successors, recent scholars of theater, leisure, and visual culture have pointed to the efforts of private investors and managers that helped widen the consumer base for a variety of cultural forms around the world.⁴ At the turn of the twentieth century, it was profiteers who pioneered new technologies, genres, marketing strategies, and fiscal practices that enabled and depended on sizeable audiences, thus ushering in the era of mass culture.⁵ Yet, to borrow Vanessa Schwartz's conceptualization, mass culture was a two-sided

⁴ Two relevant cases that are particularly well analyzed are the rise of provincial theaters in pre-Revolutionary France and the industrialization of samba in Brazil: Lauren R. Clay, *Stagestruck: The Business of Theater in Eighteenth-Century France and Its Colonies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 11; Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 11; and Marc A. Hertzman, *Making Samba: A New History of Race and Music in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 8. A recent defense of cultural commercialization is Tyler Cowen, *In Praise of Commercial Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). Adorno's and Horkheimer's argument is laid out in "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1987), 120–61.

⁵ The broad appeal of "amusements" in the United States during this period is examined by John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); David Nasaw, *Going out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1993); Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987). Much of the literature on the rise of a consumer culture follows Peiss in connecting consumption to the growing visibility of women from across classes in urban public spaces. A few examples that also explain how business practices resulted in particular customers are William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993); Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain, eds., *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850-1939* (Ashgate, 1999); Monica Neve, *Sold!: Advertising and the Bourgeois Female Consumer in Munich, 1900 - 1914* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010); Alys Eve Weinbaum, ed., *The Modern Girl around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); and, for cinema specifically, Shelley Stamp, *Movie-Struck Girls: Women and Motion Picture Culture after the Nickelodeon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). For a thorough, if now dated, bibliography of gender and consumption, see Victoria De Grazia and Ellen Furlough, eds., *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (University of California Press, 1996). Finally, within the history of Latin America, analyses of nascent consumer cultures can be found in Joseph Arbena, *Sport and Society in Latin America: Diffusion, Dependency, and the Rise of*

phenomenon defined by not only the consumption of a greater choice of goods on unprecedented scales but also their production.⁶ In other words, it was not just the urban spectator—Schwartz’s (and Benjamin’s) *flâneur*—who was as a result democratized, who could now be embodied by a greater range of inhabitants; it was also the producer, thanks to the formation of new networks and monetary flows no longer rooted in the historical elite.⁷ It is to these producers to whom we shall now turn before examining the architecture, programming, and perks that they proffered in attempting to claim Paulistano families for their own.⁸

Mass Culture (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); Steven B. Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture in the Age of Porfirio Díaz* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012); and Fanni Muñoz Cabrejo, *Diversiones públicas en Lima, 1890-1920: la experiencia de la modernidad* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2001).

⁶ Vanessa R Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 7.

⁷ The pioneering text on the economic history of theater production is Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage, 1800-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Since Davis, historical analyses of the networks and business practices of cultural producers from the disciplines of theater, music, and sociology have coalesced into their own field. These include J.S. Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage: Marriage, Management and the Mapping of Gender in London, 1830-1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Beth Lise Glixon and Jonathan Emmanuel Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); John Spitzer, ed., *American Orchestras in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012); and Christophe Charle’s comparative *Théâtres en capitales: naissance de la société du spectacle à Paris, Berlin, Londres et Vienne, 1860-1914* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2008), translated to the Portuguese as *A gênese da sociedade do espetáculo: teatro em Paris, Berlim, Londres e Viena* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2012). A number of these studies take as their theoretical inspiration Pierre Bourdieu’s *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (ed. Randal Johnson, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) and *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). While much remains to be done in Brazil, a notable recent contribution to our understanding of cultural production beyond the actions of major studios is Hertzman, *Making Samba*.

⁸ The efforts of theater entrepreneurs to attract families are better documented in the United States. See Robert W. Snyder, *The Voice of the City: Vaudeville and Popular Culture in New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and the first chapter of Stamp, *Movie-Struck Girls*.

The businessmen

The socioeconomic diversification of theater entrepreneurs accompanied and enabled São Paulo's theater rush. Until 1907, the owners and funders of the city's commercial theaters were largely from the top of the social pyramid, men whose savings and credit were deep enough to make the substantial investment that a large theater required, or whose reputation was solid enough to persuade others to join in. While the Apollo Theater had originated as a joint-stock venture in 1873 and the Polytheama's 1892 construction was the project of men closely linked to the performance world, by 1900 both were acquired by established industrialists.⁹ The Álvares Penteado family, whose fortune was quickly multiplying thanks to holdings in both agricultural and textile sectors, took over and demolished the Apollo in 1899 in order to build the Santana. Meanwhile, funds for the Polytheama's several renovations came from the coffers of the Companhia Antarctica Paulista, the industrial brewery that would go on to finance the Colombo in 1908 and erect the Casino Antarctica in 1912. These vast halls were rented by impresarios based in Rio de Janeiro, Portugal, Italy, Spain, England, Argentina, and increasingly São Paulo, but few would stay for an entire season.

That business model began to change as entertainment took on new forms during the first decade of the twentieth century. For one thing, theater production became an even more

⁹ This particular Apollo (at least three others existed before 1930) on R. Boa Vista began as the Teatro Provisorio under the leadership of Horácio de Souza Muniz. The Polytheama is thought to have been built for an equestrian company, although historians disagree as to whether this was Frank Brown's circus or a troupe collected by the impresario Cartocci, who a year earlier had secured the performance of an Italian operetta company. For more on the Polytheama, see Aline Mendes de Oliveira, "O Teatro Politeama: Uma visão múltipla do teatro, do circo e do cinema na São Paulo do Final do Século XIX" (master's thesis, USP, 2005); and Ernani Bruno, *História e tradições da cidade de São Paulo*, vol. 3 (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1954), 1290, 1293. Accounts of both theaters can be found in Antonio Barreto do Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo (da Casa da Ópera à inauguração do Teatro Municipal)*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2006).

masculine enterprise. As films replaced live performance, the actress-cum-impresario was likewise replaced by the film exhibitor. One exception was Maria Antonia Lavieri, who in 1924 attempted, and ultimately failed, to reopen the dormant Guarany Theater on Rua da Consolação, but by and large the female impresario of the late nineteenth century was a disappearing breed.¹⁰ This sudden near-extinction can be explained in part by the origins of São Paulo's cinema operators: whereas the majority of troupe directors emerged from their company's ranks, the roots of film exhibitors tended to lie in the male world of the salesman. For adventurers with a bit of cash and business know-how, cinemas—theaters in which film projectors were permanently fixed and continuously functioned, as opposed to earlier screenings by itinerant exhibitors—were an enticing get-rich-quick scheme. Audiences' thirst for moving pictures seemed unquenchable and operating costs were relatively low. A cast of performers could be replaced with a sole projectionist and perhaps a couple of entertainers to keep spectators engaged as reels were switched, a program format commonly referred to as "stage and screen" (*tela e palco*). Additionally, as ties with French, Danish, Italian, and US studios strengthened, exhibitors could more quickly turn around their programming so that the same spectators could come back again and again. According to this business model, a theater owner depended not on the simultaneous patronage of a couple of thousand but on the loyalty of a couple of hundred.

At least for a brief moment, then, the majority of men shaping Paulistanos' cultural consumption wielded neither economic nor political power. To be sure, some were making a pretty penny, but they had begun on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder. Paschoal Segreto, who purchased the Carlos Gomes Theater in 1906 and produced variety shows in a handful of theaters across town, had first tried his luck selling newspapers and lottery tickets

¹⁰ Souza, "Guarani - Rua da Consolação, 217," *Salas de cinema de São Paulo*.

after immigrating from Salerno, Italy, to Rio in the mid 1880s.¹¹ The Valencia-born Francisco Serrador followed a similar path: before founding São Paulo's first cinema, the Bijou Theatre, Serrador had been a traveling salesman in Madrid, a grocer and messaging agency manager in Curitiba, and, finally, an itinerant film exhibitor.¹² Like Segreto, Serrador quickly expanded his business, establishing in 1911 the first movie theater chain in São Paulo, the Companhia Cinematográfica Brasileira, and eventually establishing what in the 1930s would become Rio's film district, Cinelândia.

The vast majority of theater entrepreneurs, however, were not so savvy or lucky. While acquiring a space, projector, and screen was straightforward enough for an experienced salesman, staying in the black was more complicated. Those who did succeed relied on external capital and close connections with performers, film distributors, and clients, connections that many forged through immigrant networks. With no trade publication yet in circulation—or, at least, no evidence of such a periodical has survived—Paulistano exhibitors also turned to the immigrant press for business news and resources, such as an advertisement for a wholesaler of projectors and reels in the evening paper *Il Secolo* (in Italian, The Century or, less literally, Our Times).¹³ A fair number of entrepreneurs also joined forces with close relatives, as in the cases of the Falgetano brothers in Moóca, the Gragnani brothers in Barra Funda, and the Thadeo brothers in

¹¹ José Inácio de Melo Souza, *Imagens do passado: São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro nos primórdios do cinema* (São Paulo: Senac, 2003), 119. For more on Segreto and his enterprises, see William de Souza Nunes Martins, "Paschoal Segreto e a criação do mercado de diversão no Rio de Janeiro," in *Vida divertida: histórias do lazer no Rio de Janeiro (1830-1930)*, ed. Andrea Marzano and Victor Andrade de Melo (Rio de Janeiro: Apicuri, 2010), 251–74; and especially the second chapter in Tiago de Melo Gomes, *Um espelho no palco: identidades sociais e massificação da cultura no teatro de revista dos anos 1920* (Campinas, SP: UNICAMP, 2004).

¹² Julio Lucchesi Moraes, "A Valencian Tycoon in Brazil: The Economic Trajectory of Francisco Serrador Carbonell (1887-1921)," *FilmHistoria Online* 22 (2012), <http://www.pcb.ub.edu/filmhistoria/2/num2.html>.

¹³ This particular advertisement was for Rio's Cinematógrafo Photo-Cinematografia Brasileira Labanca Leal & C., *Il Secolo*, Jan 2, 1909, 3.

Brás. Like the concurrent boom and bust of New York City's nickelodeons, most of these men's ventures were short lived; in 1909, *Moving Picture World* observed that, withing New York's cinema world, a large number "in the game solely for the coin" were returning back to their "peanut and lemonade stands."¹⁴ While Paulistanos were more likely to be peddling peanuts and hot potatoes, market saturation and increasing architectural regulation similarly took a toll on São Paulo's theater entrepreneurs by 1914.¹⁵ Nevertheless, beginning in the 1890s, the dozens of halls they established collectively found a foothold within the expanding city, serving as centers of a new kind of public life and a new kind of urban public.

Constructing the familial

One of the ways in which the growing number of commercial theaters helped redefine the Paulistano public was by encouraging men, women, and children from across the socioeconomic spectrum to spend their leisure hours together and outside the home. Central to this effort, as we already began to see in the chapter above, was the demarcation of specific spaces as family friendly. Marketing to the family was key; before 1916 independent women were still unanticipated consumers. Even the lady shopper was expected to have a child in tow, that is, once São Paulo could accommodate such a character—the city's, and Brazil's, first department store only opened in 1913.¹⁶ In this manner, respectable women and children were often folded into the same category by producers, who understood that persuading both to attend, and

¹⁴ "Observations by Our Man about Town," *Moving Picture World*, May 8, 1909, in Ben Singer, "Manhattan Nickelodeons: New Data on Audiences and Exhibitors," in *The Silent Cinema Reader*, ed. Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer (New York: Routledge, 2004), 129.

¹⁵ Sylvio Floreal, *Ronda da meia-noite: vícios, misérias e esplendores da cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2002), 113.

¹⁶ This was the sumptuous Mappin Stores, located in the historic center. For a contextualization of the department store within the general intensification of commerce in downtown São Paulo, see Heloísa Barbuy, *A Cidade-Exposição: Comércio e Cosmopolitismo em São Paulo, 1860-1914* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2006), 29.

especially persuading monied women and their children to attend, in part relied on offering a theater that met the day's standards for elegance and hygiene.

In the 1890s, a growing number of voices in São Paulo's press and assembly halls demanded safety, comfort, and hygiene—a trio of terms that would become the next two decades' legislative buzzwords and that will be further explored in Chapter 7—as minimal requirements for the attendance of the gentle sex and equally vulnerable youngsters. To some extent, early theater entrepreneurs complied, occasionally promoting these features in their attempts to ensure the presence of entire families. The Polytheama, for example, which was initially disparaged in editorials as an oversized shack of wood and corrugated metal—a glorified circus tent complete with circular seating and dirt flooring—was in 1896 and 1901 renovated in order to better accommodate a wider variety of audiences.¹⁷ An inclined ground floor meant that women and children, now that they had emerged from their boxes and joined the parterre, could more easily see the stage over men's shoulders. Wooden floorboards, meanwhile, meant that women's skirts would no longer gather dust and mud inside the theater. The Polytheama's owners also added a lounge for the “relaxation of families,” a space that few theaters would afterwards omit.¹⁸ Equally essential, according to architectural plans of the city's larger theaters, were powder rooms where women could adjust hair, hats, and dresses as well as attend to bodily needs. Finally, plush seats, dignified décor, and ample lighting were presumed to satisfy feminine tastes and reassure women that they, too, were welcome customers.

¹⁷ “O Polytheama, um barracão ordinário de madeira e zinco, indigno mesmo de qualquer companhia de 3a. classe, só é suportável, quando muito, com circo de cavalinhos.” Rabiscos, *Commercio*, Nov 27, 1899, 1, in Oliveira, “Politeama,” 45; Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Actas das sessões da Camara Municipal de S. Paulo, 1901*, vol. 83 (São Paulo: Typ. Espindola, Siqueira & Comp., 1903), 14.

¹⁸ “para descanso das familias,” “Palcos,” *Auctoridade*, May 10, 1896, 4.

Such features did more than promise theatergoers a comfortable, safe, and hygienic experience; they also addressed concerns regarding women’s respectability. The connection between a theater’s space and the safeguarding of spectators’ reputations was made explicit in a 1911 advertisement for the São Paulo Theater, an auditorium just to the south of the city’s historic center, in Liberdade. As insisted in the flyer for an evening of operetta and comedy, the newly renovated hall no longer bore signs of its origins as a meat warehouse, and as a result was fitting for a “respectable public.”¹⁹ In reality, the flyer stretched the truth: traces of the warehouse could be easily identified in the São Paulo Theater’s boxy exterior and plenty of complaints had been filed with the municipality against the hall’s construction (Image 26).²⁰



Image 26: The São Paulo Theater, ca. 1930. Casa da Imagem.

¹⁹ “respeitavel publico,” Gremio das Camélias to Prefect, 10 Nov 1911, AHSP PAH, caixa 68.

²⁰ Architectural problems with the São Paulo were reported by José de Sá Rocha in his inspection report to the prefect, 11 July 1917, AHSP PAH, caixa 254; and by Alderman Luiz Fonseca, in Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo: 1924* (São Paulo: Escolas Profissionaes Salesianas, 1924), 228.

Still, the ornate façade and the organizers' insistence on this point is telling of audiences' aspirations: no decent Paulistana, the logic went, would dare bring herself or her family into a setting any less elegant, safe, clean, and commodious.

In 1911, the designation of certain spatial elements as socially proper was a response to the ubiquity of storefront cinemas. Rarely seating more than a couple of hundred, these were buildings that fit within the dimensions of existing plots and in many cases had previously functioned as a shop or bar. The result was typically a rectangular viewing room and perhaps a small vestibule to the front or side (Image 27). Countless reports by municipal inspectors

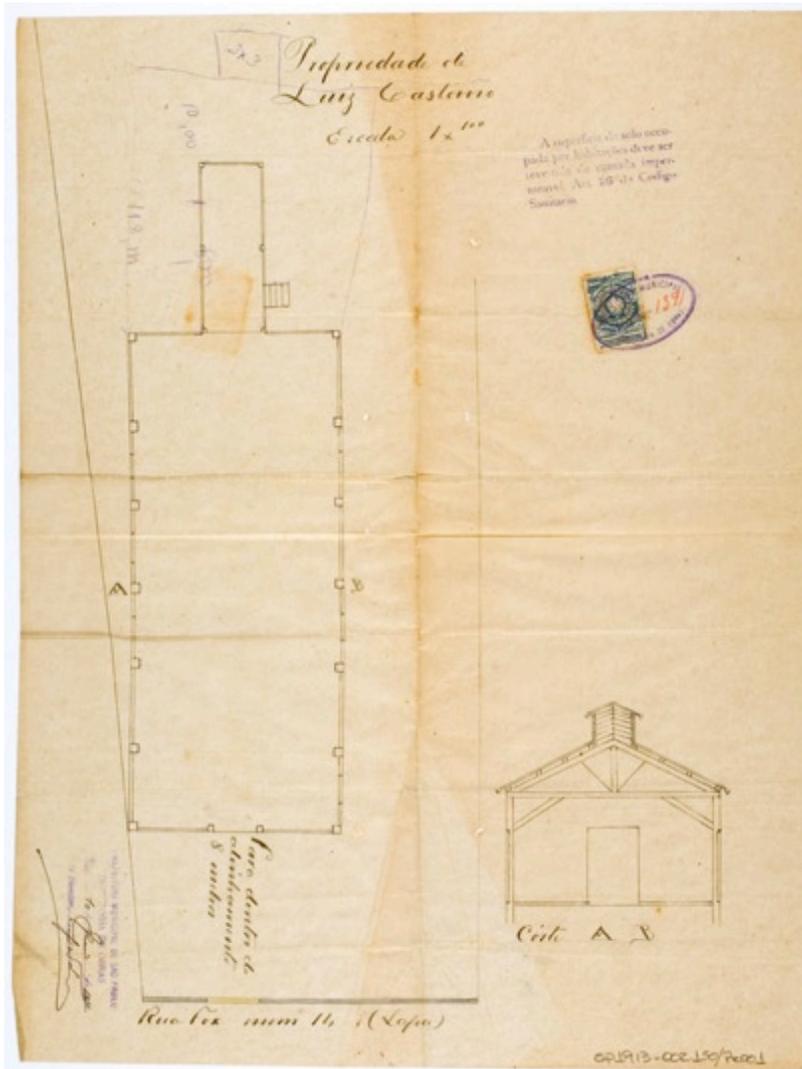


Image 27: Floor plan and cross section of the Pavilhão Recreio. The Recreio was a typical storefront cinema on Rua Engenheiro Fox, in the outlying neighborhood of Lapa. The simplicity of the rendering itself, as compared to the elaborate blueprints of the contemporaneous Smart or Royal Cinemas, operated just outside of the historic center by São Paulo's largest film distributors, are indicative of the owner's limited resources and the theater's limited offerings. Plan submitted by Luiz Castaño to the municipality on January 3, 1913. AHSP, Fundo PMSP: Série Obras Particulares: OP/1913/002.150, <http://www.sirca.com.br/>.

indicate that many of these spaces lacked adequate ventilation, seating, toilets, and the measures necessary for the prevention of fires and fire-induced panics. The absence of fixed seats, moreover, meant that bodies could be crammed together—a problem frequently reported by frustrated municipal inspectors—allowing for the possibility of unspeakable acts in the nearly complete darkness of a film screening.²¹ In such a setting, it was difficult for a woman to meet the standards of propriety preached at church, school, and in the press.

While dim lighting, overcrowding, and hazardous construction were not traits unique to storefront theaters, the availability of more refined alternatives relegated modest cinemas to the bottom of an architectural hierarchy that, in turn, conflated respectability with class. Seeking to distinguish their halls from those of lower-tier storefronts, cinema owners in particular accentuated architectural amenities in the classified pages of São Paulo's newspapers. "The most comfortable, most luxurious, most hygienic Cinema," boasted a 1911 advertisement for the Radium, a downtown movie theater that the anticlerical *A Lanterna* praised as the "preferred spot of Paulista families."²² This preference was also due to the Radium's high number of boxes—72, the highest among Paulistano cinemas, claimed the theater's ad—which offered an ideal seating arrangement for families that could afford such a luxury. Usually rented by a single family for an entire season, boxes reinforced occupants' familial unity and identity in the public eye.

Familial unity within the box did not translate into pure-minded theatergoing, however. Box occupants were, after all, in the public eye and such a vantage point had its benefits. It was to see and be seen that well-to-do girls persuaded their fathers to reserve the same box for an

²¹ On theater managers' failure to enforce capacity restrictions, see José de Sá Rocha, "Relatorio sobre as vistorias a que procedi nos cinematographos da cidade por ordem do Sr. Prefeito," 17 June 1916, 3, AHSP PAH, caixa 254.

²² "O Cinema mais comodo, mais luxuoso, mais higienico," advertisement, *Diário Popular*, March 29, 1911, 6; "o ponto predilecto das familias Paulistas," "Espectaculos," *Lanterna*, Nov 27, 1909, 4.

entire season. As the socialite Yolanda Penteadó explains in her autobiography, by marking their territory, young women guided men's gaze.²³ In more elegant halls, such glances continued into the foyer, where mirrors facilitated Paulistanos' amorous pursuits. If during the show unmarried girls were expected to sit with their families, theater lobbies and cafés often allowed for greater mobility. It was for this reason that University of São Paulo Rector Jorge Americano, who was raised in a blue-blooded household, remembers theaters as unique sites in which young men and women had the opportunity to mingle.²⁴ At school, pupils were generally divided by gender, and even those who worked rarely came into contact with the opposite sex beyond the family circle. Before 1915, with the additional exception of organized balls and dance classes, the majority of São Paulo's leisure spaces available to middle and upper-class adolescents were likewise segregated, although monied women were beginning to claim eateries and sidewalks as their own.²⁵

Inside simpler theaters, particularly those frequented by working-class audiences, gendered divisions were less ingrained, and certainly less ingrained in the architecture itself. As Jacob Penteadó (a very different Penteadó from Yolanda) recalls, spectators at the Cinema Belém during his boyhood were able to rearrange chairs so as to socialize with whom they pleased and to bring along whomever and whatever they desired.²⁶ The result was a jumble of infants, picnic baskets, pastries, and water bottles—chaos that often left boys and girls relatively free to fraternize. Neither boxes nor rigorous etiquette restricted attendees' heterosocial interactions within the auditorium itself. Worryingly for some, the absence of boxes also meant

²³ Yolanda Penteadó, *Tudo em cor-de-rosa* (São Paulo: Edição da Autora, 1977), 53.

²⁴ Americano, *São Paulo Naquele Tempo (1895-1915)*, 253.

²⁵ For an overview of (elite) women's increasing visibility in São Paulo's public spaces, especially during the late 1910s and 1920s, see Rago, "A Invenção do Cotidiano," 393, 403.

²⁶ Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 190, 195.

that children and wives lacked protection from the mischiefs of fellow spectators. Among the crowds of the parquet and galleries, Pedro Nava recalls in his memoir, it was not uncommon for troublemakers to poke, tickle, or blow on the necks of audience members. To distance the womenfolk from this “true plague,” Nava and his male relatives and friends created their own box in human form, with two men placed on either side of the women and Nava keeping guard from behind.²⁷

Programming the familial

Not all women and children could regularly bring along their sentinels, however, and so theater owners who could not offer a long list of architectural comforts began to search for additional ways to attract reputation-wary women and their families. This was especially the case for theaters situated in São Paulo’s expanded center, where during the first decade of the twentieth century the majority of passersby and workers on weekdays were primarily male. Catering to this potential audience, many central theaters hosted performances that due to their language, storyline, or visual content were less obviously family friendly. In the middle of the decade, questionable productions often took the form of the *café-concerto*, a term referring both to the genre, which made no pretension to plot in its concoction of dance, acrobatic, comedic, and sung numbers, and to the space, which combined bar and stage.²⁸ Perhaps the most frequented *café-concerto* was the Moulin Rouge, located at the edge of downtown in the Largo do Paissandú, which featured belly dancers, “immoral songs,” and, by 1909, risqué “free genre”

²⁷ Pedro Nava, *Balão cativo: memórias*, 3rd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1977), 219.

²⁸ Neyde Veneziano, *De pernas pro ar: o teatro de revista em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial, 2006), 77.

(*gênero livre*) films—that is, until the state police required the latter’s replacement with less pornographic comedies.²⁹

Yet, while not under Segreto’s management, the same auditorium in the same years also hosted Portuguese-language comedies and revues aimed at a wider spectatorship. How then did the Paulista Theater Company, for example, attract a broader audience to the Moulin Rouge when it temporarily took over the controversial locale in 1911? One solution lay in the theater’s branding. The Moulin Rouge’s name had particularly strong connotations, conjuring up images of raised skirts and other Parisian pleasure, and so the Paulista Theater Company reverted to the hall’s original moniker: Carlos Gomes.³⁰ Everything about this name oozed dignity and erudition: the Brazilian Antonio Carlos Gomes (1836-1896) was arguably the first New World composer to find widespread success across the Atlantic. Respectable families paid substantial sums to listen to his work in Europe’s leading concert halls and opera houses—perhaps Paulistanos could be persuaded to do the same. The iconic name appeared throughout São Paulo’s newspapers atop a concise rendering of the theater’s daily program, as did the names and programs of many other auditoriums.³¹ Without yet the female-oriented press of Rio or the United States, entrepreneurs turned to newspapers in order to reach out to female readers and clarify to male readers the intended audience of an upcoming show.³²

²⁹ Souza, “Moulin Rouge,” *Salas de cinema de São Paulo*.

³⁰ Cia. Theatral Paulista to Prefect, 5 Jan 1911, AHSP PAH, caixa 68.

³¹ e.g. “Ribaltas e Gambiarras,” *Commercio*, Jan 1, 1911, 3.

³² By contrast, according to Stamp (*Movie-Struck Girls*, 13), ladies’ journals were an essential tool used by US impresarios and film studios to cultivate female audiences. While a few periodicals included columns for women, *Revista Feminina* (1914-1936) was the first free-standing, long-term publication for (and by) women printed in São Paulo. See Sandra Lúcia Lopes Lima, “Imprensa feminina, *Revista Feminina*: a imprensa feminina no Brasil,” *Projeto História*, no. 35 (December 2007): 221–40; and, for a broader view of Brazil’s female press, Dulcília Helena Schroeder Buitoni, *Mulher de papel: a representação da mulher na imprensa feminina brasileira* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1981).

Polytheama's magic shows, which purportedly featured Chinese and Japanese sensations in addition to musical interludes and film clips, indicated that the afternoon's program was "dedicated to the world of children" and that the evening entertainment was "for families." That point, in the context of the Polytheama, had to be made more explicit.

The organization of a performance specifically for São Paulo's younger residents was not unusual at the Polytheama, especially under the leadership of impresario J. Cateysson. While advertisements for children's theater events in the *Estado de São Paulo* date back to 1898, it was not until Cateysson began hosting "family matinees" in 1902 at the Casino Paulista and the Polytheama that the practice became a regular occurrence in São Paulo.³³ The family matinee, if we are to believe countless reviews in São Paulo's press, was by all accounts a hit among Paulistano families, regularly packing houses with squirming but delighted children and their parents and racking revenue for impresarios in the process.³⁴ Part of the matinee's success was due to its timing: the family matinee was a daytime event as opposed to the standard show's start time, which varied between 7:30pm and 8:30pm. For theaters in which both midday and evening performances took place, the terms "matinee" and "soiree" (French for "morning" and "evening," respectively) formed a crucial dichotomy by 1905, with the former typically signaling children's presence among the audience, especially on weekends and holidays. Certainly, young Paulistanos could be found in theaters at night and, as indicated in the Polytheama ad above, were in fact on many occasions encouraged to attend "family soirees." Still, the majority of shows advertised as "familial" occurred at the hour most convenient for schoolchildren to attend:

³³ These dates are based on my search for the terms "espectaculo familiar," "matinee familiar," "matinee infantil," and "familiar" in the digitized archive of the *Estado de São Paulo*, acervo.estadao.com.br, accessed Nov 25, 2014. Interestingly, the word "familiar" was rarely used outside the context of leisure between 1890 and 1910.

³⁴ "Palcos e Circos," *Estado*, Jan 2, 1902, 2.

around 1:30pm, after morning mass and lunch on Sundays. In this sense, churchgoing and theatergoing were by no means mutually exclusive activities.

It was not only the time of day that differentiated family matinees from other events by the same impresario or film exhibitor; implied in the designation was also a difference of content. That distinction was already apparent in the 1898 advertisement for a *matinée infantil* and an evening show at the Apollo. While the magician and clown Colombino starred in both productions, he was accompanied by a longer lineup of comedic sketches in the nocturnal iteration.³⁵ A decade later, an announcement for Segreto's Casino Theater rendered in even starker contrast the divergence of the Sunday family matinee from the usual billing, which that Wednesday night in 1911 included chanteuses, acrobats, comedians, and Nelly Villete, an interpreter of "lascivious dances."³⁶ No Nelly Villete would make an appearance at the midday performance, but French singers did, or at least they did at the Moulin Rouge's family soirees in 1907, which also included Titcomb and his horse, Cocile and his dogs, and "first-rate" Spanish acrobatic dancers that, by the *Estado de São Paulo*'s account, more than satisfied the audience with their "uniformity" and "original eccentricity."³⁷ The playbill for Segreto's family matinee took much the same form a few years later at the Casino, where the French dancers Les Dambray, the acrobat Goodlow, and the reenactment of *The Merry Widow* by Rio Hartmann's twenty dogs entertained a full house in 1911.³⁸

³⁵ Advertisement, *Estado*, Sep 25, 6.

³⁶ Advertisement, *Diário Popular*, March 29, 1911, 6.

³⁷ "bailarinas acrobaticas hespanholas... agradaram pela uniformidade com que dançam e pela sua original excentricidade, o que constitue um numero de primeira ordem." "Palcos e Circos," *Estado*, May 31, 1907, 3.

³⁸ "Ribaltas e Gambiarras," *Commercio*, Jan 2, 1911, 2; "Theatros e Salões," *Diário Popular*, Jan 2, 1911, 6.

Segreto repeatedly assured concerned parents that despite a few overlaps between his theaters' "usual program" and that of the family matinee, the latter was "carefully organized" so as to suit the sensibilities and interests of children.³⁹ Entering the family matinee business in 1906, Segreto was adopting a language already established in newspapers' classified pages and theater columns by Cateysson in 1902. Cateysson had worked in the Polytheama and the Casino Paulista, both of which hosted a wildly varying assortment of companies, including São Paulo's first "artistic nude" performance, which left a burning impression on the young bohemian Cícero Marques.⁴⁰ Given that Cateysson, like Segreto after him, often used the same performers and acts in both family and regular shows, the impresario needed to assure potential spectators understood that his family matinees were "scrupulously" tailored.⁴¹ Cateysson had good reason to filter his repertoire; four years later, the *Commercio* chided the Polytheama's impresario for including Zazá and her "salty" chansons in the Sunday family matinee.⁴²

That same strategy of producing, or at least marketing, a carefully crafted program for families was embraced by at least a handful of cinema owners at decade's end. Serrador's growing collection of cinemas, which at the start of 1911 included the Bijou, Iris, Radium, and Chantecler, regularly boasted family matinees on Sundays and holidays, as well as the occasional family soiree on weeknights. Less clear, however, was the extent to which screenings intended for children and women differed from those geared toward a broader viewership. Early

³⁹ "programmas cuidadosamente organizados," advertisement, in Vicente de Paula Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1981), 289.

⁴⁰ Margareth Rago, "A Invenção do Cotidiano na Metrópole: Sociabilidade e Lazer em São Paulo, 1900-1950," in *História da cidade de São Paulo*, ed. Paula Porta, vol. 3 (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2004), 397.

⁴¹ The "Palcos e Circos" column in the *Estado de São Paulo* repeatedly used the terms "escrupulosamente organizado" to describe the programming of Cateysson's family matinees (e.g. Feb 16, 1902, 2; Nov 30, 1902, 3).

⁴² Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas de São Paulo*, 124.

exhibitors rarely repeated their programs, meaning that a matinee and soiree were unlikely to share the same selection regardless of the intended audience. Moreover, the moral and aesthetic quality of these short films, the majority of which are now lost or beyond repair, was (and is) difficult to gauge from their title alone. Whether or not *A Vengeance of Luis XIII* was any more appropriate for children than *Seven Days of Divorce* is hard to say.⁴³ Most likely, if we are to believe the social magazine *A Vida Moderna*, exhibitors followed the standards of the *café-concertos* in defining family-friendly films, aiming to please rather than instruct without entirely offending.⁴⁴ If any distinction in content existed between familial and other showings, by 1912 it was rarely noted in cinema advertisements; around that time, the number of screenings advertised as explicitly for the family all but disappeared as cinema owners began to organize multiple screenings per day or to continuously run films.⁴⁵ Perhaps it was because of these blurring lines, further erased by the production of “white slavery” films for female spectators, that in the same year audiences complained more loudly than ever before about the display of “pornography” in São Paulo’s theaters.⁴⁶

⁴³ Advertisement for Bijou Theatre, *Diário Popular*, Jan 7, 1911, 6; advertisement for Radium, *Estado*, Oct 12, 1910, 10.

⁴⁴ In the magazine’s words, the Bijou’s reels were “óptimas fitas de assumpto de alto interesse para todos, sinão científico, ao menos para abrir a caixa de nossas gostosas gargalhadas.” “Artes e Theatros,” *Vida Moderna*, Dec 25, 1907, 47.

⁴⁵ The children’s matinee would make a comeback in the United States in the 1920s as film studios responded to rising criticism of the wholesomeness of their products. See Richard deCordova, “Ethnography and Exhibition: The Child Audience, the Hays Office, and Saturday Matinees,” *Camera Obscura* 8, no. 23 (May 1990): 90–107.

⁴⁶ Audiences at the Cinema Élite, for example, reportedly protested against the 1912 showing of *Escrava Branca* (Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas de São Paulo*, 311). For more on female audiences and white slavery films in the United States, see Stamp, *Movie-Struck Girls*.

Tempting the family

Unsurprisingly, the absence of the family matinee or explicitly family-friendly content did little to deter São Paulo's younger residents from entering the city's auditoriums. In fact, many theater entrepreneurs encouraged their attendance by catering to kids in ways that did not distinguish between programs or time of day. In his 1957 memoirs, Jorge Americano recounts how as a boy his downtown strolls would occasionally be interrupted by a theater hawker trumpeting a reduced price for children—\$200 as opposed to \$500 for adults.⁴⁷ Within a few years, more than one hall in the area offered similar discounts in order to persuade young Paulistanos and their parents to attend, and by 1910 the strategy of tiered pricing was employed by theater entrepreneurs across the city.⁴⁸ São Paulo's first cinema, the Bijou Theatre, initially charged children only half the amount of an adult's entry (1\$000, or slightly less than the cost of that year's Christmas lottery ticket), a practice that Serrador probably hoped would help rebrand his theater.⁴⁹ Programming at the Bijou's predecessors had largely appealed to the men who dominated the streets of downtown São Paulo (Image 29); the theater, under its previous monikers Eldorado, Casino Paulista, and Eden-Theatre, had featured sensual chanteuses, bawdy burlesque, and slapstick sketches, with the occasional associational event and family matinee. If these were no longer the cornerstones of the Bijou, the theater's initial repertoire of short films—landscapes, crime scenes, and humorous situations—were perhaps perceived by Serrador as in

⁴⁷ Jorge Americano, *São Paulo Naquele Tempo (1895-1915)*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Carrenho Editorial, 2004), 221.

⁴⁸ A couple of examples of advertisements from the *Diário Popular* in 1911 are that of the Salão Te-Be (June 26, p.6) and Francisco Serrador's Iris Theatre (Jan 2, p.6). Just to the west in the Largo do Arouche, the impresario at the Cinema High Life used the same tactic (\$300 for a child's entry, \$500 for an adult's) to attract families to evenings of film and variety acts (Flyer for Cinema Odeon, 7 Sep 1910, AHSP PAH, caixa 56).

⁴⁹ Advertisements, *Estado*, Dec 6, 1907, 7 and 8.



Image 29: Men gathered outside the Bijou Theatre (at this point also known as the Bijou Salão) on Rua São João, ca. 1912. Photograph, Aurélio Becherini, in *Aurélio Becherini* (Sao Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2009), 170.

themselves insufficient in coaxing mothers and children to flock to a less than reputable establishment.

Over time, Serrador dangled enticements other than tiered pricing in order to attract families to his chain of theaters, once again borrowing from the strategies of impresarios operating half a decade earlier. Cateysson's New Year's show in 1902 at the Casino Paulisto featured a drawing of prizes that included dolls, kaleidoscopes, toy cars, and a "cornucopia" of

other goodies for eager youngsters—“the most delightful” way a child could herald in the year, proclaimed the *Estado de São Paulo*.⁵⁰ Cateysson’s ad also promised sweets, a promise that he would continue to make throughout the year for his family matinees at both the Casino Paulista and the Polytheama.⁵¹ By decade’s end, the handing out of toys and chocolates became a regular ploy among cinema managers seeking to establish their halls as spaces fitting for families. As in the Casino Paulista, candy and prizes in celebration of the extended Christmas holidays were doled out at Serrador’s Chantecler Theatre in 1911, while his Bijou and Radium Theaters announced a “profuse distribution of bonbons.”⁵² Although not all theater owners could afford to lavish gifts upon young spectators, even only during specific times of the week or year, those with space and staff to spare did offer an assortment of treats for sale. Carlos Remedi at the Cinema-Theatro Tiradentes in Luz, for example, insisted to doubting municipal inspectors that the theater’s bar sold “beverages, sweets, ice cream, etc., for children and the esteemed families who frequented” the hall.⁵³

Edible goods were not the only incentives that theater entrepreneurs provided to lure in parents and children. In his novel about the perils of “the great city,” Edmundo Amaral describes the carnival games organized for the amusement of children and adults during intermissions: for a minimal sum, a lad could prove his marksmanship against moving figurines, floating eggs, and the traditional, ringed target.⁵⁴ Cinema owners likewise hosted live

⁵⁰ Advertisement, *Estado*, Jan 1, 1902, 3; “Palcos e Circos,” Jan 1, 1902, 2.

⁵¹ For example, *Estado*, Jan 26, 1902, 3; Oct 11, 1902, 4; Nov 30, 1902, 3.

⁵² Advertisements, *Diário Popular*, Jan 2, 1911, 6; “profusa distribuição de bonbons,” Feb 18, 1911, 6; *Gazeta*, July 8, 1911, 3.

⁵³ “refrescos, doces, sorvetes, etc. para creança e ecimia. familias frequentadoras.” Carlos Remedi to Prefect, 3 March 1915, AHSP PAH, caixa 200.

⁵⁴ Edmundo Amaral, *A grande cidade* (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1950), 42. Amaral’s memory is supported by a 1906 municipal permit request for the inclusion of games, a puppet show, and prizes alongside the entertainment onstage (23 Jan 1906, AHSP PAH, caixa 4).

entertainment and competitions as bonuses for attending families, in this manner distinguishing their auditoriums from the dozens of others struggling to survive. Puppet shows captivated kids in the lobby of the downtown Paris Theatre in 1910, while a few blocks away games and races livened intermissions at the Casino's family matinees.⁵⁵ If these additional amenities added to a cinema's staffing expenses, they at least did not raise owners' licensing fees; cinemas continued to be assessed by the municipality only for their primary activity—the projection of films—thus opening the door for a wide range of possible perks.⁵⁶

Not all perks were intended for the innocent eyes and minds of children and virtuous women, however; the extra-performance activities of certain theaters defined them as spaces unwelcoming to families, at least during specific performances. A prime example was the Casino Theater, the 1,170-seat “music hall” whose stage was occupied by a hodgepodge of opera and operetta companies, orchestras, comedians, acrobats, and wrestlers since its inauguration in 1909. When not the venue of a family matinee, the Casino's ready supply of alcohol and prostitutes, at least under Segreto's helm, earned the theater its reputation as “the merriest spot in São Paulo nightlife.”⁵⁷ According to the weekly *O Pirralho*, an early modernist mouthpiece, husbands' descent into debauchery at the Casino surpassed that of bachelors. No wonder, then, that the protagonist of Agudo's *Gente Rica* chose to preserve his reputation and spend his afternoon instead at the Radium.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ High-Life to Prefect, 7 Sep 1910, AHSP PAH, caixa 56; advertisement, *Gazeta*, Dec 2, 1911, 3.

⁵⁶ High-Life to Prefect, 7 Sep 1910, AHSP PAH, caixa 56.

⁵⁷ “É aqui o lugar mais alegre do São Paulo nocturno.” Cicero Sylvestre, “Theatros: Casino,” *Pirralho*, Oct 7, 1911, 7.

⁵⁸ In Agudo's novel, Leivas steers clear of the Casino in order to avoid “descer ás supremas abjecções.” Agudo, 118.

Conclusion

The Radium, after all, was the “preferred spot of Paulista families,” a setting unlikely to raise suspicions. In spatially accommodating a spectrum of familial sociability, as well as in strategically appealing to children and parents through a show’s timing, content, pricing, and extra-performance activities and rewards, the Radium’s and other theater entrepreneurs nudged women and children to leave the home and spend their leisure time instead in a variety of halls across the city. Moreover, they encouraged all Paulistanos to participate in public life as families, at least at specific moments and in specific spaces. The result was overwhelming. As in other urban centers across the world, the attendance of children and women rapidly rose during the first decade and a half of the twentieth century. Indeed, by the early 1910s schoolchildren were so commonly found in front of a screen when they should have been behind a desk that the newspaper *A Capital* declaimed cinemas as “the disease of the epoch.”⁵⁹ Even better disciplined youths were frequent spectators; when in 1915 the Bijou Oriente in Brás caught fire during a weekend matinee, 600 children were rescued.⁶⁰ The frequency with which children, women, and men attended São Paulo’s theaters did not rely entirely on producers’ appeal to the family, however. In addition to capitalizing on respectability, theater entrepreneurs developed ways to sell exclusivity and popularity. As the 1910s wore on, the chapter to come will show, it was this currency of cultural capital that dominated the exchanges of São Paulo’s commercial theaters.

⁵⁹ “moléstia da época,” *A Capital*, Oct 9, 1912, 2, in Souza, *Imagens do passado*, 139.

⁶⁰ Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo, 1916* (São Paulo: Typ. Piratininga, 1916), 11.

Ch. 6 Categorizing the Consuming Public, 1900-1916

The crowd that gathered in the Santana Theater just before it closed its doors in 1912 was a stark contrast from that of the Cinema Belém's inauguration. Women and men arrived at the dazzlingly illuminated theater in automobiles, "spilling waves of silks, feathers, and ermines," as the pseudonymous José Agudo described in his acerbic novel of that year, *Gente Rica* (*Wealthy People*).¹ In Agudo's account, meticulously composed outfits and bodies filled the theater's equally ornamented foyer until, at approximately nine o'clock, a bell summoned ladies and gentlemen inside the auditorium. Agudo's readers were also led into the replete hall, observing through the author's eyes the "luxury" and "beauty" of the Santana's boxes and noting the "buzzing multitude" of students and other men high above. The packed theater, according to the novelist, was less the result of the show onstage than attendees' desperate desire to show themselves after three months of public inactivity. Still, many were also eager to set eyes on the attractive leading lady, the fictional Mina Lanzi, a Brazilian of Italian parentage.² Her "artistic genius"—a euphemism if there ever was one—managed to "monopolize" the attention of Agudo's protagonists and pull them into euphoria.

The urban dandies and rural political brokers who comprised Agudo's cast could also have been found seeking artistic genius at the nearby Polytheama. While, as noted in the second chapter, the Polytheama was regularly disparaged by some legislators and journalists for its shoddy construction, the circular hall nevertheless managed to lure in São Paulo's upper crust,

¹ "Automoveis paravam, trepidantes despejando ondas de sedas, plumas e arminhos.... As frisas e os camarotes resplandeciam de luxo e de beleza, e as torrinhas estavam literalmente atopeadas de rumorosa multidão em que predominavam os homens e os estudantes." José Agudo, *Gente rica: cenas da vida paulistana* (São Paulo: O Pensamento, 1912), 135, 147-148, 150, 157.

² Lanzi was most likely based on Nina Sanzi (the stage name of Afonsina Capelli Camarão), a Brazilian actress of French and Italian ancestry who was trained and found great success in Europe. Sanzi performed in São Paulo in 1909. See Sábato Magaldi and Maria Thereza Vargas, *Cem anos de teatro em São Paulo* (Sao Paulo: Senac, 2000), 49.

along with students, bohemians, and a wider range of families than that of the Santana. If the Polytheama was a *barracão*—an oversized shack of corrugated metal and wood—it was, as Nino Nello wrote in 1956, São Paulo’s “nicest and most popular” *barracão*.³ A comedian best known for his Italian archetypes, Nello belonged to a different world from that of municipal leaders, and his characterization of the Polytheama hints at that world.⁴ For Nello, the Polytheama was memorable for its ability to draw in the multitude, to captivate a large number of Paulistanos from across the city and from many walks of life.

The Polytheama’s popularity—that is, its widespread appeal—was not happenstance. Between the time of its erection in 1892 and its fiery end in 1914, the theater’s impresarios worked hard to attract and grow their clientele. By 1910, that clientele had expanded well beyond the limits of Agudo’s “wealthy people.” “Everyone to the Polytheama!” a 1911 announcement in the daily *Diário Popular* proclaimed in capital letters, laying bare entrepreneurs’ efforts to fill the auditorium’s more than one thousand seats.⁵ This was an all-encompassing invitation to an all-encompassing readership, as the newspaper’s name implied. To be sure, as we shall soon see, not all Polytheama events were framed so inclusively. Nor did every impresario at the Santana target his audience so narrowly. In Agudo’s novel, Leivas Gomes, a countryside politician passing through town, is persuaded to attend the Santana after seeing photographs of the actress Lanzi plastered on the city’s walls: “Mina Lanzi in blue, Mina Lanzi in red, Mina Lanzi in green.”⁶ Any passerby could have succumbed to the hypnotic,

³ “barracão de zinco que é o mais simpático e popular de São Paulo,” Nino Nello, “Grandezas e Misérios do Teatro (o teatro em São Paulo nos últimos 50 anos),” *SBAT: Revista de Teatro*, June 1956, 19.

⁴ Magaldi and Vargas, *Cem anos*, 142.

⁵ “TODOS AO POLYTHEAMA,” advertisement, *Diário Popular*, Jan 31, 1911, 6.

⁶ “Mina Lanzi em azul, Mina Lanzi em vermelho, Mina Lanzi em verde.... Ah! O suggestivo poder dos anuncios! Principalmente quando esse poder se exerce sobre o espirito de quem está

“suggestive power” of a repeating Lanzi. Yet, the Santana is remembered as an exclusive playground of the Paulistano elite, while the Polytheama earned the reputation of a popular theater.

This dichotomy between elite and popular rested on more than advertising, but it was a dichotomy that theater entrepreneurs helped to cultivate and complicate at the same time. As this chapter explains, it was a distinction that took into account the material and performers onstage and onscreen, the hall’s architecture, and the composition of its audiences. In the chapter’s first half, we will examine how some theater entrepreneurs banked on exclusivity, marketing their theaters as spaces reserved for those of fashion and means. By selling spectators the chance to be among Paulistanos of significance, these theater producers helped preserve the intimate sociability of the mid-nineteenth century theater. They also offered a setting for the further development of a public elite aesthetic, one applicable to both performances and audiences and encapsulated in the label of the “elegant world.” The majority of theater entrepreneurs, however, pursued their profits through broad appeal, offering a wide range of ticket prices and a jumble of genres on a single playbill. In doing so, the chapter’s second half argues, producers were marketing not only their own theaters, but also the experience of being among a diverse audience, of being among the many. Producers, in other words, were popularizing the popular.

By popularizing the popular I mean more than expanding the consumption of what today we might call popular culture, although theater entrepreneurs were certainly making that happen. They were also, however, challenging lawmakers’ assumptions about what practices constituted “high” and “low” forms, labels that producers reinterpreted each time they promoted an event as either exclusive or popular. Consequently, as Kristen McCleary points out for Argentina and as

ocioso e com a carteira recheiada de bom papel moeda!” Agudo, *Gente rica*, 129.

this chapter shows for São Paulo, popular culture in Latin America cannot merely be read in opposition to elite culture.⁷ First, inside commercial theaters, the cultural practices of the “popular sectors”—Paulistanos’ term for the middling and lower classes—were hardly dictated by or in resistance to legislators’ standards. Nor were elite practices necessarily in keeping with the notions of erudite Art and public respectability propounded by reformers and explained in Chapter 2. “Elegance,” as we shall see, was conveniently polysemic. Finally, in a city teeming with working-class European immigrants accustomed to theatergoing, it was unclear where elite ended and popular began. Opera, for example, was a widely consumed genre in São Paulo, a far cry from its simultaneous “sacralization” in the United States as documented by Lawrence Levine.⁸ As a result, cultural categories were not easily superimposed on social categories such as class or race or nationality within the context of commercial theaters. Moreover, this chapter suggests, cultural categories *were* social categories, a means for classifying not just the content of São Paulo’s stages but also their audiences. This was a fluid hierarchy, defining spectators as “elite” or “popular” by the company they viewed and the company they kept. In the pages that follow, we will examine how, in the moment before the stabilization of an entertainment industry, profit-seeking theater producers contributed to these labels’ shifting meanings, ultimately making palatable and even vogue the idea of belonging to the city’s new multitude.

Selling exclusivity

As we have begun to see, theater producers most explicitly participated in the labeling of theater audiences as popular or elite, and particularly the latter, in their advertising. A full page

⁷ Kristen McCleary, “Popular, Elite and Mass Culture? The Spanish Zarzuela in Buenos Aires, 1890-1900,” *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 21 (2002): 1–27.

⁸ Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 101.

announcement—one of the first of its kind—for the Royal Theatre in 1916 said and showed it all (Image 30). “The preferred cinema,” the ad boasted, “where the Paulistano Elite finds the irrefutably best programs, where the most celebrated artists in film perform on an enormous white screen, where the most luxurious and rich *toilettes* appear, where attends all that there is of the most elegant in this capital.”⁹ Filling the space beneath this hyperbolic description was a dramatic portrait of Francisca Bertini, the Italian “queen of the mute art... appreciated by Paulista ladies.” In reaching out to ladies (*damas*)—monied women and not working girls—the exhibitor at the Royal, along with his counterparts in other theaters, understood social exclusivity to be a desired product, a commodity worth marketing. That exclusivity, as implied in the Royal’s advertisement, rested on several features: a theater’s location; the aesthetics of its programming, playbills, architecture, and audiences; and the additional amenities supplied by impresarios. The pages that follow explore these features in São Paulo’s theaters to evaluate how the verbal and visual marketing of exclusivity corresponded to actions on the ground, that is, how theater entrepreneurs helped redefine the practices and tastes of the urban elite by prioritizing elegance over morality and erudition.

The Royal Theatre’s sizable ad was just one, particularly eye-catching appeal to elites among many that covered the pages of Paulistano newspapers at the start of the twentieth century. An announcement for a 1902 family matinee at the Polytheama, for example, was framed as not only *for* but “*consecrated to* the elite of Paulistano society” (emphasis mine), a phrasing that

⁹ “O cinema preferido onde a Elite Paulistana encontra incontestavelmente os melhores programmas, onde os artistas mais celebres em cinematographia se exhibem na sua enorme e branca tela, onde apparecem as mais luxuosas e ricas toilettes, onde frequenta tudo o que ha de mais elegante nesta capital... rainha da arte muda... apreciada das damas Paulistas,” advertisement, *Estado*, May 24, 1916, 12.

ROYAL THEATRE

PLANTÃO DE BOMBAIO

Rua Sebastião Pereira - Empresa Cinematographica D'Errico, Bruno & Comp. Telephone n. 3401

O cinema preferido onde a Elite Paulistana encontra incontestavelmente os melhores programas, onde os artistas mais celebres em cinematographia se exhibem na sua enorme e branca tela, onde apparecem as mais luxuosas e ricas toillettes, onde frequenta tudo o que ha de mais elegante nesta capital

HOJE Quarta-feira HOJE

3 - unicas e maravilhosas sessões - 3

Dedicadas ao GRAND MONDE

Primeira exhibição nesta Capital do colosso emocionante drama de amor violento, dedicado e interpretado pela exocleta rainha da arte muda, a quibrida, e apreciada das damas Paulistas

Francisca Bertini

A PEROLA DO CINEMA

CINE DRAMA EM

ASSIM

7 ACTOS

SYMBOLISADOS

Luxuosa Soltée
por
Sessões que
obedecerá
ao seguinte
horario

Primeira Sessão
às 10 horas
e
30 minutos

Segunda Sessão
às 20 horas
e
30 minutos

Tercera Sessão
às 21 horas
e
30 minutos

A Empresa
propoz a
realização
de um
cine-drama
em geral
muito
emocionante
e
dramatico
admitindo
o
estilo
americano

AVISO
Os
passos
de
realização
deste
cine-drama
foram
de
extrema
complexidade
e
custo
muito
elevado
mas
a
qualidade
do
trabalho
é
garantida



1ª e 2ª Parte
Flor do Campo
A dignidade
irrequieta e sensível
de um amor
honrado

3ª e 4ª Parte
**Flor do Amor
e da Gloria**
A juventude ardente
que aspira, sobra
e delira,
dominando a alma
resgando o corpo

5ª e 6ª Parte
A Flor da Pátria
O drama indomável,
o amor violento,
o crime,
e a honra

7ª Parte

A Flor da Morte
O seu tragico
em pleno vigor,
amarelado, nas
lagrimas da
destino e do
remorso

FRANCISCA BERTINI

Este nome tão querido por todos quanto apezar uma artista na verdade apegada da palmeira, reaparece agora com seus admiradores no pungente drama de amor A PEROLA DO CINEMA, e mais uma vez confirma os laços ateados pelo seu nome. A Dama da tela tem como suas companhas, os mais notáveis artistas, destacando-se dentre elles os nomes laureados de

Gustavo Serena, Carlos Benetti, Camillo de Rosso

AMANHÃ
HIGH-LIFE
na Exhibição nesta Capital de São
A Perola do Cinema
BILHETES A VENDA NA BILHETERIA

HOJE! - O ROYAL em festa em honra a BERTINI - HOJE!
Realizada pela Elite Paulistana - ARTS, LUXO, ELEGANCIA
300 artistas em scena, 40 figurantes solistas, mais-no-scena destacando. Em São, esta filmagem a esta Cinematographica em todos os seus detalhes.

Depois de Amanhã
Theatro Rio Branco
na Exhibição nesta Capital de São
A Perola do Cinema
BILHETES A VENDA NA BILHETERIA

Image 30: Advertisement for the Royal Theatre. Estado, May 24, 1916, 12.

added moral and aesthetic gravitas to a program consisting of a series of duels.¹⁰ Such phrasing also reassured readers of the *Estado de São Paulo* that even at the Polytheama, despite later calls for the attendance of “all,” they would be among like-minded and like-bred spectators. A decade later, cinema managers likewise publicized their theaters using terms of exclusivity. The Guaianazes Cinema was touted as the “*rendezvous* of the elite,” befitting the “aristocratic” neighborhood of Campos Elíseos, while a caption in *A Cigarra* stressed that the neighborhood’s “most distinguished families” counted among the attendees of the Coliseu dos Campos Elíseos (Campos Elíseos Coliseum).¹¹ Francisco Serrador, the Spanish entrepreneur whom we met in the previous chapter, framed his nearby Chantecler Theater as the “most preferred” diversion of São Paulo’s elite, while characterizing the downtown Iris Theater’s soirees as “splendid,” “marvelous,” and “chic”—elusively fashionable.¹² Both of these latter ads could be found in newspapers aimed toward a readership more varied than that of the *Estado*; the *Diário Popular*’s or *Gazeta*’s subscriber might have already belonged to the city’s *crème de la crème*, or such a status might have still been aspirational.¹³ Still, regardless of the reader, the aim was similar: theater producers were promising and nurturing the desire for exclusivity.

In doing so, theater entrepreneurs were not alone. As the number and printmaking capabilities of São Paulo’s periodicals grew, press advertisements likewise increased in number

¹⁰ “consagrado á elite da sociedade paulistana,” advertisement, *Estado*, Jan 26, 1902, 3.

¹¹ “o *rendez-vous* da *élite* do aristocrático bairro dos Campos Elísios,” Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas*, 318; “frequentado pelas mais distintas familias daquelle bairro,” *Cigarra*, Sep 14, 1916.

¹² “mais elegante de diversões o mais preferido pela ‘élite’ de São Paulo,” advertisement, *Diário Popular*, Jan 4, 1911, 6; “Esplendida e maravilhosa ‘soirée’ chic,” advertisement, *Gazeta*, Dec 2, 1911, 3.

¹³ Jacob Penteadó remembers with humor the newspaper vendor in Belenzinho, his childhood neighborhood, selling the *Diário Popular*, *Gazeta*, and *Platêa*. See Jacob Penteadó, *Belenzinho, 1910: retrato de uma época* (São Paulo: Martins, 1962), 228.

and ornamentation, selling fantasies and suggesting new needs to an ever wider consumer base.¹⁴ Additionally, in many corners of the city and especially in the bustling downtown, walls and streets were littered with flyers and posters that, thanks to the arrival of new zinc plating methods, precisely rendered viewers' dreams; by 1912, Mina Lanzi's face was hardly alone in seducing passersby. To distinguish between the aspiring consumer and his or her aspirations, retailers adopted names like Ao Mundo Elegante (To the Elegant World), an identity that by 1910 *Estado* columnists embraced in frequent references to "our elegant world."¹⁵ The equation of elegance with exclusivity was reinforced in the playbills for São Paulo's more expensive productions, where increasingly elaborate images reminded monied spectators of the social significance of displaying style, and especially high-priced style of European origin (Image 31).¹⁶ These were what the Royal Theatre's advertisement called "luxurious and rich *toilettes*," the clothes and

¹⁴ The early history of advertising in Brazil is poorly studied, but a summary, including an explanation of the arrival of zinc plating (*clichés*) at the start of the twentieth century, can be found in Nelson Varon Cadena, *Brasil: 100 anos de propaganda* (São Paulo: Editora Referência, 2001). For an overview and beautiful reprinting of early business logos in Brazil, see Cláudia B. Heynemann, Maria do Carmo Teixeira Rainho, and Rafael Cardoso Denis, *Marcas do progresso: consumo e design no Brasil do século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, Mauad X, 2009).

¹⁵ The phrase "nosso mundo elegante" was especially common in reference to the Jockey Club's attendees. For example, see in the *Estado*, "Sport," Dec 12, 1909, 8. Advertisements for the shop Ao Mundo Elegante can be found in issues throughout the decade, and especially in 1908 and 1909, as a keyword query of the *Estado*'s digital archive, acervo.estadao.com.br, reveals. While an imperfect measurement, a search for "elegante" shows a spike in the word's usage in the 1910s, an ascent that begins slowly in 1895, peaks in 1917, and then quickly reverses by 1920. Of course, some of this ascent might be due to the growing length of the *Estado*, but this does not explain the rise of "elegante" around 1900 when the average issue length remained constant nor the diminishing number of search results for the late 1910s and through the 1920s. The term also makes frequent appearance in the memoirs about and novels of the era, e.g. as a chapter title in Jorge Americano, *São Paulo Naquele Tempo (1895-1915)*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Carrenho Editorial, 2004).

¹⁶ Similar ads were also printed in mainstream papers like the *Diário Popular* (e.g. A Casa Au Bon Marché's notice for apparel "Para o Lyrico," July 17, 1911, 5). The "commodity fetishism" of Rio elites is thoroughly investigated in Jeffrey D. Needell's chapter on consumption in *A Tropical Belle Époque: Elite Culture and Society in Turn-of-the-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

accessories (and white bodies) that visibly marked the cinema’s ideal patrons as “the most elegant” and thus most exclusive of São Paulo. Elegance was exclusivity visualized.



Image 31: Advertisement for Casa Raunier, an importer of “fine” men’s clothing from Paris and London. In program for the Companhia Dramatica Franceza’s rendition of Bernstein’s *L’assaut* at the Municipal Theater, 22 July 1912, 5, Biblioteca Jenny Klabin Segall. Interestingly, almost all of the advertisements in this program were geared toward male attendees.

How, then, did theater entrepreneurs persuade men and women of style and luxury to patronize their establishments? A 1915 advertisement for the Brasil Theater in the magazine *A Cigarra* offers a hint: “The best and most luxurious Theater of the aristocratic neighborhood of Vila Buarque,” it read, in this manner linking location to the magazine’s presumably “high society” readership.¹⁷ As demonstrated in the advertisements above, that same link was also

¹⁷ “O maior e mais luxuoso Theatro do aristocratico bairro de Villa Buarque, frequentado pela

claimed by the Guaianazes and the Coliseu in nearby Campos Elíseos. Developed during the 1870s construction surge and named after Paris's Champs-Élysées, by 1910 the district was already historically upscale.¹⁸ The trees of Campos Elíseos and the adjacent avenues of Santa Ifigênia shaded the homes of Jorge Americano and Yolanda Penteado, the young aristocrats of the previous chapter, as well as that of the stately Dona Josefa in Edmundo Amaral's novel *A grande cidade* (The Big City).¹⁹ Not only were the Coliseu dos Campos Elíseos and the Guaianazes therefore within easy reach of many of São Paulo's affluent residents, but their names also made it clear that it was in Campos Elíseos and among its affluence that these theaters belonged. The Coliseu, established by Serrador in 1911, was situated in the northern half of the neighborhood, near a prominent Salesian high school and its plaza, the Largo do Coração de Jesus (Heart of Jesus Square).²⁰ The Guaianazes, managed by a trio of Italian entrepreneurs that comprised J. Perrone & Company, made reference to and faced the only landscaped park in Campos Elíseos, the Largo dos Guaianazes.²¹

Yet, by the time of their founding, both the Guaianazes and Coliseu were accessible by electric streetcar to patrons outside the neighborhood. Both theaters were also within reach of patrons outside the city: workers, migrants, and travelers alighted regional trains at the nearby Sorocabana and Luz Stations. Indeed, such a large number had flocked to the Coliseu's predecessor, the Pavilhão dos Campos Elíseos (Campos Elíseos Pavilion), that in 1909 nearby residents filed a complaint with the municipality accusing the Pavilhão's attendees of disrupting

alta sociedade paulistana," *Cigarra*, Feb 3, 1915, 9.

¹⁸ Joseph Love, *São Paulo in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 83.

¹⁹ Americano, *São Paulo Naquele Tempo (1895-1915)*, 26; Yolanda Penteado, *Tudo em cor-de-rosa* (São Paulo: Edição da Autora, 1977), 45; Edmundo Amaral, *A grande cidade* (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1950), 61.

²⁰ Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas*, 304.

²¹ J. Perrone & Cia. to Prefect, 2 Aug 1913, AHSP PAH, caixa 107.

what was once a serene corner of the city.²² According to the complainants, raucous voices punctured the peace and thousands of feet trampled the lawns of the Coração de Jesus. Residents also chastised visitors for misusing the plaza as a public restroom, an accusation that depicted spectators as not only ill-mannered but also unhygienic.²³ However, the Pavilhão had been a circus tent; the Coliseu was a theater.²⁴ A lobby in the latter encouraged spectators to maintain their socializing indoors, thick walls minimized the noise level for neighbors and passersby, lavatories accommodated attendees' bodily needs, and the absence of a surrounding lot left no suggestion that such needs might be satisfied elsewhere. All of these architectural traits not only helped prevent future complaints; they also contributed to the theater's suitability as a site for the area's inhabitants, including its "distinguished families," as the *Cigarra* caption claimed.

There was another key difference between circus tent and theater that contributed to the attendance of primarily Campos Elíseos residents: the entertainment itself, and specifically its replication in other venues. The circus companies that performed at the Pavilhão were often the only such acts in town, or at best one among two or three circus troupes simultaneously performing. Under Serrador's management, and especially during the storefront cinema boom, the Coliseu screened films that could be found in neighborhoods throughout São Paulo. A resident of Belenzinho like Jacob Penteadó had little reason to make his way across the city to the Coliseu; he could view similar content at the Belém or perhaps in one of the Brás theaters. Indeed, as a member of the "popular sectors," Penteadó was explicitly welcomed by theater

²² *Estado*, July 11, 1909.

²³ José Inácio de Melo Souza, "Pavilhão dos Campos Elíseos," *Salas de cinema de São Paulo: Inventário dos espaços de sociabilidade cinematográfica da cidade de São Paulo (1895-1929)*, 2009, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/bases/cine.htm>.

²⁴ Advertisements for the Pavilhão's equestrian and circus productions were published by the *Estado* in early 1909, e.g. Feb 13, 1909, 7.

producers in the latter neighborhood: Popular was the name of the first small-scale cinema in the working-class neighborhood of Brás.²⁵

If the presence of distinguished Paulistanos at the Coliseu and the Guaianazes was due to these halls' identities as neighborhood theaters of a distinguished neighborhood, then how do we explain Serrador's boast that gatherings at the more centrally located Iris Theatre were equally chic? To be sure, his boast could have been little more than that: an exaggeration calculated to attract as many customers as possible. Still, around 1910, the Iris did stand out from a quickly crowding field of competitors in two ways. First, it was one of only three theaters in downtown to consistently screen films, and it had been doing so since 1908.²⁶ More precisely, the Iris was situated in the heart of historic São Paulo, next door to the Café Guarany, a hub for professionals, students, theatergoing families, and monied women pausing between errands—recognizable members of São Paulo's elegant world.²⁷ Second, by the time Serrador acquired the Iris in 1911, the theater had already earned a reputation for innovative and quality programming. The Iris was the first in São Paulo to show Brazilian *fitas cantantes*, films accompanied by live singing, including arias by the esteemed Brazilian composer Carlos Gomes.²⁸ Additionally, the majority of the works screened at the Iris around 1911 were advertised as *films d'art*, and their piano accompanist, a certain Mademoiselle Candinha, was highly regarded by reviewers in the press.²⁹

²⁵ Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 60.

²⁶ The other two theaters were the Radium and the Bijou, both of which were also frequented by wealthier Paulistanos: Jorge Americano remembers sitting in the Bijou's boxes as a boy in *São Paulo Naquele Tempo (1895-1915)*, 253, while the fictional Leivas Gomes chooses the Radium as a respectable site for attending a matinee in Agudo's *Gente rica*, 118.

²⁷ Ruben Pinheiro Guimarães to Prefect, 18 Aug 1908, AHSP PAH, caixa 28; Afonso Schmidt, *São Paulo de Meus Amores* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2003), 158.

²⁸ Eliana de O. Queiroz, *Guia de filmes produzidos no Brasil entre 1897-1910*, Filmografia Brasileira 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Embrafilme, 1984), 23.

²⁹ Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas*, 299, 308.

As the example of the Iris Theatre demonstrates, legislators were not alone in seeking and promoting aesthetic excellence on São Paulo's stages and screens. Like the Municipal Theater's proponents, some theater producers supported performers, pieces, and films admired by critics at home and abroad for their artistic merit—the “best programs” and the “most celebrated artists,” as proclaimed in the 1916 Royal Theatre advertisement. The difference was that many impresarios and exhibitors were marketing artistic merit as an exclusive and therefore desirable good without necessarily defining or guaranteeing it. A case in point is cinema managers' quibbling in side-by-side newspaper advertisements over whose hall offered the most “artistic” films. Starting in 1911, the adjective and its corresponding noun, *arte*, were generously sprinkled throughout cinema announcements.³⁰ In the *Diário Popular*, Serrador hyped up the Bijou-Theatre as the only Paulistano theater to exhibit films from the “Série d'Art” by Paris's Pathé Frères and the “Gold Series” by Turin's Casa Ambrosio.³¹ In an adjacent column, the film exhibitor advertised the Iris Theatre's exclusive rights to the “grand Artistic films” of the Italian studios Cines and Milano and the French Gaumont. Meanwhile, another column over, José Balsells trumpeted the Radium's upcoming “grand soiree” of “artistic” films from “famed” American companies Edison, Lober, and Essanay.

Cinema had become an art form unto itself, or at least so theater entrepreneurs claimed. By 1910, the technological novelty of film had worn off for those Paulistanos who had had the time and means to view the medium since its arrival in 1896. No longer an oddity on par with the magic lantern and kinoscope, the Lumière brothers' cinematograph and its successors transformed moving pictures into the equivalent of the operetta or drama. The quality of a “show”—that is, an evening of films—was now publicized and measured not in terms of a film's

³⁰ See especially the advertisements in the *Diário Popular* on January 4, 1911, page 6.

³¹ Advertisements, *Diário Popular*, Jan 2, 1911, 6.

technology, such as the clarity of the projection or the film's length in feet, but by its aesthetics: the passion and complexity of the plotline, the opulence of the sets and costume, and increasingly the talent, grace, and fame of the actors, all of which could be summarized in a production company's reputation.³² Striving to solidify that reputation, some US studios began referring to their films as photoplays, while French and Italian companies adopted the term *film d'art*, in order to stress the dramatic merit of their work and distinguish it from the comedic, erotic, or "actuality" shorts that continued to proliferate.³³

While São Paulo's theater entrepreneurs were not necessarily judging the aesthetic value of the photoplays they screened, they were reinforcing the connection between exclusivity and what, as explained in the second chapter, constituted the domain of Art with a capital "A." In doing so, they were following the footsteps of impresarios who, a decade earlier, had similarly sought to capitalize on Art performed live. Just as advertisements drew readers' attention to a film's production quality, a 1902 announcement in the elite *Commercio de São Paulo* highlighted the visual elements of the Tomba Opera, Comic Opera, and Operetta Company, including the troupe's lighting effects, onstage combat, and the historical accuracy of its "new, luxurious, [and] dazzling" costumes and scenery.³⁴ Other producers stressed the talent or renown of their contracted performers, a practice that occasionally backfired when reviewers'

³² e.g. High-Life, flyer for Cinema Odeon, 7 Sep 1910, AHSP PAH, caixa 56. The obsession with the literal length of the film—in feet, not meters—is observed by Jacob Penteado in his memory of screenings at the Belém, *Belenzinho*, 191. Film length was still tied to a movie's artistic merit when the label of "artistic film" was first applied, as exemplified by the Ideal Cinema's ad: "Grandioso film artistico dramatico Biograph com 620 metros," "Diversões no Braz," *Correio*, Nov 26, 1910, 7.

³³ Interestingly, the term "photoplay" was conjured by Sacramento, CA, exhibitor Edgar Strakosch in 1910 as part of the Essanay Company's contest to replace the seemingly vulgar "movie." See Peter Decherney, *Hollywood and the Culture Elite: How the Movies Became American* (Columbia University Press, 2006), 220, fn 2.

³⁴ Advertisement, *Commercio*, July 6, 1902, 6.

expectations were dashed. A disappointed *Commercio* columnist complained in 1901 that the musicians at Segreto's *café-concerto* at the Polytheama were better suited for the saloon or circus, while the humor weekly *O Bilontra* (The Rascal) accused the Santana's owners of failing to deliver the "first-rate" opera company they had promised, leaving discerning audiences no choice but to commiserate over beers at the nearby Progredior Bar.³⁵

As implied by these reviewers' remarks, the diversification of São Paulo's spaces for live entertainment led Paulistanos to develop an increasingly niched hierarchy of what genres and which performers belonged where. With the development of the photoplay, cinema managers aimed to add film to the list of highbrow repertoire, as it would have been called in the United States, occupying São Paulo's stages.³⁶ At *café-concertos*, like those temporarily hosted at the Polytheama and, later, the Casino, this repertoire included a more polished form of the variety acts found on other stages—song and dance numbers and the occasional orchestral interlude performed by the "best that there [was] in Europe."³⁷ At the Santana, highbrow meant canonical operas like Verdi's *Tosca*, Donizetti's *Elixir of Love*, and Puccini's *La Bohème*, as well as a growing number of French, Italian, and Portuguese operettas, evident in the advertisements examined in the chapter above (Image 28).³⁸ There were also symphonic concerts, solo recitals, and the already classic French dramas of Hugo and Dumas, *films*. It was the latter's *Lady of the*

³⁵ "Palcos e Salões," *Commercio*, Aug 27, 1901, 2; Fregoli, "Theatros e Clubs," *O Bilontra*, June 6-7, 1900, 3.

³⁶ For a discussion of the term's phrenological origins, see Levine, *Highbrow, Lowbrow*, 221.

³⁷ The *Diário Popular* praised Segreto for contracting "o que de melhor ha agora na Europa, no genero variedades," in "Theatros e Salões," Jan 5, 1911, 2. A useful, if fictional, example of variety acts' hierarchy is the "Broadway Melody" segment from the film *Singin' in the Rain* (1952). Recall how the aspiring actor seamlessly progresses from one kickline to another, each more sophisticated in dress and tamer in energy than the previous.

³⁸ A list of operas performed in São Paulo during this period is published by Paulo de Oliveira Castro Cerquera, *Um século de ópera em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Empresa Gráfica Editôra Guia Fiscal, 1954).

Camellias in which the fictional Mina Lanzi performed in this chapter's opening vignette, and which had by then dominated São Paulo's stages for several decades. Ironically, if we are to believe Agudo, these lengthy dramas that the photoplay was approximating were by 1912 no longer inspiring "true artistic pleasure" among viewers. The predictable familiarity of the canon and the faster pace of film, cars, and airplanes (the aviation pioneer Alberto Santos Dumont had already been hailed as a Paulista hero, and Paulistano Edu Chaves would soon follow in his footsteps) were trying audiences' patience and instilling a desire for constant change.³⁹ Photoplays met spectators halfway: they often embraced traditional themes and plot twists but shaved off an hour or two.

Photoplays marked a shift not only in the production of moving pictures, but also in the social practices and expectations of attending screenings. If, in terms of aesthetic quality, artistic films were the equivalent of highbrow dramas and operas, then the experience of going to the cinema would need to match that of the highbrow theater. Toward this end, some among São Paulo's cinema managers worked to create an environment of refinement, offering insight into theater producers' interpretation of what the "elegant world" entailed. For Serrador and his Companhia Cinematográfica Brasileira, refined theatergoing included the playbill, which could vary in length from four pages for Pathé Freres' *Roger la Honte* to thirty-two pages for Pasquali Films' *Os últimos dias de Pompeia* (*The Last Days of Pompeii*).⁴⁰ Circulated in 1913, both programs were printed on heavyweight, glossy paper and featured an eloquent synopsis brimming with intrigue, emotions, and suspense. The *Pompeia* program also included fifteen detailed screenshots (Image 32) and was bounded by a textured cover delicately bordered and

³⁹ "verdadeiro prazer artistico," Agudo, 148.

⁴⁰ Companhia Cinematographica Brasileira, *Iris Theatre: Roger la Honte ou a Sombra do Crime*, program, 15 Sep 1913, Cinemateca D1499; Alberto Sestini, *Os ultimos dias de Pompeia*, program, 3 Oct 1913, Cinemateca D426/1.

inscribed with a slender font. The playbills were books in miniature, artworks worthy of the “masterpieces” that they both claimed their respective films to be. In the case of *Roger la Honte*, moreover, that connection between literary and cinematic arts was made explicit: the playbill’s writer stressed the film’s origins as a well-known novel (by Jules Mary) and its structure as a play (a “sensational drama, in 8 parts”), possibly based on a previous adaptation of the book for the stage. Additionally, the program’s two illustrations were reminiscent in style to those in the novel’s 1886 Parisian edition (Image 33).

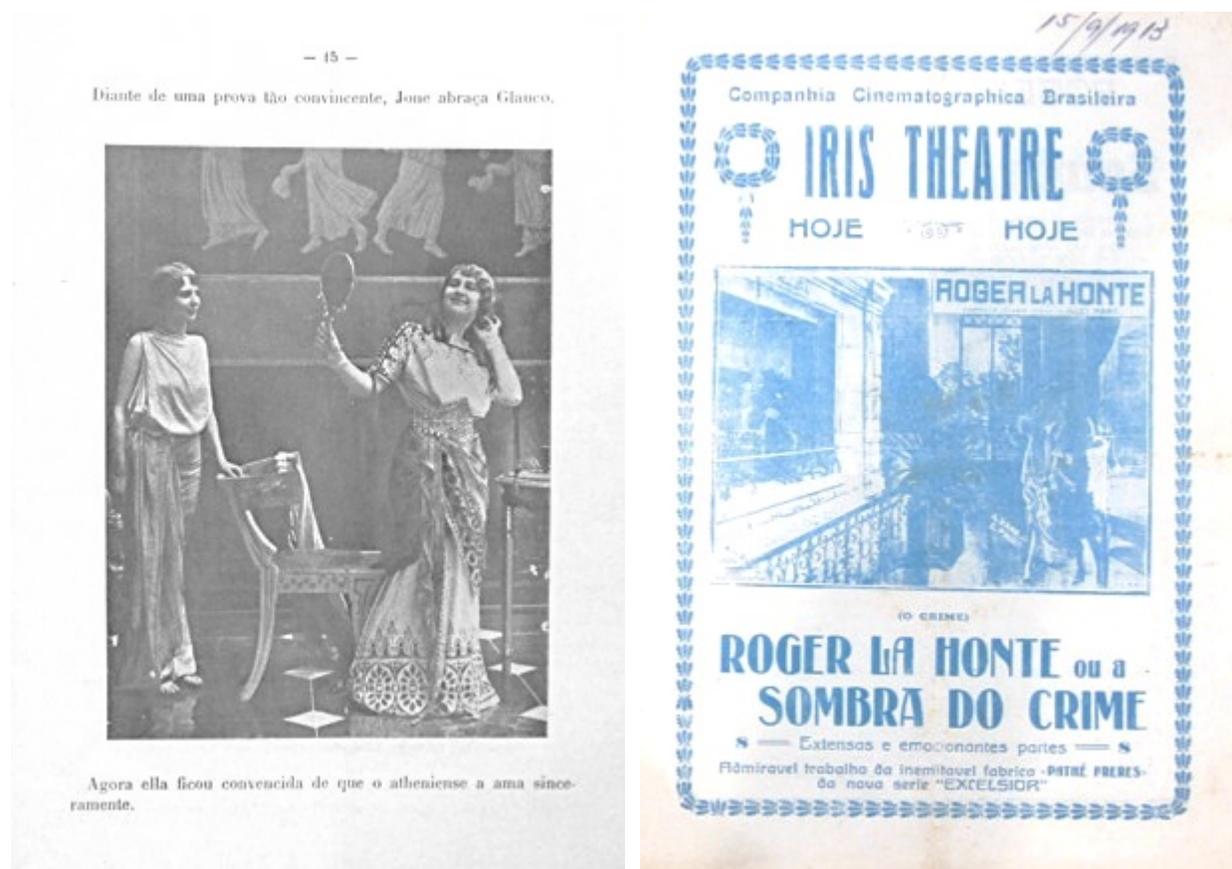


Image 32 (left): Screenshot in program for *Os últimos dias de Pompeia*. Alberto Sestini, 3 October 1913, Cinemateca D426/1.

Image 33 (right): Cover of program for *Roger la Honte ou a Sombra do Crime*. Companhia Cinematographica Brasileira, 15 Sep 1913, Cinemateca D1499.

If the printed word and image accompanying a film were used by some theater producers to reinforce an event's artistic quality—and thus to frame an event as culturally elite—so too was the accompanying space. Architectural beauty, as we saw in the second chapter, was a crucial element for supporters of the Municipal Theater, who pointed to the aesthetic shortcomings of the city's existing theaters. Those shortcomings proved a boon for the Álvares Penteadó family, which in 1899 sought to attract an elite clientele by pouring funds into the Santana's design. The result, to borrow the words of an *A Noite* critic, was a truly “elegant edifice” in place of the “birdcage” that had been the Apollo Theater.⁴¹ A neoclassical façade complete with columns, pediments, and statuary, as well as an interior tastefully furnished, painted, and electrically lit, led several others in São Paulo's press and assembly halls to likewise remark upon the theater's “modern conditions and elegant architecture.”⁴² A decade later, a handful of theater entrepreneurs adapted the playhouse's aesthetics to the smaller scale of the cinema. Like the Santana's, the Chantecler's walls and ceiling were adorned with fanciful murals, in this case the animal characters from Edmond Rostand's recent play, *Chantecler*.⁴³ After its ownership was transferred to D'Errico & Bruno in 1912, the Chantecler was rechristened the Rio Branco and given additional boxes, formal foyers, and a fresh front, upgrades that several storefront theaters received after their acquisition by São Paulo's new theater chains.⁴⁴

⁴¹ “em lugar da gaiola que se ergue alli na rua da Bôa Vista, surja um edificio elegante,” “Actualidades: Novo Theatro,” *Noite*, April 16, 1898, 1.

⁴² “Atravez do binoculo: Theatro Sant'Anna,” *A Arte*, July 8, 1900, 4; “de condições modernas e de elegante architectura,” Antonio da Silva Prado, *Relatorio de 1900 Apresentado á Camara Municipal de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Vanorden & Co., 1901), 20.. A photograph of the Santana is provided in Antonio Barreto do Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo (da Casa da Ópera à inauguração do Teatro Municipal)*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de Sao Paulo, 2006), 437.

⁴³ Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas*, 303.

⁴⁴ “Projecto de Reforma do Cinema Rio Branco,” 1912, Souza, *Salas de cinema*.

The adornments that marked a theater as a space for an elite art, and therefore audience, were not limited to a structure's beauty. If the Polytheama was not exactly a sight for sore eyes, it did boast "enviable" acoustics and the performance space demanded by large opera and dramatic companies.⁴⁵ Both of these flocked to the Polytheama in the late 1890s and even well after the smaller Santana's inauguration, from time to time drawing these genres' regular spectators to the humble *barracão*.⁴⁶ It was at the Polytheama and not the Santana, after all, that Sarah Bernhardt deigned to entertain São Paulo's wealthier spectators during her final tour there in 1905. Still, the Santana had its perks, including rooms on three different floors for sumptuous buffets, which offered theatergoers sustenance as well as a setting in which to simultaneously display table manners and full garb. After the Santana's closing, buffet service could be found a few blocks north at the Casino Antarctica, whose gardens additionally supplied the "elegant world" with a designated lot for parking cars.⁴⁷ The Antarctica's grounds competed with the "vast gardens" of Segreto's Casino Theater, which was situated between two of São Paulo's own new parks, the Anhangabaú and the Praça da República (Plaza of the Republic).⁴⁸ In these gardens, attendees could every afternoon sip spirits and make small talk to the tunes of a purportedly French all-female orchestra. These "Apertifs Concerts" were in 1911 free to the "elegant society" that Segreto hoped would linger on for the evening's indoor performances—and probably the only society that had the means to spend half a weekday at the Casino.

⁴⁵ "sua excelente acústica, que faz inveja a todos os teatros dessa capital," *Corréio Paulistano*, Aug 17, 1914; Cerquera, *Um século de ópera*, 27.

⁴⁶ The Santana's narrow stage and generally small hall were observed in "Atravez do binoculo: Theatro Sant'Anna," *A Arte*, July 8, 1900, 4.

⁴⁷ "O mundo elegante, comparecerá na 2a secção," "Pelos Theatros," *Furão*, May 13, 1916, 2; Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas*, 324.

⁴⁸ "sendo a entrada franqueada à sociedade elegante," advertisement, *Diário Popular*, Jan 2, 1911, 6.

Similar amenities drew São Paulo's glamorous lot to the expanded downtown's increasingly posh cinemas. In the Radium's lobby, as in the Casino's gardens, a female orchestra accompanied the chatter of lounging theatergoers and guests of the adjoining hotel, the chic Rotisserie Sportsman.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, across the street from the Smart near the Largo do Arouche, the High-Life's renovated foyer was in 1912 transforming the otherwise unremarkable cinema into the "preferred spot of the Paulistano elite," according to the *Pirralho*.⁵⁰ The theater foyer had become a crucial "rendezvous point for the night," to borrow the words of *Vida Moderna*, a spot in which to collect oneself and one's friends before the true "feminine battle" of *toilettes* began within the hall itself.⁵¹ The cinema lobby was also an ideal site in which to collect one's future husband or wife, as we saw in the previous chapter. Indeed, as José Agudo wryly observed, the foyer was a much more effective solution to this "important social problem" than wealthy Paulistanos' lavish balls: "Entire nights are not lost because screenings are short, nor is time wasted with courtship because all is done... cinematographically. It is perfection!"⁵²

By "cinematographically," Agudo undoubtedly referred to more than a courtship's speed—perhaps to the visibility and unpredictability of its passions, or to the prioritization of passion above prudence and prudery. Film, as well as theater's shorter forms, was challenging the moral conventions of São Paulo's elite, and the refined setting in which it was screened was only cementing the association between the elegant world and risqué diversion. When the *Pirralho*'s contributor wrote of the High-Life's luxurious lobby, he concluded that it was for the

⁴⁹ Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas de São Paulo*, 317.

⁵⁰ "incontestavelmente o ponto predileto da elite paulistana," *Pirralho*, Jan 30, 1912.

⁵¹ "O saguão ou o foyer de um teatro é o ponto de rendez-vous para a noite, assim como a sala é o mostruário das toilettes, uma arena de combate feminino." *Vida Moderna*, Oct 1911.

⁵² "um importante problema social.... Não se perdem as noites, porque as *sessões* são rápidas, e não se gasta muito tempo com os namoros, porque tudo se faz... cinematographicamente. É uma perfeição!" Agudo, *Gente rica*, 148-149.

best that “our elite” flocked to that particular cinema because the High-Life, unlike the Bijou and other locales, did not show “immoral films.”⁵³ The *Pirralho* might as well have added to the list the equally “immoral” variety acts staged in other halls frequented by São Paulo’s upper crust. The Casino Antarctica, to which the “elegants of the earth” flocked, hosted *gênero livre* productions—“free genre” was code for all sorts of freedoms—just as the less chic Moulin Rouge had done. In a similar vein, Segreto’s Casino featured numbers like Miss Lyllybelle’s “danse anglaise suggestive, pied nus” (suggestive English dance, barefoot) advertised in less than perfect French.⁵⁴ Even the Santana was known to shine a spotlight on “serpentine” dancers from time to time, as in the case of Loie Fuller in 1904.⁵⁵

In other words, the programming did not need to be morally grounded for a theater’s public to earn the reputation of elite. “Elite” relied more on a production’s and a theater’s dressings (or undressing)—on their aesthetics and amenities—than on the piece itself, and decadence functioned as its own aesthetic and amenity. In addition to kicklines, plunging necklines, and teases onstage and onscreen, pleasures of the flesh could be found in the form of lavishly bedecked courtesans in several of São Paulo’s most elegant theaters, typically in the spaces where alcohol was served. Prized accessories, these women served as more than merrymakers and visual delights. They also, as Margareth Rago has argued, enabled civilization in a way that São Paulo’s legislators on record never acknowledged: by releasing men’s allegedly pent-up desires, and thus upholding the purity of wives and the home.⁵⁶ Elite

⁵³ “E faz bem a nossa elite preferindo o High-Life pois lá, não só está livre de ver fitas imorais, como freqüentemente sucede no Bijou e outros cinemas,” *Pirralho*, Jan 30, 1912.

⁵⁴ “os elegantes da terra,” “Pelos Teatros,” *Furão*, May 6, 1916, 2; April 8, 1916, 2; advertisement, *Diário Popular*, Jan 31, 1911, 6.

⁵⁵ Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas*, 106.

⁵⁶ Margareth Rago, *Os prazeres da noite: prostituição e códigos da sexualidade feminina em São Paulo, 1890-1930* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1991), 25-26.

prostitution was moreover fashionable, signifying the loosening of social mores as idealized and practiced by the “cultured” of Paris and other cities admired by Paulistano lawmakers.

Following this fashion, local performers and escorts often adopted foreign nomenclatures, and especially the “Miss” and “Madame” of England and France, as most famously exemplified by the protagonist of Hilário Tácito’s eponymous novel, *Madame Pommery* (1920). As Segreto figured out, a producer merely had to veil his theaters’ activities in French—to phrase a “suggestive dance” in the language of the elegant world—and the latter would come. The profitability of cultivating an exclusive aesthetic even on this shallowest of foundations was not restricted to the risqué, as a tongue-in-cheek poem about the Santana Theater had already observed in *A Platéia* in 1905. Responding to an accusation that one third of the Santana’s audience had failed to understand the subtleties of Molière’s plays, the pseudonymous author jabbed that “The people is such when it wants to be, / And spends as does the good bourgeois, / If it understood nothing of Molière, / At least in the box office it spoke *Francez* well...”⁵⁷ French and, more generally, familiarity of the foreign were thus intertwined with the public display of social status, another feather in the elite spectator’s elegant cap and a marketable good in a theater’s box office.

Marketing the multitude

The allure of the foreign or the bourgeois was not restricted to theaters that fostered an elite public. In fact, the majority of São Paulo’s theater entrepreneurs applied a patina of cosmopolitanism and luxury to their theaters in order to attract as broad of an audience as possible. After all, for most of these businessmen, theaters were their livelihood and earning a

⁵⁷ “ O povo é mesmo assim quando elle quer, / E gasta como faz o bem burguez, / Si nada comprehendeu de Molière, / No bilheteiro bem falou *francez*...” Vatel, “Prato do dia: No corredor do Sant’Anna,” *Platéa*, July 28, 1905, 1.

living meant selling seats. In a city of fewer than half a million inhabitants, only so many seats could be sold to those who could afford membership to the elegant world. More to the point, the bulk of São Paulo's population *could* afford to attend the theater occasionally or even regularly if the price was low enough. And prices could be kept low by scaling up the audience. This was the business model of an emerging mass culture: small profits per unit multiplied countless times. In testing that model, entrepreneurs were persuading Paulistanos not only of the desirability of their particular theater, but also of the desirability of being one among many, of participating in the popular. The chapter's remaining pages examine these two types of persuasion: first, how producers appealed to a wide spectatorship by embracing particular forms and content, and especially by selling novelty; and, second, how producers expanded the term "popular" to render the multitude agreeable and even irresistible.

How, then, did theater entrepreneurs attract the multitude in the first place? Certainly, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, some impresarios offered an open invitation through advertisements that explicitly welcomed "all." Still, potential customers needed to be convinced to spend their *réis* at a particular locale rather than another, and to this end many businessmen drew on the wide-reaching power of fantasy and momentary escape. One way in which they did so was by playing to Paulistanos' aspirations in the names that they selected for their halls. If most theaters did not boast the gilded salons of the Municipal and the Santana, bourgeois luxury was at least appealed to through the use of French or English terms referencing wealth and social status, among them the Palace Theatre or the numerous Bijous that cropped up across the city. Other entrepreneurs, like those of the American and the Moulin Rouge, opted to instead invoke the expanding freedoms and expressions of modernity. In several cases, exoticism took the form of entirely mythical places, characters, and imagery: Eldorado and Eden, Eros and Isis. Finally,

there were the cinemas whose names capitalized on the foreign origins of their instruments, such as the Pathé Palacio and New York em São Paulo (New York In São Paulo), which was changed to Paris em São Paulo with the acquisition of a French projector. Indeed, many theater names were within a few years replaced by another, a turnover rate that hints at the impact that entrepreneurs assumed a name could have.

The aspirational cosmopolitanism touted on an auditorium's marquee was a reflection of the more welcoming cosmopolitanism that theater producers claimed to offer. To entice a broad range of spectators, impresarios highlighted the distant origins of performers and companies in flyers and the classified section of São Paulo's newspapers. In addition to the weekly selection of "global attractions" at the Moulin Rouge in 1906, there was The Great Raymond, "North American Illusionist," at the Polytheama in 1908, or, a couple of years later, films from the world's leading studios screened at the Belém.⁵⁸ Without requiring spectators to master an additional language, foreignness served to make a different appeal in each of these cases. In the first, the purportedly international scope of the Moulin Rouge's entertainers was an attempt at rendering exotic—strange, seductive—the otherwise familiar. Exotic could also be code for erotic, for costumes and movements and sounds that failed to abide by the standards of mainstream Paulistano morality and could therefore only enter mainstream stages and screens under foreign cover. The foreign offered an additional, different kind of escape in films that depicted the romanticized landscapes, histories, and customs of other peoples. Early actualities, as the minutes-long documentaries were known, took viewers down the Champs-Élysées or the Hudson River, while an Italian countryside might have been the backdrop for a historical drama. Leaving behind the reality of São Paulo, spectators were transported to far-off lands or, perhaps,

⁵⁸ Advertisement, *Estado*, Oct 6, 1908, 7; Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas*, 288; Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 193.

reminded of lands they had once known.⁵⁹ It was a journey for which Paulistanos clamored: as the *Correio Paulistano* reported in 1910, films like *Cleopatra* managed to pack the Bijou and other theaters even in the high heat of summer.⁶⁰

The Great Raymond's reference to his foreign provenance served an additional purpose: to claim his status as a global celebrity—a “great attraction”—whether or not deserved. As we saw in the case of Sarah Bernhardt, star power brought out audiences for at least two reasons: first, attendees assumed that the performer had already been vetted by countless spectators and so would give a worthy performance; and, second, many wanted to see and be seen seeing a widely known (and often mysterious) figure. Paulistanos wanted to satisfy their own curiosity, express their admiration, or simply be among those in the know. It was the fictional Mina Lanzi, not the drama in which she acted, that drew Agudo's characters to the Santana, just as it was the stars, and not the titles or plotlines, that Jacob Penteado recalled best from the films screened at the Belém in his youth.⁶¹ While Bernhardt and her archrival Gabrielle Réjane, who arrived in 1902 and 1909, launched tidal waves in the Paulistano press, other entertainers worked to at least initiate ripples in order to build as large of an audience as possible.⁶² Advertisements stressed performers' renown the world over, which reviewers in the press often uncritically repeated. The *Estado*, for example, celebrated the “great fame” and “enthusiastic reception” abroad of the otherwise unheard of Wilson and the Elton's, a team of ventriloquist and “comedic acrobats,”

⁵⁹ Before film, a similar experience was provided by the cosmoramas and panoramas that made their way through São Paulo. For an analysis of this medium's effect on spectatorship in Paris, see Vanessa R Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

⁶⁰ *Correio*, Feb 21, 1910.

⁶¹ Penteado's memory is extensive in this area; he enumerates at length the foreign and Brazilian actors of his childhood in Penteado, *Belenzinho*, 193–194.

⁶² Réjane dominated the *Commercio* in late July and early August (e.g. “Réjane,” July 28, 1902, 1), and reappeared in the *Estado* in June and July 1909 around her second visit to São Paulo.

respectively.⁶³ Meanwhile, society and arts magazines increasingly dedicated front covers and plenty of ink to extolling the talents of live and film stars, the latter of which could be easily and cheaply viewed throughout the city and around the globe at the same time.

By no means was an affiliation with the foreign necessary for attracting a wide range of spectators, however. This was especially true in the case of comedy. There was João Augusto Brandão, an Azorean largely raised in Brazil who earned the title of “o popularíssimo” (the extremely popular) for his work in *comédias de costumes*. There was also “our beloved” Sebastião Arruda, as Penteado remembered the comedic actor who got his start in small halls like the Belém and went on to direct São Paulo’s only continuously performing troupe in the late 1910s and 1920s.⁶⁴ Both Brandão and Arruda were known for their Brazilian caricatures and especially the *caipira*, or hick. Under their leadership, the latter became more and more localized on São Paulo’s stages, giving rise by the mid 1910s to a new genre of *revista* grounded in Paulista archetypes and written by Paulistas like Danton Vampré and Juó Bananère (the pseudonym for Alexandre Ribeiro Marcondes Machado).⁶⁵ These were sketches and pieces that relied on a shared sense of humor among audiences, a sense of humor that depended on the common comprehension and experiences of the growing city, its hinterland, and especially the

⁶³ “barristas comicos Eltons... vêm precedidos de grande fama e... entusiastico acolhimento,” “Palcos e Circos,” *Estado*, Feb 3, 1902, 2.

⁶⁴ “nosso querido e saudoso Sebastião Arruda, iniciador do teatro caipira,” Penteado, *Belenzinho*, 194.

⁶⁵ Magaldi and Vargas, *Cem anos*, 62; Cássio Santos Melo, “São Paulo Futuro: o caipira na projeção de uma metrópole,” *Histórica: Revista Eletrônica do Arquivo do Estado*, no. 36 (June 2009), <http://www.historica.arquivoestado.sp.gov.br/materias/anteriores/edicao36/materia05/>. The distinct *revista* of Rio de Janeiro, with its taxonomy of urban archetypes and especially wily personas, is analyzed in Flora Süssekind, *As revistas de ano e a invenção do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa, 1986), especially the third chapter.

accents and customs of the people who moved between the two.⁶⁶ The Paulista *revista*, in other words, united a heterogeneous multitude as a distinctly Paulistano public, reinforcing the association between the city's audiences and the humor, manners, appearances, and beliefs represented onstage.

At the same time, there was a universality to comedy that impresarios and especially filmmakers banked on. Even if a spectator missed the occasional inside joke or a thickly accented line, slapstick gestures, comical scenarios, and playful music could be understood by most paying customers. Moreover, there was a seemingly universal *need* for humor, for laughing away the day's cares. It was comedy that "everyone" was invited to view at the Polytheama's event mentioned in this chapter's introduction. It was also comedy that was served to "all" at the recently inaugurated São Paulo Theater in nearby Liberdade. As the flyer for the latter declared, "good laughter is the only means of diverting sorrows," and its ability to do so applied to every Paulistano.⁶⁷ Two hours of good laughter, the leaflet playfully continued, was also the only means for continuing to remember the show an entire month later. Most entertainment was little more than passing distraction, the advertising troupe seemed to imply, but the combination of *Promessa é Dívida* (*Promise is Debt*), a *comédia de costumes* by Paulista Carlos de Andrade, and *Os Sinos de Corneville* (known in English as *The Chimes of Normandy*), a wildly popular French operetta by Robert Planquette, were guaranteed to make a lasting impression.

⁶⁶ The humor of São Paulo's "macaronistic" chroniclers (in reference to their Italian-tinged humor) and, more generally, Brazilian writing at the time is analyzed in Elias Thomé Saliba, *Raízes do riso: a representação humorística na história brasileira: da Belle Époque aos primeiros tempos do rádio* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002).

⁶⁷ "Por isso hoje todos ao Theatro S. Paulo... bom rir, que é o unico meio de destrahirem as maguas e lembrarem-se do espectáculo por um mez," flyer enclosed with petition, Gremio das Camélias to Prefect, 11 Nov 1911, AHSP PAH, caixa 68.

This was not an insignificant point at the time in which the company occupying the São Paulo Theater, the Grêmio das Camélias (Guild of the Camellias), was publishing its program. Novelty, and the ephemerality that accompanied the constant pursuit of the new, was typically what theater producers marketed in order to consistently fill their auditoriums. In addition to stressing the global success or artistry of their productions, managers highlighted in newspaper advertisements and flyers that a film was the latest release or that a show featured a premiering piece or performer.⁶⁸ This was not the “new” of modernism; aesthetic originality was not theater producers’ aim nor what they presumed audiences to desire.⁶⁹ What most contractors did instead provide was variety and variation.

“Always novelties” (*sempre novidades*), proclaimed the lettering over the Colombo’s main entrance in Brás, and inside spectators could enjoy operettas organized by Cateysson, verismo operas contracted by Luiz Alonso, dramas hosted by the Spaniard Manuel Ballesteros, and films screened by Serrador, who occasionally afterward opened the hall for dancing.⁷⁰ Variety in this sense implied a diversity of genres, companies, and producers, a reality almost inevitable in a city far from a seaport and with still a relatively small population. Variety was also the reality for theaters the world over without a steady revenue stream. São Paulo’s Polytheama borrowed its name, meaning “many theaters/spectacles” in Greek, from a business

⁶⁸ A case in point are the theater advertisements in *Estado*, July 11, 1909, 11.

⁶⁹ Aesthetic originality, summed by Ezra Pound’s exclamation to “make it new,” is established as the uniting motivation of modernism in Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy: From Baudelaire to Beckett and beyond* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008). For an intellectual history of the desire for newness, see Michael North, *Novelty: A History of the New* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

⁷⁰ Município de São Paulo, *Registro de Alvarás-Licença: Diversas Atividades*, vol. 762 (São Paulo, 1908), 59–60, AHSP Fundo CMSP/INTDM/PMSP, Série Assuntos Diversos (1598-1955); Cerquera, *Um século de ópera em São Paulo*, 72; Serrador to Prefect, 2 March 1909, AHSP PAH, caixa 38.

model developed in Italy after state funds dried up in the 1870s.⁷¹ Italy's *politeami* were truly multipurpose halls whose programming was all-encompassing and indiscriminating, and the model worked on both sides of the Atlantic: in 1911, the state of São Paulo listed the Polytheama's annual profits as 102:862\$500, an order of magnitude greater than its nearest recorded rivals, the Braz Bijou and the Cinema Belém.⁷² It is telling that both of these latter theaters also featured a wide range of live performances, either in between reels or as separate productions. Even in the case of film screenings, there was typically an assortment of film types accompanied by an assortment of musical selections. At the Belém of Penteado's memories, a small band banged out mazurkas for actualities, maxixes for comedies, waltzes or opera excerpts for dramas, and *xotes* (Brazil's take on the schottische) for "curiosities" and newsreels, in this manner pairing musical with visual variety.⁷³

If variety served a profitmaking purpose, audiences and reviewers in the press only encouraged its practice, including within a single show. As we saw in the section above, the lengthy acts of *Lady of the Camellias* at the Santana were too "heavy" for Agudo's well-heeled characters. What they wanted instead was speed, to "arrive quickly to the end" without having to "think... to analyze."⁷⁴ Such velocity was by 1912 supplied by theater producers in two forms: variety acts and films. Spectators clamored for more than brevity, however. In 1907, poor

⁷¹ Jutta Toelle, "Opera, Hypnosis and Rollerskating: The Rise of the Italian Politeami as Multiple-Use Theatres," in *Musical Theatre as High Culture?*, ed. Harry White, Vjera Katalinic, and Stanislav Tuksar (Zagreb: Croatian Musicological Society, 2011), 152.

⁷² While these statistics should be taken with a grain of salt (not all theaters were listed, and the recordkeeping of a few seems questionable), the enormous gulf between the Polytheama and its competitors cannot be entirely dismissed. Repartição de Estatística e Archivo de São Paulo, *Anuario estatístico de São Paulo (Brasil), 1911* (São Paulo: Typ. Siqueira, n.d.), 275.

⁷³ Penteado, *Belenzinho*, 190.

⁷⁴ "A nevrose da velocidade em todas as cousas e em todos os actos, produz-nos uma invencível preguiça de pensar... de analysar. O que nós queremos é chegar logo ao fim." Agudo, *Gente rica*, 149.

attendance at the Eden-Theatre was attributed by the *Estado* to the Eden's "not very inviting" productions; with "more varied programming," argued the critic, the theater would inevitably overflow with spectators.⁷⁵ By contrast, under Segreto's leadership, the Moulin Rouge received endless approbation in a *Vida Moderna* issue of that same year, and Segreto himself was awarded a half-page portrait (Image 34). Segreto's accomplishment? "Pleasing all" through "nightly successes of new and splendid numbers," which were performed by companies of



Image 34: *A Vida Moderna's* adulation of Pascoal Segreto. Photograph, December 25, 1907, 43.

⁷⁵ "programma que não é muito convidativo... o programma ora mais variado," "Palcos e Circos," *Estado*, May 31, 1907, 3.

“professional ability” from “across the genres.”⁷⁶ In addition to a variety of forms, in other words, the Moulin Rouge also offered its spectators variation: from night to night enough differentiation *within* each genre—changing characters, costumes, music, etc.—so that theatergoers would have a reason to return again and again.

The Moulin Rouge’s constant rotation of acts, and its audiences’ constant desire for the new, led Segreto to market his theater in 1911 as up-to-date, trendy, “in fashion.”⁷⁷ Yet, fashionable in this case did not preclude “popular”: the same advertisement called the Moulin Rouge’s evening of first-time sensations a “popular soiree.” To be popular, the ad seemed to be saying, was to be in fashion. To what, though, did “popular” refer? Was the adjective describing the performances of the Seguin Company, a French troupe on its South American tour, or the expected audiences, or both? If “popular” referred to audiences, however, then its meaning was distinct from that of the classed “popular sectors” that we saw was used elsewhere in São Paulo’s press and assembly halls. It was also different from that of *tipos populares* (“popular types”), the label commonly attached to the street vendors, eccentrics, drunks, and other neighborhood regulars who repeatedly caught the attention of residents and passersby.⁷⁸

What these terms did have in common with the “popular” of the Moulin Rouge was that they referred to a large quantity of people visible to the public eye: the theater’s advertisement encouraged the attendance of all, bottoming out its few square inches on the *Estado*’s page with a commanding “To the Moulin!! To the Moulin!!” To this exclamation Agudo’s novel once again adds insight. The city’s growing number of fast-paced shows, his omniscient narrator

⁷⁶ “apresenta companhias de todos os generos e de proclamada habilidade profissional... successos todas as noites pelos novos e esplendidos numeros... sempre no nobre intuit de agradar a todos,” “Paschoal Segreto,” *Vida Moderna*, Dec 25, 1907, 43.

⁷⁷ Advertisement, *Estado*, July 11, 1911, 11.

⁷⁸ “Tipos populares” is the title of one of Jacob Penteadó’s chapters, which paints the public characters of Belenzinho with plenty of color (Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 226-232).

insists, meant that only three types of spectators were willing to tolerate the lengthy productions of “real theaters”: music lovers, *caipiras* (hicks), and “snobs.”⁷⁹ To value the novelty supplied by the Moulin Rouge, then, was to be among the Paulistano majority, a majority truly urban but also free of the dilettante’s haughty pretensions. This was a popular that, like the programming of the *politeami*, was all-encompassing and indiscriminating, one that included *Vida Moderna* readers alongside, say, those of the Italian, socialist weekly *Avanti!*—a popular only possible in the packed public spaces of a diversifying city.⁸⁰

A similarly catchall intention lay behind the “popular” of advertisements’ “popular prices.” In the *Estado*, the phrase *preços populares* made only a rare appearance in the 1890s, as in the case of a Japanese troupe’s performance at the São José in 1895.⁸¹ Under contract with local impresario Luiz Milone, who would organize many of the city’s opera seasons over the following decade, the company offered reduced prices for every tier except the gallery, that is, the cheapest entry.⁸² While the number of advertisements boasting popularly priced entertainment rose dramatically over the next twenty years, the practice’s implications remained ambiguous. For example, at the Polytheama in 1908, Cateysson’s Brazilian Theater Company (Empresa Teatral Brasileira) likewise only lowered the costs for boxes and first-order parterre seats. Perhaps this was an attempt to compete with comparable programming at the newer Colombo; in an adjacent announcement for the latter, Serrador promised Italian comedies and

⁷⁹ “Os espectáculos por sessões de uma hora, a preços reduzidos, fazem que os verdadeiros theatros fiquem ás moscas, e se alguém supporta ainda um espectáculo de tres horas é porque gosta de musica, é caipira ou é... *snob*.” Agudo, *Gente rica*, 149.

⁸⁰ Advertisement for Moulin Rouge, *Avanti*, Sep 18, 1908, 3.

⁸¹ A query in acervo.estadao.com.br for the enclosed keywords “preços populares” produces only two results during this decade, both in 1895.

⁸² The company’s regular and popular prices are listed in *Estado*, Aug 3, 1895, 4, and Aug 8, 1895, 4, respectively.

dramas at the popular prices that Cateyssson would soon adopt.⁸³ Popular prices in this sense meant that only those already able to shell out 4\$ per person—approximately a male textile worker’s daily wages—saw any savings as compared to regular prices for the same troupes.⁸⁴

Did impresarios, then, expand legislators’ “popular sectors” to encompass the nouveau riche and middling Paulistanos? Or could “popular” have referred to the prices associated with a different kind of entertainment, a lowbrow as opposed to highbrow performance? In short, was a popular public defined by its income or by its tastes? Certainly, at least one theater reviewer disparaged opera companies that offered *preços populares* for their unimpressive sets and “homogenous” casts, that is, their lack of stand-out talents.⁸⁵ There was also the fact that productions charging similar or lower rates without claiming popular prices typically offered genres other than operas or dramas. When the Great Raymond was hired by Cateyssson to grace the Polytheama’s stage, admission rates equaled those of the popular prices noted above—with two exceptions: at 2\$ and 1\$, respectively, a second-order seat and gallery admission were even cheaper.⁸⁶ The lower prices of what might have been considered popular productions is particularly apparent in the *Gazeta*’s 1911 juxtaposition of Polytheama ads for the Grand

⁸³ On the fifth page of the May 23, 1908, issue of the *Estado*, Cateyssson advertised a “variado espectáculo” featuring Italian pieces with ticket prices of 25\$ for first-level boxes (*frisas*, which could hold up to five spectators), 20\$ for second-level boxes (*camarotes*), 5\$ for first-order parterre seats, 3\$ for second-order parterre and balcony seats, and 1\$500 for entrance to the gallery (the top balcony, which included either benches or standing room). In the next column over, Serrador announced “popular prices” for a show by the Grande Companhia Comico-Dramática Italiana Vergani at the following rates, in the same order as the Polytheama’s prices listed above: 20\$, 15\$, 4\$, 3\$, and 1\$. Within a couple of weeks, Cateyssson’s rates matched Serrador’s, with the exception of the gallery (*Estado*, June 9, 1908, 6).

⁸⁴ “Quadro dos salarios e do pessoal segundo os officios em que são occupados,” based on 1911 inspections of textile factories, in Secretaria da Agricultura, Commercio e Obras Publicas do Estado de São Paulo, *Boletim do Departamento Estadual do Trabalho: Annos 1, Nos. 1 e 2, 4.o trimestre de 1911 e 1.o trimestre de 1912* (São Paulo, 1912), 76–77.

⁸⁵ “Palcos e Circos,” *Estado*, Sep 28, 1909, 4.

⁸⁶ Advertisement, *Estado*, Oct 26, 1908, 7.

Venetian Comedy Company and Pietro Mascagni's opera *Iris*, conducted by the esteemed composer himself.⁸⁷ Boxes for the latter, of which few remained, ranged from 120\$ to 150\$ apiece, in contrast to the comedic troupe's 25\$ to 30\$. Moreover, a Mascagni admirer would have had to pay at minimum 5\$ in order to enter the auditorium, as opposed to 1\$500 for an evening of Italian comedy.

Luiz Alonso, Cateysson's successor at the Polytheama, had contracted both productions; it was he who determined the monetary value of genres and companies.⁸⁸ From this perspective, Alonso's calculations may have been less about aesthetic judgment—the distinction between highbrow and lowbrow forms per se—than about the assumption that certain entertainment was more likely than others to attract and therefore demand big spenders, or at least big spending. For some Paulistanos, patronizing the famous Mascagni was a worthwhile investment, not only in the arts but also in their individual status and their connections—what today we call social capital. In a city of upwardly mobile immigrants and industrialists, the theater was a relatively accessible Jockey Club, a social network penetrable with the purchase of a ticket. The higher the price of that ticket, the more selective and, presumably, endowed the audience. It is of such an audience that Alexandre Rossi, an aspiring Italian immigrant in Agudo's *Gente rica*, takes advantage when he arrives at the Polytheama with a dazzlingly dressed wife on his arms.⁸⁹ The latter's radiance coaxes a Dr. Claro da Silva into loaning Rossi seed money for an industrial company, the success of which soon cements Rossi's place among the ranks of the nouveau riche.

⁸⁷ Advertisements, *Gazeta*, July 8, 1911, 3.

⁸⁸ Such price variation was not unique to the Polytheama, of course. For example, a comparison of the cost of a parterre seat at the new São José Theater, managed by Guimarães Aragão & Cia and Luiz Marino, highlights the lower cost (4\$) of seeing the Silva Pinto Operettas, Magic and *Revistas* Company as opposed to that (6\$) of enjoying the Italian Lyric Company of Schiaffino & Tuffanelli. Guimarães Aragão & Cia and Luiz Marino to Prefect, 11 March 1910 and 4 July 1910, AHSP PAH, caixa 56.

⁸⁹ Agudo, *Gente rica*, 101.

If a Mascagni-conducted and composed opera could transform the Polytheama into the Jockey Club, then popular prices had the potential to open the club doors to an even broader swath of residents. Such prices allowed spectators accustomed to occupying a chair on the ground floor to afford a box, a perch from which to display their status and connect with established and other social-climbing families and individuals. In multilevel theaters, then, popular prices enabled literal upward mobility by lowering the threshold for purchasing the next more expensive seat. At the same time, especially in theaters not frequented by wealthier Paulistanos, such mobility only served to fragment along finer class lines the lump sum of the “popular sectors.” As Pedro Nava recalled in Rio, the “first-class” seats of his neighborhood theater were generally occupied by “monied Galicians, property owners, women with plumed hats”—what Nava labeled “the neighborhood’s beastly folk.”⁹⁰ Seating differentiation in this manner reinforced and rendered even more visible existing social cleavages at the same time that some spectators were able to move from one section to another from show to show. Multiple tiers also rendered more visible attendees themselves; beastly or not, Nava could not help but notice higher-paying patrons. Through their visibility and plumes, better endowed spectators embraced “popular” in a second sense of the word: the admiration of the multitude, made possible by theaters’ social topography.

That topography rarely allowed for mobility between sections *during* a show, especially in larger theaters with galleries. While the Santana’s parterre and box patrons were able to mingle around shared buffets, audiences in the galleries were relegated to their own dining hall

⁹⁰ “ só a gente besta do bairro ia de primeira e sentava-se espaçadamente em cadeiras tristonhas. Galegos apatacados, proprietários, senhoras de chapéu de plumas...” Pedro Nava, *Balão cativo: memórias*, 3rd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1977), 218.

upstairs.⁹¹ Plans for the Santana's successor, drafted in 1912, along with existing theaters like the Colombo and the São Paulo, only encouraged the gallery's isolation by designating separate entrances and stairwells for the use of gallery attendees.⁹² With or without architectural barriers, the distinction between gallery and other spectators was also upheld by the law. A 1909 state decree prohibited peddlers from entering the parterre and boxes but not the gallery, and only audiences in the latter were explicitly barred from booing and teasing their counterparts in other sections of the hall.⁹³ The mandate hints at the hooliganism of which gallery occupants, and especially law school students, had been over the years accused, as we saw in the first chapter. With separating structures and policemen in place, law students, prostitutes, or individuals of more modest means could frequent the same theater as São Paulo's finest families without tarnishing by association the latter's reputation, at least while inside the auditorium. In this manner, a theater entrepreneur could accommodate a public popular in terms of socioeconomic spread without entirely compromising the exclusivity and elegance pledged in his advertisements.

The humbler halls that cropped up across São Paulo in the few years before 1910 flattened the social geography that was built into the very architecture of larger theaters such as the Santana, São Paulo, and Colombo. Variety acts and film did not necessitate large stages or stalls or sophisticated lighting. In fact, intimate spaces offered audiences better vantage points, not to mention cheaper production costs for theater managers, in the days of small screens and contained ensembles. To be sure, some entrepreneurs continued to construct massive theaters, but by 1915 the majority of auditoriums frequented by Paulistanos featured little variation in

⁹¹ Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo*, 436.

⁹² Maximilian Hehl, "Projecto de um Theatro para o Exmo. Senhor Conde Sylvio de Penteadó á Rua 24 de Maio, São Paulo," blueprint (São Paulo, April 8, 1912), AHSP Fundo PMSP: Série Obras Particulares: OP/1912/004.544; Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo: 1924* (São Paulo: Escolas Profissionaes Salesianas, 1924), 228.

⁹³ State Decree 1,714 (18 March 1909), Art. 28, 30.

terms of seating and pricing. Film screenings in particular flattened price scales, with cinema managers differentiating only between children and adults and between parterre and boxes. Even these deviations were relatively minor. Given that a box could typically fit five, an attendee at the Coliseu dos Campos Eliseos, the High-Life, or the Radium could on most nights pay the same price for a spot in a box as a chair on the ground floor, or perhaps pitch in an additional 1\$ per person for the choicest boxes.⁹⁴ By no means were these the 30\$ chasms of the Polytheama's Mascagni extravaganza. Many cinemas, moreover, could not boast boxes or even fixed chairs. As was illustrated in the previous chapter, the Belém's "beer hall" folding chairs could be easily moved throughout the long, one-story auditorium to form whatever arrangements spectators desired, and a similarly flexible and compact space was the expected norm for most "workers' cinemas," at least as characterized by legislators.⁹⁵

Essential to the characterization of modest halls as workers' theaters were their affordable admission costs. Before the lavish sets or star power of lengthier films, Paulistanos could typically enjoy moving pictures for fewer *réis* than any staged entertainment, including the circus.⁹⁶ In the couple of years before and after 1910, these rock-bottom rates were consistently marketed in newspaper advertisements as "popular prices." Next to the Great Raymond's 1908 announcement, for example, was that of the Progredior-Theatre for a *cinematographo falante* (a film screening synchronized with a sound recording), whose "popular prices" lightened purses

⁹⁴ Advertisements, *Estado*, July 26, 1913, 11; Jan 8, 1913, 12.

⁹⁵ "tipo cervejaria," Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 190; "para operarios," Mário do Amaral, Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes*, 1916, 30.

⁹⁶ Penteadó remembers a nearby circus, led by Benjamim de Oliveira, charging \$500 for children and 1\$ for adults (Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 187). *Estado* advertisements indicate that prices were occasionally higher, for example, 2\$ for chairs and 1\$ for benches at the Circo Americano (advertisement, *Estado*, Feb 2, 1911, 11). For more on Oliveira and his *circo-teatro*, see Erminia Silva, *Circo-teatro: Benjamim de Oliveira e a teatralidade circense no Brasil* (São Paulo: Altana, 2007).

by a mere \$500 for adults and \$200 for children—the cost of a liter of good milk and a slice of pizza, respectively, in Penteadó’s working-class neighborhood of Belenzinho.⁹⁷ These rates outdid those of not only the Polytheama but also the nearby Bijou, where *preços populares* for film screenings just a few months earlier had consisted of 2\$ for an adult and 1\$ for children.⁹⁸ Facing stiff competition, other exhibitors soon followed suit, and in this manner the Progredior set a precedence for the low cost of cinema attendance in São Paulo’s center as well as its lower-income neighborhoods.

At the same time, by highlighting the hall’s “elegant lobby and good terrace,” the Progredior’s advertisement stressed that popular prices did not translate into an experience of lesser value.⁹⁹ A similar defense was mounted in 1911 announcements for the Chantecler’s “chic program” and “fashionable soiree.” Below the enumerated “popular prices”—the same \$500 for adults, \$200 for children, or 2\$ for a box—was the theater’s usual claim to being the preferred spot of the “Paulistano elite.”¹⁰⁰ These prices, the ad seemed to insist, were unexpected at the Chantecler, indeed contradictory to an elegant space frequented by the elegant world. Perhaps then, at least in this case, popular prices—that is, reduced prices—were not intended for a lower-income audience but rather as a means of encouraging habitual movie-going among otherwise regular theatergoers. After all, most regular readers of the mainstream press, those for whom the advertisements analyzed in this chapter were intended, did not count themselves to be among São Paulo’s popular sectors. The use of *preços populares*, then, may have been as much about defining an “other,” referring to a category with which consumers might not have at least initially identified, as it was about encouraging that other’s attendance.

⁹⁷ Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 106, 230.

⁹⁸ Advertisement, *Estado*, June 13, 1908, 5.

⁹⁹ “elegante sala de espera e bom terraço,” advertisement, *Estado*, Oct 26, 1908, 7.

¹⁰⁰ Advertisement, *Estado*, Feb 2, 1911, 11.

Still, whether theater entrepreneurs were appealing to elites, to the aspiring members of a new middle class, or to the families of a growing working class, the multitude—the sum of all in São Paulo’s public spaces—increasingly mattered. The sudden inclusiveness and cachet of “popular” in the press, as evident by the frequency of the term’s appearance in the *Estado* at the time, points to the newfound attractiveness of the many and its opinion in the 1910s.¹⁰¹ Perhaps a 1915 cover of the *Cigarra* (Image 35) captured it best. A smartly dressed, fair-skinned woman



Image 35: Cover illustration, *A Cigarra*, May 11, 1915.

¹⁰¹ A keyword query of the *Estado*’s digital archive, acervo.estadao.com.br, shows that the use of the term “popular” in the newspaper nearly doubled in frequency during the 1910s as compared to the previous decade (the search engine identified 9,212 appearances in the 1910s as opposed to 4,960 appearances in the 1900s). Indeed, the term’s usage maps neatly onto the São Paulo’s theater rush, peaking between 1909 and 1913 and then gradually declining through 1923.

confidently gazes at the magazine's reader lounging at home, her curls and hat precisely pinned, her stole and muff precisely draped, even as she takes a step forward. Far behind her are indistinguishable figures; in contrast to those in the background of the Casa Raunier advertisement (Image 31), these are little more than silhouettes, grayed bodies melting together into one on the city's streets. Every *Cigarra* subscriber must have yearned to be in the elegant woman's shoes, yet her position was impossible without the existence of this blurred multitude. Hers was not a case of exclusivity but rather popularity: to stand out from the crowd, she needed the crowd. In the new visibility of urbanizing São Paulo, to be elite meant to be elegant among, rather than simply isolated from, the popular.

Conclusion

Commercial theaters helped Paulistanos simultaneously blend and stand apart from the multitude: within theater stalls, Paulistanos found and defined their place. In this sense, claiming one's spot in the new city was intimately tied to consumption. As Leivas Gomes discovers in his transition from small town to big city in Agudo's *Gente rica*, ready money was crucial for the full enjoyment of São Paulo's comparatively intense nightlife.¹⁰² To be urban meant to publicly consume pleasure, a widespread act that was crucial to organizing Paulistano society. Cultural practices, in other words, were essential elements in the creation and categorization of the urban public. Yet, as this chapter has shown, theater entrepreneurs complicated the categories articulated by many local lawmakers and associational leaders. As we saw in the chapter's first section, theater producers who worked to attract an elite spectatorship typically relied on their hall's location and design, programming, or the language and images of their advertising to build a reputation of exclusivity and elegance. Elegance, however, did not necessarily coincide with

¹⁰² Agudo, *Gente rica*, 117.

the standards of morality and beauty demanded by advocates of the Municipal Theater. Neither did novelty, which theater entrepreneurs peddled in order to grow as large of a clientele as possible, a clientele that they labeled as popular but that came to encompass both the “elite” and “popular sectors” referred to in São Paulo’s assembly halls and in the press.

In appealing to a wide range of Paulistanos, in blurring the social line between elite and popular, theater entrepreneurs rendered desirable the sharing of tastes and habits with many others, as long as one was also still noticeable among the multitude. This was not necessarily the slumming of US cities; transient self-othering and exile on the part of affluent Paulistanos was not required. In fact, sharing tastes in many cases did not entail sharing spaces. The audiences at the Cinema Belém of Jacob Penteadó’s childhood, for example, belonged squarely to the popular sectors: they were small farmers, shopkeepers, factory hands.¹⁰³ They came because they lived nearby and because their neighbors did, not because of an advertisement. Indeed, no Belém exhibitor ever announced his programs in the *Estado*; the theater’s only appearance in the newspaper was when the building and lot were listed for sale in 1912.¹⁰⁴ Still, many theater entrepreneurs aimed to and did accommodate a wide range of spectators, and in doing so they promoted a new understanding of urbanity grounded in the inevitability of the multitude. It was also a new understanding of the popular, one that stressed the urban context of the Brazilian commoner, as opposed to earlier and later searches for the authentic Brazilian among the rural folk.¹⁰⁵ If the urban public was a popular public, then the stakes for shaping both were even

¹⁰³ Penteadó, *Belenzinho*, 71, 77, 192.

¹⁰⁴ “Cinema Belem,” *Estado*, Aug 17, 12; “Cinema,” *Estado*, Sep 1, 1912, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Most famous among these searches was Paulistano writer and musician Mário de Andrade’s recordings of musical traditions in the Brazilian hinterland. See, among other studies, Carlos Sandroni, *Mário contra Macunaíma: cultura e política em Mário de Andrade* (São Paulo: Vértice, 1988); and Antonio Gilberto Ramos Nogueira, *Por um inventário dos sentidos: Mário de Andrade e a concepção de patrimônio e inventário* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 2005).

higher, especially as the number of theaters in São Paulo quickly multiplied. In the next chapter we will examine those rising stakes and the men who, in setting them, sought to reshape the urban public.

Ch. 7 Legislating Publics, Differentiating Minds, 1916-1924

On the evening of December 27, 1914, another of São Paulo's theaters burned down. This time it was the Polytheama, and the police did have a sense of its cause. According to reporters for the *Commercio*, the fire had begun around 4:50pm, when an attempt to repair the theater's "old and defective" electric wiring backfired—or, rather, short circuited.¹ Spectators were still settling into their seats and the exhibitor for Francisco Serrador's Companhia Cinematográfica Brasileira had just loaded the reels for the film *O despertar da consciência* (The Conscience's Awakening). By the time the flames were doused around 9:00pm, consciences had indeed been rudely awakened. For Serrador, the loss of uninsured projectors, furniture, piano, and three programs' worth of film—all together valued at 30:000\$—was a stark reminder of the volatility of the theater business. For newly minted Alderman Luiz Fonseca, the victimless scene was a close-call indication of his legislature's failure to protect the Paulistano public and his need to do more. Seeking to lighten the load of his heavy conscience, Fonseca ordered municipal engineers to inspect São Paulo's entertainment venues and directed his own energies toward drafting a regulatory bill.

Compared to the destruction of the São José Theater, in other words, the fire that consumed the Polytheama elicited a very different response from city and state lawmakers. To be sure, both cases inspired in assembly halls and in the press laments for the loss of a long-standing institution, a reputable center of artistic activity. Yet the Polytheama was a commercial institution, an enterprise privately run for the sake of profit. Moreover, it was by 1914 far from alone in doing so. In the preceding six years alone, over one hundred theaters had opened their

¹ "velha e defeituosa," *Commercio*, Dec 28, 1914.

doors. As we saw in the previous two chapters, these numbers were indicative of not only a new class of theater producers, but also a dramatically expanded group of theater consumers. When the Polytheama met its fiery match, these spectators emerged in full force, rendering visible for perhaps the first time the magnitude of São Paulo's growing population. The *Commercio* estimated that between twenty and thirty thousand onlookers flooded the *centro*'s streets that summer evening: "In one moment, as if by magic, the esplanade of the Municipal Theater, the Viaduto do Chá, and the yet unfinished belvederes of Rua Líbero Badaró disgorged men, women, and children," a "mass of curious *populares*" difficult to contain.²

The safe containment of this mass was precisely what Fonseca hoped to accomplish when he initiated and steered toward approval a bill regulating São Paulo's cinemas. This chapter analyzes the motivations behind and implementation of what would become Municipal Law 1,954 and related legislation. Beginning as attempts to protect the safety, comfort, and hygiene of theatergoers, the city's foray into theater regulation took on new forms in the mid 1910s. Beyond a concern for spectators' bodies, municipal lawmakers increasingly paid heed to spectators' minds. Through the policing of performers, producers, and audiences, as well as the subsidization of troupes, playwrights, and composers, legislators sought to shape an urban public grounded in the appreciation of virtue, hygiene, and beauty. In doing so, they transformed audiences into political objects and urban culture into a political issue. At the same time, such measures diminished the political agency of theatergoers and the political consequence of theatergoing. If lawmakers' aim was to elevate the spectator from the narrow role of passive

² "Todos corriam para ali, vinte ou trinta mil curiosos, procuravam deliciar-se com o espectáculo.... Num momento, como por encanto, a esplanada do Municipal, o viaduto do chá e os belvédères da Rua Líbero Badaró, ainda inacabados, regorgitavam de homens, mulheres e crianças, sem se falar das Ruas Formosas e São João, nas quais se viam os policiais em sérias dificuldades em conter a massa de populares curiosos." *Commercio*, Dec 28, 1914.

consumer, elevation did not lead to the part of citizen. Indeed, by only minimally intervening, the municipality effectively blessed the nascent theater industry as a supplier of depoliticized diversion. While the labor strikes of the late 1910s led to the forced or voluntary closing of many associational theaters, most commercial theaters remained standing.

Still, legislators did find causes for intervention in the city's theater scene. Often taking the form of ad hoc, focused regulations, the municipality's steps proved to forge the path for the better studied cultural policies of Getúlio Vargas's regime.³ It was local tensions, in other words, that set in motion national efforts to define and control Brazilian cultural production beginning in the 1930s. At the heart of both urban and national policies was a diversifying population, a population that São Paulo's lawmakers was increasingly empowered to legislate in the face of epidemics, labor conditions, housing shortages, and other challenges. It was also a population that many municipal leaders feared was receiving undue influence from the entertainment business. Like other expanding industries, entertainment stretched further the role of the state as the local government sought to check the private sector's actions without entirely impeding

³ Despite its long history, cultural policy in Brazil and Latin America has only recently become the subject of a corpus of academic studies. The Vargas era figures heavily within the Brazilianist literature, which has focused on censorship, the institutionalization of modernism, and the emerging concept of patrimony: Mônica Pimenta Velloso, "Cultura e poder político: uma configuração do campo intelectual," in *Estado Novo: ideologia e poder*, ed. Lúcia Lippi Oliveira (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1982), 71–108; Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Antonio Gilberto Ramos Nogueira, *Por um inventário dos sentidos: Mário de Andrade e a concepção de patrimônio e inventário* (São Paulo SP: Editora Hucitec, 2005); Lia Calabre, *Políticas culturais no Brasil: dos anos 1930 ao século XXI* (Rio de Janeiro RJ Brasil: FGV Editora, 2009); Maria Cristina Castilho Costa, *Censura em cena: teatro e censura no Brasil: Arquivo Miroel Silveira* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2006); Roseli Figaro, ed., *Na cena paulista, o teatro amador: circuito alternativo e popular de cultura (1927-1945)* (São Paulo: Ícone Editora, 2008). The link between municipal and national cultural policies is directly explored in two texts on São Paulo's Department of Culture: Patricia Raffaini, *Esculpindo a cultura na forma Brasil: o Departamento de Cultura de São Paulo (1935-1938)* (São Paulo: Humanitas FFLCH/USP, 2001), and Roberto Barbato Jr., *Missionários de uma utopia nacional-popular: os intelectuais e o Departamento de Cultura de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2004).

investments.⁴ Most Paulistano politicians, after all, were businessmen of one sort or another, and they recognized entertainment's contributions to the public coffers and to related enterprises.

Their aim, then, was not to dismantle the nascent theater industry but rather to guide its growth.

In guiding that growth, lawmakers rethought what the urban public was and how to shape it. The optimism of 1900 that surrounded the approval of the Municipal Theater was now clouded by a fear of theaters', and especially cinemas', destructive potential. The first half of this chapter explores that potential in terms of bodies by unpacking the debates and policies that resulted in Municipal Law 1,954. The rapid rise in the number of theaters around 1910 multiplied not only São Paulo's audiences but also possible threats to these audiences' health and safety. The sheer number of spectators in these new spaces pushed municipal lawmakers and other observers to, on one hand, abstract the Paulistano public as a sum of equal bodies. On the other hand, such flattening was challenged by the heterogeneity of both the audiences and activities within theaters. In the chapter's second half, we will examine how gender and age became the principal axes along which municipal leaders differentiated between "suggestible" and more rational viewers. By 1915, however, the protection of the suggestible was no longer limited to moral and aesthetic dangers; for some legislators, a greater and related threat was the "invasion" of foreign works and practices. As we shall see, the theater sector's expansion in this sense motivated many contemporaries to reconsider the universality of urbanity. Rather than striving to harness a cosmopolitan culture for the construction of an *urban* public, São Paulo's lawmakers began to search for the means to forge a uniquely Paulistano public.

⁴ In São Paulo, such checks included the regulation of the São Paulo Tramway, Light, and Power Company, as well as tax incentives for the construction of workers' housing (Municipal Law 498). See Ubirajara de Farias Prestes Filho, *Câmara Municipal de São Paulo: 450 Anos de História*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, 2012), 98–99, www.camara.sp.gov.br.

Bodies

One of the ways in which the urban multitude manifested itself was in the sheer quantity of bodies participating in public life. When Fonseca gaped in horror at the burning Polytheama, his thoughts immediately leapt to the number of fatalities that were with luck avoided. By some accounts, the Polytheama could have squeezed in 3,000 spectators, and it was just one theater among dozens. While in the years around 1905, the number of theaters opening their doors hovered around three or four, by the early 1910s an average of nineteen halls were christened each year. In Fonseca's eyes, that meant nineteen new spaces in which thousands of Paulistanos could be injured, sickened, or even killed on any given day. Moreover, theaters' capacity meant that such tragedies could affect hundreds in one fell swoop and be exacerbated by crowd panics and stampedes. Theaters, in other words, not only escalated São Paulo's public life but, as possible threats, also made its scale very real in legislators' eyes.

Theaters furthermore made that scale quantifiable. The municipality had long required the submission of architectural plans and measurements for any construction project within the city's boundaries.⁵ In the case of theaters, such plans needed to indicate the location of chairs, benches, and spaces for standing spectators. While not every rendering accurately represented this information, and not every theater owner or manager legally petitioned to build, the dozens of permits reviewed by municipal engineers offered lawmakers some sense of how many Paulistanos spent their leisure hours in different halls around town. Legislators could also see that that number varied from venue to venue: as storefront cinemas proliferated around 1910, the quantity of theaters accommodating over 1,000 spectators also slowly grew. Among others, there was a new São José Theater just kitty corner from the unfinished Municipal Theater, as

⁵ These applications are now housed in the Polícia Administrativa e Higiene (PAH) collection of the Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo (AHSP).

well as the Eden Cinema a few blocks further.⁶ The Smart anchored the nightlife of the Largo do Arouche, and, beginning in 1913, the Marconi and the Cinema Barra Funda did the same for the city's ever more populous northwest.⁷ While the municipality kept track of these theaters' structures, additional data were supplied by the state's annual statistical handbook after 1910.⁸ Accorded their own section, "theater statistics" reduced audiences to countable and undifferentiated bodies, another numerical insight into the workings of a significant urban institution.

Outside of the statistical record, government officials were more inclined to dwell on divergences. At its start in 1893, the Municipal Chamber's tax on operating licenses (*imposto de licença*) varied according to a theater's offerings.⁹ This variation most likely reflected assumptions about the sizes of audiences; operas and dramas were fined at similar rates as magic and equestrian shows, but that rate was tiered to reflect a hall's scale. In 1900, after the successes of the Polytheama, Apolo, and Steinway and the arrival of film projectors, municipal legislators recalibrated their approach. The organizer of an operatic performance was taxed three times as much as that of a dramatic performance and twice as much as a spectacle of "phantasmagoria, prestidigitation, [or] metempsychosis."¹⁰ In this manner, the cost of operating licenses more closely reflected lawmakers' expectations for producers' profits and, by implication, spectators' pocketbooks, an expectation that a few years later was reinforced by the

⁶ José Caetano da Cunha to Prefect, 4 Jan 1909, AHSP PAH, caixa 28.

⁷ Silvino & D'Andrea to Prefect, 23 April 1909, AHSP PAH, caixa 38; Companhia Cinematográfica Brasileira to Prefect, 13 Apr 1913, AHSP PAH, caixa 107; .

⁸ The Marconi and Barra Funda, for example, appear under their exhibitors' names (Companhia Cinematographica Brasileira and Manoel I. Lopes & Companhia, respectively) in Repartição de Estatística e Archivo de São Paulo, *Anuario estatístico de São Paulo (Brasil)*, 1913, vol. 1 (São Paulo: Typ. do Diario Official, 1915), 354–355.

⁹ Municipal Law 64 (16 Oct 1893).

¹⁰ Municipal Law 493 (26 Oct 1900).

pegging of the license tax to ticket prices.¹¹ Finally, beginning in 1902, another factor entered legislators' calculations: location. Film exhibitors in the Triângulo were required to pay double the fee as those operating beyond the commercial core, and this division between *bairro* and an expanding *centro* was only accentuated as time wore on.¹²

As later debates made clear, the geographic dichotomy reified in the Municipal Chamber's annual budgetary laws was embedded with social meaning. When, in January of 1916, Luiz Fonseca reinitiated discussion around a bill regulating the construction of cinemas, Alderman Mario do Amaral raised issue with the unfair burden such a law would place on the shoulders of *bairro* residents. In Bom Retiro, Lapa, and other peripheral neighborhoods, Amaral argued, it was unrealistic to expect film exhibitors to recoup their investment in a theater's renovation.¹³ These were the auditoriums of laborers (*operários*), of those who could not "dispose of great resources."¹⁴ If cinema owners in outlying areas were forced to raise their prices or shut down in order to comply with superfluous constraints, the city's working class would be deprived of its main source of diversion. This would not be the last time Amaral defended leisure opportunities for *bairro* residents; during his fifteen-year tenure in the Chamber, the alderman also championed initiatives to support athletic groups and competitions along São Paulo's fringes.¹⁵ For Amaral and many of his peers, then, engaging the hearts, minds, and

¹¹ Municipal Law 862 (19 Nov 1905).

¹² Municipal Laws 611 (22 Oct 1902), 683 (7 Nov 1903), 1,054 (12 Nov 1907), 1,258 (30 Oct 1909).

¹³ Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo, 1916* (São Paulo: Typ. Piratininga, 1916), 30.

¹⁴ "O que o meu collega não póde pretender é tornar por tal fôrma caros os divertimentos dos operarios, de gente que não póde dispor de grandes recursos, dos habitantes dos arrabaldes extremos da cidade, que ficarão privados delles, pela elevação dos preços dos alugueis." Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1916*, 34.

¹⁵ e.g. Projeto 16 (29 Mar 1919).

bodies of Paulistanos in the *bairros* was the equivalent of molding the toiling masses into an urban public.

The social distinction between *bairro* and *centro*, however, was dismissed as irrelevant by Fonseca and his allies. In his response to Amaral, the junior alderman insisted (incorrectly) that worn-out workers could hardly comprise the bulk of cinema spectators. More importantly, Fonseca continued with the aid of Rafael Gurgel, it was the scale of audiences, not their composition, that mattered. Whether in the city's center or periphery, whether monied or moneyless, all theatergoers were human bodies squeezed in among hundreds of others. They were bodies equally susceptible to the carelessness or deceit of theater owners, managers, and architects, bodies that together constituted a single, threatened public.¹⁶ In Fonseca's eyes, ensuring the safety of that public, of the multitude outside the home, stood "above all else," and certainly above concerns for prohibitive ticket prices.¹⁷

The simplification of Paulistano audiences into a homogenous mass of bodies was thus linked to concerns about that mass's physical wellbeing, and it had been for some time. The 1894 State Sanitary Code had dedicated twenty-two articles to establishing standards for theaters' construction, all in the name of occupants' safety, hygiene, and comfort.¹⁸ From ventilation to fireproofing, to the inclusion of a bar and coatrooms when possible, the elements addressed by the code and its successive bills were peppered with measurements and details, the accessories of science. Under this purportedly objective gaze, theatergoers became neutral and indistinguishable subjects, the abstracted motivation for inspections by the state police and

¹⁶ Câmara Municipal, *Annaes*, 1916, 11.

¹⁷ "A segurança publica está acima de tudo," Câmara Municipal, *Annaes*, 1916, 38.

¹⁸ State Decree 233 (2 Mar 1894), Art. 213-234.

municipal engineers.¹⁹ The latter's reports, typically composed in response to requests to the prefecture for construction permits or operating licenses, only reinforced this abstraction. Most authors made no reference to those whose lives would be affected by the inspected hall, relying instead on adjectives or the passive tense to efficiently enumerate dangers. When audiences were acknowledged, they were generalized as "the public," as in engineer José Sá Rocha's 1909 claim that the Ideal Cinema offered no "comfort for the public."²⁰

If spectators were not always present in inspectors' accounts, their unification under the category of "public" had powerful consequences. The easy slippage between the *público* (audience) of a theater and the *público* (public) of a political body allowed government officials to invoke the public nature of what were otherwise private properties. Among the municipality's first legislative forays into theater regulation was a controversial 1912 law that required "establishments of public character"—theaters were first on the list—to include and keep clean a sufficient number of restrooms.²¹ While some opponents argued that the bill was an infringement on the rights of property owners and an attack on business, others defended the Municipal Chamber's duty to uphold "public safety," especially in light of similar actions by leading cities around the world.²² As the Chamber's Justice Committee articulated in its brief, private property was always subject to policing and the law in instances concerning the "safety and comfort of *cidadões*."²³

¹⁹ The inspection of "theaters, shows, festivities, and public diversions" was explicitly granted to the state police in State Decree 494 (30 Oct 1897), which clarified and implemented State Law 522 (25 Aug 1897).

²⁰ "commodidade ao publico," Rocha, report appended to Guerra L. Romano to Prefect, 15 Mar 1909, AHSP PAH, caixa 38.

²¹ Municipal Law 1,591 (12 Sep 1912).

²² "segurança publica," Armando Prado, Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo, 1912* (São Paulo, 1912), 363.

²³ "segurança e commodidade dos cidadãos," Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1912*, 362.

Whether the final word was read as “townsmen” or “citizens,” it stressed the political urgency and uniquely urban predicament that a large and mobile public posed. In one sense, then, the Committee was calling on the Municipal Chamber’s obligation to protect its constituency. At the same time, *cidadões*, along with Alderman Armando Prado’s reference to *municipes*, might have implied that, on another level, that constituency also encompassed the entirety of São Paulo’s residents. Restrooms, after all, affected more than the small percentage of Paulistanos who comprised the city’s electorate. Moreover, many of the commercial property owners or lessees who would be responsible for the maintenance of public restrooms were not registered voters nor, given their gender, race, foreign birth, or property holdings, entitled to such a status. Still, regardless of their citizenship, they shared many of the city’s spaces with other urban dwellers and visitors; hygiene, safety, and comfort for the politically privileged relied on the hygiene, safety, and comfort of all.

The indiscriminatory nature of health and safety conditions in commercial establishments thus encouraged the conceptualization of an urban public as the totality of bodies occupying and utilizing São Paulo’s public spaces. The political heft of this concept was not solely accumulated and wielded by those within government. In 1913, well before the Polytheama fire, the newspaper *A Capital* took on the task, with readers’ help, of identifying those theaters in São Paulo most harmful to the public. Its pages featured the Minerva, an unsightly death “trap” on R. Consolação (Image 36), and the Bijou Bom Retiro, “a dangerous ruin” that had once served as the headquarters of the celebrated Grêmio Dramático e Musical Luso-Brasileiro.²⁴ In both of

²⁴ “arapuca,” *A Capital*, Mar 18, 1913, 1; “pardieiro perigoso,” *A Capital*, Mar 28, 1913, 1, in José Inácio de Melo Souza, *Salas de cinema de São Paulo: Inventário dos espaços de sociabilidade cinematográfica da cidade de São Paulo (1895-1929)*, 2009, <http://www.arquiamigos.org.br/bases/cine.htm>.

Precisamos acabar com certos pardieiros
que existem pela cidade

APONTAL-OS-EMOS

“A CAPITAL” publica as photographias
das principaes arapucas



O CINEMA MINERVA, da rua da Consolação, que merece algumas visitas da policia, principalmente aos sabbades, domingos, dias santos e feriados

Image 36: *A Capital*'s cover for its series on dangerous theaters, featuring the Minerva in Consolação. “We need to put an end to certain hovels that exist in our city,” the periodical declared. “We point them out. ‘A CAPITAL’ publishes photographs of the main traps.” *A Capital*, 18 March 1913, 1.

these cases, the newspaper's editors used the theaters' inadequate ventilation, size, and lighting to demand action by the government. “Police visits,” *A Capital* urged, were of absolute necessity, “especially on Saturdays, Sundays, holy days and holidays,” when Paulistanos left

behind school, work, and home for amusement elsewhere.²⁵ Even—and perhaps especially—in São Paulo’s less affluent neighborhoods, theatergoers constituted a public worthy of legal protection.

While it is difficult to gauge the frequency with which the police inspected São Paulo’s halls, the prioritization of a broadly defined public over the property rights of theater owners was reinforced in the city’s growing number of interventions. In 1914, just after the theater rush’s peak, the prefecture issued two acts strengthening and detailing the municipality’s role in regulating theaters and other businesses. The first, Act 701 (11 July 1914), singled out entertainment, which included sporting events and gambling, as an industry meriting additional restrictions, including the prohibition of animal fights, fires, and explosives within shows. While the second, Act 705 (7 August 1914), situated theaters within the larger category of commercial establishments, both acts stressed the need for inspections by municipal engineers, and not just state police, in order to guarantee the “safety, hygiene, and comfort of spectators.”²⁶ Several of these stipulations were repeated in the following year’s building code, which additionally introduced a few new fire precautions.²⁷

²⁵ “O CINEMA MINERVA... que merece algumas visitas da policia, principalmente aos sabbados, domingos, dias santos e feriados,” *A Capital*, Mar 18, 1913, 1.

²⁶ “segurança, hygiene e commodidade dos espectadores,” Art. 1, Act 701. The involvement of the municipality in inspecting theaters was a controversial issue given the delegation of that task to state police in state law. It was Municipal Law 252 (2 July 1896) that insisted on the additional approval of a theater’s construction and operation by the city’s Intendant of Police and Hygiene (Intendente de Polícia e Higiene). That office was by 1914 retitled the Bureau of Administrative Police and Hygiene (Diretoria de Polícia Administrativa e Higiene), and, as outlined in Act 705, Art. 4, the task of inspecting theaters was shared between the department and that of the Bureau of Works and Transportation (Diretoria de Obras e Viação).

²⁷ Municipal Law 1,874 (12 May 1915), Art. 137, 142. The Municipal Chamber also passed Law 1,833 (13 Nov 1914), which required all live-performance theaters in the city to include dressing rooms.

The *coup de grâce* for São Paulo's growing number of cinema owners was Municipal Law 1,954, the fruit of Luiz Fonseca's labor. Approved on February 23, 1916, the bill supplemented existing state legislation in its targeting of *cinematographos*, that is, halls that housed film projectors. Its twenty-two articles were garnished with unprecedented specificity for municipal legislation, the outcome perhaps of the growing presence of engineers within the municipal bureaucracy: staircases needed to be at least 1.5 meters wide, the parterre had to be divided by at least three aisles, a minimum of 30 centimeters of stone wall had to separate a cinema from its neighbor.²⁸ Law 1,954 also reminded film exhibitors to maintain sanitary restrooms and prohibit smoking inside the auditorium so as to enable hygienic habits among their clientele. Further embellishments would come from the prefecture under Act 983 (21 September 1916), which was in part informed by engineer José Sá Rocha's commissioned report on the existing status of São Paulo's cinemas.²⁹

In his seven-page assessment, Rocha made much more frequent reference to "the public" and its safety than in any of his previous reports. He also cited Berlin as a model for theater regulation, as well as appended in a later submission relevant legislation adopted by New Orleans.³⁰ The notion of a broad urban public whose safety, hygiene, and comfort were the obligations of the city government was, in other words, one that Paulistano politicians developed alongside and in rivalry with their counterparts elsewhere. Just as the lack of a municipal theater had evoked shame among a previous cohort of lawmakers, aldermen in the early 1910s

²⁸ The city's engineering school, the Escola Politécnica, had opened its doors in 1893 and trained many of São Paulo's leaders.

²⁹ José Sá Rocha, "Relatorio sobre as vistorias," 17 June 1916, AHSP PAH, caixa 254.

³⁰ Rocha, 11 July 1916, AHSP PAH, caixa 254.

denounced the absence of clean restrooms as one of São Paulo's "biggest embarrassments."³¹ Still, there was little sense that legislating theaters' construction and operation was catch-up work, at least in the Municipal Chamber's records. In their attention to audiences' physical wellbeing, legislators were very much with the times. If they were glancing at Berlin and New Orleans, it was for recent examples in a newly charted legal territory.

As we have seen, the contours of that territory were largely defined by the tension between the welfare of the public and the liberties of individuals, whether in the role of consumers, producers, or property owners. In this equation, the larger the public, the more empowered was the municipality to curtail the actions of individuals. The inclusion of women in particular altered the dynamics of government intervention. As the past few chapters have demonstrated, Paulistano audiences had changed dramatically in terms of gender over the past half century. By 1916, women not only comprised a significant portion of the city's spectatorship, but they also were no longer relegated to theaters' boxes. Yet this near equality of mobility across genders, still new for the affluent set, by no means implied an equality of movement. On the first day of discussion for what would become Law 1,954, Luiz Fonseca defended the need for enforcing architectural standards on the grounds of preserving female theatergoers' dignities. "It would be a horror," Fonseca exclaimed, if elegant ladies were forced to scramble over chairs in the case of a fire or panic because a theater owner failed to fasten seats to the ground or set aside ample aisles.³² The only alternative raised in the Chamber was Amaral's suggestion that women escape on "the backs of gentlemen," a proposal made only half in jest by the alderman hesitant to raise costs for producers.

³¹ "uma das maiores vergonhas da nossa cidade," Armando Prado, Câmara Municipal, *Annaes*, 1912, 363.

³² "Seria um horror!... As senhoras sahiriam nas costas dos cavalheiros." Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes*, 1916, 39.

Gender, in other words, was the single discriminator in lawmakers' conception of a public of equal bodies. It was a combination of expectations about women's physique and attire that led legislators to refer to feminine needs in determining the standards of comfort, safety, and hygiene guaranteed by law. In addition to considering the type of layout that would accommodate a female spectator's evacuation, government officials paid heed to the amenities that they assumed the fairer sex demanded. Primary among these was the *toilette*, an imported term that in São Paulo referred to both the totality of a woman's superficial alterations—clothing, accessories, hairstyle, cosmetics—and to the room in which such alterations could be achieved. Like the performers onstage, female theatergoers invested time, money, and effort into donning a particular *toilette*, and maintaining that *toilette*, the 1894 State Sanitary Code insisted, demanded its own chamber away from the eyes of men.³³ While Municipal Law 1,954 did not reinforce this stipulation for cinemas, the city's inspectors did require larger halls to comply. In 1922, for example, plans filed by the Companhia Cinematográfica Brasileira for renovating Bom Retiro's Marconi were rejected—twice—on the grounds that the theater lacked a women's lounge.³⁴

At the same time that such requirements encouraged feminine devotion to fashion, another set of legal measures placed that devotion in opposition to the broader public's wellbeing. Specifically, it was the devotion to overflowing hairpieces that led state lawmakers to gender spectators' bodies within the context of theater regulation. The height and broad brims of turn-of-the-century hats added a touch of masculinity to female style, but that touch was compromised by etiquette. While men were accustomed to removing hats indoors and in greeting, women were not held by that rule. In fact, for those women who could afford to stay in style, it would have been an extraordinarily difficult feat; countless pins and layers of

³³ State Decree 233 (2 Mar 1894), Art. 221.

³⁴ Souza, "Marconi," Salas de cinema de São Paulo.

ornamentation transformed hats into extensions of one's hairstyle. At the same time, changes in female mobility within theaters meant that ladies' lavish adornments were no longer distant showpieces to admire but rather nearby obstacles to circumvent. This clash of changing and continuing norms led municipal leaders in Berlin, Chicago, and even Wisconsin to limit the wearing of large hats inside auditoriums.³⁵ Indeed, it was by way of Wisconsin that the issue was first raised in São Paulo by the newspaper *A Platéia* in 1897.³⁶

Three months later, the same column condoned the solution proposed by the town of Bridgeport, Connecticut: a female "hat inspector" whose sole job would be to request "with delicacy" that a woman sporting an obstructive hat promptly remove it.³⁷ Paulista legislators were not yet ready to employ women, but they were interested in safeguarding ladies' propriety while preserving the comfort of other theatergoers. In the spirit of Bridgeport, the state executive issued in 1909 a decree requiring, among other theater regulations, that women seated in the first ten rows of a parterre or the first two rows of a box remove their hats.³⁸ The same decree additionally obligated all male spectators to uncover their heads, but only female perpetrators were entitled to "prudent" treatment by ushers and inspectors enforcing the law.³⁹ Hat restrictions in this manner etched into law not only gendered divergences in dress, but also assumptions about gendered temperaments: as members of the more sensitive, decorous sex, monied women warranted more careful handling.

³⁵ As Emily Remus explains, the conflict over ladies' high hats in 1890s Chicago centered around the infringement of consumer rights, as established in the city's recently approved sumptuary ordinance. See Emily A. Remus, "The Making of the Consumer City: Gender, Space, and Class in Chicago, 1871-1914" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 2014), 82; Emily A. Remus, *Consumers' Metropolis: How Monied Women Purchased Pleasure and Power in the New Downtown* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).

³⁶ "Bastidores," *A Platéia*, May 14, 1897, 1.

³⁷ "Theatros," *A Platéia*, Aug 24, 1897, 1.

³⁸ State Decree 1,714 (18 Mar 1909), Art. 12.

³⁹ State Decree 1,714, Art. 45 §2, Art. 46 §5.

If legislation targeting female theatergoers reinforced the link between social norms and sex, it at least offered an explicit acknowledgment of women's place within the urban public. It was precisely because of this widened public that lawmakers were motivated and felt authorized to expand the government's role in protecting Paulistanos' safety, hygiene, and comfort throughout the city's public spaces. From the 1894 State Sanitary Code to 1916's Municipal Law 1,954, government officials increasingly micromanaged theaters' construction, generating stacks of architectural plans and engineers' reports.⁴⁰ These reports, moreover, did have real consequences. While some theater operators, like those of the Pathé Palácio in downtown or the Marconi in Bom Retiro, were able to elude inspectors for years, many were persuaded to comply with required alterations.⁴¹ The 1917 inauguration of the São Pedro Theater, which was intended to be an improvement on the Cinema Barra Funda, was delayed by several days due to the prefecture's dissatisfaction with the hall's design.⁴² Other efforts to open or reopen theaters were completely thwarted: two attempts to resurrect the defunct Guarany in Consolação—the same hall that, under the name of Minerva, had been condemned by *A Capital* in 1913—failed due to

⁴⁰ As early as April 1917, municipal engineers were submitting reports to the Bureau of Works and Transportation (Diretoria de Obras e Viação) in response to Law 1,954 (AHSP PAH, caixa 254). A few months later, the prefecture charged forty-five district inspectors with compiling a list of cinemas and investigating these spaces, in some cases for the second time (AHSP PAH, caixa 291). According to the records available at the AHSP, the Bureau's list consisted of at least twenty-six cinemas, while the prefecture's totaled eighteen. Only six theaters appeared on both lists.

⁴¹ Both of these cinemas were among the twenty-four theaters inspected in 1924 by Luiz Fonseca himself as part of an effort to highlight the municipality's incompetent enforcement of Law 1,954. At the same time that he berated these halls, Fonseca praised the construction of others, including the Eros in Brás, and, among those constructed after Law 1,954, the Eden Polytheama, the Mafalda, and the Olímpia, all three in Brás. See Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo: 1924* (São Paulo: Escolas Profissionais Salesianas, 1924), 194-196, 229-230.

⁴² Lopes & David to Prefect, 10 Jan 1917, AHSP PAH, caixa 329; Souza, "Cinema Barra Funda," *Salas de cinema de São Paulo*.

the municipality's high demands.⁴³ Still, the majority of theaters constructed or renovated after Municipal Law 1,954 did pass inspections, including those personally conducted by Luiz Fonseca in 1924.

Minds

If by 1924 Fonseca harbored some doubts about the efficacy of his 1916 bill, he attributed its successes to the heavy fist of Washington Luís Pereira de Sousa.⁴⁴ It was under Washington Luís's term as the state Secretary of Justice and Public Safety (Secretário de Justiça e Segurança Pública, 1906-1912) that the 1909 decree detailing theaters' construction and operation was issued and enforced. It was also under his term as prefect of São Paulo (1914-1919) that resources were likewise allocated to regulate the city's halls. In both cases, these resources consisted of not only a troop of engineer-inspectors, but also an expanded and professionalized state police force, which Washington Luís himself headed after the reorganization of the Secretariat of Justice in September 1906.

Why was policing, and not just architectural interventions, essential to the management of theaters? In a 1907 state Chamber of Deputies debate, José Roberto Leite Penteadó explained that the duty of police was to “maintain the public order, wherever it may be altered,” including—indeed, especially—within theaters.⁴⁵ At the crux of justifications for the presence of state police within auditoriums, in other words, was the assumption that Paulistanos should and could be tamed, that, with guidance, the crowd could be transformed into a rational, well-behaved, and well-dressed public. Such a metamorphosis demanded more than the appropriate

⁴³ Souza, “Guarani – Rua da Consolação, 217,” *Salas de cinema de São Paulo*.

⁴⁴ Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1924*, 228.

⁴⁵ “manutenção da ordem publica, onde esta for alterada,” Câmara dos Deputados do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Ordinária de 1907* (São Paulo: Estado de São Paulo, 1908), 661. The bill in question would be ratified as State Law 1,103 (26 Nov 1907).

space and bodily discipline examined in the section above: the sanitation and protection of the body had to be accompanied by the sanitation and protection of the mind. As the chapter's remaining pages will explain, lawmakers' increasing emphasis on the latter coincided with their increasing differentiation among the components of Paulistano society. The regulation of what theatergoers could see, hear, and do thus reveals how São Paulo's leaders marked, sequenced, and responded to difference as they worked to create an orderly public.

One of the ways in which the state police strove to attain that goal was by restricting the actions and appearances of audience members. In prioritizing theaters as public spaces rather than private property, lawmakers empowered policemen to enter the city's halls. This constabulary extension of the street was reinforced by privileges unavailable outdoors. Police inspectors, for example, were by state law reserved a box, or a seat in smaller theaters, from which they could observe the activities onstage and in the stalls.⁴⁶ The privilege of vantage was duly claimed: in 1897, one angered police officer halted an evening of zarzuelas at the Apolo when the box granted to him by impresario Félix Amurrio proved inadequate.⁴⁷ From his box, inspector Herculano de Carvalho was charged with maintaining "order, decency, and silence" among spectators, including the right to throw out troublemakers.⁴⁸ He also needed to ensure that audiences were "comfortable" by encouraging Amurrio's faithfulness to the publicized program and start time. Finally, Carvalho was duty-bound to protect the safety of theatergoers by preventing overcrowding, keeping exits clear, and prohibiting smoking inside the auditorium. In 1897, then, most of the police inspector's aims were equivalent to those of the engineer inspector: guaranteeing the entire public's safety, hygiene, and comfort.

⁴⁶ State Law 522 (25 Aug 1897), Art. 86; State Decree 1,714 (18 Mar 1909), Art. 36.

⁴⁷ "Bastidores," *A Platéa*, 29 Jan 1897, 1. The *Platéa* was unsupportive, calling the incident an "abuse" of authority and a lack of consideration for the paying public.

⁴⁸ "ordem, decencia e silencio," State Law 522 (25 Aug 1897), Art. 84.

The main difference was that Carvalho was inside the theater, among the action, and that he could rely on a troop of policemen to enforce the law. If, on paper, the inspector's enumerated responsibilities gave the impression of objectivity—the placing of all spectators on a level playing field—the reality of regulating a heterogeneous audience was more complex. As we saw in the case of the São José Theater in Chapter 1, police presence was not always welcomed by spectators, and intervention was particularly controversial when those targeted were of higher social standing. Police inspectors undoubtedly felt these pressures, adjusting their definition of “public order” from theater to theater and section to section.⁴⁹ Indeed, the 1909 state decree addressing theater inspections sanctioned such distinctions. Under the heading of “measures of order,” one article singled out gallery audiences in restricting their ability to jeer and tease spectators in the more expensive boxes and parterre.⁵⁰ Another limited vendors from entering these latter areas, while patrolling troops were likewise barred from the parterre and boxes unless explicitly authorized by the chief inspector or in the clear case of a disturbance.⁵¹ In all of these ways, lawmakers implied that maintaining order had a different meaning in the hall's highest tier, which, depending on the theater, was typically dominated by male students or workers or both.

Still, if policemen were legally allowed to differentiate among audience members according to their seat—and, consequently, according to their class, race, and gender—they were required to treat all theatergoers with equal “delicacy.” Being inside a theater rather than on the street meant something: all spectators had presumably paid to be entertained. Police officials

⁴⁹ Unfortunately, records of police intervention in the city of São Paulo are few and far between for this period. The Autos Crimes collection at the State Archive is sparse, while the years 1898 through 1920 are entirely absent from the Processos Policiais.

⁵⁰ State Decree 1,714 (18 Mar 1909), Art. 30.

⁵¹ State Decree 1,714 (18 Mar 1909), Art. 28, Art. 56.

were therefore instructed to be “calm, patient, but firm... always maintaining dignity in attitude and moderation in words... and executing orders with *urbanidade*.”⁵² That final noun was revealing: urbanity, as in English, was the equivalent of civility, and both could be cultivated within São Paulo’s auditoriums. Such a task began with the gentility of policemen, but it also extended to every spectator. Regardless of the cost of their seat, all attendees were by Decree 1,714 obligated to “maintain a correct attitude,” smoke only where permitted, and generally avoid disturbing their fellow audience members and performers.⁵³ Anyone appearing drunk, unclean, indecent, or in any other way a nuisance was entirely prohibited from entering the theater.⁵⁴ More than guaranteeing the rights of customers to see and hear what they paid for, as indicated in Article 29, these regulations were local leaders’ attempts to socialize the city’s diversifying public, to nurture urbanity in both senses of the word.

Despite the decree’s 102 articles, police inspectors were left with vague notions of what socializing entailed. What did uncleanliness look or smell like in the era of limited bathing and a few sets of clothes? Where did the fine line between diversion and disturbance lie among audiences still unaccustomed to suppressing opinions? At least in terms of the latter, Decree 1,714 offered some guidance: dissatisfaction with the performance could only be expressed aloud if the inspector determined that the majority of the “cultured people” were of the same opinion.⁵⁵ Still, this was hardly an exact rule. Rather than dictating details, the state executive entrusted the judgment of inspectors and spectators, or at least a circumscribed group of spectators. Socializing an urban public, in other words, was the process by which a qualified

⁵² “Calmos, pacientes, mas firmes... devem sempre conservar dignidade na attitude e moderação nas palavras... e executar as ordens com urbanidade.” State Decree 1,714 (18 Mar 1909), Art. 50.

⁵³ State Decree 1,714 (18 Mar 1909), Art. 45.

⁵⁴ State Decree 1,714 (18 Mar 1909), Art. 27.

⁵⁵ “maioria do povo culto,” State Decree 1,714 (18 Mar 1909), Art. 31.

portion of the population enlightened the remainder through articulated values and enacted tastes and behaviors. Those values, tastes, and behaviors were encapsulated in the term “cultured,” allowing for some flexibility as fashions and ideas changed over time.

The “order” in “public order” was thus more than an insistence on measured speech and movement, on avoiding the actions that might spark a riot, panic, or other uncontrollable circumstance. It also implied *an* order, a hierarchy of cultural forms and, by extension, of the people who embodied them. To be sure, folded into the concept of culture were assumptions about rabbleroxing and political agitation: Decree 1,714 was explicit in its prohibition of speechmaking, distributing written material, and mutinying. Yet, if lawmakers were attempting to avoid a second *Electra* incident—or the general strike of May 1907—their stress lay elsewhere. Like their anarchist counterparts, as we saw in Chapter 3, local leaders around 1910 wagered their bets on the power of example, on the creation of an orderly, urban public through cultural osmosis. In this manner, government officials reinterpreted commercial theaters’ often heterogeneous audiences as an advantage: only through proximity to their cultural superiors could common Paulistanos absorb the forms deemed appropriate for urban public life.

Within legal documents and the press, these forms were regularly referred to as *bons costumes*, literally, “good customs.” Over the course of the 1910s, “good” cultural practices were defined in opposition to a growing list of vices not limited to theaters, although certainly encouraged inside of some halls. There was gambling, which the illustrated weekly *O Parafuso* lamented was not being adequately checked by the “police in charge of *bons costumes*” (the magazine had been forced to relocate to Rio in 1918 due to local censorship).⁵⁶ There was also

⁵⁶ “Rôtisserie Sportsman joga-se a roleta desbragadamente,” *O Parafuso*, Mar 25, 1919, 16. The censorship of *O Parafuso* is mentioned in Richard M. Morse, *From Community to Metropolis: A Biography of São Paulo, Brazil* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 211.

prostitution, an issue that in 1917 exploded in the *Estado* and that fell under the label of “customs police.”⁵⁷ The bohemian *O Furão* (The Ferret) would later use the same heading to critique the state’s policies toward prostitution.⁵⁸ As these periodicals indicate, the connection between policing and the diffusion (or suppression) of specific habits and ideas was thus already cemented in São Paulo by 1920.

These publications also closely linked policing and *bons costumes* to women’s growing participation in public life. For *O Parafuso*, the police’s inadequacy lay in the fact that women and children could be found alongside the roulette tables of the chic Rotisserie Sportsman. For the *Estado*, it was a question of distinguishing between “public women” and respectable women in public, as well as keeping the latter away from the influence of the former. In fact, confusion of the two female sets by policemen had previously occurred. In 1897, a group of women were verbally abused and “imprisoned” inside their box at the Polytheama after the supervising policeman caught them conversing with gentlemen in the hallway. While at least one of these women did prove to be a *demimondaine*, an innocent group of female onlookers was also suspected, scandalizing their families and instigating a heated, front-page condemnation in the Republican newspaper *A Nação*.⁵⁹

If there was anything that the policing of *bons costumes* was intended to prevent, it was the scandalizing of families. As *O Furão* argued through the voice of João Cabeça (John Head), customs police were “family police.” It was the “habits, customs, gestures, and manners” of the

⁵⁷ “Policia de Costumes,” *Estado*, Feb 17, 1917, 6. This was also the year in which police raids of Rio gambling dens and *jogo do bicho* arrests took on new proportions. See Amy Chazkel, *Laws of Chance: Brazil’s Clandestine Lottery and the Making of Urban Public Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 211–213, Tables 10–11.

⁵⁸ João Cabeça, “Policia de Costumes,” *O Furão*, May 5, 1920, 1.

⁵⁹ “A moral policial,” *A Nação*, Sep 28, 1897, 1. Some of these accusations were later questioned in *A Platéia*, “O facto do Polytheama,” Oct 11, 1897, 3.

family that formed the moral foundation upon which society rested, that defined the “good” in “good customs.” This was the argument embraced by many of the organizations examined in Chapter 4, with one caveat: for Cabeça, it was the police’s duty to ensure that such customs were upheld.⁶⁰ While Cabeça was a caricature of the city’s socially conservative leaders, his harangue does shed light on the justifications behind the expansion of penal and police codes across Brazil during the 1910s. If women and their families could now be found throughout the city’s public spaces, then the “protection and defense of the family” necessitated many more troops. The “police of the home,” the guardians of “familial integrity,” were now also the police of “moral urbanity, of the moral perfection of the population, of public decency.” Only with police bolstering could the family leave the home and function as the bedrock of *bons costumes*, of the urban public.

A similar concern for the vulnerability of the family and its morals could be found in another form of policing: censorship. As we saw in the first chapter, theater censorship in Brazil dated back to at least the mid-nineteenth century and took on several forms in Paulista law. Its implementation in São Paulo during the First Republic always relied on the state police: both the State Police Code of 1897 and Decree 1,714 prohibited the performance of any work not first approved by the police. While the latter replaced religious offenses with those of political affronts, both included in their list of inappropriate content the offense to “public decency.”⁶¹ In 1897, decency was tied to “morality,” to the banning of “obscene songs” and risqué vaudevilles

⁶⁰ “habitos, costumes, gestos e ademanes... protecção e defeza da familia,” “a policia do lar, da moralidade urbana, do aperfeiçoamento moral da população, da decencia publica, da protecção aos elementos necessarios a defeza da dignidade e do recato social e da integridade da familia.” Cabeça, “Policia de Costumes,” *O Furão*, May 5, 1920, 1.

⁶¹ State Law 522 (25 Aug 1897), Art. 83; State Decree 1,714 (18 Mar 1909), Art. 6.

that, to the surprise of *A Platéia*, were at the time still making their way onto London's stages.⁶² By 1909, however, "morality" had been replaced by "*bons costumes*" and "public order," a nod to the societal implications of maintaining family values beyond the hearth.

Under either wording, censorship at the start of the century tended toward the banning of "pornography," the overly revealing images that Paschoal Segreto and others marketed as "light genre." Segreto was forced by São Paulo's police in early 1909 to replace his *café-concerto*'s film clips with comedic sketches—a substitution never required in his Rio theaters—while other exhibitors, like one at the dubiously named Ideal Cinema in 1912, were fined for screening pornography (in this case, 200\$ for a series of nightly showings).⁶³ Still, the boundary between the innocuous and libidinous display of human bodies was rarely clear-cut. An Italian comedy at the Municipal Theater, for example, was ultimately approved despite one censor's protestations that the work should be classified as illicit *gênero livre*.⁶⁴ Also approved were the "*genero alegre*" films shown by Alberto Scazzola in the hall of the Luso-Brazilian Dramatic and Musical Guild (Grêmio Dramático e Musical Luso-Brasileiro).⁶⁵

Why did the baring of skin worry local lawmakers? In the Municipal Chamber, José Adriano Marrey Júnior spoke in broad terms of moralization, public modesty, and the "deleterious influence" of entertainment. He was especially worried about the influence of film on children and "all those suggestible," a term that increasingly crept into municipal leaders' diction in the mid 1910s.⁶⁶ In other words, it was not the lust of grown men that worried Marrey, Jr., but rather the impressionability of young Paulistanos and women. Ironically, those who

⁶² "Bastidores," *A Platéia*, June 22, 1897, 1.

⁶³ Souza, "Moulin Rouge," *Salas de cinema de São Paulo*; Vicente de Paula Araújo, *Salões, circos e cinemas de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1981), 315.

⁶⁴ Giacomo Almirante to Prefect, 20 Nov 1913, AHSP PAH, caixa 107.

⁶⁵ *Diario Oficial do Estado de São Paulo*, June 4, 1909, 1,735.

⁶⁶ "todos os suggestionaveis," Marrey, Jr., Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1916*, 189.

transformed the individual man into a family, those who formed the buttresses of familial values, were perceived to be the most vulnerable to the reenactment of life onstage and especially onscreen. Without the knowledge and capacity for reason of an educated man—some scientists pointed to smaller brain masses—women and children could not help but be swayed by the realism of what they saw and heard; both, advice articles suggested, needed to be surrounded by the “purest of environments.”⁶⁷ Suggestibility could certainly be an advantage in the sense that films could be instructive—unsurprisingly, Charles Pathé and Thomas Edison insisted that their inventions could altogether replace schools.⁶⁸ The only problem was that commercial studios could not be trusted to produce instructive films, or so Paulistano legislators argued. Indeed, even the “scientific” reels that showcased medical procedures were occasionally deemed problematic: Alderman Orlando Prado was horrified by the screening of a Caesarian section that, in his perspective, only served to indecently expose a suffering female body to the eyes of an “ignorant” audience, including women and children.⁶⁹

According to Prado, the published program for that night’s showing had explicitly barred the attendance of women and children. On paper, then, the exhibitor had stayed within the law, which over the course of the 1910s increasingly distinguished between adult men and other

⁶⁷ A piece on “the education of our children” (A Educação dos Nosso Filhos) in the *Revista Feminina* (Dec 1918, p.87) stressed the significance of a child’s surroundings (which needed to be “purissimo”) to the formation of his “character.” The same emphasis on character and the pliability of children’s and women’s minds was supported by Gustave Le Bon’s *The Crowd* (1895). See Robert Nye’s introduction to Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, ed. Robert A. Nye (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 33. Unlike Le Bon, however, the *Revista Feminina* did not take seriously phrenology, that is, the determination of intellect and character by the size and weight of one’s brain, at least in terms of defining mental distinctions between the sexes (“Agosto,” *Revista Feminina*, Aug 1918, 3).

⁶⁸ Walter Silveira, *A história do cinema vista da província* (Salvador: Fundação Cultural do Estado da Bahia, 1978), 14, 27.

⁶⁹ Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo, 1923* (São Paulo: Typ. Piratininga, 1923), 996–997.

members of society in order to protect the moral welfare of the latter. At the forefront of such legal protection was the addition in 1915 of a clause to the 1890 Brazilian Penal Code that criminalized the “corruption” of minors under twenty-one years of age. By corruption, the revised article clarified, legislators meant the “spoiling of innocence or the perverting of any form [a minor’s] moral sense.”⁷⁰ Brazilian law in this manner codified not only the hierarchical ordering of cultural practices in terms of morality, but also the ordering of minds in terms of age. Children were mentally pure, well intentioned, but also weaker than their grown counterparts.

The protection of pure minds was, in the hands of municipalities, quickly applied to the context of cinemas. Among the standards for comfort, safety, and hygiene of Law 1,954, São Paulo’s Municipal Chamber squeezed in a provision banning films that “offended public morality or threatened the education of minors.”⁷¹ This article was by year’s end transformed into its own bill upholding *bons costumes*, Municipal Law 2,015 (20 October 1916), in large part due to the defense mounted by Alderman Marrey, Jr., of “children and all those suggestible.”⁷² The premises of both efforts were supported by much of the press in the late 1910s. The intellectual *O Pirralho* accused film studios of manipulating audiences’ emotions and instilling “false conceptions about the world and life” in the minds of children.⁷³ The *Estado*, meanwhile, suggested that film, along with soccer, was the most influential force on the lives of adolescents

⁷⁰ “Excitar, favorecer ou facilitar a corrupção de pessoa de um ou de outro sexo, menor de 21 annos, induzindo-a á pratica de actos deshonestos, viciando a sua innocencia ou pervertendo-lhe de qualquer modo o seu senso moral,” National Law 2,992 (25 Sep 1915), revising Art. 266 §1.

⁷¹ “É proibida a exhibição de fitas que offendam á moral publica ou prejudiquem a educação dos menores,” Municipal Law 1,954 (23 Feb 1916), Art. 18.

⁷² “Ficam prohibidas, nas casas de espectaculos, as exhibições de fitas cinematographicas que não consultem a moral e os bons costumes, a juízo do encarregado da fiscalização,” Municipal Law 2,015 (20 Oct 1916), Art. 1.

⁷³ “Dessa escola viva as nossas crianças vão tirando as mais falsas concepções sobre o mundo e a vida.” *O Pirralho*, July 1918, cited in Julio Lucchesi Moraes, “São Paulo, Capital Artística: a cafeicultura e as artes na Belle Époque (1906-1922)” (Iniciação científica, USP, 2007), 19.

and thus a force on all of Paulistano society.⁷⁴ The pliability of youthful minds—and the disconcerting prospect of their later hardening—brought aldermen back to the drawing board in the early 1920s, with Heribaldo Siciliano pleading in 1921 for the Chamber’s further intervention on behalf of children’s “character formation, education and morality.”⁷⁵ The result, two years later, was Municipal Law 2,649, which for the first time placed age limits on theatergoing.⁷⁶ It was in defiance of this legislation that, shortly thereafter, the Caesarian-section film was viewed by children, although Alderman Prado had no legal reason to condemn the presence of women.

As in the United States, then, film censorship began on the local level, the project of city leaders invoking age-determined differences.⁷⁷ The urban origins of film censorship was no coincidence. When Siciliano made his case, he appealed to all of the fathers in the Municipal Chamber, to all those who intimately knew the difficulty of distancing children from the temptations of the cinema. It was in Brazil’s cities that such temptations were most strongly felt, and it was in cities that the ubiquity of cinemas and the throngs outside their doors made film’s influence difficult to ignore. Cinemas were by 1916 “within reach of all” Paulistanos, Alderman Marrey, Jr., declared to his peers in 1916, rendering film’s “inconveniences manifest” in the eyes

⁷⁴ P., “Cinematógrafo,” *Estado*, Mar 25, 1919, 6, cited in Nicolau Sevckenko, *Orfeu extático na metrópole: São Paulo, sociedade e cultura nos frementes anos 20* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992), 92.

⁷⁵ “para a formação do caracter, para a educação e a moralidade das crianças,” Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo: 1921* (São Paulo: Typ. Piratininga, 1921), 493.

⁷⁶ Interestingly, Law 2,648 (10 September 1923) defined adulthood as beginning at twelve years rather than twenty-one, as in the 1915 revision of the Brazilian Penal Code.

⁷⁷ Chicago’s City Council was, in 1907, the first to require that films be approved by the police. In New York City, it was the mayor who intervened, revoking operating licenses and prohibiting film screenings on Sundays. In 1911, New York City also required children under sixteen years of age to be accompanied by a guardian. See Lee Grieveson, *Policing Cinema: Movies and Censorship in Early-Twentieth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and Garth S. Jowett, “‘A Capacity for Evil’: The 1915 Supreme Court Mutual Decision,” in *Controlling Hollywood: Censorship and Regulation in the Studio Era*, ed. Matthew Bernstein (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 16–40.

of urban observers.⁷⁸ Concerned Paulistanos could also see that these “inconveniences” were daily occurrences: in the words of João Mauricio de Sampaio Vianna, a colleague of Marrey, Jr., the “abuses” of cinemas were repeating “every day, with the exhibition of reels that should never be presented in public and especially to children.”⁷⁹ Film, in short, was an especially urban threat, and its regulation demanded action on the local level. This was not the first time arguments for municipal censorship had been made—the *Estado* had made the same case for live theater in 1900—but the proliferation of cinemas in urban centers rendered the geographical specificities of morality all the more pronounced.⁸⁰

If the quantity of theaters in São Paulo had by the mid 1910s transformed women and children into regular spectators, there was another, overlapping audience group whose suggestibility worried legislators, just as it did their counterparts abroad.⁸¹ When Marrey, Jr., warned about the broad reach of cinemas, he was particularly attentive to their low cost of admission. As we saw in the chapters above, competition among commercial and associational theaters helped keep ticket prices affordable for most Paulistanos, at least in a large number of halls. A significant portion of the city’s audiences, as a result, were members of São Paulo’s “popular sector,” the sector of society that famed psychologist Boris Sidis had classified as the most suggestible of the urban population.⁸² Like women and children more generally, explained

⁷⁸ “ao alcance de todos; os seus inconvenientes, são, porém, manifestos.” Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1916*, 189.

⁷⁹ “os abusos estão se repetindo todos os dias, com a exibição de fitas que nunca deveriam ser apresentadas em publico e especialmente ás crianças.” Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1916*, 8.

⁸⁰ “Actualidades,” *Estado*, July 15, 1900, 1.

⁸¹ In the US, much of the decision in *Block v. Chicago* (1909), the first case to try and defend film censorship, rested on the fact that cinemas were frequently accessed by “children, as well as by those of limited means,” that is, those “entitle[d]... to protection against and evil influence.” See Jowett, “A Capacity for Evil,” 23.

⁸² Boris Sidis, *The Psychology of Suggestion: A Research into the Subconscious Nature of Man and Society* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1919), 3, 42. See also Richard Butsch, *The*

Marrey, Jr., these theatergoers were minimally educated, if at all, meaning that cinemas were their schools and film stars their teachers. In these darkened classrooms, as the tight-laced *Revista Feminina* agonized two years later, it was the glorification of vice, the feeding and growing of sexual and violent appetites, that constituted the lessons absorbed by all “social classes.”⁸³

The *Revista Feminina*’s choice of terms is telling. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the categorization of audiences in the early 1910s had been grounded in the dichotomy of “popular” and “elite.” Yet, as the decade neared its end, “class” increasingly entered lawmakers’ discourse of theater politics and policing more generally. In large part, this was a reaction to the looming specter of communism and socialism around the world and at home. When the *Revista Feminina* published its piece, the Russian Revolution was still fresh on Paulistanos’ minds, including those who supported the Bolshevik government. Brazil was also at war, and in the midst of strained resources but also increased demand for industrial goods, workplace abuses and a rising cost of living spurred many laborers to organize. The result was a general strike during the winter of 1917, a strike that was initiated by female textile workers but went on to encompass tens of thousands of industrial laborers and craftsmen under the heading of the working class. No longer concerned about unions’ “fractionaliz[ing] the proletariat into categories,” as the Italian newspaper *Guerra Sociale* had been in 1916, anarchist leaders joined the fold, acting as negotiators in the strike’s resolution.⁸⁴

Citizen Audience: Crowds, Publics, and Individuals (New York: Routledge, 2008), 36.

⁸³ Ana Rita Malheiros, *Revista Feminina*, 1918, cited in Margareth Rago, “A Invenção do Cotidiano na Metrópole: Sociabilidade e Lazer em São Paulo, 1900-1950,” in *História da cidade de São Paulo*, ed. Paula Porta, vol. 3, *A Cidade na Primeira Metade do Século XX* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2004), 395.

⁸⁴ For an analysis of the internal factions of São Paulo’s 1917 strikes, see Joel Wolfe, “Anarchist

For some Paulista lawmakers, the combination of workers and political radicals marked the full onset of the “social question” in São Paulo, a question that Washington Luís would later call a matter of “public order,” “a case of policing.”⁸⁵ In the name of protecting the laboring class’s suggestible minds from hypnotic forces, the state began censoring labor, anarchist, and other critical periodicals, including *O Furão*, and empowered the police to entirely shut down presses and organizations. Policing and public order after the 1917 general strike, in other words, was about more than upholding familial morality in the city’s public spaces; it was also about amplifying certain political ideas and silencing others.

Interestingly, if this adjustment in volume—to put it mildly—occurred within the city’s theaters in the years after the strike, it is difficult to make out in existing sources. To be sure, Paulistanos were attentive to political censorship at home and abroad: at least as early as 1897, *A Platéia* had been including in its theater column accounts of censorship due to, say, “slight socialist tendencies.”⁸⁶ As we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, there had also certainly been cases of policemen interrupting or preventing performances and speechmaking linked to anticlericalism and anarchism, interventions that under State Decree 1,714 were in 1909 reinforced by the censoring of offenses to “national or foreign institutions” or their representatives. Undoubtedly, the outright suppression of politically threatening groups worked toward that end, but plays like Joaquín Dicenta’s *Greve domestica* (Domestic Strike) continued to return to São Paulo’s stages

Ideology, Worker Practice: The 1917 General Strike and the Formation of Sao Paulo’s Working Class,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 71, no. 4 (Nov 1991): 809–46. The quote is cited in Wolfe, 831, from Eric Arthur Gordon, “Anarchism in Brazil: Theory and Practice, 1890-1920” (Doctoral dissertation, Tulane University, 1978), 165.

⁸⁵ Washington Luís’s words are recorded as the former in Amadeu Amaral, *Política humana* (São Paulo: Editora HUCITEC, 1976), 11, and as the latter in Sílvia Hunold Lara and Joseli Maria N. Mendonça, *Direitos e Justiças no Brasil: Ensaio de História Social* (Campinas: Ed. Unicamp, 2006), 379.

⁸⁶ “tendencia um pouco socialista,” in this case in Lisbon’s Teatro de D. Maria, “Bastidores,” *A Platéia*, Jan 30, 1897, 1.

throughout the 1920s, even in one instance under the label of “fashionable theater” at “popular prices.”⁸⁷ Never did the city’s theater producers face the same restrictions as movie producers in the United States, where the Supreme Court had ruled in 1915 that freedom in speech in films was not protected, effectively depoliticizing the medium.⁸⁸

Instead, Paulista legislators refocused their efforts in the early 1920s toward offering alternatives to the commercial entertainment found in São Paulo’s halls. As in the debates around the Municipal Theater, lawmakers once again pointed to the lack of an “artistic culture” among São Paulo’s audiences, and especially among those beyond the “restricted and rich class.”⁸⁹ If aesthetic quality could be found beyond the salons of Paulo Prado, José de Freitas Valle, and Olívia Guedes Penteado, all of Paulistano society could benefit from art’s ability to “educate the spirit and strongly temper the character.”⁹⁰ This conviction voiced in 1924 by Armando Prado, now in the state Chamber of Deputies, was an allusion to music in support of the subsidization of the Symphonic Concerts Society (*Sociedade de Concertos Simfônicos*). Prado’s defense rested not on the abstract “uplift” to which his predecessors had referred, but more precisely on music’s “caressing” effect on the nervous system, its influences on the “human psyche” and especially the psyches of the “popular classes, the classes less favored by

⁸⁷ “Theatro Apollo: Tourneé Procopio – Abigail Maia,” 1927, Program, Biblioteca Jenny Klabin Segall, *Artes de Espetáculo – Personalidades – Dicenta*, Joaquín, 7275.

⁸⁸ The case was *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio*. This is part of Grieverson’s explanation for the apolitical nature of “Hollywood classicism” in *Policing Cinema*.

⁸⁹ “classe restricta e rica,” Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo: 1926* (São Paulo: Estabelecimento Graphico Ferrari & Losasso, 1926), 244.

⁹⁰ “educa o espirito e tempera fortemente o caracter,” Armando Prado, Câmara dos Deputados do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Ordinária de 1924* (São Paulo: Estado de São Paulo, 1925), 846. On São Paulo’s salons, see Marcia Camargos, *Villa Kyrial: crônica da belle époque paulistana* (São Paulo: Senac, 2000); Morse, *From Community to Metropolis*, 262; and Rago, “A Invenção do Cotidiano na Metrópole,” 405–407.

fortune,” as insisted by the Symphonic Concerts Society.⁹¹ The very enjoyment of music, in other words, was from Prado’s perspective sufficient to calm the urban public and direct its energies toward more harmonious ends. This was precisely the opposite result that many observers claimed for moviegoing, especially during the cinema boom of the early 1910s: the *Correio Paulistano*, for example, had in 1914 complained about the “grave disturbances” that films triggered on the “visual organism.”⁹² By altering spectators’ sensual experience, legislators could pacify working-class minds.

Such alteration required “priests of beauty, educators of the aesthetic sentiment of the people,” or so insisted Alderman Orlando Prado in 1923.⁹³ True artists were essential to the social success of cities, argued Prado, and several of his colleagues agreed, pointing to the shortcomings of contractors at the Municipal Theater or to the need for funding a national theater company. In both of these cases, members of the Municipal Chamber implied that a segment of Paulistano society did already “comprehend and appreciate” the performing arts, that there did exist a “high level of culture among our people.”⁹⁴ Indeed, as the modernist magazine *Ariel* pointed out, São Paulo’s conservatory was teeming with students, music shops were prospering, and many homes had pianos.⁹⁵ Yet, the *Ariel* contributor continued, classical musicians were performing to half-empty halls, even after years of government funding and tax breaks that

⁹¹ “às classes populares, às classes menos favorecidas pela fortuna.” Câmara dos Deputados, *Annaes*, 1924, 844.

⁹² “graves transtornos no organismo visual,” *Correio*, July 15, 1914, cited in Moraes, “São Paulo, Capital Artística,” 19.

⁹³ “As *Cidades*... precisam de homens como Chiaffarelli... os sacerdotes do bello, os educadores do sentimento esthetico do povo.” Câmara Municipal, *Annaes*, 1923, 525.

⁹⁴ “temos publico para comprehender e estimar,” Armando Prado, Câmara Municipal, *Annaes*, 1921, 52; “alto grau de cultura de nossa gente,” Almeirindo Gonçalves, Câmara Municipal, *Annaes*, 1924, 646.

⁹⁵ “Magdalena Tagliaferro,” *Ariel*, Oct 1923, 33.

supported the training and work of Paulista artists.⁹⁶ If, as boasted by Alderman Almeirindo Gonçalves, “our people” (*nossa gente*) was characterized by its “high level of culture,” then *nossa gente* had to be narrowly defined.

In making such a claim, Gonçalves may have been using the same “our” wielded by State Deputy Mario Tavares when, in 1912, he supported funding a national theater company that would serve as an “archive of our customs.”⁹⁷ This would also have been the same “our” that Marrey, Jr., deployed a few years later in his defense of film censorship. “It is urgent that we respond... to this new element disorganizing our customs,” Marrey, Jr., implored his fellow aldermen in 1916, going on to denounce motion pictures as a “threat... incompatible with our tradition.”⁹⁸ This was an “our” that implied shared cultural practices and a shared history, an “our” that normalized the lifestyle and ideas of Marrey, Jr., and his peers in the Municipal Chamber by scapegoating an invading “other,” imported films. *Bons costumes*, in short, were *nossos costumes*.

⁹⁶ Among the subsidies provided by the state of São Paulo were stipends supporting young Paulistas’ study in Europe of music, painting, and sculpture (State Law 90, 12 Sep 1892); stipends for similar study either in Brazil or abroad (State Law 955, 15 Sep 1905); the creation of a Pensionato Artístico that served the same purpose for five years of study in Europe (State Decree 2,234, 22 Apr 1912); state and municipal tax breaks, loans, and subsidies for the Conservatório Dramático e Musical de São Paulo (State Law 1,533, 29 Dec 1916, Art. 2; State Law 2,045, 31 Dec 1924; beginning in 1906, the annual budgetary laws of the Municipal Chamber; Municipal Resolution 114, 16 Feb 1918); similar benefits for other arts education organizations (e.g. the Sociedade Artística e Beneficente in State Law 1,303, 30 Dec 1911; the Sociedade de Cultura Artística, Municipal Project 105, 23 Dec 1919; and funds and/or free use of the Teatro Municipal for performers. Not all proposed arts initiatives were approved, however, as in the request by the Centro Musical de São Paulo for financial assistance in organizing symphonic concerts (Câmara Municipal, *Annaes*, 1916, 200).

⁹⁷ “arquivo dos nossos costumes,” Câmara dos Deputados do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Extraordinária e Ordinária de 1912* (São Paulo: Estado de São Paulo, 1913), 1,143.

⁹⁸ “Urge que reajamos ao menos contra esse elemento novo de desorganização dos nossos costumes e que ameaça implantar no nosso meio um systema de educação incompativel com a nossa tradição.” Câmara Municipal, *Annaes*, 1916, 189.

For Marrey, Jr., such customs included the correct application of the Portuguese language, free from the blemishes of Italian and French.⁹⁹ The latter was the preferred idiom of many of São Paulo's elite, while the former was the mother tongue of thousands of immigrants and, according to Marrey, Jr., their Brazilian-born children who failed to be taught Portuguese.¹⁰⁰ The alderman was chastising both groups, calling instead for the purification of their language and manners as defined by "true" Brazilian and Paulista traditions.¹⁰¹ This dual sense of purity was codified in the resulting film censorship bill, which in its first article upheld *bons costumes* and in its second the purging of linguistic deformities, "barbarisms, [and] grotesque expressions."¹⁰² In this manner, the law's proponents hoped, "the great quantity of foreigners" washing up on the state's shores and frequenting the city's cinemas would begin to become Paulista. And by becoming Paulista, by adopting *nossos costumes*, immigrants would be integrated into an ordered, rational urban public.

Underlying the desire to assimilate immigrants into *nossa gente* was not only a faith in the superiority of Paulistano practices and beliefs, but also the assumption that immigrants were suggestible enough to be elevated to the "high culture" of real Paulistanos. There was also the fear that full-blooded Paulistas could be susceptible to foreign seductions; even purebred minds were penetrable. In this fear, Marrey, Jr., who would in 1926 be among the first to represent the

⁹⁹ Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1916*, 15.

¹⁰⁰ "numa terra em que ha grande quantidade de estrangeiros, muitos dos quaes não se preocupam com o ensino do portuguez aos filhos aqui nascidos." Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1916*, 189.

¹⁰¹ The overlap of regional and national identity is pointed out and analyzed in Barbara Weinstein, *Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

¹⁰² "serão em puro vernaculo, expurgados dos barbarismos, expressões grotescas," Municipal Law 2,015 (20 Oct 1916).

nativist Democratic Party, was hardly alone.¹⁰³ As we saw above, the general strike of 1917, which was followed by a brutally repressed May 1 rally and strikes in 1919, led many local lawmakers to suspect foreign influence.¹⁰⁴ Constructing his argument on the suggestibility of an innocent working class, State Senator Aureliano de Gusmão toward the end of that year painted anarchists as manipulative foreigners, “pure fanatics” and “audacious adventurers,” who were crossing the Atlantic to “penetrate the principal cities” of South America.¹⁰⁵ That sense of an internal front had only been strengthened by World War I, which spurred the regular publication of images and texts that praised Paulista and Brazilian perseverance, diligence, and, on magazine covers extolling the Paulista or Brazilian woman, beauty (Images 37 and 38). In a further fit of self-identification, in 1917 the city of São Paulo chose its coat of arms, complete with the ironclad arm of a Portuguese conqueror, the leaves of the coffee tree, and a motto brazenly proclaiming, “I am not led, I lead” (in Latin, *Non ducor duco*).¹⁰⁶

The celebration of Paulistano and Paulista customs and people also served to vilify another group of immigrants: those increasingly dominating the city’s industrial and commercial sectors. Paulo Prado, the patron of local modernists, warned in 1917 of São Paulo’s subjugation to “Italian *bandeirantes* and Syrian conquerors,” inverting Paulista heroes to emphasize the

¹⁰³ Mauricio Font, *Coffee and Transformation in São Paulo, Brazil* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 193, 195.

¹⁰⁴ Wolfe, “Anarchist Ideology, Worker Practice,” 834.

¹⁰⁵ “puros fanaticos, outros, verdadeiros e audazes aventureiros, transpuzeram o Atlantico... conseguiram penetrar nas principaes cidades dos paizes sul-americanos,” Senado do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Ordinária de 1919* (São Paulo: Estado de São Paulo, 1920), 302.

¹⁰⁶ The coat of arms was the winning design from a competition organized in 1916 under Washington Luís’s prefecture. Its symbols are explained in “Símbolos da Cidade,” *Prefeitura de São Paulo*, http://ww1.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/portal/a_cidade/historia/index.php?p=757, accessed Sep 9, 2015.

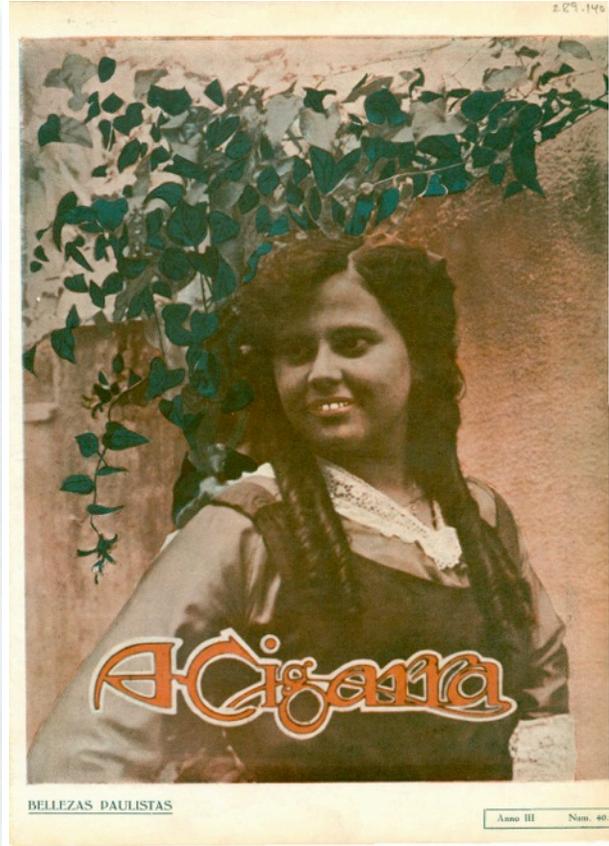


Image 37 (left): An interpretation of “the Brazilian woman” on the cover of *A Cigarra*, November 24, 1915. This docile figure was a far cry from the confident “modern woman” who typically adorned the magazine.

Image 38 (right): In this issue (April 19, 1916), *A Cigarra* promised “Paulista beauties,” beginning with this spunky but traditionally garbed woman.

impending inversion of Paulistano society.¹⁰⁷ Included in this alien class of entrepreneurs were film exhibitors and impresarios, whose financial successes were likewise criticized as the product of a singularly profit-seeking mind. The accusation, according to Mauricio Font, was especially common among members of coffee planting families, families that felt their status and coffers threatened by the arrival of foreign profiteers.¹⁰⁸ In chastising theater entrepreneurs for

¹⁰⁷ “Bandeirantes italianos e Conquistadores sírios,” cited in Sevckenko, *Orfeu extático na metrópole*, 246.

¹⁰⁸ Font, *Coffee and Transformation in São Paulo, Brazil*, 188.

prioritizing coins above culture, municipal leaders were therefore not only protecting Paulistanos from morally and aesthetically deficient products, but also protecting their own social, political, and financial assets. It was a neat sleight of hand that, from whatever direction one approached it, led to the same result: the redefining of “culture,” and consequently the urban public, in Paulista terms.

This is not to say that local lawmakers rejected outright all foreign forms; Paulista youths continued to seek further training on the Continent, while European works and stars continued to delight audiences in São Paulo’s halls, occasionally with funding from the municipality.¹⁰⁹ By most counts, the city around 1920 was more cosmopolitan than ever, a significant node in the transnational circulation of people, goods, and ideas. A widening range of Paulistanos were donning the same fashions, watching the same films, and, especially with the popularization of recorded sound, listening to the same music as other urban dwellers around the world. Yet, for a growing number in São Paulo’s assembly halls, the cultural progress legislators had called for two decades earlier was still incomplete—or, rather, in need of redirection. Ironically, it was precisely the erosion of local distinctions, the transformation of São Paulo into a node just like any other, complete with both the attractions and troubles of the generalized city, that was problematic. Without *nossos costumes*, lawmakers like State Senator Gusmão insisted, it would be impossible to preserve “our social order and politics.”¹¹⁰ The “instruction of our democracy,” Armando Prado agreed, rested on the local production onstage of nationally and regionally defined values and manners.¹¹¹ And so the city was subsumed under the region and nation. The

¹⁰⁹ Municipal Laws 2,929 (26 Oct 1925) and 2,955 (6 Apr 1926), for example, subsidized the maintenance of an Italian lyric company at the Teatro Municipal.

¹¹⁰ “nossa ordem social e política,” Senado, *Annaes*, 1919, 304.

¹¹¹ “para instrução da nossa democracia,” Câmara Municipal, *Annaes*, 1921, 53.

urban public mattered only insofar it instilled and embodied a Paulistano—or, better yet, Paulista—way of life.

Conclusion

Both Gusmão and Prado linked cultural practices and public order with the preservation of the First Republic's political institutions, of which the two men were a part. The urban public for these two men was a social body that forged not only good townsmen but also good citizens. "Our democracy" depended on all members of the urban public regardless of their right to vote. Democracy relied on the molding of suggestible women, children, immigrants, and members of the working class, on the entire hierarchy of minds codified in the municipality's and state's regulation of theaters. Where race fit into that hierarchy was unclear from lawmakers' discussion of theaters and theatergoing before 1925, despite photographs and associational records clearly indicating that Afro-Brazilians could be found among Paulistano audiences. Were former slaves and their descendants incorporated into other social categories—did they count as Brazilian, Paulista, working-class (they certainly were not considered by *A Cigarra* to be Paulista beauties)—or were they completely excluded from government officials' visions for the urban public?¹¹²

For Amadeu Amaral, a poet and *Estado* journalist, the question was a moot one. In the 1924 preface to a collection of his essays, Amaral wrote that "a people" was comprised of "*men*, and not classes, not parties, not religions, not categories, not groups, not races, not entities more or less fictional, more or less abstract, but of *men*, all of flesh and blood, all of stomach, brain,

¹¹² Barbara Weinstein argues in *Color of Modernity* that, at least in the decades that followed, the category of Paulista (*paulistinidade*) was defined by whiteness.

and heart.”¹¹³ To be sure, those men (and women) could be molded, their “good tendencies... cultivated and developed,” but Amaral’s point was that such molding did not correspond to one’s classification; equal bodies and bodily instincts should translate into equal social benefits beyond the government’s guarantee of safety, comfort, and hygiene. Justice, truth, “a better distribution of the benefits of culture and civilization, and... a regime of superior morality” rested not in the attention to specific “social groupings,” but rather in the acceptance of all as humans.¹¹⁴ To shape “efficient and unselfish *citizens*,” then, politicians needed to care for “the general and individual man” and especially his education, health, and happiness.¹¹⁵ “We want citizens?” Amaral asked. “Then let us make men.”

Amaral honed what he called a “humane politics” while campaigning for state deputy in 1922. He framed his platform in opposition to Washington Luís’s claim that public order, and therefore policing, mattered above all else in solving the social question.¹¹⁶ In his double embrace of the individual and of collective mankind, Amaral resembled the anarchists of Chapter 3. In his denouncement of repressive policies, he approached the bohemians of *O Furão*.¹¹⁷ Ultimately, however, these ways of thinking, along with Amaral’s campaign, failed to gain traction. Instead, state legislators turned their attention in 1926 to creating a municipal police

¹¹³ “*homens* e não de classes, não de partidos, não de religiões, não de categorias, não de grupos, não de raças, não de entidades mais ou menos fictícias, ou mais ou menos abstratas, mas de *homens*, todos de carne e osso, todos com estômago, cérebro e coração, todos com boas tendências que é preciso cultivar e desenvolver,” Amaral, *Política humana*, 9.

¹¹⁴ “para uma melhor distribuição dos benefícios da cultura e da civilização e para o advento de um regime de moralidade superior no seio dos agrupamentos sociais.” Amaral, *Política humana*, 8.

¹¹⁵ “homem individual e geral... Queremos cidadãos? Formemos homens.” Amaral, *Política humana*, 8.

¹¹⁶ In a campaign speech given in São Roque, Amaral refuted this claim by challenging three assumptions: that conflict between capital and labor in Brazil was unfounded, that these tensions were merely a pretext for mass agitation, and that Brazilian institutions were strong enough to subdue any conflict (*Política humana*, 12).

¹¹⁷ “Pela alegria da vida,” *O Furão*, April 8, 1916, 1.

force, the civic guard, in order to quell what one deputy called the “occurrences that, lamentably and unpatriotically, are unsettling the normality of our life.”¹¹⁸ The following year in the same chamber, Armando Prado argued that “social order” demanded an increase in resources for film censorship, resources that State Decree 4405-A granted in 1928. Tellingly, the decree also expanded the basis for censorship to include any films or live performances that, “by suggestion or instruction, may induce someone to practice crimes... [or] seek to create violent antagonism between races or diverse classes of society.”¹¹⁹

In lawmakers’ eyes, the categorization of the urban public was inevitable: these were divisions innate to and endangering city life in the 1920s. Social order thus implied the ordering of society, the projection onto the urban public of a theater’s sections and tiers. Theaters themselves—as a censored medium of communication, as policed spaces for sociability—were essential to that ordering. When, in 1924, Luiz Fonseca attempted to pass another bill regulating the construction of São Paulo’s cinemas, his peers in the Municipal Chamber were no longer interested.¹²⁰ The Polytheama in 1916 may have collapsed into a “heap of ruins,” but more pressing now was whether urban society would do the same.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ “acontecimentos que, lamentavel e impatrioticamente, vêm perturbando a normalidade da nossa vida,” José Rodrigues Alves Sobrinho, Câmara dos Deputados do Estado de São Paulo, *Annaes da Sessão Ordinária de 1926* (São Paulo: Estado de São Paulo, 1927), 250. The civic guard would be created under State Law 2,141 (22 Oct 1926).

¹¹⁹ In its totality, Article 188 of State Decree 4405-A (17 Apr 1928) prohibited the following: “offensas á moral e bons costumes, as instituições nacionaes ou de paizes estrangeiros, a seus representante ou agentes; allusões deprimentos ou aggressivas a determinadas pessoas e a corporações que exerçam autoridade publica ou representem confissão religiosa, assim como a acte ou objecto de seu culto e symbolos; representação de peças ou exhibição de pelliculas, numeros ou espectaculos de variedades que, por suggestões ou ensinamentos, possam induzir alguém á pratica de crimes, ou contenham a apologia, directa ou indirecta, destes; procurem criar antagonismo violento entre raças ou diversas classes da sociedade, ou que, finalmente, propaguem idéas subversivas da ordem e da organização actual da Sociedade.”

¹²⁰ Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1924*, 191-197, 227-230.

¹²¹ “um montão de ruínas,” Luiz Fonseca, Câmara Municipal, *Annaes, 1916*, 10.

Conclusion

If in 1924 São Paulo's aldermen were concerned about the hardening lines that divided Paulistano society, they at least had no reason to complain, as Manuel Antonio Álvares de Azevedo had done seventy years earlier, that their city was "the monotony of tedium."¹ Long gone were the days of the "academic village" and Angelo Agostini's 1864 caricatures (Chapter 1, Image 3), the days in which, as argued in Chapter 1, the provincial capital's law students and leading families gasped for the fresh air of "civilization" inside the São José Theater. Instead, as Paulo Prado wrote in the nationalist *Revista do Brazil*, life in 1920s São Paulo was characterized by an overwhelming modernity, by the "disordered" onslaught of peoples and technologies on "a new and rich land, in full and ardent puberty."² Prado, as Darrell Levi points out, may have belonged to the "pessimistic extreme," but the pubescence that he observed eloquently epitomized the concerns of a generation of local lawmakers. São Paulo was in the midst of rapid change, the most vocal of Paulistanos worried, a crisis of identity and purpose. How, then, could the tempers and desires of the adolescent city be channeled effectively so as to produce a mature metropolis?

As this dissertation has shown, an important way in which Paulista politicians responded to this question at the start of the twentieth century was by turning to theaters. In Chapter 2, we saw how both state and municipal legislators around 1900 defended funding for the São José Theater's replacement on the grounds that such an institution would uplift the morals, manners, and tastes of Paulistano society as a whole. While the resulting edifice, the Municipal Theater, never served the entirety of São Paulo's inhabitants, it did accommodate the city's expanding

¹ See Chapter 1, p.34. Translated in Richard M. Morse, *From Community to Metropolis: A Biography of São Paulo, Brazil* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 90.

² Translated in Darrell E. Levi, *The Prados of São Paulo, Brazil: An Elite Family and Social Change, 1840-1930* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 133.

upper and middle classes, in the process offering one standard for what the tempers and desires of a mature city should be. For the Municipal's most vocal proponents, these traits were encapsulated in the term "culture," in the notion that an advanced society was marked by a discerning appreciation of beauty in all its forms, including in the "harmony" of an orderly multitude. The aim, then, was collective salvation, the creation of a cosmopolitan city whose cosmopolitanism was defined not by the mixture of nationalities pouring into São Paulo but rather by a shared aesthetic sophistication presumed to universally define a civilized public. Within the Municipal Theater's stages and stalls, São Paulo's leaders worked to mold this urban public, positing the latter against the "irrational" agglomerations of the plaza's political crowd, the boxing ring's gambling mass, or, in the eyes of some, the church's indoctrinated flock.

São Paulo's lawmakers were not the only group, however, to imagine and shape through the spaces of theaters a new, uplifted society. As demonstrated in Chapters 3 and 4, associational leaders from across the social spectrum were, at the start of the century, also taking advantage of the city's growing spaces and population to erect their own theaters and their own, secular visions for what an urban public looked like. If these individuals were not always concerned with urban society as a whole, they, too, were responding to what they perceived to be the downfalls of the adolescent city. At the heart of those downfalls was the fraying of community and family ties, a fraying that associational theater events helped to prevent and even undo. Chapter 3 illustrated how different groups used theaters to create a variety of communities that emphasized shared cultural practices and beliefs, in this manner offering multiple interpretations for the urban public. At the same time, however, as Chapter 4 explained, many associational leaders also relied on a broad understanding of respectability, grounded in the

family, in order to legitimize their activities in the face of both growing regulation and increasing commercialized competition.

Commercialized competition came in various forms during the first decade of the twentieth century. There were new bars and gambling dens, brothels and billiard rooms, as well as the stages and, especially after 1907, screens of a rapidly multiplying number of for-profit theaters. On one hand, as we saw in Chapter 5, many of the businessmen behind São Paulo's commercial theaters joined their associational counterparts in encouraging the attendance of entire families, and consequently in expanding the public spaces that women and children of all classes could reputedly occupy. On the other hand, the entertainment and activities of a large number of those commercial theaters that claimed to be familial—those halls occupied by conjurors and contortionists, chanteuses and champagne—hardly complied with legislators' ideas of civilized urbanity. In fact, Chapter 6 argued, theater entrepreneurs were, through their use of the terms “elite” and “popular,” redefining what civilization meant, isolating aesthetics from morality and elevating “popular” to a desirable trait. Such reinterpretation, as Chapter 7 showed, did not come without reaction on the part of lawmakers, some of whom accused commercial producers of sabotaging their attempt to construct a civilized, artistic city. In the 1910s, aldermen moved beyond the regulation of theaters' safety, comfort, and hygiene to pay closer attention to the effects of the entertainment itself, differentiating among audiences according to their gender, age, class, and nationality.

In all of these ways, theaters became the arena within which a wide range of Paulistanos began to think about, debate, and create an urban public. As we saw in the chapters above, theaters in the inchoate metropolis were a relatively accessible medium for producers and audiences alike. Under the label of “culture,” theaters offered a secular alternative to the church,

a blank slate on which organizers and participants could reimagine and realize social transformation both in the stalls and onstage or onscreen. Whether or not transformation was the aim, the inauguration of nearly two hundred theaters between 1890 and 1924 meant that a growing number of Paulistanos and especially Paulistanas were emerging from their homes and affecting and being affected by public life.

In the process, they were expanding the urban public in both theory and practice. By attending theaters, spectators were rendering inevitable their place within any conception of a civilized society; their very presence in the public eye, within public spaces of culture, made theatergoers impossible to dismiss. At the same time, not all theatergoers and theatergoing practices were on equal ground, literally and figuratively. Seating hierarchies within larger auditoriums and differences among auditoriums in location, architecture, and programming resulted in a complex geography that, while in some instances brought together Paulistanos from various walks of life, in most instances nonetheless distinguished among them. This was also a geography that did not always neatly map cultural forms onto class, nationality, race, or gender. Indeed, many associational leaders, as Chapters 3 and 4 argued, worked to upend outsiders' doubts about their group's fitness for urban life by subscribing to what were presumed to be mainstream aesthetic and moral norms, in turn laying the groundwork for an emerging middle-class respectability.

If, as this dissertation has demonstrated, theaters were the slates on which Paulistanos drew competing images of urban society, on which they tested a variety of designs for the mature metropolis, then what were the consequences of such experimentation? The findings in the chapters above lead to several speculations. First, in shedding its provincialism, the former provincial capital shed much of its artistic independence. For all of the rhetorical pomp in the

municipal and state legislatures, these governing bodies were doing little to stem the profiteering tide that, especially after 1907, flooded São Paulo with films and troupes from beyond the state's boundaries. The result was the rise of a mass consumer society—what we might call, in opposition to the racial “whitening” of Barbara Weinstein’s mid-century São Paulo, a cultural graying.³ This was the graying that left indistinguishable the background figures of *A Cigarra*'s May 11, 1915, cover (Chapter 6, Image 35), a graying encouraged by both businessmen's and lawmakers' appeals to “the popular,” by their use of theaters for the diffusion of cultural practices to all Paulistanos, including, as Chapters 4 and 5 explained, to women and children. Within halls like the São Pedro Theater in Barra Funda, as one journalist observed in 1927, “two publics”—“the enemy of the necktie” and the user of “Windsor soap”—momentarily came together, although not necessarily side by side, in the shared pursuit of pleasure.⁴

On a larger scale, São Paulo's graying was one that led the Swiss writer Blaise Cendrars to declare the city in 1924 to be like any other metropolis: alighting at the Luz railway station, Cendrars described in verse, was like disembarking “at Nice station / Or arriving at London Charing Cross.”⁵ Likewise, in its shots of smokestacks and rushing workers, skyscrapers and “enchanted gardens,” the 1929 film *São Paulo: A Symphonia da Metropole* (São Paulo: Symphony of the Metropolis) could have represented any number of urbanizing centers at the

³ Barbara Weinstein, *Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

⁴ “um é inimigo da gravata, outro usa sabonete Windsor—tem, por força da sua posição dois públicos.” Jorge Martins Rodrigues, *Diário da Noite*, in *Cinearte*, Nov 16, 1927, in Schvarzman, “Ir ao cinema,” 160.

⁵ Translated in Nicolau Sevckenko, “São Paulo: The Quintessential, Uninhibited Megalopolis as Seen by Blaise Cendrars in the 1920s,” in *Megalopolis: The Giant City in History*, ed. Theo Barker and Anthony Sutcliffe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 175.

time, any hub of “Modern life, Civilization,” as one of the film’s title cards proclaimed.⁶

Universality was energizing and exciting at the same time that it was effacing and redundant, rendering anonymous not just the individual but the city as a whole.

Still, if on one level the city seemed to be transforming into any other and if many of its commercial theaters seemed to be cranking out cookie-cutter, cosmopolitan consumers, on another level theaters were the breeding ground for São Paulo’s own blend of cultural pluralism. In the same year that *São Paulo: A Symphonia da Metropole* celebrated the city’s “vertiginous” growth, Guilherme de Almeida published his series of *Estado de São Paulo* articles that were later collected under the heading of *Cosmópolis*. For Almeida, São Paulo’s urbanization was above all marked by its diversification, by the cultural differences that the associational theaters of Chapter 3, along with a handful of commercial auditoriums, had over the course of three decades helped to preserve. Rather than uniformity or anonymity, these spaces enabled a public sociability that revolved around a common cause or customs. By, on one hand, upholding within their theaters the familial morality that many lawmakers claimed to promote and that Chapter 4 details, São Paulo’s associations were, on the other hand, stimulating artistic, linguistic, and ideological variety. They were creating cultural communities that muddled the neat bifurcation of popular and elite, provincial and cosmopolitan, a muddling that ultimately inspired the city’s better studied modernists. The dizzying effect of São Paulo’s metamorphosis was thus the result of not merely an accelerated graying but also an overwhelming coloring, the blinding, prismatic fracturing of a rapidly expanding population. It was this friction between monochrome

⁶ It was no coincidence that the film depicted familiar scenes representative of the urban ideal: *São Paulo: A Symphonia da Metropole* was modeled on *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis*, released two years earlier.

modernity and variegation, played out in São Paulo's theaters as well as elsewhere, that by the 1920s produced a uniquely Paulistano vertigo.

That vertigo was only exacerbated by the decade's political turbulence, the basis for our second speculation: to what extent did theaters contribute to the social conflicts that occupy a significant portion of São Paulo's historiography? Certainly, the emergence of mass commercial culture had in no way hindered laborers from organizing strikes, Afro-Paulistanos from launching campaigns against racial discrimination, influential Republican Party members from establishing their own Democratic Party in 1926, or junior military officers from attempting to take over the city and state in July of 1924. If, in the 1850s, members of the provincial government had argued that theaters were a means of "distraction that contribute significantly to the public order," the dozens of auditoriums inaugurated in São Paulo since had disproven this logic.⁷ Nor had the government-funded São José and Municipal Theaters served to "educate" the majority of Paulistanos in what many lawmakers understood to be the ways of civilized, urban life. While, as we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, many of the immigrant, anarchist, labor, black, and neighborhood associations that occupied São Paulo's theaters did promote a morally grounded spectatorship, morality in these cases by no means precluded politicization.

In fact, that very aspiration toward discipline was essential to the strikes and marches that in the late 1910s and early 1920s brought together thousands of laborers and allies into the heart of São Paulo. The shared commitment to a single leadership and a single purpose, reinforced by the chanting of already familiar songs and slogans; the comfort of being among the multitude, and of being surrounded by one's family in doing so; and the attention to self-presentation and its

⁷ "distração, que muito contribuem para a ordem pública," Costa Cabral to the Provincial Legislative Assembly, Jan 1857, in Antonio Barreto do Amaral, *História dos velhos teatros de São Paulo (da Casa da Ópera à inauguração do Teatro Municipal)*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2006), 133.

contribution to the collective spectacular were all behaviors that the events within associational theaters helped to, if not perfectly ingrain, then at least make more routine. To be clear, the majority of the organizations that occupied São Paulo's theaters, especially before the 1917 general strike, were not actively pursuing collective action. On the contrary, as Chapter 3 explained, anarchist gatherings at the start of the century typically emphasized the individual as actor, seeking to develop both mind and soul for the imminent revolution. Yet other groups focused on raising funds for families or institutions in needs, or on simply providing an opportunity for leisure without the perceived dangers of the dance hall or bar. Still, regardless of associations' aims, the net effect of fundraising *festas* and family dances was the generation of a mass sociability that bridged genders and ages but often divided along class, race, or nationality. What lawmakers branded as crowds were instead, from organizers' perspectives, the manifestations of an expanded thinking public, a public that had been nurtured inside São Paulo's theaters.

By 1924, the political consequences of theater events were clear not only to associational leaders but also to government officials. While a local anarchic and syndicalist dramaturgy flourished during the decade's first half, producing a number of new works that circulated among amateur troupes, this stream of creativity was reduced to a mere trickle in the aftermath of July's Paulista Revolt.⁸ Such a reduction was in part due to the consolidation of anarchist and labor groups and the growing emphasis by both on more immediate solutions to workplace injustices. Theatrical, along with more general union, activity was additionally hampered by the State Department of Political and Social Order (Departamento Estadual de Ordem Política e Social, or

⁸ Maria Thereza Vargas, *Teatro operário na cidade de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, Idart, 1980), 48.

DEOPS), which was established in response to the 1924 military rebellion.⁹ With many lawmakers and industrialists implicating the labor movement in the Paulista Revolt, the DEOPS was given free reign to shut down periodicals, organizations, and auditoriums and heavily censor those plays that associational and commercial producers did attempt to stage. Once again, Paulista politicians were recalibrating their expectations of an urban public and especially the measures they were willing to take in order to realize those expectations. If the DEOPS is any indication, more than a cosmopolitan city (Chapter 1) or an artistic city (Chapter 2), lawmakers in the mid-1920s wanted an orderly city.

That theaters would be the medium for cultivating an orderly urban public was less apparent after 1924. In the first place, as indicated by the findings of Alderman Luiz Fonseca's renewed campaign for cinema safety, there were fewer auditoriums left standing in 1924 than there had been a decade earlier (48 theaters in 1924 as opposed to 85 in 1914), and several were damaged during the Revolt. While lower numbers meant fewer headaches for municipal inspectors, they also meant that the distribution and production of entertainment was concentrated in fewer and, in many cases, foreign hands. A small set of performance companies, like that of Ottavio Scotto, was monopolizing South America's leading venues in the late 1920s, while US film studios like MGM and Paramount were establishing their own cinemas and distribution networks in São Paulo and across Brazil.¹⁰ The men at the heads of these networks and cinema chains, among them Chapter 5's Francisco Serrador, together constituted a powerful

⁹ Joel Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 37. The censorship of amateur theater in São Paulo during this period is examined in Roseli Figaro, ed., *Na cena paulista, o teatro amador: circuito alternativo e popular de cultura (1927-1945)* (São Paulo: Ícone Editora, 2008). In São Paulo State, the DEOPS fell under the jurisdiction of the state Chief of Police, as stipulated in State Law 2,034 (30 December 1924).

¹⁰ Paulo de Oliveira Castro Cerquera, *Um século de ópera em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Empresa Gráfica Editôra Guia Fiscal, 1954), 129.

industry by 1930, one that legislators every so often accused of maltreating “the people” but were rarely able to rally support for further regulation.¹¹ If, on one hand, the new movie palaces were associated with large-scale refined theatergoing (the seating capacity of the downtown Cine-Theatro Republica, for example, surpassed 2,000), on the other hand, these theaters presented the state few opportunities to adjust the content screened to tens of thousands of Paulistanos each day.

The standardization of offerings inside São Paulo’s theaters was accompanied by the diversification of mass leisure, and together both trends marked the demise of theaters as spaces for forging an urban public. In addition to the popularization of dance halls, as we saw in Chapter 4, the 1920s witnessed the emergence of the soccer field as a key site for recreation on a large scale: approximately 150 soccer clubs were registered with the Paulista Association for Athletic Sports (Associação Paulista de Sports Atléticos, or APSA) at the beginning of the decade and that number—among the highest of any Latin American city—only grew as the sport left its elite roots behind.¹² The development of new parks and avenues further encouraged regular picnicking and “footing” among a broad swath of the population, and the latter activity was enhanced over the course of the decade by São Paulo’s expanding retail sector. After 1924, displayed products occasionally shared their vitrines with another attraction: “radio-telephonic” devices. Still expensive to own and maintain, radio sets were typically accessed by the average Paulistano in shops and eateries seeking to lure in customers. Like theatergoing, radio listening was therefore a highly public and interactive practice in the late 1920s.¹³

¹¹ Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, *Annaes: 1929*, 423.

¹² Sevchenko, *Orfeu extático*, 52.

¹³ This thread between theatergoing and radio listening leads Alejandra Bronfman, in her study of Cuban radio, to explain the former as preparatory practice for the latter. See Alejandra

Radio was also a medium that the government could and did harness in order to continue promoting its vision of an urban public. The radio tower in the modern city became the equivalent of the opera house in the civilized city—and, indeed, the Municipal Chamber debated in 1924 whether or not to broadcast Municipal Theater performances.¹⁴ As radio consumption spread throughout the region, the medium also became a way for Paulistanos to disseminate their notion of modernity to the “far-off corners” of São Paulo State, a way to aurally construct the city on a hill, in the process reinforcing the link between modernity and urbanity.¹⁵ In 1933, the state Department of Education added to its responsibilities the organization of “radio schools,” which broadcasted the national hymn, lectures, performances, official communications, and the weather.¹⁶ São Paulo City also had hopes for a radio school, a project that was included in the 1935 legislation authorizing the establishment of the Department of Culture and Recreation (Departamento de Cultura e Recreação, or DC).¹⁷

Bronfman, manuscript, “*El naciente público oyente: Towards a Genealogy of the Audience in Early Republican Cuba*,” in Amparo Sánchez Cobos, ed., *After the Intervention: Civics, Sociability and Applied Science in the New Cuba, 1895-1933* (in press, Duke University Press): 9, accessed December 8, 2013, <http://alejandrabronfman.wordpress.com/research/a-voice-in-a-box/>. For a study of radio in São Paulo, see Antônio Pedro Tota, *A locomotiva no ar: rádio e modernidade em São Paulo, 1924-1934* (São Paulo: Secretaria de Estado da Cultura, 1990).

¹⁴ Already in 1924, the year of radio’s arrival to São Paulo, the Municipal Chamber offered financial support to the Paulista Educational Radio Society. The idea of subsidizing the club’s equipment purchases was first raised in the Municipal Chamber by Orlando de Almeida Prado, Francisco Machado de Campos, and Luciano Gualberto on January 26, 1924. *Câmara Municipal de São Paulo, Annaes da Camara Municipal de São Paulo: 1924 (2.o anno da 11.a legislatura)* (São Paulo: Escolas Profissionais Salesianas, 1924), 57. Later subventions were funneled directly toward performance companies, like the Italian-Brazilian Theater Corporation (Sociedade Anonyma Theatral Italo-Brasileira), in order to make possible live broadcasts at the Municipal Theater (Municipal Law 2,955, 6 April 1926).

¹⁵ As Alderman Orlando Prado asked, “Quantas pessoas... nos longinuos recantos do Estado, ha que desejam—sem poder realizar a sua aspiração—ouvir um concerto, uma opera lyrica, uma conferencia religiosa, scientifica, politica ou literaria?!” (Ibid., 55).

¹⁶ State Decree 5,828 (4 Feb 1933), Art. 121, 122, 134, 135.

¹⁷ Municipal Act 861 (30 May 1935).

While the radio school never materialized, the Department of Culture did, and its organization speaks volumes about the persistence of the faith in culture—in the ability to mold and order urban society through public, cultural practices—nurtured within São Paulo’s theaters.¹⁸ Indeed, that faith was very much alive in the modernist writer Mário de Andrade’s 1935 attempt to garner support for a Department of Culture, which Andrade would soon head: “If [lawmakers] praise and ask for Culture,” he chastised members of the Municipal Chamber, “they still continue to leave unprotected or to combat any cultural initiatives. We are not yet convinced that culture is worth as much as bread. And that is our most heartrending cultural immorality.”¹⁹ In many ways, Andrade’s words evoked the arguments of Provincial Assembly members in 1854, the debates over fiscal priorities, the language of morals and uplift, the notion of culture as essential nourishment. Yet, there was a key difference: culture—in this case, the work of thinking artists—was a nourishment required multiple times a day, to be consumed not only at the theater but at school, at the park, on the streets, and even, through the now more affordable radio, inside the home. Furthermore, it was a sustenance intended to feed not the city but the nation. In the face of Getúlio Vargas’s new apparatus for cultural production and management and with the aid of recording technology, Andrade and others were urging that São Paulo could and should become the cultural breadbasket of Brazil.²⁰

¹⁸ Patricia Raffaini, *Esculpindo a cultura na forma Brasil: o Departamento de Cultura de São Paulo (1935-1938)* (São Paulo: Humanitas FFLCH/USP, 2001), 76.

¹⁹ “De forma que si elogiam e pedem a Cultura, ainda continuam desprotegendo ou combatendo quaisquer iniciativas culturais. Nós não estamos ainda convencidos de que a cultura vale como o pão. E essa é a nossa mais dolorosa imoralidade cultural.” In Roberto Barbato Jr., *Missionários de uma utopia nacional-popular: os intelectuais e o Departamento de Cultura de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2004), 48–49.

²⁰ Paulistas’ 1930s conflation of nation and region, that is, their determination to remake Brazil in their regional image, is central to the argument of Weinstein, *Color of Modernity*.

The primary aim of the municipal Department of Culture and Recreation, then, was not urban order and progress but the definition and dissemination of what it meant to be—to behave, to dress, to believe, to enjoy as a—Brazilian. Joining government officials in their search for a truly national culture were, as many scholars have shown, also average Brazilians: songwriters and singers, authors and actors, film producers and painters, and the mix of listeners and viewers that consumed their works. Together they constituted not the end of the urban public but, on the contrary, its fullest realization: the use of the city’s public spaces for the exchange and diffusion of ideas, for the proposition and evaluation of new aesthetic or behavioral forms, even in an environment of state censorship and policing. If theaters, as a 1937 presidential decree insisted, were now just “one of the expressions of national culture,” in São Paulo they had been essential to the creation of a capacious forum in which the very concept of a national culture was now being debated and developed.²¹ Rather than a gateway to the world, the city after 1924 became a stage for the nation.

²¹ “O teatro é considerado como uma das expressões da cultura nacional, e a sua finalidade é, essencialmente, a elevação e a edificação espiritual do povo.” National Decree 92 (12 December 1937), Art. 1.

Appendix: São Paulo's Theaters, 1854-1924

I use the term “theaters” broadly to encompass playhouses, cinemas, union halls, and multipurpose auditoriums. In other words, I consider a structure a theater if it was built for long-term use with a roof and solid walls (i.e. not a tent or bandstand) and was regularly, although not necessarily exclusively, used for entertaining large audiences. Given the ambiguity and flux of most theaters’ seating capacity (a blueprint might indicate one number, a statistical handbook might state another—or no number may be documented at all), I chose not to strictly define “large audience,” but in almost all cases excluded auditoriums that sat fewer than 100 spectators. Among these smaller venues were taverns, cafés, and, beginning in the mid 1910s, cabarets. I chose to include cinemas under the “theaters” umbrella because of the overlap in activity and architectural design between those sites referred to as *teatros/salões* and those referred to as *cinematographos/cinemas* in the source base. In other words, as the table below shows, many halls doubled as both, making the distinction difficult for the studied period.

The data below is pieced together from the periodicals, construction permits and plans, memoirs, and other sources that I consulted, as well as the *Salas de cinema de São Paulo* database jointly hosted by the Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo and the Cinemateca Brasileira. Although organized alphabetically by theater name, each row represents a particular building rather than a specific name since names often changed depending on the owner, impresario, or exhibitor. As a result, many of the theaters below have multiple names listed in the Names column. Some also have multiple addresses due to changes in street names and numbering during the course of the examined period. If a theater was entirely torn down and rebuilt, I treated the space as a separate theater (i.e. a separate entry in the table below) and used the Start Year and End Year columns to differentiate between the two structures. I have preserved the

original spellings of theaters' names and street names in order to reflect the maps used throughout the dissertation. Neighborhood names, however, have been updated to their present-day spellings.

The Years Columns are based on the years in which a theater was documented to have existed. Given the lack of thorough documentation and the impossibility of a single researcher to consult every record in a limited amount of time (keyword searchability for São Paulo's major newspapers only became an option toward the end of this dissertation's completion, and far from every theater was acknowledged in the mainstream press), the listed years may not necessarily reflect the actual opening and closing dates. Likewise, audience capacity is listed in the table as a fuzzy range representing the smallest and largest sizes attributed to a given theater in the sources. Finally, the designation of a theater as associational (A), commercial (C), or governmental (G) is primarily based on ownership. If a theater was owned by an association or educational or religious institution, it was automatically marked as associational, while those auditoriums established by impresarios, investors, or exhibitors for commercial purposes were marked as commercial, even if they were occasionally used by associations. The single exception to the latter is the Steinway, which was almost exclusively utilized by philanthropic or amateur performance groups despite its commercial ownership and is therefore listed as associational.

Table 1: São Paulo's Theaters, 1854-1924

	Names	Address	Neighborhood	Start Year	End Year	Capacity	Associational (A), Commercial (C), or Governmental (G)	Live (L), Film (F), Hybrid (H)
1	—	R. dos Italianos, 1	Bom Retiro	1898	1899	100	C	L
2	Actos do Lyceu	Al. Nothmann	Campos Elíseos	1908	2012	600-725	A	H
3	Alhambra, Salão; Centro Republicano Português; Galeria de Cristal	R. Marechal Deodoro, 2	Centro	1905	1921		A	L
4	Ambrósio, Cinema	R. das Flores, 68-70	Centro	1912	1913		C	F
5	America Cinema	R. Lopes de Oliveira	Barra Funda	1914	1916	563	C	H
6	America, Cinema; Biographo Variedades; Cinema Biograph; American	R. da Consolação, 324-326	Conso-lação	1911	1947	450-802	C	H
7	American Cinema	R. Barra Funda, 151	Barra Funda	1909	1909	81	C	H
8	Amerikan Cinema; American Cinema; Cinema Celso Garcia	Av. Celso Garcia, 40-44, 44-46	Belen-zinho	1911	1917	350-520	C	F
9	Andrea Maggi; Gargi	R. dos Imigrantes, 180	Bom Retiro	1902	1902		A	L
10	Apollo, Salão	R. Vergueiro, 145, 159	Paraíso	1908	1909		A	H

Table 1, continued

11	Artístico, Salão	R. Boa Vista, 23 or 22	Centro	1907	1907		A	L
12	Avenida, Theatro	Av. Rangel Pestana, 111	Brás	1913	1914		C	H
13	Avenida, Theatro	Av. Brigadeiro Luiz Antonio, 56	Liberdade	1910	1912		C	H
14	Barra Funda, 74	R. Barra Funda, 74	Barra Funda	1897	1897		A	L
15	Barra Funda, Cinema	R. Barra Funda, 14-16	Barra Funda	1913	1917		C	H
16	Batuíra, Theatro	R. da Cruz Preta, 4	Centro	1864	1867	200	C	L
17	Belém; Melitta; Santa Terezinha	Av. Celso Garcia, 228, 225, 328, 340, 360	Belenzinho	1911	1960	1,245-1,700	C	H
18	Bevilacqua	R. São Bento, 14	Centro	1906	1909		A	L
19	Bijou Aurora; Santa Ephigenia Theatre; Progredior; The Berlim Cinema; Aurora Theatre; Cinema Aurora	R. Aurora, 59	Santa Ifigênia	1911	1914		C	H
20	Bijou Oriente; Flor do Oriente; Cinema Estrella; Cinema Oriente	R. Oriente, 41	Brás	1911	1919	350-600	C	F
21	Bijou Santa Marina; Theatro Santa Marina	R. Guaycurú, 71	Água Branca	1913	1917	1,085	C	H
22	Boa Vista, Theatro	R. Boa Vista, 52	Centro	1916	1947	891-1,100	C	H

Table 1, continued

23	Brasil, Cinema	R. dos Andradas, 53	Santa Ifigênia	1909	1913	150	C	F
24	Braz Bijou, Salão Cinema	Av. Rangel Pestana, 148, 118	Brás	1910	1917	750-850	C	H
25	Bresser, Cinema	R. Bresser, 55, 53	Belenzinho	1913	1917	440-573	C	F
26	Carlos Gomes, Cinema	R. São João, 389, 382	Santa Cecília	1912	1912		C	F
27	Carlos Gomes, Theatro	R. 12 de Outubro, 46, 44, 16, 76	Lapa	1922	1968	1,304-2,000	C	F
28	Casino Antarctica	R. Anhangabaú, 59-63, 67	Santa Ifigênia	1912	1939	1,386-1,700	C	H
29	Casino Paulistano	R. do Carmo, 38-A	Centro	1900	1900			L
30	Casino Penteado	R. Rodrigues dos Santos, 2	Pari	1902	1904		A	L
31	Casino; Apollo	R. Dom José de Barros, 8 = R. 11 de Julho, 8; R. 24 de Maio, 40, 188	Centro	1909	1962	1,138-1,544	C	H
32	Celso Garcia, Salão; Classes Laboriosas	R. do Carmo, 23, 39	Centro	1904	1931		A	L
33	Central	R. São João, 21, 53	Centro	1916	1922	1,148-1,400	C	F
34	Centro Dramático Recreativo; Grêmio Dramático Gil Vicente	R. Líbero Badaró, 20	Centro	1897	1901		A	L
35	Centro Ipiranga	R. Bom Pastor, 109	Ipiranga	1912	1939	200	A	H
36	Cercle Français	R. São Bento, 79	Centro	1906	1925		A	L
37	Cercle Français	R. Marechal Deodoro, 8	Centro	1902	1905		A	L

Table 1, continued

38	Chantecler; Rio Branco	R. General Ozorio, 73, 75, 77	Santa Ifigênia	1910	1925	800	C	F
39	Choueiri, Antonio; Shoneiri	R. Vergueiro, 4	Liberdade	1909	1909	100	C	F
40	Cinema das Famílias; Cinema Grátis	Av. Rangel Pestana, 126	Brás	1911	1912	300-520	C	F
41	Cineographo Lubin	R. 15 de Novembro, 63	Centro	1900	1902		C	H
42	Club Germania, Salão do	R. 11 de Junho, 9 = D. José de Barros	Centro	1886	1916		A	L
43	Club Ginástico Português	R. Marechal Deodoro	Centro	1878	1910		A	L
44	Club Internacional	R. 15 de Novembro, 17A	Centro	1890	1911		A	L
45	Colombo	Largo da Concórdia	Brás	1908	1966	1,968-2,200	C	H
46	Colyseio Villa Mariana	R. Domingos de Moraes, 221	Vila Mariana	1914	1915		C	F
47	Congresso	R. do Theatro, 9-11 = Praça João Mendes, 9-11	Centro	1910	1929	438-515	C	F
48	Consertorio		Moóca	1912	1912		A	L
49	Correio Paulistano	R. do Rosário 8-12	Centro	1908	1911		A	L
50	Crystal	R. Lopes Chaves, 37, 64	Barra Funda	1913	1914	1,220	C	H
51	Deutschen Turnverein, Salão do	R. Bom Retiro, 18-20	Bom Retiro	1907	1907		A	L

Table 1, continued

52	Drolhe, Theatro; Independencia; Cinema Ipiranga	R. dos Ituanos, 33	Ipiranga	1913	1921	390	C	F
53	Eden Cinema; Isola	R. São Caetano, 11, 15	Luz	1912	1921		C	F
54	Eden Cinema; Lirico Cinema	R. São Bento, 33	Centro	1909	1909	1,200	C	F
55	Eden Club	R. Florencio de Abreu, 20-22	Centro	1900	1909		A	L
56	Eden Polytheama; Braz Polytheama	Av. Celso Garcia, 53	Belen- zinho	1921	1963	3,225	C	H
57	Edison Cinema	R. da Estação, 71 = R. Mauá, 191-193	Bom Retiro	1908	1914	200- 540	C	H
58	Eldorado	R./Av. São João, 15, 19, 21	Centro	1899	1914	325- 400	C	H
59	Eldorado Cinema; Casino Paulista; Eden- Theatre; Bijou Theatre	R. Quintino Bocaiuva, 39	Centro	1911	1917	272	C	H
60	Élite	R. Barão de Iguape	Liber- dade	1912	1913		C	F
61	Eros; Heros; Cine Theatro São Carlos	R. Piratininga, 95	Brás	1912	1960	850	C	H
62	Esperia	R. Conselheiro Ramalho, 132	Bexiga	1914	1952	1,052- 1,420	C	H
63	Excelsior	R. Florencio de Abreu, 29, 33	Centro	1901	1907		A	L

Table 1, continued

64	Excelsior Theatre	R. São Caetano, 226	Pari	1913	1914	1,020	C	F
65	Familiar Club	R. General Ozorio, 34	Campos Elíseos	1901	1901		A	L
66	Familiar, Cinema	R. General Jardim, 57	Vila Buarque	1911	1914		C	F
67	Familiar, Cinema; Theatro Variedades Familiar	R. Três Rios, 96	Bom Retiro	1912	1914		C	H
68	Federação Espanhol	R. do Gazometro, 49	Brás	1920	1931		A	L
69	Flor; Nordisk Cinema; Cinema Theatro	R. da Conceição, 5	Santa Ifigênia	1912	1912		C	F
70	Folies Bergères	Ladeira de Santa Ifigênia, 7	Santa Ifigênia	1914	1914		C	H
71	Gentil Theatre	R. São João, 135-137	Santa Ifigênia	1909	1909	130	A	H
72	Gil Vicente, Salão	Av. Rangel Pestana, 265, 305	Brás	1914	1927		A	L
73	Ginásio São Bento	Largo de São Bento	Centro	1912	1912		A	L
74	Giuseppe Garibaldi; Apollo	R. Carlos Petit, 2	Vila Mariana	1909	1913	150	A	H
75	Grêmio Dramático da Lapa		Lapa	1903	1903		A	L
76	Grêmio Dramático e Musical Luso-Brasileiro; Real Cinema; Bijou Bom Retiro	R. da Graça, 116, 132, 144	Bom Retiro	1907	1940		A	H
77	Grupo de Studi Sociali do Bom Retiro	R. dos Imigrantes, 195	Bom Retiro	1908	1909		A	L

Table 1, continued

78	Guarany, Salão	R. do Lavapés, 13	Liberdade	1908	1909		C	F
79	Guarany, Theatro	R. do Paraíso, 32	Paraíso	1904	1908		A	L
80	Guarany, Theatro	Largo do Cambucy, 21	Cambuci	1913	1929	625-850	C	F
81	High-Life; Cinetheatro Brasil; São Carlos	Largo do Arouche, 65, 63, 57-A, 26	Santa Cecília	1908	1924	1,036	C	H
82	Ideal Cinema	R. do Gazometro, 35-37	Brás	1910	1914		C	F
83	Ideal Cinema	R. Barão de Itapetininga, 44	Centro	1909	1909		C	F
84	Independencia	Largo do Cambucy	Cambuci	1913	1916	600-700	C	F
85	Instituto Histórico	R. Benjamin Constant	Centro	1909	1909		A	L
86	Internacional	R. dos Italianos, 70, 72	Bom Retiro	1912	1913		C	F
87	Internacional, Salão	Largo do Riachuelo, 56	Bexiga	1914	1920		A	L
88	Internacional, Salão, Theatro; Star	R. Sete	Lapa	1906	1911		A	H
89	Iris Theatre; Kinema	R. 15 de Novembro, 52	Centro	1907	1917	420	C	F
90	Isis Theatre; Gloria	R. do Gazometro, 47	Brás	1911	1970	750-1,360	C	H
91	Itália Fausta	R. Florencio de Abreu, 45	Centro	1909	1921		A	H
92	Ivonette Theatro	Av. Celso Garcia, 238	Belenzinho	1920	1920		A	L
93	Jardim da Acclimação	Jardim da Acclimação	Acclimação	1918	1920		G	L

Table 1, continued

94	João Minhoca	R. Barra Funda, 158	Barra Funda	1908	1908		C	L
95	Joaquim Elias	R. São José	Centro	1869	1869	500	A	L
96	Lapa Cinema-Theatro	R. Trindade, 17, 19, 25, 12	Lapa	1912	1917	1,200	C	H
97	Lega Lombarda, Salã da	Largo de São Paulo, 18-20	Liberdade	1902	1931		A	L
98	Liberdade Theatre	R. da Liberdade, 34, 38	Liberdade	1911	1913	520	C	F
99	Liceo Español	R. do Gazometro, 54	Brás	1903	1905		A	L
100	Liga de Resistencia			1902	1902		A	L
101	Liga Democratica	R. Florencio de Abreu	Centro	1901	1901		A	L
102	Lyra; Nordlyset	Largo do Paysandú, 20	Santa Ifigênia	1906	1920		A	H
103	Mafalda	Av. Rangel Pestana, 150	Brás	1917	1929	800-1265	C	F
104	Marconi	R. João Correa de Mello, 6	Bom Retiro	1913	1939	1,215-1,500	C	H
105	Maria José	R. Major José Bento, 136	Cambuci	1913	1914	510-642	C	F
106	Mignon Theatre	R. do Seminário, 10-12	Centro	1908	1909		C	H
107	Minerva, Theatro	Largo do Cambucy	Cambuci	1909	1909		A	L
108	Minerva, Theatro/Salão	Av. da Intendencia, 250	Belenzinho	1906	1908		A	H
109	Minerva; Guarany	R. da Consolação, 217	Conso-lação	1912	1919	500	C	F
110	Moderno, Theatro/ Palácio	R. Moóca, 419, 407	Moóca	1916	1966	527	C	H

Table 1, continued

111	Moulin Rouge; Theatro Avenida; Carlos Gomes; Variedades; Royal Theatre	R. São João, 161, 115	Santa Ifigênia	1906	1929	980- 1,100	C	H
112	Municipal, Theatro	R. Conselheiro Chrispiano	Centro	1911	2016		G	L
113	Nasi; Cambucy	R. dos Pescadores, 44	Cambuci	1901	1909		A	L
114	New York em São Paulo, Salão	R. 15 de Novembro, 58	Centro	1899	1900		C	H
115	Novo Seculo	Largo de São Bento, 10	Centro	1907	1907		C	L
116	Oberdan	R. Brigadeiro Machado, 5	Brás	1912	1922		A	L
117	Odeon; Éclair Palacio	R. Duque de Caixas, 46	Campos Elíseos	1912	1914	478	C	L
118	Olavo Bilac; Apollo	Av. Rangel Pestana, 227- A	Belen- zinho	1905	1907		C	H
119	Olympia, Theatro	Av. Rangel Pestana, 88- 94, 118-A, 120	Brás	1922	1929	2,154	C	H
120	Opera, Casa da; Theatro do Largo do Palacio; Theatro Publico; Theatro de São Paulo	Largo da Fundição	Centro	1795	1870	350	C	L
121	Oriente, Pavilhão, Cinema	R. Henrique Dias, 44	Brás	1911	1913	1,800	C	H
122	Osasco			1919	1919		C	F

Table 1, continued

123	Palace	Ladeira do Piques, 7-A	Centro	1908	1908		C	F
124	Palace Theatre; Palacio Theatro; Theatro Rink; Rink Theatre; Rink Avenida	Av. Brigadeiro Luiz Antonio, 69-A	Liberdade	1911	1924	1,725-2,155	C	H
125	Paraizo	R. Vergueiro, 362	Paraíso	1912	1913	285	C	F
126	Paraizo, Theatro	R. do Paraíso, 63, 69	Paraíso	1924	1945	1,116	C	F
127	Paris Cinema; Bernardino de Campos	R. Appa, 12	Santa Cecília	1913	1916	600	C	F
128	Paris Theatre	R. Direita, 29	Centro	1909	1910		C	F
129	Paris Theatre	R. Anhangabaú, 12-14	Centro	1908	1909		C	F
130	Pathé Palacio; Liberdade	R. Rodrigo Silva, 4-10	Centro	1913	1954	1,040	C	H
131	Paulicea Phantastica; Paris em São Paulo	R. do Rosário, 5	Centro	1900	1904	100	C	H
132	Paulista, Cinema; Salão Alhambra	R. Senador Feijó, 2	Centro	1899	1910		C	H
133	Pavilhão dos Campos Elyseos; Coliseu dos Campos Elyseos; Theatro Colyseu	Al. Barão do Rio Branco, 57	Campos Elíseos	1909	1924	2,000	C	H
134	Paz, Theatro da; Cine-Colombinho; Cine Rialto	R. João Theodoro, 47, 49	Pari	1914	1934	1,005	C	H

Table 1, continued

135	Penha	R. Campos Salles, 23, 25 = R. da Penha, 25	Penha	1908	1914		C	F
136	Penha, Cine-	R. da Penha, 74	Penha	1918	1922	240	C	F
137	Petit Cinema; Cinema Odeon	R. Marquez de Itú, 50-50A	Vila Buarque	1909	1910		C	H
138	Petit Santana, Theatro	R. Voluntarios da Patria, 459, 467, 469	Santana	1908	1917		C	H
139	Phenix, Theatro	R. Domingos de Moraes, 74	Vila Mariana	1923	1965		C	F
140	Piratininga, Salão Cinema; Eclair	R. Piratininga, 118	Brás	1910	1913		C	F
141	Polytheama	R. São João, 20	Centro	1892	1914	946-3,000	C	H
142	Popular, Cinema	Av. Rangel Pestana, 140, 168, 170	Brás	1908	1913		C	H
143	Popular, Theatro; Eden Theatre; Popolare	R. do Gazometro, 114, 112	Brás	1903	1916		A	H
144	Progridior; Paulicéa	R. 15 de Novembro, 38	Centro	1897	1917		C	H
145	Provisorio, Theatro; Ginasio Dramático; Theatro das Variedades Paulistanas; Minerva; Apollo	R. Boa Vista	Centro	1873	1899		C	L

Table 1, continued

146	R. Trindade, 27	R. Trindade, 27	Lapa	1912	1912		C	H
147	Recreio Artístico, Sociedade			1901	1902		A	L
148	Recreio Cinema, Pavilhão	R. Major Diogo, 39	Bexiga	1911	1916	870-930	C	F
149	Recreio da Barra Funda	R. Barra Funda	Barra Funda	1911	1912		C	H
150	Recreio, Pavilhão	R. Engenheiro Fox, 14, 16	Lapa	1912	1929	300	C	H
151	Roma	R. Barra Funda, 62 = R. Lopes de Oliveira, 21	Barra Funda	1913	1929	911	C	F
152	Rotisserie Sportsman, Salão de; Radium; Cinematographo Paulista	R. São Bento, 59-61	Centro	1900	1914		C	H
153	Royal Cinema	R. São Lázaro, 19	Luz	1909	1910		C	F
154	Royal Cinema	R. Lopes de Oliveira, 53	Barra Funda	1910	1910		C	F
155	Royal Theatre	R. Sebastião Pereira, 62-66	Santa Cecília	1913	1952	600-800	C	H
156	Salão Cinema; Central; Café Guarany	Av. Rangel Pestana, 122	Brás	1911	1914	600	C	H
157	Santana	R. Boa Vista, 20	Centro	1900	1912	1,186	C	H
158	Santana, Cinema	R. Voluntarios da Patria, 306, 316	Santana	1912	1929	300-369	C	H
159	Santana, Salão, Theatro	R. 24 de Maio, 43	Centro	1921	1958	1,378-1,600	C	H

Table 1, continued

160	Santos, José Pereira dos	R. dos Imigrantes, 120	Bom Retiro	1909	1909		C	F
161	São João	R. São João, 371	Santa Cecília	1910	1910		C	F
162	São João; Bijou Mooca; Internacional	R. Moóca, 492, 436, 430, 380	Moóca	1912	1916	142- 500	C	F
163	São José, Cinema	R. Nova São José, 22	Brás	1914	1917	605	C	F
164	São José, Theatro	R. Xavier de Toledo, 1	Centro	1909	1924	2,322- 3,000	C	H
165	São José, Theatro	Largo Municipal = Largo de São Gonçalo	Centro	1861	1898		G	L
166	São Paulo, Theatro	Largo de São Paulo = Pç. Almeida Júnior	Liber- dade	1914	1967	1,328- 2,500	C	H
167	São Paulo, Theatro, Pavilhão	Largo de São Paulo, 18	Liber- dade	1910	1912		C	H
168	São Pedro	R. Barra Fundada, 33	Barra Fundada	1917	2016	1,100- 1,580	C	H
169	Savoia; Campos Sales; Saquia	R. Conselheiro Ramalho, 205	Bexiga	1912	1916		C	F
170	Scala; Brasil Cinema; Universal Cinema; Cinema Municipal	R. Barão de Itapetininga, 10-14	Centro	1913	1917	1,088- 1,400	C	H
171	Skating Palace; Gaumont Palacio; Republica	Praça da República, 50	Vila Buarque	1912	1978	1,830- 2,000	C	H

Table 1, continued

172	Smart; Cinema- tographica Brasileira; Cinema Guarany	Largo do Arouche, 26, 31, 94	Vila Buarque	1909	1921	730	C	F
173	Sociedade Italiana	R. Moóca, 508	Alto da Moóca	1921	1921		A	L
174	Sociedade Recreativa e Dançante Pérola Internacional	R. Passos	Belen- zinho	1904	1910		A	L
175	Star Cinema	"near bondes stop"	Lapa	1911	1911		C	F
176	Steinway; Ibach; Carlos Gomes; Conservatorio	R. São João, 95, 85, 61	Centro	1897	1930		A	L
177	Te-Be; Guayanazes	R. Duque de Caxias, 83- 87	Campos Elíseos	1911	1913		C	H
178	Tiradentes	Av. Tiradentes, 110-112	Luz	1913	1915	200	C	H
179	Triangulo	R. 15 de Novembro, 34	Centro	1923	1929	500	C	F
180	Tripoli Cinema	Praça José Roberto Penteado, 37-37A	Bom Retiro	1912	1913		C	F
181	Turnerschaft, Salão	R. Bom Retiro, 52	Bom Retiro	1910	1910		A	L
182	União Lapa, Salão do	R. 12 de Outubro	Lapa	1920	1920		A	L
183	Victoria, Cinema			1917	1921	550- 600	C	F
184	Villa Marianna; Cinema Apollo; Odeon	R. Domingos de Moraes, 153, 155, 121	Vila Mariana	1912	1929		C	H

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