

Exploring Berta Alves de Sousa's vocal chamber works

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Abstract

Berta Alves de Sousa (1906–1997) remains a forgotten figure in the history of Portuguese music, despite her pivotal role as a composer of vocal chamber repertoire in the mid-20th century. This article explores her life and contributions, focusing on her art songs, which draw on Portuguese literary traditions while incorporating influences such as Germanic and French musical styles. Her works, mostly composed during the 1930s and 1940s, reflect both personal creativity and a connection with the nationalist cultural policies of the Estado Novo. The dispersal of her manuscripts across various collections hinders the study of her compositional chronology, but her artistic evolution—from late Romanticism to Impressionism and neo-modality—is evident. This article advocates for a renewed recognition of her critical contributions to Portuguese music.

Keywords

Berta Alves de Sousa, vocal chamber music, Portuguese art song, musical nationalism

Introduction

Although a central figure in 20th century Portuguese music, Berta Alves de Sousa (1906–1997) remains an under-recognised name in the country's musical history. Throughout her career, she maintained a unique balance between teaching and performing, working as a conductor, pianist, and composer. This interplay of multiple facets of musical practice makes her an exceptional case within the Portuguese cultural landscape of her time.

Raised in a family with strong artistic roots and a clear affinity with German culture, Berta Alves de Sousa had the opportunity to develop a musical vision that allowed her an early artistic experience. Her studies in Paris and Berlin, two cultural capitals of Central Europe, brought her into direct contact with innovative musical trends such as neo-modality and polytonality, characteristics that marked musical creation in the post-World War I period. Furthermore, her life and study experiences allowed her to establish close ties with other Portuguese composers

and musicians, such as Luís Costa (1879–1960), Croner de Vasconcelos (1910–1974), Luís de Freitas Branco (1890–1955), Frederico de Freitas (1902–1980), and Lopes-Graça (1906–1994), prominent figures in 20th century Portuguese music.

This study adopts a musicological approach that integrates documentary analysis and musical historiography. The research is grounded in primary source analysis, with particular emphasis on manuscripts and documentation related to the composer, as well as on musicolog-

ical and historical literature concerning women's participation in Portuguese music in the 20th century. Given the scarcity of in-depth studies on Berta Alves de Sousa, this investigation follows a compensatory methodological strategy (Citron, 1994), aiming to recover and reassess her role in the Portuguese musical context. This perspective is aligned with the first of three approaches outlined by Ellen Koskoff (2000), who identifies key themes addressed by feminist research, namely: i) mitigating the invisibility of women through the analysis of their contributions; ii) examining gender issues within the context of cultural dynamics; iii) critically exploring the interactions between social and musical structures from a postmodern theoretical perspective.

Her vocal chamber repertoire is the primary focus of this article. Compared to other Portuguese composers of the same period, such as Frederico de Freitas, Cláudio Carneiro (1895-1963), or Croner de Vasconcelos, Berta Alves de Sousa's output includes significantly more works in this musical format, making her vocal chamber music one of the most distinctive aspects of her work. Although she began her musical training as a pianist—from the age of 11—and participated in various chamber ensembles, the number of works for or including piano is comparatively smaller, further highlighting the significance of her vocal chamber repertoire.

The chamber song, due to its intimacy and personal character, became a privileged platform for the development, in Portugal, of an amateur artistic practice in musical salons promoted by women connected to affluent families, from the late 19th century. The Countess of Proença-a-Velha (1864–1944) was a paradigmatic example: “the first Lisbon woman amateur who managed to cross the boundaries of her own home, promoting external events before a larger audience that admitted journalists as well” (Cascudo, 2017, p. 209), but Ema Câmara Reis (1897-1968) can also be identified within this context. In addition to the concerts she organised, she published five volumes, entitled *Divulgação Musical*¹ (Musical Dissemination), in which she documented in detail “all the programmes of the recitals of which she was the very meticulous organiser, the respective

reviews, and the programmes of the lectures which, as a rule, precede the concerts and serve, so to speak, as a valuable guide for the listeners” (Sampaio, 1935). These activities, while presented in private spaces, were attended by a significant number of persons associated with the promoters, and sometimes even mentioned in the press (Cascudo, 2017, p. 196) and were thus embedded in contexts of sociability, a characteristic socially sanctioned during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century (Simmel, 1949; Sirinelli, 2003; Chimènes, 2004). These contexts, especially in concert societies, played a fundamental role in the circulation and promotion of artists and repertoires, functioning as relevant spaces for musical interaction in Portugal during the first half of the 20th century (Deniz Silva, 2015). Moreover, several women used these contexts for the dissemination of their musical compositions: the Countess of Proença-a-Velha, for instance, composed chamber songs, which were presented in the concerts that she organized, and published three volumes of *Melodias Portuguezas*, with more than 60 songs. Thus, she can be considered a prominent figure “in the construction of what could be called a Portuguese national music” (Cascudo, 2017, p. 197). Similarly, other figures such as Laura Wake Marques² also excelled in the field of chamber song composition, publishing four volumes of songs with poetry by António Lopes Vieira (Pinto (Saccavém), 1930, pp. 83-89).

A few publications that address the role of women in Portuguese musical life, such as those by Cascudo (2006, 2017), Marinho and Deniz Silva (2019), Lopes Braga (2013), Artiaga et al. (2017a), and Artiaga (2017b), highlight the importance of women in society and culture in the first half of the 20th century, while pointing out the lack of studies on women in Portuguese music. In addition to the Countess of Proença-a-Velha and Laura Wake Marques, these publications address other women of high social standing who were active as performers, teachers, composers, concert organisers, and musicologists (similar activities to those of Berta Alves de Sousa), particularly in the context of vocal and piano performance and composition.

Although most of these women did not register as composers or

formalise their professional practice, several of them maintained relevant activities as composers, musicologists and/or performers, such as Júlia Oceana Pereira,³ Francine Benoît,⁴ Elizabeth Cintra,⁵ the Countess of Almeida Araújo,⁶ Sarah Motta Vieira Marques,⁷ Maria Clementina Pires de Lima,⁸ Maria Antonieta de Lima Cruz,⁹ and Elisa de Sousa Pedroso.¹⁰ In some cases, such as that of Laura Wake Marques, composition served as an extension of their practice as performers.

Berta Alves de Sousa, a potential inheritor of these legacies, emerges as one of the last composers to consistently produce an extensive vocal chamber repertoire, spanning the Estado Novo period and continuing into the 1980s.

Exploring vocal chamber works and their socio-political and cultural context

This article examines Berta Alves de Sousa's vocal chamber repertoire as the central element of her artistic output, highlighting its dual aesthetic and sociocultural framing. It explores how her compositions engage with nationalist and traditional themes while incorporating modernist influences from a broader European context. The analysis is grounded in concepts from historical and aesthetic musical analysis, considering her relationship with both nationalist and modernist currents, as well as the political and social context in which she worked. Furthermore, the study situates her work within the wider framework of women's musical practices in Portugal, drawing on recent research that addresses the historical invisibility of women composers and the structural barriers imposed by the patriarchal musical culture of the twentieth century.

Cultural and stylistic influences

The composer demonstrated a profound emotional and intellectual connection to artistic creation. This creative impulse, which extended to music, painting, and poetry, resonated in her approach to the relationship between words and music. In a lecture given at the Porto Conservatoire of Music in 1969, she mentioned the impact that the dramatic texts of Schiller and Shakespeare, as well as opera, had had on her young imagination, leading her,

as a teenager, to conceive an opera inspired by Schiller's *Turandot*, adapted according to her own understanding and using techniques influenced by Wagner.

At the age of 13 to 14, I became fascinated about the dramatic works of Schiller and Shakespeare, which I was then reading regularly, either alone or for my mother. At that time, I attended the opera, and these two strong rhythms, of the stage, created in me a great desire to perform in the same way; so much so that, certainly impressed, my imagination leapt over all obstacles, immediately wanting to make my presence known with an "opera," whose plot I had chosen from Schiller's "*Turandot*" for its strange oriental flavour. I adapted the story in my own way, with the most contrasting scenes, and had already chosen some themes in the style of Wagner's "*leitmotiv*" and was preparing myself for this immense task.¹¹

However, the composer emphasised her search for a personal style, avoiding the study of established scores in order to develop her "musical voice" independently.

Context and characteristics

The vocal chamber repertoire occupies a central position in Berta Alves de Sousa's output, both in terms of quantity and diversity, and stands out from other genres addressed by the composer, as mentioned above. In the specific case of Berta Alves de Sousa, her passion for literature seems to have played a significant role in her work. Despite her initial musical training being focused on the piano, and her involvement in chamber ensembles, such as the duo with her sister Leonor, a violinist, or their trio with Rui Lacerda, a cellist, her output for piano or for instrumental ensembles featuring this instrument is noticeably more

the explorer Vasco da Gama (1469-1524) and the poet Luís de Camões (c. 1524-1580), and addresses representations of national customs and traditions, as well as epic and exotic elements. Among the poets most frequently chosen by the composer are Luís de Camões, Sá de Miranda (1481-1558),¹⁵ Teixeira de Pascoais (1877-1952), António Nobre (1867-1900), Florbela Espanca (1894-1930), Cândido Guerreiro (1871-1953), and António Feijó (1859-1917). In addition to these Portuguese authors, Berta Alves de Sousa also worked with texts by Portuguese-language writers such as Guilherme Almeida (1890-1969) and José de Abreu Albano (1882-1923), as well as non-Portuguese authors, including Michelangelo (1475-1564), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), and Heinrich Heine (1797-1856). Interestingly, the poems for *Silêncio* and *Dístico*, works for women's choir, are believed to have been written by the composer herself.

Table 1: Works by Berta Alves de Sousa awarded in competitions

Work	Date/Competition	Notes
No tormento da saudade ²²	Honourable Mention in the 1940 Floral Games	Voice and orchestra
Saudade, alegre tormento ²³	Honourable Mention in the 1941 Floral Games	Voice and orchestra
Joguei às cartas contigo ²⁴	Honourable Mention in the 1943 Floral Games	Voice and piano; poem by an unidentified author
Ó virgens que passais ao sol poente ²⁵	Honourable Mention by the Círculo de Cultura Musical in 1944	Voice and orchestra; poem by António Nobre; the score remains missing and no performance is currently known
Canção n.º 1 para soprano ²⁶	Honourable Mention by the Círculo de Cultura Musical in 1944	The original of this song was awarded in the Jogos Florais in 1942

Her formative path was also shaped by prominent figures such as Luís Costa, Cláudio Carneiro, and Lucien Lambert, with whom she studied piano, orchestration, and counterpoint and fugue, respectively. Regarding compositional influences, Berta Alves de Sousa herself acknowledged the impact of French art: "French art [left] traces in my feelings [...] and so much so that certain Debussy-like¹² subtleties were later to be found in some of my works."

limited. Thus, the choice of the vocal chamber format not only highlights an affinity with words but also reinforces the importance of this genre in her work.

There is a marked predominance of texts by Portuguese authors in her vocal chamber works, often linked to the valorisation of historical events, emblematic figures, and cultural traditions.¹³ This repertoire focuses on themes such as the "Discoveries",¹⁴

Berta Alves de Sousa's cosmopolitan training and her interest in literature influenced her poetic selection, which reflects a preference for themes such as romantic suffering, troubadour lyricism, bucolicism, and nature, at times placid and contemplative, at other times exuberant, tragic, or exotic. Berta Alves de Sousa's works were presented in different contexts in Portugal, especially in Porto, for example, in the recital series *A Música*

do Canto Através dos Tempos, created in 1939 by Ofélia Diogo Costa,¹⁶ Maria Adelaide Freitas Gonçalves,¹⁷ and Joaquim Freitas Gonçalves.¹⁸ The aim of this cycle was to provide Porto audiences with an opportunity to listen to romantic and contemporary art song, with Berta Alves de Sousa's songs being performed alongside works by renowned composers such as Mussorgsky, Manuel de Falla, Cláudio Carneiro, Francisco de Lacerda, and Croner de Vasconcelos.

Furthermore, Berta Alves de Sousa participated in competitions and events promoted by state institutions, which suggests that she

may have sought the validation of her work within the context of the Estado Novo regime. The composer received Honourable Mentions in several competitions promoted by the Emissora Nacional¹⁹ and the Círculo de Cultura Musical de Lisboa²⁰, such as the "Jogos Florais de Primavera".²¹

Some of these events contributed to the Estado Novo's cultural policy, based on the "Política do Espírito"²⁷ (Policy of the Spirit), idealised by António Ferro, and may have aimed to promote a repertoire that aligned with nationalist values and the exaltation of Portuguese identity (Ramos do Ó, 1999). For women composers like Berta Alves de Sousa, this meant the need to adapt to an artistic environment with dominant norms and expectations, both in terms of public recognition and within the institutions that regulated the cultural life of the time.

Two main formats can be identified in Berta Alves de Sousa's art song output: individual songs and song cycles. Analysing specific examples of her works will help to better understand the particularities and contributions of each approach to her overall musical creation.

The songs display a strong affinity with the stylistic trends prevalent in her time, reflecting the influences of neo-modalism and neo-folklorism, as well as the exploration of nationalist, folkloric, and historical themes.

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These stylistic elements are recurrent in various works of the period, revealing a broader trend among composers to incorporate traditional and national influences into their compositions. This phenomenon is also noticeable in the work of her contemporaries, such as Fernando Lopes-Graça, who addressed the division between art songs and those inspired by or derived from

traditional music (Casado, 2010). Like her peers, Berta Alves de Sousa is part of this context of dialogue between the scholarly and tradition, although her specific approach and the way she uses folk and historical themes present variations

and distinctive characteristics.

Challenges in archival research

Research into Berta Alves de Sousa's work faces several challenges, mainly due to the dispersal of her manuscripts across different collections, including the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library—where her archive is located—, the Catholic University of Portugal Library, and private archives. This dispersal has hindered the complete compilation and organisation of her repertoire, requiring a meticulous research process to identify and gather materials scattered in various locations.

Three main types of documentation were analysed: autographs, handwritten copies, and photocopies of autographs or handwritten copies. The most significant collection is found at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library, which contains, in addition to autographs and handwritten copies of her works, newspaper cuttings, letters, photographs, and other scores from her personal library. Another notable archive is the Maestro Manuel Ivo Cruz Collection, located at the Catholic University of Portugal Library in Porto, which includes autographed scores and handwritten copies. Additionally, the family collection of the baritone José de Oliveira Lopes contains both handwritten copies and autographs, some with dedications. Other archives, such as those of the pianist and professor Jaime Mota,

the collector João Pedro Mendes dos Santos, and the conductor and professor Janete Ruiz, contain material related to Berta Alves de Sousa's work, including photocopies of autograph manuscripts and handwritten copies, and are essential for locating works that, for various reasons, are no longer found in the Porto Conservatoire of Music's holdings.

In 1997, the year of the composer's death, her work was still relatively unknown and underdisseminated. From the chamber song repertoire, only three harmonised traditional songs had been published²⁸—*Boa noite, ó meu Patrão!*, *Por o mar abaixo*, and *O vinho, licor famoso!* (Lima & Lima, 1939)—in addition to an *Avé-Maria* for a cappella choir (Sousa, 1948) and the song *Vós teus mi corazón* (Sousa, 1949).²⁹

Dating the composition of various works also proved to be a significant challenge in this study. When comparing dates given in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue (1980) with dates in other materials, such as newspaper articles or concert programmes, it became evident that the dates did not necessarily correspond to the year of composition. Moreover, Berta Alves de Sousa often offered manuscripts of her works to friends or potential performers and, in the case of handwritten copies, the dates indicated on the scores often corresponded not to the composition but to the date of the gift or copy.

Despite the challenges encountered, the documentary analysis revealed a particular concentration of works in the 1930s and 1940s, with production extending into the following decades.

Stylistic evolution

Throughout her career, Berta Alves de Sousa showed a remarkable stylistic evolution, reflecting a transition from late Romanticism to more modern musical styles such as neo-modalism, polytonality, and Impressionism. This stylistic path not only marks her compositional output but also positions her music within a broader cultural movement, linked to musical nationalism and the artistic transformations that characterised the early 20th century.

Harmonised melodies

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were a time of intense cultural and social change, with the movement for the appreciation of cultural roots gaining considerable momentum. As Cascudo (2000) observes, this movement in Portugal, which aimed to promote popular traditions and folklore, encompassed various artistic spheres, including music. Several intellectual groups sought to promote the “Portugueseization of

culture” (Castelo-Branco & Branco, 2003, p. 24), imbuing national cultural expression with a new “social functionality” (Cascudo, 2000, p. 181). This process, which involved literature, visual arts, and music, played a crucial role in affirming national identity, especially in the context of the cultural policies of the Estado Novo regime, by advocating the preservation of national identity as a pillar of social cohesion and the promotion of a culture aligned with its ideology (Marinho, 2010). In this

context, the National Propaganda Secretariat, created in 1933, played a decisive role in valorising traditional Portuguese culture, supporting folk music, and promoting festivals and traditional music and dance groups.

The songs listed in Table 2 can be associated with this context, as described below.

Table2: List of harmonised melodies by Berta Alves de Sousa

Poem Title	Poem Author	Date of Composition	Observations
Boa noite, ó meu patrão!	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	1937	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1937
Ó chulita	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	Possibly 1949	
Ó do zás, trás, trás!	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	Possibly 1938	Mentioned in BAS archive; performed in 1949; no specific date in d'Ávila's catalogue
Ó vinho, licor famoso!	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	1937	
Pingó	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	Possibly 1938	Possibly performed in 1938; no specific date in d'Ávila's catalogue
Por o mar abaixo	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	1946	
Rosa de Alexandria	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)	Possibly 1938	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1937
Se fores ao rio lavar	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)		Possibly performed in 1938; no specific date in d'Ávila's catalogue
	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)		Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1937
	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)		Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1946
	Traditional (collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima)		Possibly performed in 1938; no specific date in d'Ávila's catalogue

In the field of music, repertoire for voice and piano based on popular or traditional melodies was particularly promoted by the regime, with the Department of Musical Studies developing initiatives such as the publication of the *Cancioneiro Popular Português*, a collection of folk songs harmonised by contemporary composers (Moreira, 2012). Throughout her career, Berta Alves de Sousa produced several vocal works inspired by Portuguese popular tradition, particularly nine songs based on collections by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima.³⁰ Three of these songs were published in *O Vinho Verde na Cantiga Popular*³¹ (1939), a book by Maria Clementina and Fernando Pires de Lima.

Berta Alves de Sousa's songs present a fusion of traditional elements with the sophistication of Western art music, reflecting the evolution of her style. Lyrical melodies and precise text declamation, with elaborate piano accompaniment, are notable features. This contrast between traditional simplicity and harmonic complexity is evident in songs such as *Rosa de Alexandria* and *Dobadoira*, through the presence of chromaticism and rhythmic accents.

Furthermore, her vocal repertoire, especially her chamber songs, reveals meticulous attention to the creation of melodic lines and the

treatment of musical words, reflecting influences of Impressionism, with a search for subtler and more evocative sonorities, and polytonality, by exploring bolder chords and harmonies.

Art song

Portuguese art song, unlike in countries such as Germany and France, was a late bloomer, marked by the lack of a deeply rooted tradition. Twentieth-century Portuguese composers faced the challenge of creating an art song style in Portuguese without a consolidated framework, which led to various compositional approaches, as exemplified by Berta Alves de Sousa's art song writing

Table 3: List of art songs by Berta Alves de Sousa

Poem Title	Poem Author	Date of Composition	Observations
A fonte dos amores	Luís de Camões	1965	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1965
Amámo-nos	—	1967	Copy dated 1967; not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
A noite	Michelangelo	1946	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1946
Ave Maria	—	(c. 1920)	Mentioned by composer in manuscript dated 10 July 1969
Canção marinha	Teixeira de Pascoaes	1949	Listed in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1949
Chanson triste	—	1933	Premiered 1 May 1933; not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
De amor escrevo	Luís de Camões	1951	Listed in d'Ávila's catalogue as dating from 1951
Desejos juvenis	Unknown	—	Not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
Despertar es morir	Gustavo Adolfo Becker	—	Not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
Die Spröde	Goethe	1933	Premiered 27 May 1933; not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
Falo de ti	Florabela Espanca	1982	Not listed in d'Ávila's catalogue
Habanera	Augusto Gil	1967	Version for voice dated 1967, per composer's annotation

As reflected in this repertoire, these songs are characterised by rhythmic simplicity and a stable metre—often homorhythmic—resulting in homogeneous rhythms of crotchets and quavers, with no significant metric variation. This approach stands in contrast to the use of complex rhythmic figures by contemporary composers such as Fernando Lopes-Graça.

Berta Alves de Sousa's writing, while seemingly simpler, does not lack expressiveness. On the contrary, her rhythmic simplicity invites the performer to explore vocal nuances and dynamics, transferring to them the responsibility of imparting a lively and expressive interpretation to the melody. Her choice of stable metre and clear melodic structure reflects her connection to the German Lied, where precise articulation of the text is crucial to interpretation. Her songs require rigorous diction and clear enunciation, especially due to the way the melody fits the natural rhythm of the words. The vocal tessitura favours middle or low voices, allowing for a more intimate and personal interpretation.

The intrinsic relationship between the poetic text and the melody is central to the work of Berta Alves de Sousa, with each song requiring a specific sound tailored to

the meaning of the text and the melodic line. The piano accompaniment plays a key role, reinforcing the emotional impact of the song and providing a solid foundation for vocal expression.

In this sense, her music goes beyond a mere adaptation of popular or traditional song; it seeks emotional and interpretative depth.

Her output, which began with *Ave Maria* (composed in the 1920s), exemplifies this stylistic transition. Although still influenced by late Romanticism, particularly Schubert,³² this piece anticipates the approach that Berta Alves de Sousa would develop in the 1930s, when she began to consolidate her identity in the field of art song. During this decade, her works began to be performed regularly in concerts promoted by institutions such as the Porto Conservatoire of Music, Orpheon Portuense, and the Pró-Arte association, highlighting the growing recognition of her work in the Portuguese music scene. The songs she composed, always with a strong connection to the text, and her ability to explore new sonorities

and harmonies reflect the development of a musical identity that remained faithful to earlier examples of Portuguese art song.

“Her choice of stable metre and clear melodic structure reflects her connection to the German Lied, where precise articulation of the text is crucial to interpretation”

From the 1940s onwards, there was a significant increase in references to songs composed by Berta Alves de Sousa, reflecting the growing dissemination and appreciation of her work. In addition to the

songs included in the competitions promoted by Emissora Nacional and the Círculo de Cultura Musical de Lisboa, it is possible to identify fundamental characteristics in her compositions that define her unique style. These include the predominance of ternary and durckkomponiert forms, syllabic vocal writing, the expressiveness of text declamation, and pianistic writing that often recreates or suggests the atmosphere contained in the poem.

Canção n.º 1 Perguntas: que significa saudade, although adopting the melodic style of earlier works and drawing on popularly inspired verses, reveals an evolution in the pianistic treatment. The piano takes on an

expressive role in the central section, accompanying the excitement and rapture suggested by the voice. This work also introduces a neo-modal language, which would be recurrent in her subsequent compositions, in line with the composer's quest for new sonorities and more complex harmonic structures.

The exploration of polyrhythms and polymetre began to gain prominence, especially in the song *Singra o meu barco*,³³ based on a poem by

Heinrich Heine. Here, the chords in the lower register of the piano anticipate an expressive rhythmic treatment, a characteristic that would extend to other works, such as *Há no meu peito uma porta*,³⁴ based on a poem by José de Abreu Albano. This type of instrumental virtuosity reaches a high level of complexity in *Canção Marinha*,³⁵ based on a poem by Teixeira de Pascoais, in which the arpeggios, tremolos, and scales illustrate the outbreak of a storm at sea and the destruction of

the boat and its crew. The first incursions into polytonality appear in *Mormaço*³⁶ (a text erroneously attributed to Manuel Bandeira in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, but written by Guilherme Almeida), and are extended in works such as *A Fonte dos Amores*³⁷ and *Sete anos de pastor*,³⁸ both based on poems by Luís de Camões, and *Amámo-nos*,³⁹ based on a poem by António Feijó. True to her stylistic eclecticism, the composer also explores neo-modalism

Table 4: Promontório Sacro songs.

Song Title	Observations
Incêndio	Included in both CMP (as BAS 17) and OL sources; listed independently in Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue.
Oremus	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Subvenite, Sancti Dei	Included only in OL manuscript.
O último sono (Vae victis)	Included only in OL manuscript; dated 1966.
Farol eterno	Included only in OL manuscript.
Terra sagrada	Included only in CMP copy.
Catedrais	Included in both CMP and OL; in OL titled as part of Promontório de Sagres.
De bordo	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Al-Hambras	Included in both CMP and OL sources; dated 1966.
Ressurreição	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
O Altitude	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Oh mar imenso...	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Sol posto	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Batalha do Ocidente	Included only in CMP copy.
Despojos	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Largada	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Gil Eannes	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Meu Portugal	Included in both CMP and OL sources.
Ardentia	Included only in CMP copy.
Mais além	Included only in CMP copy.
Rosas de Santa Maria (Trova)	Included only in CMP copy.
	Included in both CMP and OL sources.

“The cycle presents a high degree of contrast between the pieces, with initial indications that describe character more than tempo. Elements such as tremolos, arpeggios, and scales are reused throughout the pieces, creating a recurring sonic identity.”

combined with chromaticism in *Falo de Ti*,⁴⁰ her last identified song, which remained unknown until the late 1990s.⁴¹

The Cycle *Promontório Sacro* as an example of stylistic maturity

The *Promontório Sacro* cycle of 21 songs (Table 4) stands as one of Berta Alves de Sousa's most ambitious and significant works. Most likely composed between 1965 and 1966, the cycle uses epic poetry by Cândido Guerreiro and is partially preserved in the composer's estate (BAS 30) at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library. However, it was only possible to complete and analyse the work through additional documents from the private collection of the family of José de Oliveira Lopes, the likely dedicatee⁴² of the cycle, and from Janete Ruiz's personal archive.⁴³

The tessitura of the pieces suggests a composition for a low male voice. Although the cycle is extensive and varied, it shares general characteristics with other works by the composer. Notably dramatic, it includes a significant innovation in the song *Oremus*, in which a declaimed introduction precedes the sung melody, differing from the habitual use of recitative in earlier works, such as *Fonte dos Amores* (“as spoken”) or *O Último Sono*. The songs show a remarkable richness of description, with precise indications of the desired atmosphere, ranging from “feverish agitation” to “gloomy,” “poetically,” “with majesty,” among others. The pianistic writing reinforces the poetic text and the intended atmosphere, revealing meticulous detail in the dynamics and recurring

motifs, which connect the different songs within a stylistic unity.

Although the full interpretation of the cycle remains uncertain, there are registers of performances of the first song, *Incêndio*, by José de Oliveira Lopes.

Formal and stylistic analysis

The analysis of the work can be summarised in three main dimensions: musical materials (melodic and rhythmic), textures, and dynamics.

The cycle presents a high degree of contrast between the pieces, with initial indications that describe character more than tempo. Elements such as tremolos, arpeggios, and scales are reused throughout the pieces, creating a recurring sonic identity. Certain motifs are transformed or reappear in different pieces, such as the tremolo with a bass in the sextuplets of *Incêndio*, which resurfaces in *Oremus* and *O Último Sono*, albeit adapted. This motif also reappears in *Farol Eterno* and *Al-Hambras*, retaining its chromatic essence, although without the tremolo. Some songs follow a ternary structure, with distinct materials featured in the central section.

Textural variety is one of the defining characteristics of the cycle, oscillating between pieces with more melodic texture and undulating accompaniments, and others with vertical blocks of homophonic chords. The song *Catedrais* stands out for its exploration of echo, using the pedal and contrasting registers, to evoke

the majesty of a sacred space. This piece, with its spaced chords and contemplative atmosphere, can be compared to the ambience of *La cathédrale engloutie* by Debussy. The undulating texture is characteristic of songs that evoke the sea, in contrast to the predominantly homophonic texture found in other pieces.

The work demonstrates meticulous care in the dynamic markings, adjusting them differently between the piano and the voice. The dynamic range is impressive, varying from pianissimo (ppp) to fortissimo (fff), as exemplified in *De Bordo*. This attention to detail allows for the creation of specific environments, even in more delicate passages, such as in *O Último Sono*, where various levels of piano are indicated.

Canções de Berlim:

44 Context and characteristics

The *Canções de Berlim* cycle of nine songs (Table 5) reflects the influences of Berta Alves de Sousa's cosmopolitan experiences in Berlin. These songs, in manuscript versions and photocopies of autograph manuscripts, are part of the composer's collection at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library (CMP, no. BAS 12), with no exact date of composition. The cycle was presented on 28 June 1976 at the Porto Conservatoire of Music, during a concert in honour of the composer, where she shared her impressions of the “Informative Seminar” held in Berlin in November



Table 5: Canções de Berlim45 - Die Wlener in Berlin list of songs

Song Title	Date/Competition	Observations
Das macht die Berliner Luft, luft, luft	Unknown	Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
Ich liebe dich so tief	Unknown	
Wir sind Berliner Bummler	Unknown	Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
Oh du mein Waldeman	Unknown	
Es war einmal ein Junge kleen	Unknown	Included in Version 1 and Version 2 (marked as 7th); performed in 1976 concert.
In Rixdorf ist Musike	Unknown	
In Berlin, Sagt'er	Karl Hotei	Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
Solang noch untern Linden	Unknown	Included in both versions; Version 2 dated 1799, inspired by O Tannenbaum; performed in 1976.
Ick fuhr mal mit meine Kaline	Unknown	
Berliner Luft is jünstig (Sehn Se, das ist Berlin)	Günther Neumann	Included in both versions; Version 2 dated 1870, notes: "Berlin heute Neuröln".
Wen die Jensen springen über Berjesjipfel	Unknown	Included in both versions; indicated as "extra" in Version 1; Version 2 dated 1824.
Det de Spree musikal'sch is	Unknown	Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
		Included in Version 1; marked as part of Berlinisches Liederbuch; performed in 1976 concert.
		Included in Version 1; performed in 1976 concert.
		Included only in Version 2.
		Only appears in the 1976 concert programme.

The texts of these songs include poems by authors such as Günther Neumann (1913-1972) and Karl von Holtei (1798-1880), as well as proverbs and traditional melodies. This collection of songs incorporates arrangements from Berlin's folk song repertoire, covering a historical period from the end of the 19th century to the early days of the Nazi regime, capturing the essence of a pre-20th century Berlin, between the post-Bismarck era and the rise of Hitler.

The repertoire consists of popular songs, operetta pieces and examples of Kabarett, a performative genre typical of the German tradition. The German Kabarett, especially in Berlin, stood out as a space for social and political criticism. Through a combination of monologues and music, the artists tackled contemporary issues with biting humour and satire, always with a marked dimension of political and social criticism (Jelavich, 1996).

Collectively, these songs encapsulate Berlin's cultural essence, social dynamics and the city's historical

evolution from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. Das Macht die Berliner Luft, Luft, Luft synthesises Berlin's creative spirit, becoming a cultural symbol. Similarly, In Rixdorf ist Musike (c. 1870) portrays the vibrant and bohemian lifestyle of the Rixdorf district, mixing linguistic influences and celebrating the city's dialect. Meanwhile, songs such as Walter Kollo's Solang noch untern Linden and Berliner Luft is jünstig / Sehn Se, das ist Berlin reflect the resilience and humour intrinsic to Berlin's identity, often underlining its atmosphere and collective pride.

Other songs, such as Wir sind Berliner Bummel (1930s) and Oh du mein Waldemar (First World War era), emphasise the socio-economic circumstances of the time. Songs such as Es war einmal ein Junge kleen and In Berlin, Sagt'er (1824), part of Die Wiener in Berlin, show how folk melodies and theatrical performances were used to explore themes ranging from personal tragedy to cultural nationalism. These works illustrate the depth and diversity of Berlin's musical legacy,

reflecting and celebrating its enduring character.

Berta Alves de Sousa's choice to work with the Berlin repertoire, and in particular the folk songs to which she was introduced during the Informative Seminar in Berlin, reflects a deep and thoughtful approach to the material, demonstrating a clear intention to transform and integrate it into her own musical language. The composer sought to understand this repertoire and give it new life, reflecting her desire to explore and reinterpret the material with a critical and creative perspective.

Songs for children

In addition to the cycles mentioned above, a small group of songs have titles that suggest a target audience of children and whose simple writing points to their use as educational material (Table 6). The manuscripts of A cauda do gato, O embalo da boneca, and O passarinho⁴⁶ (the latter two with lyrics by Ofélia Diogo Costa⁴⁷) are kept in the private archive of Jaime Mota.

Song Title

Poem Author

Observations

Embalo para a boneca

Ofélia Diogo Costa

Once part of the CMP collection (Ruiz, 2004), now missing; copy held by Jaime Mota. Photocopy of autograph manuscript.

A cauda do gato

Ofélia Diogo Costa

Held in the private archive of Jaime Mota. Photocopy of autograph manuscript. Labelled on the cover as "(canção infantil)".

O passarinho

Unknown (possibly Ofélia Diogo Costa)

Previously part of the CMP collection (Ruiz, 2004), now missing; copy in Jaime Mota's archive. Photocopy of autograph manuscript dated January 1953.

Final considerations

Despite the richness of Berta Alves de Sousa's compositional corpus and her undeniable significance for music in Portugal, her work continues to receive disproportionately limited attention. This lack of recognition can be attributed to various factors, including a broader systemic marginalisation of women in music that has persisted since the late nineteenth century. Women were historically encouraged to engage with music as a domestic or formative activity, particularly within the middle and upper classes, where musical training was regarded as a marker of social refinement rather than as a pathway to a professional vocation (Lessa, 2022). Even those who aspired to professional careers found their opportunities largely confined to teaching, with few managing to establish themselves in composition or high-level performance. This divide between amateurism and professionalism was further entrenched under the Estado Novo, reinforcing the perception of female composers as exceptional figures rather than integral contributors to the national musical landscape.

Broader societal expectations, particularly surrounding marriage and domestic responsibilities, often curtailed women's professional engagement with music. Even highly trained female musicians faced considerable pressure to abandon their careers upon marriage, thereby perpetuating the notion that their artistic contributions were secondary or temporary. Although Berta Alves de Sousa remained active throughout her life, her trajectory reflects the persistent challenges that female composers encountered in securing lasting institutional recognition. In contrast to most of her female contemporaries, whose musical education was predominantly domestic, Alves de Sousa benefitted from formal academic training. Her oeuvre encompasses a wide range of genres, styles, and techniques, distinguishing her as a particularly versatile and innovative figure within the Portuguese musical landscape. When compared with earlier composers such as Maria Antonieta de Lima Cruz and Laura Wake Marques,

notable similarities emerge in the use of modal⁴⁸ and polytonal harmonic languages, complex pianistic textures, and vocal writing that privileges poetic declamation. However, whereas many of her contemporaries favoured a simpler idiom often associated with salon music⁴⁹, Alves de Sousa's stylistic evolution reflects a progression from late Romanticism to various twentieth-century currents, including Impressionism, polytonality, and neo-modalism. Her later song cycles, *Promontório Sacro* and *Canções de Berlim*, exemplify this trajectory through their innovative harmonic language and engagement with modern themes.

Although her vocal chamber works were acknowledged within certain artistic circles, Berta Alves de Sousa's position as a female composer in mid-twentieth-century Portugal remained constrained by structural and institutional limitations.

The rigid cultural policies of the Estado Novo regime, coupled with deeply entrenched gender norms, relegated women's artistic contributions to the periphery, shaping not only the conditions of musical production but also the parameters of reception. While her compositions occasionally aligned with the nationalist ideals promoted by the regime—particularly through her engagement with historical and literary themes drawn from canonical Portuguese poets such as Camões and Teixeira de Pascoais—this alignment did not shield her from systemic barriers to recognition. The *Política do Espírito*, a key ideological mechanism of the Estado Novo, reinforced such dynamics by favouring compositions aligned with nationalist and folkloric aesthetics (Ramos do Ó, 1999). For women, this policy offered a paradoxical space: it provided limited visibility within official programmes while simultaneously restricting the scope for autonomous artistic expression.

The reception of women composers during this period was shaped by gendered critical discourses that evaluated their work through reductive stereotypes. Whereas male composers were assessed in terms of technical mastery and innovation, women were often praised—or

dismissed—for emotional expressiveness and so-called "feminine sensitivity" (Lopes Braga, 2013). This contributed to a cultural hierarchy in which female composers were expected to produce more intimate, lyrical, or small-scale forms, such as chamber songs, while genres such as symphony and opera remained largely inaccessible (Lessa, 2022). Within this framework, Berta Alves de Sousa's preference for vocal chamber music and solo piano repertoire cannot be disentangled from the prevailing norms that deemed such forms suitable for female study. Even within these more "acceptable" genres, however, her work was frequently interpreted as reinforcing nationalist values rather than being recognised as autonomous artistic statements.

Her compositions were praised in certain contexts, but their circulation remained largely confined to limited social networks, hindering integration into the canon of Portuguese art music. A notable example is the inclusion of some of her songs in the 1939 recital series *A Música do Canto Através dos Tempos*, organised by Ofélia Diogo Costa, Maria Adelaide Freitas Gonçalves, and Joaquim Freitas Gonçalves. While this initiative sought to legitimise her repertoire within the national vocal tradition, it took place within a predominantly female social environment, reflecting the gendered structuring of musical spaces and the confinement of women's creativity to certain domains.

Alves de Sousa's participation in competitions organised by Emissora Nacional and the *Círculo de Cultura Musical de Lisboa* afforded her a degree of institutional visibility. However, this recognition did not translate into sustained inclusion in concert programmes, nor did it lead to widespread dissemination or recording of her compositions. In comparison to her male contemporaries, such as Fernando Lopes-Graça or Luís de Freitas Branco, her work received considerably less critical attention and remained largely peripheral within the Portuguese musical canon. Despite her prominent role in the cultural life of Porto, her music has been notably absent

from contemporary repertoires. A commemorative event organised by the Porto City Council in 1989, which featured only four of her works (*Há no meu peito uma porta*, *Sete anos de pastor*, *Incêndio* for voice and piano, and *Ave Maria* for women's choir), exemplifies the limited formal acknowledgement of her legacy. This is emblematic of a broader tendency to marginalise music composed by women, often relegating their contributions to a peripheral position within both musicological research and performance programming.

A relevant comparison may be drawn with Francine Benoît (1894–1990), one of the few women of the time to intervene publicly in both musical and intellectual discourse. As a composer, critic, and conductor, Benoît was notably marginalised not only due to her gender but also because of her political radicalism. Her engagement with left-wing movements such as the *Movimento de Unidade Democrática* (MUD)⁵⁰ and the *Associação Feminina Portuguesa para a Paz*⁵¹ brought her into direct conflict with the *Estado Novo*, resulting in surveillance and exclusion from dominant institutions (Lopes Braga, 2021). While Alves de Sousa faced similarly restrictive conditions, she adopted a more conciliatory strategy by engaging with state-sponsored competitions and cultural programmes. This approach granted her a limited degree of recognition, albeit still shaped by the secondary status typically assigned to women composers.

The posthumous obscurity of Alves de Sousa's output further under-

scores the fragility of mechanisms for the preservation and dissemination of music composed by women in Portugal. The limited publication of her works, coupled with the continued fragmentation of her manuscripts across various collections and archives, reveals the absence of a systematic initiative to recover her legacy—a situation that stands in stark contrast to the efforts dedicated to preserving the repertoire of her male contemporaries⁵². Her erasure from concert programmes and institutional narratives reflects a broader historical process of exclusion, perpetuated by the lack of critical editions, recordings, and sustained scholarly engagement.

Recovering the legacy of Berta Alves de Sousa thus necessitates not only a reappraisal of her repertoire but also a broader reassessment of the institutional and cultural frameworks that have shaped the reception of music composed by women in Portugal. It is therefore imperative to renew scholarly and artistic interest in her work, as well as in that of other overlooked composers who contributed to the richness of Portuguese musical heritage. This process entails the publication of critical editions, the promotion of academic and artistic events, and the inclusion of their music in educational curricula and concert pro-

gramming. Furthermore, it requires the construction of a more inclusive historical narrative—one that highlights individual achievements while critically engaging with the social and cultural contexts that simultaneously enabled and constrained women's artistic development.

“Berta Alves de Sousa leaves a legacy that is both deeply personal and emblematic of the broader history of resilience, creativity, and determination among women in twentieth-century art music”

In this regard, it is pertinent to revisit the work of Marcia Citron (1994), particularly her call for “historical compensation” as a necessary strategy to address the systemic omissions and inequalities embedded within the musical canon. Such an approach contributes not only to a

more comprehensive and equitable understanding of Portuguese music history, but also to the construction of a future in which the canon is more representative, inclusive, and aligned with the principles of historical justice.

In conclusion, Berta Alves de Sousa leaves a legacy that is both deeply personal and emblematic of the broader history of resilience, creativity, and determination among women in twentieth-century art music. Her work deserves to be rediscovered and re-evaluated—not merely as a neglected chapter of Portugal's cultural history, but as a vital expression of artistic agency within a constrained and unequal musical landscape.

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Notes

¹ The author has translated all the Portuguese quotations.

² Laura Wake Marques (1880–1957) was a prominent figure in 20th century Portuguese music, excelling as a singer, pianist, composer, and writer. She began her piano studies with her father, Joaquim José Marques, and received vocal instruction from her mother, Laura Wake Marques, Vellani, and Jane Bensauade. At the Royal Conservatoire of Lisbon, she studied piano with Alexandre Rey Colaço and harmony and composition with Rui Coelho. Her artistic output was mainly composed and published during the 1920s. Additionally, in 1924 she organised a series of concerts on the history of Portuguese music and founded "Hora da Arte," a series of events aimed at the working classes. Her literary work was published between 1929 and 1947 (Oliveira & Viana, 1967, p. 82; Paz, 2018 pp. 351–52; Pinto (Sacavém), 1930, p. 82).

³ Only a few references in periodicals mention concerts she organised and the performance of her compositions. Alfredo Pinto (Sacavém) notes that she studied with Rey Colaço and that "her works, within the modern spirit, never leaned toward extravagant modernism, avoiding dissonances unpleasant to the ear and sentiment"; he also provides a list of works encompassing various instrumental formations (Pinto (Sacavém), 1930, p. 100).

⁴ Francine Benoit (1894–1990), composer, music critic, teacher, and essayist, studied with Alexandre Rey Colaço at the National Conservatoire and with Vincent D'Indy at the Schola Cantorum. She was one of the founders of the Sonata Concert Society in 1942, alongside Fernando Lopes-Graça, Maria da Graça Amado da Cunha, Joaquim Silva Pereira, and Macário Santiago Kastner (Lopes Braga, 2013).

⁵ Elizabeth Lindley Cintra Torres (1926–2019) was homeschooled until the 6th grade, after which she studied piano with Helena Sá e Costa and Maria Cristina Lino Pimentel at the National Conservatoire. She participated in the series of recitals "A Nova Geração" (1947–48) organised by the National Conservatoire. She continued her studies in composition with Croner de Vasconcelos (Marinho, 2022).

⁶ Countess de Almeida Araújo, born Herminia Augusta Ferreira de Almeida Gonçalves de Azevedo Franco in Lisbon (1865–1912), was the daughter of the 1st Viscount of Falcaraire and married Joaquim Palhares de Almeida Araújo, 1st Count of Almeida Araújo. A member of the artistic direction of the *Sociedade de Concertos de Canto* (Proença-a-Velha, 1902, p. 54), she was also a poet, publishing a book of sonnets (Cardoso, 1917, pp. 29–32).

⁷ Sarah Motta Vieira was born on 2 January 1862. She began studying music at age 6, and took lessons with Daddi at age 7. She studied piano and harmony with Rey Colaço and Diezzi, respectively. At 16, she began vocal studies with Pontecchi, performing alongside prominent opera figures in Lisbon. Parallel to her career as a singer and pianist, she organised concerts at her home, showcasing repertoire rarely performed in Portugal. Laura Wake Marques referred to her as a gifted pianist with the ability to sight-read musical pieces. Throughout her life, she performed with names such as Kaschmann, De Lucca, Perello, António Arroyo, Thibaud, Casals, Rey Colaço, Guilhermina Suggia, Vianna da Motta, Francisco and António de Andrade, João and Augusto Rosa, Óscar da Silva, Goñi, Loevehnson, Nicolletti, among others. She withdrew from artistic activity in 1884, after her husband's death (Marques, 1933, pp. 42–53).

⁸ Maria Clementina Pires de Lima (1909–1941), pianist, collector, and arranger, studied piano, harmony, and composition with Luís Costa and Lucian Lambert. She compiled about 200 melodies and songs, many of which she harmonised herself, and gave lectures such as "Folclore de Riba d'Ave" and "Como se Canta em Landim." She worked mainly with women singers and believed that the collected pieces did not reflect a local tradition, but the geographical diversity of their origins (Branco, 2010, pp. 702–3).

⁹ Maria Antonieta Lima Cruz (1901–1957), music critic, musicologist, composer, and pianist, studied music with her mother, the painter and singer Adelaide de Lima Cruz (1878–1963), and won the National Composition Competition in 1926. From 1942 onwards, she was curator of the Instrumental Museum and Library of the National Conservatoire of Lisbon. She published several books and articles on music (Igayara-Souza & Paz, 2012, pp. 2–3).

¹⁰ Elisa Baptista de Sousa Pedroso (1881–1958) studied piano with Alexandre Rey Colaço and Vianna da Motta. Known as a musical patron and concert organiser, she founded the *Círculo de Cultura Musical* in 1934, serving as its director until her death. She was responsible for presenting numerous Portuguese and international musicians at her palace in Lisbon (Fernandes, 2010, pp. 976–77).

¹¹ Excerpt from the lecture "1st Hearing of My Musical Works at the Porto Conservatoire," presented by the author on 10/7/1969; autograph from the Berta Alves de Sousa collection at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library.

¹² Excerpt from the lecture "1st Hearing of My Musical Works at the Porto Conservatoire," presented by the author on 10/7/1969; autograph from the Berta Alves de Sousa collection at the Porto Conservatoire of Music Library.

¹³ Fernando Rosas refers to the "myth of rurality" as one of the foundations of ideological indoctrination during the Estado Novo period, to which many artists were sensitive (Rosas, 2001).

¹⁴ The Portuguese Discoveries, spanning the 15th to 17th centuries, involved maritime explorations that expanded geographic knowledge and established contact with various cultures across Africa, Brazil, India, and the Far East. In *Teoria Geral dos Descobrimentos Portugueses*, Jaime Cortesão argues that these explorations were driven by Portugal's cosmopolitan ambition to confront the Ottoman Empire—particularly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453—and by economic and political aims to disrupt the spice trade monopoly held by Genoese and Mamluk powers.

He further contends that Portugal's strict policy of secrecy, while initially advantageous, ultimately contributed to the nation's economic decline (Cortesão, 1940).

¹⁵ The use of poetry by classical authors in art song dates to the early 20th century, with examples such as *Os nossos poetas – Melodias Portuguezas* (1904), by the Countess of Proença-a-Velha, supported by Teófilo Braga, which aimed to valorise the Portuguese literary tradition (Artiaga et al., 2017, pp. 383–84). Joaquim Teófilo Fernandes Braga (1843–1924), born in Ponta Delgada, stood out as a prolific writer and republican politician, president of the Provisional Government in 1910 and of the Republic in 1915. He produced 360 works on themes such as history, literature, and Portuguese theatre, coordinating editions of authors such as Camões and Garrett, but received criticism for the academic imprecision of some of his work (Teófilo Braga, n.d.).

¹⁶ A disciple of Rodrigues de Freitas and Atilia Cunha, she studied German and French literature, particularly poetry. She also devoted herself to painting and was a student of the masters Artur Loureiro and António Carneiro. She is believed to have been the first Portuguese singer to perform a recital entirely dedicated to the Lied. She led the Porto branch of both the *Círculo de Cultura Musical* and the *Juventude Musical Portuguesa*. She was part of the management of the *Camarata Portucalense*, an association founded by Guilhermina Suggia. Dedicated to the promotion and teaching of children's music education, she was honoured by the French government with the title of Chevalier of the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* (*Círculo de Cultura Musical*, 2017).

¹⁷ Piano professor at the Porto Conservatoire of Music, where she also held the position of director. She was responsible for establishing the Porto branch of the *Círculo de Cultura Musical*, following an invitation from Elisa de Sousa Pedroso (*Conservatório de Música Do Porto*, n.d.).

¹⁸ Pianist and professor of piano, as well as the author of several writings on music, including recital reviews and programme notes. He served as a professor at the Conservatory of Music of Porto, where he held the position of director during the periods 1934–1939 and 1940–1941 (Melo-teca, n.d.).

¹⁹ The Emissora Nacional de Radiodifusão was the official Portuguese state radio broadcaster during the Estado Novo regime, playing a central role in disseminating nationalist and imperial narratives, including those that glorified the maritime Discoveries and Portuguese colonial expansion (Moreira, 2012).

²⁰ The Círculo de Cultura Musical was an institution that promoted concerts and musical activities in Lisbon, playing a role in legitimizing composers within the Portuguese musical landscape (Almeida, 2018).

²¹ The first Jogos Florais in Portugal took place in May 1936, as part of the celebrations of the "Year X of the National Revolution," promoted by the Emissora Nacional. The jury, chaired by General Óscar Carmona, included figures such as António Ferro and Henrique Galvão. This literary event gained prominence during the Estado Novo, promoted by organisations such as Mocidade Portuguesa and the Emissora Nacional. The Jogos Florais of the Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina were a platform for original productions in various literary forms (Quintal, 2021, pp. 42-7).

²² No references to this piece were found in the catalogue of Humberto d'Ávila. The composition date of the work, located in Janete Ruiz's private collection, could not be determined. The piece received an Honourable Mention at the Jogos Florais of 1940, as indicated in the handwritten copy.

²³ No references to this piece were found in the catalogue of Humberto d'Ávila. The composition date of the work, located in Janete Ruiz's private collection, could not be determined. The piece received an Honourable Mention at the Jogos Florais of 1941, as indicated in the handwritten copy.

²⁴ According to the catalogue of Humberto d'Ávila, dated 1941. The work was located in Janete Ruiz's private collection. The piece received an Honourable Mention at the Jogos Florais of 1943, as indicated in the handwritten copy (Ávila, 1980).

²⁵ According to the catalogue of Humberto d'Ávila, dated 1941, the work Poema by António Nobre is mentioned in Cunha e Silva's inventory as part of the Porto Conservatoire of Music collection. However, the score is missing, and no performance of the work is known (Ávila, 1980).

²⁶ Source: Berta Alves de Sousa collection at Porto Conservatoire of Music; copy from Janete Ruiz's private collection – Perguntas que significa saudade, from the cycle on the seven musical notes.

²⁷ The 'Política do Espírito' was the designation of the cultural programme promoted by António Ferro during the Estado Novo, aimed at constructing a nationalist cultural identity through the arts (Moreira, 2012).

²⁸ Melodies collected by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima (pp. 66–67; 70–71; 74–75). According to Humberto d'Ávila, the harmonisations by Berta Alves de Sousa are from 1937.

²⁹ In 2001, the works Singra o meu barco, Canção Marinha, Há no meu peito uma porta, and De amor escrevo, de amor... were edited by Jaime Mota and published by Fermata Editora (Sousa, 2002), and in 2019, edited by Ana Barros, AvA Musical Editions published Berta Alves de Sousa - Canções sobre Poesia de Camões (Sousa, 2019).

³⁰ "O S. João de Landim": "Organised by the talented composer and orchestral conductor Berta Alves de Sousa, a musical gathering will soon take place, which will feature S. João de Landim, a popular play extensively developed and orchestrated by the distinguished Porto artist. This popular play was discovered by the learned folklorist D. Maria Clementina Pires de Lima, who, after collecting the respective melodies, uncovered the story of the play. She even conducted an interview with the elderly author of the play and the music and managed to obtain the score, which is entirely in agreement with the melodies she collected directly from the people. Based on these melodies and adding others of the same genre extracted from the *Cancioneiro* by César das Neves, Berta Alves de Sousa produced an extensive and valuable work, which will soon be presented to the public for the first time. In this work, choirs are featured, which are being rehearsed by the proficient conductor Afonso Valentim." – News from O Comércio do Porto, dated 5/6 (1939?), announces the forthcoming musical gathering (first scrapbook in Berta Alves de Sousa's estate at the Porto Conservatoire of Music).

³¹ In addition to the harmonisations by Berta Alves de Sousa, the book includes the harmonisations of Cantilena dos Pedreiros de Melgaço by Lucian Lambert; Olha o Quico! by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima; O Chirino by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima; Para os nossos copos! by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima; Ó peão! by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima; O vinho by Luís Costa; Adega de vinte pipas by Lucian Lambert; Debaixo daquela ponte by Maria Clementina Pires de Lima (Lima & Lima, 1939).

³² "1st Hearing of My Musical Works at the Porto Conservatoire of Music."

³³ According to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, it dates from 1944 (Ávila, 1980).

³⁴ According to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, it dates from 1949 (Ávila, 1980).

³⁵ The composer made several versions of this work, including for voice and wind ensemble; voice and orchestra (according to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue – 1958); and the version indicated here (voice and piano), which, according to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, dates from 1949 (Ávila, 1980).

³⁶ According to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, it dates from 1950 (Ávila, 1980).

³⁷ Autograph dated 1965 (Portuguese National Library).

³⁸ According to Humberto d'Ávila's catalogue, it dates from 1966 (Ávila, 1980).

³⁹ Copy by Fernando Jorge Azevedo, dated 1967.

⁴⁰ Autograph manuscript, dated 1982.

⁴¹ A photocopy of the manuscript at the Porto Conservatoire of Music was given to Janete Ruiz by Professor Fernanda Correia and became part of her recitals of Portuguese music starting in 1999.

⁴² The reference to the dedication is only related to the first song of the cycle.

⁴³ In 2005, as part of the continuation of the 2004 study, the researcher photocopied some of the songs from this cycle, which are part of the composer's estate at the Porto Conservatoire of Music, and which are now missing.

⁴⁴ At the time of my presentation at ENIM 24, most of the references to this work were still unavailable. I would like to thank Professor Inês Thomas Almeida for the information she shared, which was essential for the advancement of this research. Based on this information, and after a further visit to the Porto Conservatoire of Music, it was finally possible to access the arrangements of these songs, which allowed for new approaches to the study and interpretation of this work.

⁴⁵ Despite the ten songs listed, only nine were presented as belonging to the cycle at the concert held at the Porto Conservatoire of Music: So-lang noch untern Linden; Ich fuhr mal mit meine Kaline; Sehn Se, das ist Berlin; Das Macht die Berliner Luft, luft, luft; Ich liebe dich so tief; Wir sind Berliner Bummler; Oh du mein Waldemar; Es war einmal ein Junge kleen; and the song Det de Spree musikal'sch is, which is not among the collected pieces.

⁴⁶ Photocopy of autograph manuscript dated January 1953, private collection of pianist Jaime Mota.

⁴⁷ See note 16.

⁴⁸ Neo-modalism, characteristic of the early 20th century, is exemplified by several prominent Portuguese composers such as Frederico de Freitas and Luís de Freitas Branco.

⁴⁹ Exceptions to this trend include Laura Wake Marques, Maria Antonieta de Lima Cruz, and Francine Benoit.

⁵⁰ The Democratic Unity Movement (MUD) emerged as the successor to the National Antifascist Unity Movement (MUNAF), a clandestine organisation opposing Portugal's fascist regime. MUD advocated for freedom of assembly, association, and the press, as well as fair elections, proposing new voter registration, opposition oversight, and the postponement of the vote (Honório, 2014).

⁵¹ Founded in 1935 and dissolved by the Estado Novo regime in 1952, the Portuguese Women's Association for Peace was a pacifist organisation, officially non-political and non-religious, though several of its members held antifascist views. It promoted cultural and humanitarian activities, such as support for war exiles and events advocating for peace. In its final years, the association adopted a more oppositional stance, publishing a regular bulletin and maintaining a children's choir directed by Francine Benoit (Cova, 2011).