Theaters and the Popular-Elite Divide in São Paulo, Brazil, 1895-1922[1]

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Around 1922, in "As Enfibraturas do Ipiranga," the modernist poet and musicologist Mário de Andrade reimagined the residents of the city of São Paulo as performers of a caucophonous, "profane oratorio" (77). Equally significant to the brief libretto were Andrade's stage directions, which divided Paulistanos into four groups, each carefully stationed around the decade-old Theatro Municipal. Andrade designated the theater itself the domain of "The Conventional Orientalisms," artists and intellectuals tied to the conforming traditions of Brazil's Orient, that is, Europe (79). Gazing in approval from the balconies of nearby clubs, government buildings, and hotels were "The Palsied Decrepitudes," the wealthiest of Paulistanos, while the working-class "Indifferent Pallbearers" bellowed from the adjacent Viadúto do Chá (79). Andrade's observation that the Theatro Municipal and its traditionalist fare fed São Paulo's men of means is hardly surprising. Today, as at most points in São Paulo's history, urban dwellers tend to associate lavish opera houses like the Municipal with an elite public. Yet, for a moment at the start of the twentieth century, it seemed possible that the Municipal could be more capacious, that it would accommodate all of Andrade's choirs.

In the pages below, I examine this moment of possibility through a comparison of the Municipal's pricing, programming, design, and location with those of another auditorium, the Theatro Colombo. Inaugurated within a few years of each other—the Colombo in 1908, the Municipal in 1911—both theaters were founded with the support of the municipality and with the aim of morally and aesthetically educating São Paulo's growing population. By the time that Andrade composed "As Enfibraturas," however, the two theaters served distinct functions and distinct publics. While contemporaries frequently used the term "elite" to describe the Municipal's performances and audience,

the Colombo was increasingly characterized as "popular." In applying these labels, Paulistanos were conflating genre and spectator, collapsing aesthetic and social hierarchies. Moreover, the parallel lives of the two theaters encouraged the reduction of both hierarchies to binaries. Such conflation and reduction were not without consequence; they propped an illusion of social fluidity between popular and elite while insisting on the permanence of these categories. Unlike biological race or nationality, one's cultural grouping was not determined at birth, and unlike 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.

In explaining how Paulistanos read the Colombo and Municipal as popular and elite, this article argues for the significance of theaters to the construction of social difference. By "theaters" I refer to more than the action onstage, traditionally the subject of theater scholars and the all too few historians of Latin America who are attentive to the dramatic arts. Instead, I analyze theaters holistically, as tangible sites within but also onto which meaning was inscribed. I consider each theater's architecture, urban setting, and managerial practices in addition to its programming; the edifices in their entirety become stages upon which theatergoers performed. From this vantage point, one can see how taxonomies of genre, space, and publics coincided at the start of the twentieth century. Building on the scholarship of cultural hierarchy, I demonstrate how cultural hierarchy functioned as a *social* hierarchy and how, through theaters, Paulistanos erected and adjusted both.[2] While lawmakers initially insisted that the Municipal and Colombo would foster cultural and therefore social unity, the two theaters ultimately served to bisect São Paulo's population. A comparison of the Municipal and Colombo in this manner sheds light on the formation of multiple publics in an emerging mass society, and especially the liminality of the nascent middle class in a bipartite social scheme that would persist well into the mid-twentieth century.[3]

Examining theaters' role in the construction of cultural and social hierarchies additionally lightens the chronological weight given by scholars of São Paulo to the 1920s. Theaters show that the shattering of "absolute social identities" attributed by historians to that decade owed much to the cracks already in place in the 1910s (Gomes 36; Sevcenko 18). Theaters also position the 1922 Semana de Arte Moderna within a longer arc of artistic activity in São Paulo. To be sure, the series of exhibits and performances situated the city as Brazil's nucleus for modernist innovation. Yet, from the angle of the

Paulistano public, the Semana was merely another, albeit significant, event at the Theatro Municipal. By the time of the Semana, the Municipal had hosted countless productions of both avant-garde (Isadora Duncan, Vaslav Nijinsky, Stravinsky's *Firebird*) and traditional leanings. Furthermore, by the time of the Semana, São Paulo's residents and visitors had passed by, gazed at, and sent postcards of the Municipal for over a decade. Whether or not they had entered its halls, most had a sense of what the theater meant for them and their city: a landmark, a meeting point, or an exclusive bastion of Art with a capital "A." The Municipal, in short, was by 1922 São Paulo's premier site for nurturing and legitimating erudite culture, and it was precisely for this reason that it housed the Semana de Arte Moderna. The Semana, along with Andrade's oratorio, thus serves as a convenient endpoint for this article's analysis.

Our starting point is the year in which a publicly funded theater was first proposed in São Paulo's Municipal Chamber: 1895. This proposal materialized into blueprints and a budget eight years later, when prefect Antonio Prado used his executive power to appoint a committee of architects. The final attempt at a theater was therefore entirely directed and funded by São Paulo City, with a bit of assistance from the state of São Paulo in the form of expropriated territory.[4] The Colombo, by contrast, more closely resembled the model originally envisaged for the Municipal: ownership by the municipality but management and maintenance by a long-term lessee. In this case, it was the 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 (Município de São Paulo 25). 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 (Souza).

The Colombo and Municipal were two among a multiplying number of theaters at the beginning of the twentieth century in São Paulo. Indeed, well over one hundred auditoriums hosted live performances between 1895 and 1922, offering Paulistanos and visitors a wide variety of repertoire and sociability.[5] At the start of this period, the majority of São Paulo's theaters were sizable halls that primarily hosted European, Brazilian, and the occasional

Argentine lyric, dramatic, or comedic troupe. After 1900, stages for amateur productions proliferated, mainly utilized by immigrant, anarchist, and labor groups seeking to raise funds and build community. By decade's end, these associational theaters 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* 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 film or amateur theater production, or to 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.

The rapid increase in entertainment options in São Paulo was accompanied and fueled by a rapid increase in the city's population, and both trends worried lawmakers. As urban centers around the world swelled and collapsed under the weight of the new masses, São Paulo's municipal government took an increasingly proactive role in regulating public infrastructure, private construction, and the "safety," "comfort," and "hygiene" of Paulistanos.[6] To be sure, in 1922, São Paulo still lagged behind Rio de Janeiro in number of inhabitants, but the city's pace of change was dizzying. Between 1890 and 1920, its population ballooned from 65,000 to 580,000 and its urban boundary expanded accordingly. This dramatic growth was largely fueled by a regional coffee boom that, along with the development of a railroad network, positioned São Paulo as an agricultural processing center between hinterland and port. As coffee beans and capital poured into São Paulo, so did migrants and immigrants, especially those from Italy, Portugal, Spain, Eastern Europe, the former Ottoman Empire, and Japan. By 1909, observed the traveler Pierre Denis, São Paulo, more so than Rio, was the place to find the Brazilian crowd (Morse 209).

How to make sense of and regulate this crowd was at the front of municipal legislators' minds when, in 1895, they first considered the construction of a new theater. A theater, its proponents argued, would enlighten the general populace by providing regular opportunities to encounter beauty. This encounter with beauty, especially in the orderly setting of the rowed and policed theater, would in turn foster social harmony. Minds would be sharpened, morals corrected, tastes refined, and spirits uplifted—and all would be calibrated according to the same standard, according to "culture." The common culture generated inside a government-sponsored theater, in other words, would cultivate an urban public, the antithesis to both the unruly (Le Bonian) crowd and the impressionable audience.[7]

If the notion that theaters were schools of morality and aesthetics was, in 1900, hardly new, the imagined pupils were. When the congressional assemblies of the State of São Paulo debated their contributions to the future Theatro Municipal, several representatives dismissed the project on the grounds that it would only serve the "small-numbered class of *desoeuvrés*… unfamiliar with the acridity of labor" (Câmara dos Deputados 731). The theater's defenders took these accusations seriously, likewise adopting the language of class to assert the breadth 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 Municipal would have "different levels, different prices, and therefore accommodation for all social classes" (Câmara dos Deputados 175).[8] In other words, compared to São Paulo's existing theaters, what would become the Theatro Municipal would boast an expanded and more finely gradated social geography, to borrow Jeffrey Ravel's term (Ravel 68).

To some extent, the final manifestations of both the Municipal and Colombo reflected politicians' proclaimed desire for an audience representative of São Paulo's economic diversity. The Colombo 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 three floors (Município de São Paulo 25). The Municipal was numerically not far behind, with a seating capacity of 1,816. Its spectators, however, were more vertically organized: a complex hierarchy of seats and boxes, including a president's box, spanned five floors. Furthermore, a higher portion of auditorium space—about a quarter, in contrast to the Colombo's sixth—was dedicated to boxes.[9] The Municipal also lacked standing room and generally distributed its audiences more comfortably. As evident in a photograph published in 1921 by the magazine *A Cigarra*, the Colombo's spectators were crammed into the spacious auditorium (Figure 1). Some boxes nearly spilled over with bodies, while the 636 ground-floor seats—a third more than at the Municipal—were tightly squeezed together, in violation of municipal building codes.[10]

The differences between the two theaters in seating arrangements unsurprisingly translated into divergent pricing schemes. At the Colombo, the range of ticket prices, like the range of seating, was narrower than that of the Municipal, allowing for a more socioeconomically homogenous audience. The cost of admission was also generally lower. 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

Fig. 1. An audience at the Theatro Colombo, as captured by *A Cigarra* in 1921. Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

(2$400 per person) (e.g. Sociedade Fior della Giuventú).[11] For one of the city's coachmen, this meant that an outing to the Colombo with his entire family of five was worth nearly four days' wages, or two days if the family was willing to stand or sit less comfortably.[12] The Municipal offered no such alternative; if a lyric company was onstage, "amphitheater" seats at the top of the fourth balcony often began at 4$ each and the choicest boxes went for the sum of 100$, well over a coachman's monthly salary (e.g. Alonso).[13] The exorbitance of these prices led to no end of criticism in the press. Within a month of the Municipal's inauguration, a review in the literary and artistic magazine *O Pirralho* scolded policymakers for promising performances at "popular prices" and offering instead seats at a whopping 18$ (Sylvestre 6). The accusation still rang true in 1915, when *A Cigarra* bemoaned that true art continued to be expensive, "the monopoly of the privileged of fortune" ("Chronica" 7).

Both condemnations begin to reveal the ways in which theaters pushed Paulistanos to simplify their increasingly complex society. In these two cases, as well as in legislators' remarks quoted above, society's dividing factor was income, or, more precisely, the ability to spend. Diametrically opposed to one another were "the privileged of fortune" and those who re-

lied on "popular prices," with no room for anyone in between. Lawmakers reinforced this interpretation in their own discussion of *preços populares*, a term that gained traction in the mainstream press during the first decade of the twentieth century.[14] Indeed, legislators were in part responding to impresarios who increasingly deployed "popular prices" in their advertising as a sales-boosting euphemism for "discounted rates." If the Municipal were to fulfill its mission, State Senator Frederico Abranches had argued in 1900, it would need to compete with these commercial offerings and be "within reach of all purses" (Senado do Estado 186).[15] In this spirit, Paulistanos could later find announcements in the city's leading newspapers for Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly*, Afonso Arino's musical *O Contratador de Diamantes*, and an evening of Nativity scenes at the Municipal, all at "popular prices" ("Theatro Municipal," *O Estado* 13; "O 'Contratador'" 3; "Quadros Vivos" 1).

Yet, a comparison of advertised ticket prices for *Madame Butterfly* with those of Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* concurrently playing at the Colombo indicates that popular prices at the Municipal remained higher than the usual prices at the Colombo ("Theatro Colombo," *O Estado* 12). The "popular" of the Municipal, in this sense, lay somewhere between the textile worker and the industrialist in socioeconomic terms, a middling group whose labor generated sufficient income to spend on leisure. Moreover, the reliance on the adjective "popular" implied that such rates and, by extension, such audiences remained the exception to the rule. Despite the Municipal's multiple tiers as promised by legislators, even those who could afford to sit luxuriously at the Colombo might have struggled to enter the Municipal on an average night. Indeed, the many photographs of Municipal spectators printed in *A Cigarra*, such as this one from 1915 (Figure 2), present a stark contrast to the magazine's 1921 image of Colombo audiences. Even on an occasion meriting a photograph, boys and men at the Colombo donned caps, jackets, and neckties rather than the canes, tailcoats, and bowties of the Municipal's attendees. Likewise, the garb of the few women visible in the Colombo photograph was modestly cut and simply stitched, hardly worth the *Cigarra* reader's attention, as the wide camera lens suggests. By comparison, to quote a *Cigarra* columnist, at the Municipal one could admire "the best faces of São Paulo, the best *toilettes*, the best jewels and the best smiles"—the not so hidden costs of theatergoing at the Municipal ("Chronica" 7).

If expendable income determined the "popular" in "popular prices" offstage, such prices also correlated to a theater's offerings onstage. A closer examination of the Municipal's three *preços populares* productions listed

Fig. 2. Socializing between operatic acts at the Theatro Municipal in 1915. Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

above reveals that two of the performances themselves were exceptions to the rule. In the case of *O Contratador de Diamantes*, the musical's Brazilian authorship and subject matter, and particularly its heroic portrayal of the colonial experience, persuaded the affluent members of the Liga Nacionalista to sponsor the 1919 run at reduced rates. Popular prices were also made possible by the municipality's generosity—prefect Washington Luís waived all fees associated with usage of the Municipal—and relatively low production costs; most actors were amateurs affiliated with the Sociedade de Cultura Artística ("'O Contratador'" 4). Similarly, the "quadros vivos" staged in celebration of Christmas most likely adhered to a budget more limited than that of either *O Contratador* or *Madame Butterfly*. As for the latter, the opera's boldfaced "Preços Populares" in its *Estado* advertisement seems no more than a gimmick given the starting price of 7$, the *Estado*'s consistently tepid reviews, and the previous evening's "nearly empty" hall ("Palcos e Circos" 2). The press may have deemed popular pricing to be instrumental to Paulistanos' "aesthetic and civic formation," but this formation appeared to rely on financial and therefore artistic compromise ("O 'Contratador'" 3).

In the discourse surrounding theaters, then, "popular" was linked to thrift also on the part of producers and performers. Such thrift was found with less frequency at the Municipal than at the Colombo, where the lower monetary

and bureaucratic costs of using the hall allowed for tighter budgets. While 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.[16] Partly for this reason, immigrant, anarchist, and recreational associations turned to the Colombo when searching for a space for their soirees, leaving the Municipal to affluent groups such as the Automobile Club or a 1912 carnival committee spearheaded by the "distinguished ladies of São Paulo's highest society" ("Edú Chaves"; Cesar and Leite Jr). Indeed, as an abundance of archived permit requests demonstrates, the Colombo was commonly occupied by middle and working-class Italian amateur troupes known as *filodrammatici*, among them the Centro Dramático Italiano, the Club Filodramático Dante Alighieri, and the Sociedade Beneficiente e Recreativa Fior della Giuventú.[17] 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 punctuated 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 overtones of labor rights, the plays performed by amateur actors at the Colombo would have never entered the programming organized by the Municipal's seasonal impresarios. When they did make their way onto the Municipal stage, as in the case of Henry Bernstein's *O Assalto* (*L'Assaut*) in 1918, a different audience was expected. That production's advertisement in the radical republican newspaper *O Combate* indicated a starting price of 1$100 for admission and specified that the Municipal's usual dress code would not be in effect ("Theatro Municipal," *O Combate* 2). The appearance of a Municipal advertisement in *O Combate* was in itself telling; while the afternoon paper regularly kept its readers abreast of performances at the Colombo, there were few mentions of events at the Municipal. *O Combate*'s directors aimed their writing at *o povo*, a wide readership that included manual wage laborers, and they and impresarios seemed to conclude that the Municipal was not usually within reach of such a popular public.[18]

Despite this, *O Assalto* was staged at the Municipal rather than the Colombo, an anomaly that points to another quality that Paulistanos associated with elite art and audiences: the renown of the performer, and particularly

his or her approval by the audiences of Europe's most prestigious theaters. According to the *O Combate* advertisement, that evening's production of *O Assalto* would star Clara Della Guardia, an Italian actress who regularly toured South America during this period. Whereas the Municipal's stage was often graced by global celebrities on par with Della Guardia—among them baritone Titta Ruffo, tenor Enrico Caruso, and soprano Amelita Galli-Curci—the Colombo in the 1910s tended to feature less-experienced local or regional groups, such as the Companhia de Sebastião Arruda and the Companhia Paulista de Operetas, Revistas e Dramas (Veneziano 130 and 141). Certainly, as advertisements in the mainstream press indicate, the Colombo did host touring companies from abroad, but reviewers regularly deemed these to be second rate, the singers' names unrecognized, the scenery and costumes not worth noting. This was hardly surprising given that the Colombo's stage house failed to accommodate the elaborate sets and enormous casts of world-class lyric and dramatic companies, while its ticket prices failed to cover these companies' bills. As a result, after the Municipal's inauguration, performers at the Colombo paled by comparison in fame and, by some measurements, quality.

There was also the issue of genre. The typical fare at the Municipal in its early years consisted of Verdi's *La Traviata*, Puccini's *La Bohème*, and Rossini's *Barber of Seville*—the pantheon of lyric Italian Romanticism, which could on occasion be found at the Colombo. In fact, according to municipal records, the Colombo hosted 36 operas and 52 operettas in 1911 alone ("Repartição" 274-75). However, while Romantic and *verismo* operas straddled both the Colombo and Municipal during their first decade, operettas and *revistas* were rarely performed at the latter. In the realm of dance, 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, much to the chagrin of some of its spectators.[19] Similarly, the typically untranslated French plays of Alexandre Dumas (fils), never made their way to the Colombo while Spanish *zarzuelas* and circus acts were barred from the Municipal. The latter forms and their *revista* cousin, complained the newspaper *A Noite* in a multi-issue diatribe, sacrificed elegant prose and character development—the results of "long hours of labor"—for the sake of immediately and repeatedly satisfying undiscerning spectators ("Actualidades" 1). A popular audience demanded diversion, *A Noite* presumed, and diversion was what the Colombo would provide.

In fact, the Colombo began as a *casa de diversões* rather than a *theatro* in the legal language that regulated its founding (Municipal Law 914, 9 Jun.

1906). While this distinction did not alter the government's relation to the Colombo, it did diminish the financial burden of converting what had once been a vast market into an auditorium for live performance. The Colombo could claim neither the Municipal's renowned architect, Francisco de Paula Ramos de Azevedo, nor its Paris Opéra-inspired design (Figure 3).[20] The Municipal was a Beaux-Arts mass of balustrades, columns, stained glass, and ornamentation, with tapestries from Milan, crystal from Bohemia, and sculptures from Germany. These and other fineries adorned the building's 3,609 square meters (38,847 ft^2), which, in addition to the auditorium, included a foyer, entrance hall with grand staircase, restaurant, bar, ballroom, dressing rooms, offices, and cupola. The Colombo's beauty was more subdued; 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 (Figure 4). Still, the Colombo boasted an imposing stage house along with many of the Municipal's features, including electric lighting, a restaurant and bar, ample dressing rooms, imported furniture (from Austria, by Thornet), and delicately painted ceilings (Souza). The Colombo's interior was in fact so impressive in its "comfort and elegance" that *O 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" (qtd. in "O Commercio" 1).

The *Commercio*'s statement hints at the press's struggle to classify the Colombo and its audiences shortly after the theater's 1908 inauguration. On the one hand, in the years before the Municipal's opening, the Colombo's scale and amenities lent themselves to elite performance companies and an elite spectatorship. The journalist Jacob Penteado would later recall in his memoirs the "luxurious carriages" that paused outside the new Colombo to release famous figures of the "political, economic, and social world in tailcoat and top hat" (60). On the other hand, the Colombo was situated in Brás, the neighborhood across the Tamanduateí Canal from the historic center. The theater was 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. By contrast, the Municipal sat at the vanguard of a downtown that was extending westward toward the affluent neighborhoods of Santa Ifigênia and Higienópolis. Perched atop a hill, the Municipal overlooked a graceful esplanade and a drained marsh turned landscaped park. The Colombo sat facing the Largo da Concórdia, an uninspiring square in the heart of flat and flood-prone Brás. The Municipal was an

Fig. 3. A postcard of the Theatro Municipal ca.1912. Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo.

Fig. 4. A photograph of the Theatro Colombo ca.1920. Arquivo Histórico de São Paulo.

unmistakable landmark, a frequent subject of postcards, a monument to São Paulo's metamorphosis.[21] The Colombo was a landmark for the city's new masses, not monied tourists passing through.

No wonder, then, that São Paulo's journalists frequently equated *os populares* with Brás and, by extension, especially after the Municipal's completion in 1911, the Colombo. In the writings of many contemporaries, Brás became the point at which the pulse of the popular sector was measured, and the heart of Brás was the Largo da Concórdia. The Colombo also became the heart of a budding entertainment district; between the Colombo's opening in 1908 and the start of World War I, over a dozen film and performance spaces were established in the blocks surrounding the theater, largely under the helm of Italian entrepreneurs. Like the North American nickelodeon, the majority of these were storefront theaters, squeezed within the limits of a plat. Their modest architecture and vaudevillian and cinematic offerings helped to reify in the press and elsewhere Brás's reputation as a popular neighborhood, in turn cementing the Colombo's reputation as a theater both of and for the popular.

Genre reinforced audience, and vice versa, so that by 1920 it seemed only natural for the Municipal's opera company to transplant to the Colombo when attempting to stage "popular" performances (Cerquera 108). In a sort of entrepreneurial slumming, the Empresa Mocchi-Da Rosa headed to Brás's largest theater to access the largest swath of São Paulo's population. It was in the breadth of this swath, evident in the *Cigarra*'s 1921 photograph of a Colombo audience (Figure 1), that lay the difference between the Colombo and the Municipal; popular, offstage and on (think of the era's *variedades*), meant variety. The Colombo's size, seating arrangement, and pricing allowed for a diversity of spectators, just as its ample stage house and lower cost of use allowed for a diversity of repertoire. Moreover, variety in one begat the other, so that Paulistanos came to associate "popular" theaters like the Colombo with a relative capaciousness of audience as well as programming. Rather than a marker of national or regional authenticity, which would be recorded and celebrated by 1930s folklorists, "popular" evoked a new social scale, that sea of faces obscured by the wide scope of the *Cigarra*'s lens.

By 1922, then, while Mário de Andrade composed "As Enfibraturas" and lent his support to the Semana de Arte Moderna, São Paulo's press and residents were likewise distinguishing between popular and elite publics and mapping and remapping them onto a rapidly changing landscape. The proliferation of theaters facilitated this process, leading influential Paulistanos to aggregate the bulk of São Paulo's population under the heading of "popular"

and in contraposition to "elite." Despite the professed intentions of those who had initially championed the Colombo and Municipal, the practices of and discourses surrounding the two theaters after their opening largely served to bisect Paulistano society. This bisection rested on the conflation of cultural and social hierarchies and the simultaneous simplification of both. Social difference was presumed to correspond to cultural difference, creating the illusion that social mobility and belonging were acquirable attributes, a matter of talent and consumption. However, if in 1895 a broad range of Paulistanos believed that theaters would catalyze the diffusion of erudite culture, in 1922 the superposition of audience and art seemed complete. Whether accommodating the Semana de Arte Moderna or Mário de Andrade's Conventional Orientalisms, the Municipal remained inaccessible to the majority of São Paulo's inhabitants. Elite culture implied an elite viewership, a limited circle already trained to appreciate erudite art.

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Notes

[1] Many thanks are due to the issue's editors and anonymous readers for their comments and time, as well as to the Princeton Mellon Initiative in Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities for its support.

[2] For historians in the United States, the foundational text on cultural hierarchies is Levine. An overview of the historiography of the elite-popular culture divide in Latin America and a case that complicates this neat bifurcation is offered in McCleary.

[3] The persistence of the elite-popular divide is apparent, for example, in planning for São Paulo's IV Centenário, insightfully discussed in Weinstein (242–45). On the history of Brazil's middle class, see Owensby. For a more global historiography of the middle class, see the introduction to López and Weinstein.

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

[5] An interactive map of São Paulo's theaters between 1895 and 1922 can be found at aialalevy.carto.com/viz/7be11bb0-fd87-4e5d-8d79-dd961136d3f4/public_map. I created the dataset as part of the research for my dissertation (Levy).

[6] These three terms are ubiquitous in records of legislative debates and legislation from this period.

[7] The reasoning of lawmakers is explained in Chapter 2 of Levy. For more on the ideas of the crowd underlying Paulista lawmakers' anxiety, see Barrows, Ginneken, and Nye.

[8] See also José Luiz de Almeida Nogueira's arguments on p.140.

[9] 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 therefore the number of boxes multiplied by five and divided by the theater's total capacity.

[10] The Colombo's tight seating was censured in a 1917 inspection by municipal engineer José Sá Rocha. 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.

[11] All monetary values are given in units of *mil-réis* (1$ or 1$000 = 1 *mil-réis*; 1:000$000 = 1,000 *mil-réis* = 1 *conto;* $100 = 1/10 of 1 *mil-réis* = 100 *réis*). During the studied period, the *mil-réis* fluctuated between US$0.20 and US$0.50.

[12] A coachman for the Municipal Depository earned 80$ per month according to the 1910 Municipal budget, Law 1258, of Oct. 30th 1909.

[13] See Moraes (200) for an analysis of Theatro Municipal prices and Table 4, pp. 226-37, for an extensive list of theater ticket prices.

[14] A query for the enclosed keywords "preços populares" in the digitized archive of *O Estado de São Paulo*, one of the city's leading dailies, produces only two results before 1900.

[15] In the mid 1920s, the municipality would pass legislation specifying the organization of performances at "popular prices."

[16] For example, Francisco Serrador, one of the Colombo's contractors, offered to cover the permit fee for the Sociedade Dramatica Almeida Farrett's production. By contrast, as one editorial complained, any rising artist interested in arranging a recital at the Theatro Municipal had to first surmount all of the "possible and imaginable fees" charged by the Municipal Chamber: the rent, the seal, the professional tax, etc. (*A Cigarra* 41).

[17] A portion of this abundance of permit requests can be found in the municipality's *Registro de Alvarás-Licença*, e.g. those filed by the Centro Dramatico Italiano p.59, and the Club Filodramatico Dante Alighieri p. 60.

[18] The readership and politics of *O Combate* are analyzed in Woodard (see especially p.363).

[19] *A Liberdade*, a newsletter published by and for São Paulo's "class of color," advised its readers in 1919 against consorting with "as senhoras que tem dançado maxixe no Colombo" ("O pessoal"). Maxixe was often referred to as Brazilian tango because of its blend of intimate partner dancing and syncopated melodies.

[20] For more on Ramos de Azevedo and the legacy of his firm, see Mehrtens.

[21] In the words of one columnist in *A Vida Moderna*, "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" (qtd. in Moraes 170).

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