

The history of the Music Museum is also the history of innumerable personalities who have followed it over the years, gathering collections, looking for a suitable place to house them, studying them, always with the aim of putting them on display.

1911

In concrete terms, the birth of the museum goes back to 1911, when Michel'angelo Lambertini managed to be appointed by the government to begin the collection of musical instruments, scores and iconographical items dispersed in public and religious buildings.

The aim was to create a museum, a project to which Lambertini dedicated himself with great enthusiasm. However, the musicologist quickly came across with a lack of commitment on the part of those in power, which forced him to reformulate the museum project with the help of private investors. It was in this context that he turned to António Carvalho Monteiro, also a collector, to acquire the Keil collection that was in danger of leaving the country. Lambertini also sold to him his own collection and proposed to take the project further together. Carvalho Monteiro agreed to the idea and gave up space available to hold the instruments in a building in Rua do Alecrim, where Lambertini's collections, an amount of 500 items, were brought together. Out of this group was the Lamas collection (auctioned by his heirs, in 1916), in which some of its items were possibly acquired.

1931

With Carvalho Monteiro and Lambertini's deaths, the project to create a museum was postponed. As a result, the collection remained at Rua do Alecrim completely abandoned until 1931, when Tomás Borba, curator of the then Museum and Library of the National Conservatoire, rediscovered it. It was Borba who took on the task of acquiring the rest of the

collection from Carvalho Monteiro's heirs, which was then transferred to the National Conservatoire. Later on, the instruments that had formerly belonged to King Luís and were at the Ajuda Palace, were added to the collection, as well as some items sold during the abandonment period at Rua do Alecrim, acquired in auctions by the National Conservatoire.

1946

From 1946 onwards, with the reopening of the Conservatoire after building works, the museum was officially opened, leading to a period of development of a museological perspective and concern for the public access.

1971

In the early 70s, the space taken by the museum became necessary, owing to the creation of three new schools at the Conservatoire - Dance, Cinema and Art Education. In the hope that it would be possible for the collection of 658 items, to have a place of its own, it was transferred, in 1971, to the Pimenta Palace at Campo Grande. It remained there until 1975 in precarious conditions. In that year, by decision of João de Freitas Branco, then Secretary of State for Culture, and the Music School of the Conservatoire, it was once again transferred, this time to the National Library, where the musicologist Santiago Kastner began an inventory of the pieces.

1980

During this period there were discussions as to where it would be the best place to house properly the collection which was continuing growing. Several buildings were indicated as possibilities: the Cabral and Rattton Palaces, in Lisbon; the Belém Cultural Centre; the Queluz Palace or the Convent of São Bento da Vitória, in Oporto. None of these possibilities went forward.

1991

In 1991, by decision of the Secretary of State for Culture, in response to the wishes of the direction of the National Library, who claimed the lacking of space, the collection was packed and once again moved, this time to the National Palace of Mafra, where it remained until the opening of the Music Museum in Alto dos Moinhos.

1993

On 1st October of 1993, World Music Day, an agreement was signed, under the terms of the sponsorship law, between the Portuguese Institute of Museums (today DGPC - Directorate General for Cultural Heritage) and the Lisbon Underground Railway, which finally created the necessary conditions to make Lambertini's dream come true. The space was made available in the underground station at Alto dos Moinhos and the Music Museum was opened on 26th July 1994.

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