

Harpsichord & fortepiano

Vol. 12, No. 2 Spring, 2008

© Peacock Press.

Licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#).

You are free to share and adapt the content for non-commercial purposes, provided you give appropriate credit to Peacock Press and indicate if changes were made. Commercial use, redistribution for profit, or uses beyond this license require prior written permission from Peacock Press.

Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCat)

COMPOSING TOCCATA DE ROÇA FOR SOLO HARPSICHORD

by Calimerio Soares

Introduction

Motivated by the successful premiere (and several further performances) of my piece *Cravocembalada* (1980), two years later I wrote *Toccata de Roça* (Peasant's Toccata, 1982). At that time, I was still seeking the aesthetic thread through which I could develop my composing. While both pieces were still written with conventional musical notation, it was imperative that less conventional textures and sounds for the harpsichord be articulated, although in accordance with the instrument's idiomatic nature. With both works, I had the idea of removing the harpsichord from its aristocratic pedestal and bringing it into our current time, through the use of a less intimate language, but also with a popular feature.

Cravocembalada (the title could also be: "A Ballade for the Harpsichord") had the main purpose of parodying the 200 years of music written for the instrument. The piece's eight sections could also be presented by a performer dressed up in a costume inspired by the eighteenth century. In the case of *Toccata de Roça*, the similarity of timbre between the ten string "viola" (a kind of Portuguese guitar with five double strings) and the harpsichord had motivated me to examine the art of two-part popular singing characteristic of central Brazil for the appropriate material for the composition of this work.

"Canto" and "Contra canto"

Through the centuries, melodies performed in two parallel parts in thirds and sixths have been used systematically by composers in their most diverse works. This technique was used by Henry Purcell (1659-1695) in his wonderful airs "Fear no danger" (from the opera *Dido and Aeneas*) and "In vain the am'rous flute" (from the *Ode on St Cecilia's Day*).

It is in Brazilian folk music (Paz, 1989) that this technique finds considerable development. Its constant use in Brazilian popular country music is of great importance as a basic compositional technique. Musical speech is

basically developed through parallel thirds and sixths in these songs. Although few modulations¹ are found in this kind of music, it is important to note its sophisticated usage in some of these popular songs².

The melody

The melody for this piece is based on a sequence of parallel thirds in the manner of the *cantadores* (singers) of central Brazil. It develops the traditional eight measures, as in figure 1. In order to break the monotony of the melody played in parallel thirds, I amplify the interval to a major tenth, maintaining this interval relationship between the upper and the lower part (*canto* and *contra canto*) throughout the musical period, as shown in figure 2.

This interval amplification between either part (or voice) emphasizes the *country* character of the musical speech, and gives it a more sophisticated connotation in accordance with my own aesthetic. The suggested ornamentation in the score makes this more idiomatic for the instrument.

Registration

For the performance of the piece, I suggest an instrument of two manuals, 8' and 4' stops plus a *lute* stop. However, the piece can also be performed on a single manual instrument with these stops.

Form

The eight initial measures present the melody in parallel tenths, performed as a recitative. After a sequence of syncopated rhythms (which the player taps on the instrument) the piece begins to develop. [The introduction (section 1) returns at the end of the work.] Here is presented the dance rhythm upon which the work is based. This rhythm cell suggests the *Catira* (or *Catereté*)³, a dance very popular in the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais (figure 3).

In section 2, melodic elements are varied along with the following section (3), accompanied by an *ostinato* rhythm played in the

bass, as in figure 4. Next follows a sequence of repeating chords based on fourths (E, A flat, B flat) of a percussive character, which alludes to clapping and stamping traditionally performed by dancers of the *catira*, as in figure 5.

Section 3 constitutes the central nucleus of the work, where elements derived from section 2 are also varied, as in figure 6. In order to

emphasize the musical period, I decided to repeat the full section using a *ritornello*. A short bridge (b. 119) prepares the return of section 1 to conclude the work.

The table presents a structural summary of the work:

RECITATIVE	Section 1 INTRODUCTION	Section 2 VARIATION	Section 3 3' (Section 2) (Percussion) (Variations of 2) (Percussion)	1' FINAL
------------	----------------------------------	-------------------------------	---	--------------------

The *Recitative* is the main melodic element of the work. The *Introduction* emphasizes the dance rhythm in the entire work. Section 2 presents a varied melody from the recitative, preparing for section 3 (of percussive character), where once more the melody is varied. The return of the *Introduction* to conclude the work lends a sense of finality.



Fig. 1

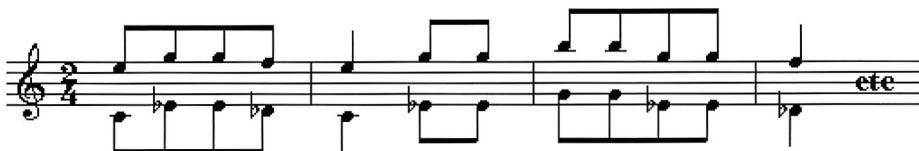


Fig. 2

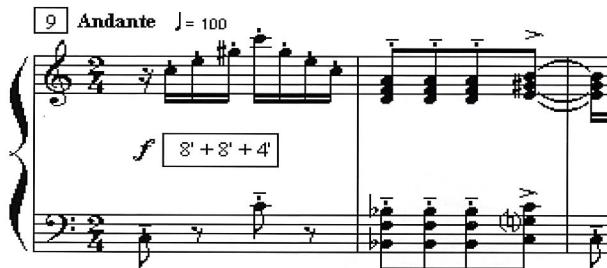


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Works Consulted

Cook, Nicholas. *A Guide to Musical Analysis*. (London: Dent, 1989).

Dunsby, J. & Whittall, A., *A Musical Analysis in Theory and Practice*. (London: Faber, 1988).

Koellreutter, H.J. *Introdução à Estética e à Composição Musical Contemporânea* (Porto Alegre: Movimento, 1985).

Morgan, Robert P. *Twentieth-Century Music: a History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America*. (New York: Norton, 1991).

_____. *Anthology of Twentieth-Century Music* (New York: Norton, 1992).

Paz, Ermelinda Azevedo. *500 canções brasileiras*. ed. Luis Bogo. (Rio de Janeiro, 1989).

Pergamo, A. M. L. *La Notacion de la Musica Contemporanea* (Buenos Aires: Ricordi Americana, 1973)

1 Commonly: I, IV and V chords.

2 The Brazilian country music titled *O menino da porteira* (amongst other country songs of this kind) is a good example of the usage of canto and contra canto.

3 Catira (or Cateretê): Native Indian-Brazilian dance found in the States of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso and Goiás.

CLASSIFIED

Harpsichord 1981, by Alec Hodsdon.
Painting in the lid of Stourhead. Black naturals, light wood sharps.
- £800

Clavichord 1937, by Alec Hodsdon. Made for Cecil Clutton.
Black naturals, black sharps.
Gold miniature cockerel on end of keyboard.
- £400

Clavichord 1947, by Alec Hodsdon.
Black naturals, light wood sharps. Needs some restoration.
- £400

Tel: 01799 502044

Bentside spinet. Lovely, resonant sound. Used for concerts.
Made from John Storrs kit. Music stand and made-to-measure strong,
padded transport case. £2000, o.n.o.

Can be seen in London.

Box no 111, Scout Bottom Farm, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W.Yorks, HX7 5JS

TOCCATA DE ROÇA

Calimerio Soares (1982)

Recitando calmamente $\text{♩} = 40$

Harpsichord

mp 8' lute + 4'

5

rall.

a) Bater o ritmo na madeira do instrumento, com ambas as mãos

Andante $\text{♩} = 100$

f 8' + 8' + 4'

9

13

a) Bater o ritmo na madeira do instrumento, com ambas as mãos
 Knock the rhythm at the instrument's wood with both hands.

Copyright 1985 by Calimerio A. Soares Netto
 All rights reserved

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

mp [8' lute + 4']

33

37

p 4' off, only 8' lute

41

8vb

45

(8vb)

49

Harpsichord & fortepiano

65

69

73

77

The image displays four staves of musical notation for piano, arranged in two systems of two staves each. The notation is in common time. The top staff (treble clef) contains eighth-note patterns with various slurs and grace notes. The bottom staff (bass clef) contains eighth-note patterns with slurs. Measure 65 starts with a dotted half note followed by a sixteenth-note grace note. Measure 69 features a bass line with eighth-note chords. Measure 73 shows a bass line with eighth-note chords. Measure 77 includes a bass line with eighth-note chords and a dynamic marking of p .

81

Harpsichord & fortepiano



97

8^{vb}

101

(8^{vb})

105

(8^{vb})

109

8^{vb}

>

113

allargando

117

lute off, prepare 8' + 8' + 4'

a tempo

f

121

125