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## Leo Brouwer's Estudios Sencillos for Guitar: Afro-Cuban Elements and Pedagogical Devices

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**The University of Southern Mississippi**

**LEO BROUWER'S ESTUDIOS SENCILLOS FOR GUITAR:  
AFRO-CUBAN ELEMENTS AND PEDAGOGICAL DEVICES**

**by**

**Carlos Isaac Castilla Peñaranda**

**Abstract of a Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts**

**May 2009**

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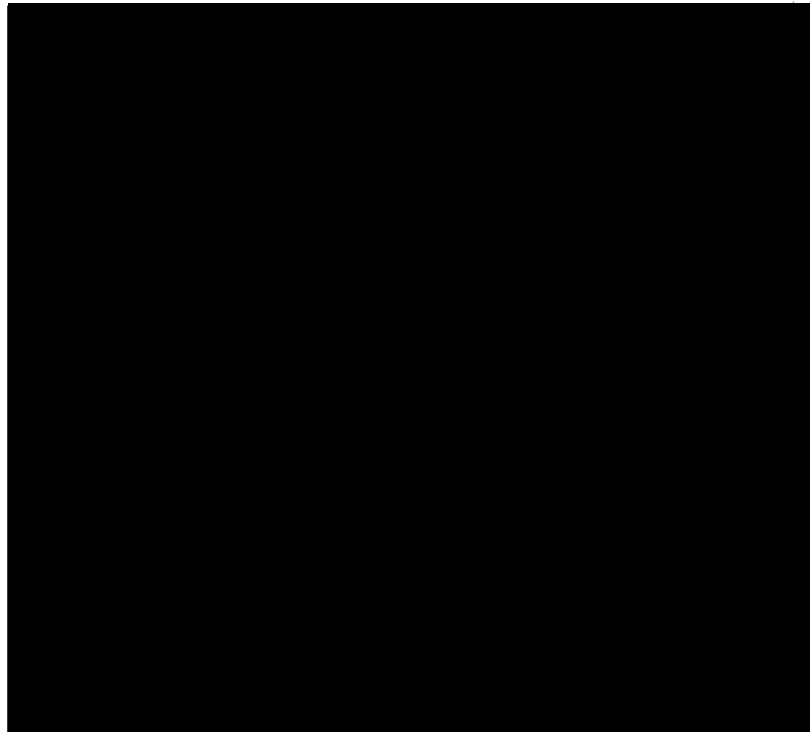
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**A Dissertation**

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Approved:



May 2009

## ABSTRACT

### LEO BROUWER'S ESTUDIOS SENCILLOS FOR GUITAR: AFRO-CUBAN ELEMENTS AND PEDAGOGICAL DEVICES

by Carlos Isaac Castilla Peñaranda

May 2009

This document presents a detailed performance and pedagogical analysis of the *Estudios Sencillos* by the Cuban composer, Leo Brouwer. Such pertinent musical aspects as biographical data of the composer, Afro-Cuban traditions, Cuban composers, and philosophical and artistic trends that impacted Brouwer's aesthetic world are studied and discussed.

Virtually any of Brouwer's works can serve to convey this information, but it is particularly this group of pieces that better suits the study of Afro-Cuban elements within a pedagogical focus since no other of Brouwer's compositions is set with this particular target in mind: etudes for the development and/or implementation of a particular technical skill.

The author offers suggestions for each of the etudes regarding fingerings, strokes, dynamics, and interpretation based on his own findings and pedagogical experience. A chapter of the document is dedicated to describing the Afro-Cuban phenomena that served as an influence to Brouwer's oeuvre. A glossary of important terms is also included.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Conductor, composer, and guitarist, Leo Brouwer (born 1939) has set a landmark in the history of the guitar. Throughout his life he has composed hundreds of film scores, dozens of chamber pieces, concertos, symphonies, and electro-acoustic works. He has also composed numerous and diverse works for the guitar.

The purpose of this study will be to analyze the *Estudios Sencillos*, the Simple Etudes for Guitar, by Leo Brouwer. This dissertation should enable the guitarist to better understand these etudes as a pedagogical resource and to help him or her to perform Brouwer's overall guitar music in a more idiomatic way.

Brouwer's *Estudios Sencillos* were completed and published in four scattered volumes over a span of twenty-five years, covering not only different moments in Brouwer's life, but also different phases of evolution in his approach to composition. These volumes display plenty of creativity from the composer, who presented along with the etudes an important output of music for different instruments and formats. At the same time, he combined his compositional activity and expanded his horizons as an artist and intellectual, holding prestigious positions in the cultural world, inside and outside Cuba, his country.

Brouwer's etudes are scattered among the rest of his compositions in terms of when they were written. Brouwer has stated that it is impossible to analyze his guitar pieces in general without considering hundreds of pieces that he composed in between them.<sup>1</sup> According to Brouwer, analyzing his music without such consideration will give the

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<sup>1</sup> Constance McKenna, "An Interview with Leo Brouwer," *Guitar Review* 75 (Fall 1988): 25.

wrong idea, one that makes him seem whimsically eclectic.<sup>2</sup> Brouwer calls his guitar pieces, “prototypes of change”; this statement provides an interesting way of looking at his compositional process.<sup>3</sup>

The *Estudios Sencillos* are wonderful miniatures that transcend the two-fold primary goal of an etude, that being to provide the performer with practice in a particular technical skill, while also being miniature concert pieces. As a result, they have been widely recorded and performed in recitals all over the world by prominent guitarists. At the same time, the etudes are full of traditional Afro-Cuban elements, which are important to understand in order to convey a convincing and accurate interpretation of Brouwer’s music.

Early in his career, Brouwer felt that the guitar was lacking a more interesting repertoire, one that was more representative of new trends in composition. He mentioned in the video-documentary *Leo Brouwer* that the guitar repertoire, although beautiful, was weak in terms of form and development.<sup>4</sup> Brouwer thus felt the need to “fill the gaps” of the repertoire. He even criticized the guitar concertos of Villa-Lobos and Rodrigo, mentioning their beauty, but also their shortness and lack of motivic development.

Brouwer’s early compositional efforts focused on musical content, technique, and proper exploitation of timbral resources on the guitar. Brouwer has always been a pioneer of the “avant-garde” style of guitar composition, including innovative, extended techniques in many of his pieces, as can be easily observed in *Canticum* (1968) and *La*

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<sup>2</sup> Constance McKenna, “An Interview with Leo Brouwer,” *Guitar Review* 75 (Fall 1988): 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Leo Brouwer, and José Padrón, *Leo Brouwer*. Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba: ICAIC, 2000.

*Espiral Eterna* (1971). However, his approach to standard technique has been always unique, and he has shown plenty of idiomatic nuances since the beginning of his career.

According to Brouwer, he did not feel satisfied with the traditional technique that he inherited directly from Isaac Nicola, his first formal guitar teacher.<sup>5</sup> It is important to mention that Nicola was a former student of the legendary guitarist Emilio Pujol. Pujol was one of the most important former students of Francisco Tárrega, often considered to be the father of the modern guitar school. Pujol contributed a great deal by bringing the classical guitar tradition or Spanish guitar legacy to the Caribbean and South America. Therefore, Brouwer was taught from the early stages of his guitar education with solid information having an impeccable pedigree. Nevertheless, he felt that his technique remained incomplete, as if something were missing.

That feeling propelled his restless quest for new sonorities and made him develop a rich technique that expanded the boundaries of the tradition. However, *Estudios Sencillos* are also a great showcase of Brouwer's approach to conventional technique. Since the *Estudios Sencillos* were written mostly to be played in the lower fingerboard area, some of them are accessible even to novice students. At the same time, their highly sophisticated musical content makes them suitable for the concert stage. This content is often emphasized by the composer by means of specific dynamics and performance practice annotations, which in turn end up conveying a hidden lesson to the student.

My goal is to compile a comprehensive list of elements that will allow the guitarist/pedagogue to address and perform the *Estudios Sencillos* in an idiomatic, effective and informed manner. To achieve this goal, it is important to understand the

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<sup>5</sup> Leo Brouwer, and José Padrón, *Leo Brouwer*.



background of the composer and the different elements that helped form his inner aesthetic world. One such element is the Afro-Cuban tradition and its basic terms and concepts. It is also important to introduce some early Afro-Cuban composers who had a significant role in Cuban music and whose legacy influenced Brouwer. Philosophical trends and various artists and intellectuals who left an aesthetic footprint in Brouwer's art will also be discussed. Once these elements are studied, I will analyze the etudes. All the elements mentioned above will be pointed out in each one of the *Estudios Sencillos*, giving priority to the stylistic and pedagogical elements.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

Several books were consulted for the purpose of this dissertation. These books contain data about the *Estudios Sencillos*, Afro-Cuban tradition, Brouwer's biographical data, and Brouwer's own writing.

The first book is *Dez Estudos Simples Para Violão de Leo Brouwer*, written by the Brazilian guitarist and pedagogue Orlando Fraga. This work includes just the first two volumes of the *Estudios Sencillos*, just the first ten etudes. The author dedicates one chapter to each etude. Each chapter is divided into three sections: right hand technique, left hand technique, and an analysis of form and phrasing. The author emphasizes in the preface that his primary focus is interpretation and technique. Fraga includes many graphics that may vary according to the type of analysis that he tries to convey. His analyses focus on rhythm, phrasing, articulation and form. The author suggests that the reader first consult the writings of Charles Rosen, William Rochstein, Heinrich Shenker, and Arnold Schoenberg in order to understand the concepts implied in such analysis.

The second work is a study guide written by the American guitarist and pedagogue David Tanenbaum. The work consists of three volumes, covering relevant etudes by Fernando Sor, Mateo Carcassi, and Leo Brouwer. The third volume is completely dedicated to the *Estudios Sencillos* and was published in 1992. Tanenbaum's work covers all the twenty etudes, dedicating a specific section to each one. The author supports his study with several sources that, according to him, are generally unavailable, including the tapes of Leo Brouwer's late 70s Berkeley master classes in which the composer

discusses the first ten etudes, the Cuban edition of the last ten etudes, and the collaboration with Brouwer's researcher, Paul Century.

Tanenbaum's work provides valuable information about the *Estudios Sencillos* without going into much depth. Clearly, the idea of his book is to provide easy reading to convey several aspects of the etudes in a practical way. The author had the opportunity to record these etudes, so it is very common to find valuable insights and advice throughout the book. Although the book is short, Tanenbaum was able to include interesting data about Brouwer's biography, style, some Afro-Cuban elements, and technique. At some points, he expresses his own conclusions and even corrects the edition's version of the Etudes.

Two books authored by Leo Brouwer and his wife Isabelle Hernández, a Cuban musicologist, are also of great value for the purpose of this dissertation. The first one is the recently published *Gajes del Oficio* (2004), which is basically a congress report of different lectures and writings that Leo Brouwer has made throughout his career. This book includes virtually every chapter of Brouwer's essay *La Música, lo Cubano y la Innovación* (1982). The idea behind this book is to portray Leo Brouwer as a scholar, intellectual, and thinker beyond his more immediately musical achievements. The book is filled with Brouwer's ideas on philosophy, ideologies, art, aesthetics and Cuban music.

The other book written by Isabelle Hernandez is "Leo Brouwer" (1997). This book recounts Brouwer's life in chronological order. It reports virtually every step of Brouwer's career, including his origins, friendships, jobs, achievements, catalog of pieces, festivals, concerts, and early manuscripts.

Two books are used in this document as references to the Cuban culture and its Afro-Cuban elements. The first one is *La Música en Cuba* (Music in Cuba) by Alejo Carpentier. This book encompasses the history of Cuban music from as early as the Spanish conquests to beyond the second half of the twentieth century. It is written in delightful prose and with many references to the works of relevant scholars of Cuban folklore. Carpentier conveys invaluable information through his personal views and insights, although sometimes he can be rather opinionated. The second is a very recent publication, *Diccionario Enciclopédico de la Música en Cuba* (2007) (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cuban Music) written by Cuban musicologist Radamés Giró. It covers virtually every term, genre, subject, and composer related to the island.

CHAPTER III  
BIOGRAPHY OF LEO BROUWER: AN OVERVIEW OF HIS ROOTS,  
INFLUENCES, AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL CAREER

Roots

Juan Leovigildo Brouwer Mezquida was born in La Havana, Cuba, on March 1, 1939. His mother and aunt were active musicians. His mother, Mercedes Mezquida, was a talented singer and instrumentalist. She played the flute, clarinet, saxophone, piano, different percussive instruments, and guitar. She started a duet with her sister Cachita, Brouwer's aunt, with whom she co-hosted a radio program *La Hora Suprema* (The Supreme Hour), which featured the sisters performing different instruments and singing. Mercedes and Cachita also opened a music academy in their house. The duo later evolved into a successful touring orchestra that performed tropical music in different countries of the Americas including Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Panama.<sup>6</sup>

Brouwer's father, Juan Bautista Brouwer Lecuona, came from a very important musical family in Cuban music. His mother was a musician and his uncle was the legendary Ernesto Lecuona, a world-renowned pianist and composer from Cuba. Although Leo Brouwer's father did not pursue music as his main career<sup>7</sup>, he certainly inherited the artistic vein of his family. Juan Brouwer was a self-taught guitarist who had many acquaintances among the guitar world in Cuba at that time. He taught Leo his first guitar lesson, which included the basic technique and evolved in little time to concert pieces, such as preludes and mazurkas by Tárrega and dances by Granados. None of these

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<sup>6</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*. Habana, Cuba: Editora Musical de Cuba. 2000, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Leo Brouwer' father was a veterinary pedagogue and also human cancer researcher.

lessons reflected scholarly rigor, since his father was not a professional. However, they certainly inspired Brouwer's passion for the instrument, as Brouwer recalls:

My father was an amateur guitarist of a high level who was able to play flamenco, music by Granados, Villa-Lobos and pieces by Tárrega and Albeniz. He learned all this music by ear without any score and was able to play them perfectly without a single mistake. In one of my visits I found him playing guitar for the first time and that was the day when I fell in love with this instrument. He asked me if I liked the guitar and immediately taught me my first lesson. He showed me some chord positions and strumming techniques. After a few days I was playing *farrucas* and *tanquillos* since flamenco was then and even today my passion. After five months I was playing standard pieces of the classical guitar repertoire exclusively by ear. Even after becoming a professional guitarist I kept playing those pieces exactly as I learned them originally.<sup>8</sup>

Around 1952, Brouwer met Jesus Ortega,<sup>9</sup> who was also studying the guitar. A great illustration of Leo's vocation as a pedagogue was demonstrated at the early age of twelve, when he taught everything he was learning from his father to Ortega, who later became his lifetime colleague and friend. At the end of that year, Leo was introduced to the renowned Cuban guitar pedagogue, Isaac Nicola. This event happened through one of the acquaintances of Brouwer's father, the Cuban guitarist Ramón Ibarra. Leo Brouwer's meeting with Isaac Nicola was a milestone in his career and development.<sup>10</sup> Nicola was a former student of Emilio Pujol and a bearer of the Tárrega tradition. He played many pieces for Leo that introduced him to different époques and guitar styles throughout history. Brouwer studied with Nicola until 1955, when he earned his title as professor of guitar. Brouwer was passionate about flamenco before meeting Nicola, but it was the latter who opened his eyes to the Renaissance, Classical and Romantic periods. For the

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<sup>8</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Brouwer's colleague, long time friend and important guitarist, pedagogue and researcher from Cuba. He has served for many years as the head of the guitar department at ISA (Cuban Institute of Arts.)

<sup>10</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 10.

first time, Brouwer was aware of the compositions of Milán, Narvaez, Sor, Llobet and Bach.

Brouwer's compositional bent developed almost simultaneously with his formal guitar studies. While studying the repertory of the guitar, Brouwer found both great and mediocre music. He thought that some music could have been written differently, with different melodic gestures or perhaps more graceful harmonic and voicing solutions. By altering those pieces according to his taste, though, he ended up with totally different music. But he thought he had no right to change the masters of the past, so began to have an urge to compose his own new music.<sup>11</sup>

#### Career

Brouwer composed for all kinds of instruments, ensembles, and media. Brouwer was also associated with the theater in Cuba, working with directors and dramatists to add music to their plays. This partnership allowed him to work with the many Cuban folklorists from whom he learned and developed his understanding of Afro-Cuban music. Brouwer found himself more engaged in film scoring projects, theater productions and conducting affairs, than he did composing music for guitar, as can be inferred by analyzing the chronology of his oeuvre documented in Isabelle Hernandez's biographical book, *Leo Brouwer*. According to Isabelle Hernandez, Leo Brouwer owes much of his style as a composer to his study of film music.<sup>12</sup> By analyzing his catalog, one can surmise that it was not until 1984, the year in which he composed *Variaciones Sobre un*

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<sup>11</sup> Leo Brouwer and José Padrón, *Leo Brouwer*.

<sup>12</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 93.

*Tema de Django Reinhardt*, that his writing for guitar became fruitful and steady. Before that year, his compositions were really scattered among the bulk of his overall output.

In terms of form, Brouwer was never attracted to any specific template. Once he understood, experimented with, and mastered the common forms of western music, he set those models aside and replaced them with ideas coming from filming techniques or from other types of visual arts. While pursuing a degree in design he learned about Paul Klee, whose teachings at the Bauhaus Academy during the early twentieth century inspired Brouwer's approach to music and composition greatly, especially regarding form and proportion. Brouwer experimented widely with painting at an early age, then decided to quit, since he felt he did not have enough talent.<sup>13</sup>

Brouwer worked at the *Amadeo Roldán Conservatory* in Havana, first teaching harmony and counterpoint, then later composition, music form, analytical techniques, orchestration, aesthetics, and music history. Two important Cuban institutions owe part of their success to the teachings of Brouwer. One is the *Teatro Musical de la Habana* (Havana Musical Theater) which provided an opportunity for many popular musicians such as the jazz pianist and Grammy-winner Chucho Valdés<sup>14</sup> to develop their careers through master-classes and workshops with Leo Brouwer. The other institution is the *Instituto Cubano del Arte y la Industria Cinematográficos* (Cuban Institute of the Arts and Cinematographic Industry) and its branch the *Grupo de Experimentación Sonora* (Group of Sonorous Experimentation). Brouwer continued developing the idea previously used with the TMH. For three years he educated a talented group of popular musicians

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<sup>13</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 93.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



within the areas of music and art history, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, and film scoring. Pablo Milanés and Silvio Rodríguez, two of the most important composers/singers of *Nueva Trova*<sup>15</sup>, whose work defined a whole era in Cuba and Latin-America, studied in those classrooms.<sup>16</sup>

Since the 1970s Brouwer also has been in the forefront of the areas of symphonic music and conducting, leaving also in these fields a pedagogical imprint. Many of the musicians who have worked with him have stated that his rehearsals are true lessons where everybody ends up learning a great deal.<sup>17</sup> In Padron's film, Brouwer mentioned that he finds it more interesting, challenging and valuable to work with younger orchestras with inexperienced players than when conducting a more experienced orchestra, such as the Berlin Philharmonic, where he claims the only thing the conductor needs to do is to give the entrance and the orchestra sounds perfect by itself.<sup>18</sup> Jesus Ortega mentions the following about Brouwer as pedagogue:

His main pedagogic prowess is his oeuvre itself. Every piece for guitar the maestro composes is embraced by the guitar world immediately, by both the beginner and the accomplished performer as well. The *Estudios Sencillos*, which were composed originally with a pedagogical purpose in mind, represent an important contribution for the technique and pedagogy of this instrument. This music has been incorporated virtually in every major conservatory in Europe, South America and North America as well.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See glossary of terms.

<sup>16</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 258.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Leo Brouwer and José Padrón, *Leo Brouwer*.

<sup>19</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 259.

In conclusion, his biography offers to the reader pertinent data concerning how Brouwer became a guitarist, composer, and pedagogue. Along with the *Estudios Sencillos*, the topic of this document, Brouwer's oeuvre compiles a catalog that surpasses two hundred works for a diversity of ensembles and formats.

## CHAPTER IV

## AFROCUBANIA AND BEYOND

## An Overview of the Afro-Cuban Phenomenon

By the nineteenth century in Cuba, black descendants of slaves were totally trans-cultured into the white culture. As a result, their traditions, although apparently forgotten, still remained strong enough to influence the rhythms of Cuban music without altering its melodic content. At the same time new slaves were still arriving to Cuban shores. There was an interesting classification for the different stages of slave generations in Cuba: *bozales* – those who just arrived from Africa, speaking only in their dialects; *ladinos*- those who are starting to speak Spanish; *criollos* - the children of *ladinos*; and *reyoyo* the children of *criollos*. The slavers discovered that it was healthy for slaves to practice their own dances, so they were allowed to do so during white festivities; however, blacks were not allowed to attend parties at other slaver's properties. Normally, a slaver would buy slaves from a single clan or nation, since slaves could not visit others from different ranches. As a result many different African sub-cultures were preserved in Cuba for some time. The emancipated blacks started to build social factions to preserve the original African-black of the so-called "common graves." These factions evolved into fellowships called *Ñáñigos*.<sup>20</sup>

The term Afro-Cuban music is extremely broad. The presence of African music in Cuba has basically four ancestors: *Dajomé*, *Lucumí*, *Carabalí* and *Congo*. Alejo Carpentier states that according to Fernando Ortiz, the riverside communities of the Niger, specifically the *Yorubas* or *Nagos* better known as the *Lucumís* in Cuba, brought along with their sophisticated religious beliefs along with their drums to the island.<sup>21</sup> In these communities the drum beats remain pure even today, to implore favors from the deities.

The *Lucumí* and *Ñáñiga* music usually has a very sparse melody that contrasts with a more active rhythmic background (provided by the drums). The congregation sings in

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<sup>20</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *La Música en Cuba*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 1972, 288. Partial translation Carlos Castilla.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

unison and the overall system is antiphonal, presenting either a soloist and a chorus, or just two choruses doubling each other on the phrase repetitions.<sup>22</sup> Some other customary features are the absence of leading tones and the use of pentatonic scales.

It is important here to explain the intonation and nature of the *batá* drums which are extremely prominent in the Afro-Cuban tradition. Three drums in graduated sizes form the whole *batá* set. All of them have a tapered shape and two sides. The largest *batá* is named *Iyá* and has the lower register. It is tuned with an (F) and an (A). The middle *batá* is the *Itótele* and its register is higher. It is tuned with a (G sharp) and an (E). The smallest *batá* is the *Okónkolo*, which has the highest register of the whole set, and has the same note on both ends, a (B). The *batá* drums present a clear bitonality (E and F major). The same intervallic relationships outlined here are prevalent in Brouwer's music.

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<sup>22</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *La Música en Cuba*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 1972, 295.



Illustration 1. *Batá* drum set.<sup>23</sup>

*Batá* drum set: Iyá, Itótele, and Okónkolo.

The *batás* are arguably the most ancient of the African drums types found in Cuba, but they are just a part of the entire Afro-Cuban arsenal of percussion. Among other instruments belonging to the same broad classification there are the *tumba* and *tahona*, *cajón*, *marimbula*, *güiro* and *claves*. All of them may be used for secular or sacred purposes.<sup>24</sup>

Some reminders of the music characteristics of these instruments can be found in many of Brouwer's *Estudios Sencillos*. For instance, in Etude XI Brouwer uses the *güiro* rhythmic pattern as the basis for the whole composition; while in Etude XIII, the use of the *son clave* pattern is rather apparent.

It is noteworthy that the pure Afro-Cuban tradition has predominantly plain chanting with drumming as accompaniment. The accentuation of the phrases does not obey the Western system of regular patterns of weak and strong beats, but rather a very advanced system of modal rhythms. Part of this tradition can be seen in the apparently whimsical treatment that Brouwer uses in his etudes, changing the meter constantly.

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<sup>23</sup> *Batá* drum set. <http://www.worldartswest.org>. [Accessed June 18, 2008].

<sup>24</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *La Música en Cuba*, 299.

In Brouwer's music, the combination of the black subculture with the predominant white culture is represented through the concept of "*Lo Guajiro*," which is associated with the peasant culture. It was perceived as whiter, more melodic and "cleaner." This tradition obeys the heritage of the first white colonizers, who brought with them all the romance and the poetry of the Spanish countryside, mostly from the Canary Islands. The Cuban *guajiros* accompanied *décimas* with a *tiple*, *laúd* or *tres*, which are in the guitar family of instruments.<sup>25</sup>

Regardless of which music may be more "valuable" than the other, I will show how both these parts of Cuban heritage are represented in Brouwer's music: the exotic, pentatonic, multi-rhythmic elements of the African Diaspora and the white Spanish melodic heritage.

#### Caturla and Roldán: The Pioneers of Afro-Cubanism

Brouwer's immersion in the *Afrocubanismo* (Afrocubanism) has its origins in the precepts established by the masters of this movement back in the beginnings of the twentieth century in Cuba. The pioneering figures of Amadeo Roldán (1900-1939) and Alejandro García Caturla (1906-1940) demonstrated a vast knowledge of the different components within the Afro-Cuban tradition in their own compositions. These two composers were probably the most relevant of the whole line of erudite composers in Cuba who found inspiration in the Afro-Cuban traditions.

Amadeo Roldán's oeuvre contributed a great deal of technical elements to future Cuban composers. For example, he was the first to come up with a complete system of

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<sup>25</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *La Música en Cuba*, 303.

notation for folkloric instruments included in the orchestra along with the execution of extended techniques. Roldán was an important influence on Brouwer, who also has strong opinions about the treatment of the folkloric instruments and their inclusion in the orchestra.

On July 12, 1980, Brouwer gave a lecture about a work by Roldán named *Motivos de Son*, a piece based on the poetry of *Nicolás Guillén*<sup>26</sup>. The lecture, well documented in the book *Gajes del Oficio* brought immense clarity for the purposes of this dissertation. Leo Brouwer stated that Roldán, as a composer, went against any European influence and rather established himself in his roots, with an uncommon rigor.<sup>27</sup> *Motivos de Son* consists of eight songs for soprano, winds, strings and percussion. They are based on the *Yoruba*, *Bantú*, and the “peasant” traditions, and they combine elements of such Cuban popular musical genres as the *son*. According to Brouwer, *Motivos de Son* has remained of great importance in Cuban music, especially for being the most relevant homage ever paid to the *son* as a traditional genre.<sup>28</sup>

Example No.1a shows some notes used by Brouwer in his lecture. This is his own hand writing, as it appears on his latest book, *Gajes del Oficio*. Many of the following rhythmic formulas that Brouwer analyzed and excerpted from Roldan’s music are present also in his own music. This example features the *rallao del güiro* (scratched pattern of the *güiro*), which is the main motive of Brouwer’s Etude XI.

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<sup>26</sup> Afro-Cuban poet (1902-1989).

<sup>27</sup> Leo Brouwer, Isabelle Hdez., and Nisleidys Flores Carmona, *Leo Brouwer: Gajes del Oficio*. La Habana, Cuba: Letras Cubanas. 2004, 36.

<sup>28</sup> Leo Brouwer, *Gajes del Oficio*, 36.

**Example 1a. Leo Brower's notes from his lecture about Roldán's music.**

Güiro

"Rallao" del güiro en la Guaracha-Son 29

**Example 1b. *Stretto* displacement of the *clave*, as used by Roldán.**

2 clave

Desplazamiento en "stretto" de la "clave"

clave cubana típica.

Alejandro García Caturla was a disciple of Nadia Boulanger in Paris, and he is considered to be one of the most important musical minds of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Cuba.<sup>30</sup> During his early years he was considered a prodigy, able to learn many languages by himself, get a law degree in just three years and simultaneously take care of his musical endeavors. He defied the prejudices of his white bourgeois lineage; he manifested a clear admiration for Afro-Cuban culture, as will be discussed later.

<sup>29</sup> Guaracha-son is one of the many variants of the son genre.

<sup>30</sup> Aurelio de la Vega, "Roldán, Amadeo. In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>. [accessed July 24, 2008].



After his trip to France, he focused immediately on the Afro-Cuban elements of his land.<sup>31</sup> The Hispanic heritage did not influence him too much. Instead, he was an enthusiastic and avid student of the Cuban music from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Saumell*<sup>32</sup> and *Cervantes*<sup>33</sup>, with their fusion of French dances and black rhythms forged in America, were his favorites.<sup>34</sup> Caturla played and experimented with the Afro-Cuban style from the beginning with total authority. A great example of his Afro-Cuban mastery can be observed in his piano piece, *Berceuse Campesina* (Peasant's Lullaby), in which he mixed *guajiro* melody with "black" rhythm, something that until that point had no precedent. Caturla wrote music to capture the real essence of the specific rhythm he was using. His interest was not to use a folkloric "formula," wearing it out from the beginning to the end, but rather to recreate the world that surrounded a specific Afro-Cuban rhythm. Examples of that rhythm are present in his piece *La Rumba* for orchestra or his *Bembé* for woodwinds, brasses and piano. Both pieces represent the utter essence of the *santería* and other Afro-Cuban traditions.<sup>35</sup> Caturla left behind a substantial body of work, including music for orchestra, chamber ensembles, voice, and piano.

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<sup>31</sup> Aurelio de la Vega, "Roldán, Amadeo. In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>. [accessed July 24, 2008].

<sup>32</sup> Manuel Saumell (1817-1870) important exponent of the 19<sup>th</sup> century school of Cuban classical piano music.

<sup>33</sup> Ignacio Cervantes (1847-1905) is one of the most notable composers and pianists from the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Cuba.

<sup>34</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *La Música en Cuba*, 319.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

### The Cuban Style according to Brouwer

Upon close analysis of Brouwer's essay *La música, lo cubano y la innovación*, one can gather that according to him, Cuban style joined two ingredients. There was the "African black" and the "Spanish white," and the result, "*Lo Cubano*" (the Cuban thing).<sup>36</sup>

Brouwer considers the following elements to define the Cuban sound:

1. The rhythm of drums of African origin.
2. The guitar and its variations, representing Spanish roots. The guitar is used in the Cuban *Nueva Trova*, and also in the *controversia campesina* (peasant controversy song). The latter also uses as a main instrument the Cuban *laúd* (Cuban lute) and the Cuban *tres*.
3. The voice, including the Spanish *Guajira*, the Italian opera and salon song, but "cubanized" by the language.
4. The musical form of two dance types: elementary, from African rituals, and sophisticated, from Spanish ballroom festivities.
5. The piano *contradanzas* composed by Manuel Saumell, which were influenced by Schubert's harmonic style and include rhythmic elements of folklore.
6. The presence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century rhythmic structures of the *danzón*,<sup>37</sup> *danza*,<sup>38</sup> and *contradanza*,<sup>39</sup> in the piano music of Ignacio Cervantes, in this case with Chopin harmonic style.<sup>40</sup>

With these elements, Brouwer asserts the following conclusions: First, the most representative sounding elements of the past Cuban popular music are currently valid.

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<sup>36</sup>Leo Brouwer, *Gajes del Oficio*, 24.

<sup>37</sup> Cuban dance originated from the combination of the Cuban *contradanza* and the *danza*.

<sup>38</sup> The *danza* evolved from the *contradanza* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>39</sup> Cuban *contradanza* originated as a result of the immigration of French and Haitians to Cuba in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the French contradanse in the island went into an adaptation process becoming a genre of Cuban characteristics. With Manuel Saumell (1817-1870) the *contradanza* loses its initial dance purpose to become a concert piece.

<sup>40</sup> Leo Brouwer, *La Música, lo Cubano y la Innovación*. Ciudad de La Habana, Cuba: Editorial Letras Cubanas. 1982, 24.

Second, the Spanish and African roots joined forces in Cuba without sacrificing any of their integrity.<sup>41</sup>

#### Brouwer's Thoughts on Postmodernism, Universalism, and Nationalism

Brouwer's thoughts about the relationship among contemporaneity, postmodernism, and folklore are directly related to his understanding of nationalism and its value.<sup>42</sup>

According to him, contemporaneity, as a trend of thought at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, raised the concept of opposition between nationalism and universalism.<sup>43</sup> The latter refers to the sum of the rules and styles imposed during European and North American colonialism.<sup>44</sup>

Brouwer believes that folklore is a valid and important element for artistic creation and innovation. He thinks that the main feature that defines postmodernism is the crisis of European "authority" controlling the dominant trends of artistic creation. Thus, pluralism is the result.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, Cuba as part of both Latin America and the Caribbean relies on the mixture of its various cultures. The Cuban by definition is a *criollo*, which means sum, integration, plurality, mixture, and, therefore, richness. All these features go hand by hand with postmodernist thought.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Leo Brouwer, *La Música, lo Cubano y la Innovación*. Ciudad de La Habana, Cuba: Editorial Letras Cubanas. 1982, 24.

<sup>42</sup> Leo Brouwer, *Gajes del Oficio*, 49.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>46</sup> Leo Brouwer, *Gajes del Oficio*, 50.

Brouwer thus projects himself as a “*criollo* – postmodernist” artist following the *criollo* ideal, which, as the Cuban national hero Jose Martí said, is to: “Embrace the world in our countries, but keep our Latin-America as the spine.”<sup>47</sup>

#### Overview of Different Elements in Brouwer’s Style

Brouwer was able to achieve a personal sound from the very early stage of his career. The following elements mark Brouwer’s stylized themes: ascending intervals of seconds and thirds (major and minor); descending melodic lines, similar to the shape of African melodies; pentatonic scales; antiphonal or responsorial character inherited from the African rituals, binary structure; complex of rhythmic features, and the concept of “*Lo Son*.”

According to Brouwer, this concept called “*Lo Son*” is related to a new category of the Cuban thinking and a convergence of a cultural identity.<sup>48</sup> “*Lo Son*” is not the archetype of the obvious sounding elements of the *son*, that would be better called “*Lo Sonero*,” but instead is the essence of it.<sup>49</sup> Brouwer elevated the concept of “*Lo Son*” to the level of an aesthetic category. When asked, Brouwer has mentioned that “*Lo Son*” is totally embedded in him and therefore it comes out naturally when composing without being conscious about it.<sup>50</sup>

Brouwer has shown two formal tendencies in his output. The first may be the use of free forms. Brouwer tends to develop music gradually, based on his perception of the

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<sup>47</sup> Leo Brouwer, *Gajes del Oficio*, 56.

<sup>48</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 150.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 150.

organic growth of his chosen sounds and cells. The other process used by Brouwer to determine form is a “modular” one, that being the result of the influence on him of the German-Swiss painter Paul Klee and his implementation of the golden mean,<sup>51</sup> an influence that can be clearly seen in his milestone piece *La Espiral Eterna*.

Also, it is pertinent to mention that for Brouwer anything that repeats should be varied.<sup>52</sup> An example of that repetition can be seen in his very first etude, where the first theme is repeated with a C sharp on its second statement, as shown in Example 6.

Brouwer defines his own approach to composition as follows:

Homo Ludens means Man who plays, and it is precisely during an early recreational stage that the individual speaks out at an early age. My personal secret was to be able to find the balance between the highest discipline and the pure joy of the music as a game...<sup>53</sup>

The analysis that follows in the next chapter is intended to discover in Brouwer's *Estudios Sencillos* the combination of the elements described in the present chapter: Afro-Cuban tradition, peasant influence, and the concept of “*Lo Son*.”

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<sup>51</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 35.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 352.

## CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE *ESTUDIOS SENCILLOS*

## Introduction to the First and Second Volumes

The first ten *Estudios Sencillos* were composed between 1959 and 1961. Some of them may have been written in the United States. The last ten were composed in 1981, except for Etude XII. Some publishing issues found in the *Estudios Sencillos* include the fact that Etude No. 8 was originally conceived as No. 6 and had the title of *Fantasia*. Etude No. 9 was originally composed as No. 7 and was finished in Santiago de Cuba.<sup>54</sup> In a conversation with Jesus Ortega from 1983, Brouwer states:

This is the beginning of a series of etudes that were composed for the real guitar apprentice. Every technical problem is separated by the degree of difficulty of the rest of information. If, for instance, there is an arpeggio for the left hand, we are going to do it so that the other hand, in this case the right one, does not find much problem. The choral etude in three voices, is an exercise for chords where the left hand fingerings are relatively simple, the chords change virtually finger by finger.<sup>55</sup>

The *Estudios Sencillos* are miniatures that have been embraced by many recording artists and many music schools in their curricula. Every etude approaches a specific technique problem, as well as expressive demand. These etudes, as with all of Brouwer's music, have an incredible rhythmical richness. Additionally, they are based on cells of different genres of Cuban music. Every etude will be analyzed from three different perspectives:

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<sup>54</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 50.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

1. Afro-Cuban elements (peasant elements will also be mentioned).
2. Stylistic and idiomatic elements characteristic of Leo Brouwer.
3. Technical and pedagogical elements.

### First Volume

#### *Etude I*

The first Afro-Cuban element present on the first etude is the bi-measured nature of the opening and subsequent phrases. As has been mentioned before, one of the most relevant features of the Afro-Cuban tradition is the mixture between black and white cultures. The original African cells were formed by just one measure, but in Cuba the basic rhythmic motifs have two measures, and they blend the syncopated black and the steady white, mixed together.

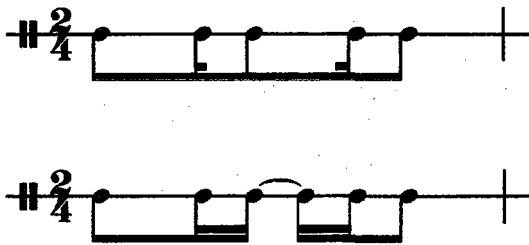
This opening bi-measured phrase also has an interesting internal rhythmic pattern in each measure. The first measure displays a melody in the bass that alternates with an accompaniment of notes G and B. The melody present in the bass line has a rhythmic structure similar to the 3-3-2 subdivision of the *rumba clave*, but it is not evidently spelled since the second group of three is divided between a quarter note and an eighth note, both a D and without a tie.

#### **Example 2. Etude I. Measure 1.**



The second measure instead presents in the bass line a variation of the *cinquillo cubano*, also called *danzón clave*. Instead of having the typical *cinquillo* figure (shown in Example 3), it shows the same elements but in a slightly different order, in augmentation ( $\text{♩} = \text{♪}$ ) and highly syncopated.

**Example 3. *Cinquillo Cubano*.**



**Example 4. Etude I. Measure 2.**



At the same time, the accompaniment alternates rhythmically with the bass line filling the gaps of its syncopation. This feature is commonly present in the percussion, bass and other rhythm section instruments of folkloric or traditional ensembles that play a *montuno* with the proper feel, pocket, or groove. Those players usually fill the gaps of the highly syncopated *tumbao* line with “ghost notes” that are represented here as an interval of a major third. It is thus clear that the bass line should be brought up, but as we can see, the accompaniment has an important role in providing a distinctive Afro-Cuban feel.



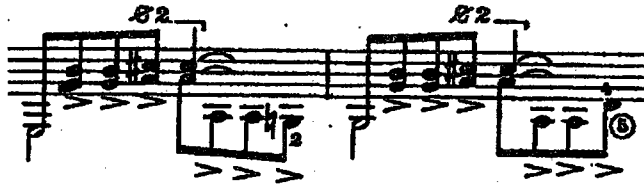
It should not be at the same level of volume as the bass line, but it should still be played with enough presence and be very precise rhythmically.

A common physical gesture that might help to understand how the ghost notes within a *tumbao* work can be observed on the *conga* or *tumbadora* players, or even the double bass or baby bass players of a modern *timba* group when playing grooves. These gestures help them to play their lines with the proper feel and with a tight sense of rhythm.

The way Brouwer treats the bi-measured nature of the first phrase resembles but does not imitate the bi-measured Afro-Cuban *rumba* or the *cinquillo*. These two types of clave have a weak and strong side. In this case, Brouwer eliminates the weak one and invents his own version of strong bi-measureness. These first two measures of the *Estudios Sencillos* show clearly Brouwer's style of taking the most basic figures of the Afro-Cuban music and developing them into something stylistically unique. It is important to mention that as an axiom, Brouwer will always try to avoid the predictability caused by importing directly a plain folkloric element into a given piece. His approach to this matter is similar to that of his already mentioned predecessors in Afro-Cubanism, Roldán and Caturla.

Another Afro-Cuban element can be observed at the beginning of the B section (mm.9-10). The responsorial nature of the *Lucumí* rituals are depicted by the dialogue between the bass line and the major thirds, formerly functioning as an accompaniment and now working as a melody.

**Example 5. Etude I. Measures 9-10.**



Brouwer provides an interpretive lesson as well in this etude. The phrase in the first two measures is repeated immediately in measures three and four, with a slight variation that consists of a C sharp instead of the C natural in the previous phrase:

**Example 6. Etude I. Measures 1-4.**



[ First phrase ] [ Variated repetition ]

*mf*

*pp*

M.1

M.2

M.3

M.4

This C sharp should be brought out somehow as a way of showing an understanding of Brouwer's intentions. As it also can be seen, the dynamic marking for the first phrase (in the first two measures) is a *mezzo forte* and clearly contrasts with the *pianissimo* of its repetition in measures three and four. This idea of contrast continues in the second phrase starting in measure five.

**Example 7. Etude I. Measures 5-8.**

[ Second Phrase ] [ Repetition ]

*f* *mp*

As the score shows above, the dynamics are similar to those in the previous phrase, but are overall increasingly louder. This simple but important feature of this piece becomes a valuable lesson for the student, who will need to control his initial volume in order to convey the expected effect of a natural crescendo.

Brouwer's way of varying the repetition is rather prevalent in this etude, and it represents a great lesson for the student, since this phenomenon is customary to the music of every common practice period. This way the student is able to begin developing a consciousness of how traditional musical discourse works.

*Etude II*

Many pieces by Brouwer for guitar, chamber and symphonic formats contain quotations of his *Estudios Sencillos*. The second etude provides an example. The fourth movement of *Pequeñas Piezas para Piano, Coral* (1960) resembles the second etude.<sup>56</sup> 1960 was the year in which Brouwer wrote his second series of etudes, following a piano fugue, a cello sonata, and the previously mentioned *Pequeñas Piezas para Piano*. In a conversation with Isabelle Hernandez, Brouwer refers to the second etude:

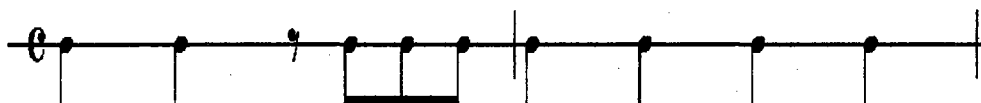
<sup>56</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 150.

“The choral etude in three voices is an exercise for chords where the left hand fingerings are relatively simple; the chords change virtually finger by finger.”<sup>57</sup> Brouwer’s idea here is perhaps to isolate a specific problem within a musical context. In this case, the problem is to play sustained chords and conduct the voicing, while paying attention to specific dynamic and articulation markings that are present from the very beginning.

It is worthwhile to note the number of dynamics and articulation markings in this etude, especially after the fifth measure towards the end. The pedagogue has a great opportunity with this piece to teach all kinds of expressive nuances such as *crescendo*, *decrescendo*, accents, *legatos*, and *diminuendos*. Dynamics also rank from a piano *meno sonoro* to *mf sonoro* and even *mp* and *forte*.

This miniature is in common time and starts with a pick-up measure. This is characteristic of the old Cuban *danzones* from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that had the *cinquillo* or *danzón clave* as the core of its rhythmic structure. The Afro-Cuban bi-measure structure is evident and also Brouwer’s interpretation of it. The *cinquillo* is again hidden and altered. Brouwer shows the two-bar structure throughout the whole etude following this pattern:

**Example 8. Two-bar structure. *Cinquillo* variation.**



This structure can be seen right from the beginning of the piece in measures two and three:

<sup>57</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 50.

**Example 9. Etude II. Measures 1–2.**

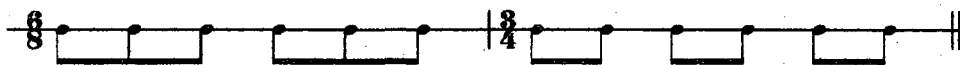


Brouwer mentioned in a master class that I attended in Havana in 2000 that guitarists should educate their ears by listening analytically to the source from which music comes. That is, if the guitarist is playing a Domenico Scarlatti sonata, listening to the original version for harpsichord is crucial. In this case, it is clear that for the etudes and Brouwer's overall oeuvre, it is crucial to hear the Afro-Cuban sources in order to better understand Brouwer's world. In this particular case, the exposure to a *danzón* would be helpful.

*Etude III*

Etude three presents two Cuban features that stand out immediately, and perhaps others that are somehow more difficult to see. This particular etude explores the basic rhythmic cell of the *Cuban guajira*. The *guajira* is a peasant music form that has its origins in the Canary Islands. The *punto guajiro* also has a bi-measure structure. It is basically an alternation between 6/8 and 3/4 time signatures, and it is derived from Spain.

**Example 10. *Guajira* pattern.**

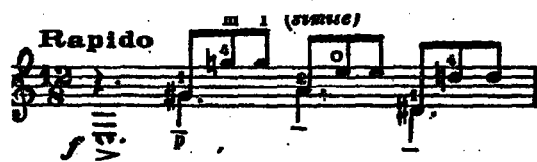


The triplet figuration of the *guajira* is quite predominant. Again, Brouwer hid the raw material of folklore just by taking the most reduced but still discernable element of it, in this case the triplet, presumably a rhythmic cell inherited from the Canary Islands' folklore.

During the baroque period, the folklore of the Canary Islands influenced the stylized dances in Spain. The *canarios* is very common among the compositions by Spanish guitarist and vihuelists of the baroque period, such as Gaspar Sanz and Francisco Guerau. The *canarios* or *canarie* became popular in France in the 1660s when Lully first used it in his court ballets. It became one of the optional dances of the suite, appearing in compositions for solo lute and clavecin.<sup>58</sup>

Besides the triplet pattern, another interesting characteristic is the responsorial quality of this etude, which also was present in etude one. In this case, the effect is achieved by the dynamic contrast between phrases that are repeated. The forte dynamic (*f*) of the first phrase in measure one has an immediate answer in piano (*p*) in measure three, giving the idea of echo or response:

**Example 11. Etude III. Measures 1 and 3.**



Measure one



Measure three

<sup>58</sup> Richard Hudson and Meredith Ellis Little, "Canary." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>. [Accessed August 13, 2008].

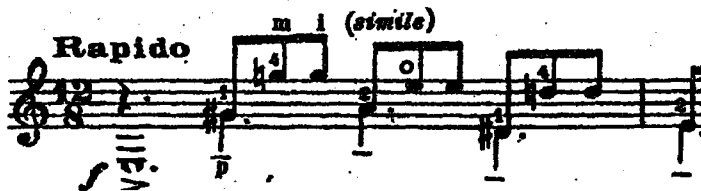
Other Afro-Cuban characteristics in this etude include note choices and melodic shapes. The typical melodies of the Afro-Cuban rituals generally have a descending contour. This feature is present in all of the phrases of this etude especially with the elision produced by the low open 6<sup>th</sup> string that starts and ends every phrase.

**Example 12. Etude III. Measures 7-8.**



In terms of pitch choices it is probable that Brouwer found inspiration from the *bata* percussion's pitch set, which is F-A-E-G#-B. The melody in the opening phrase shows all the notes of the *bata* except the F and includes a D sharp, which may be considered a leading tone to the E in the first beat of the second measure.

**Example 13. Etude III. Measure 1.**



The intervals formed between the melody and the upper voices are all in the *bata* set. The intervals present in the opening phrase of etude three are: diminished octave, which is enharmonic to a major seventh, perfect fifth, and minor third. Brouwer avoided

predictability by changing the expected roles of the “white” and “black” elements: the melodic elements provided by the African heritage and the rhythm by the Iberian one.

In terms of technique, it has been my experience as a guitar pedagogue to notice the tendency of some students to accentuate the second note of the triplet. This is a technical error produced by a lack of control of the right hand. The understanding of the origin of the triplet figure in this particular piece is very important as well as the development of a proper technique to recreate it.

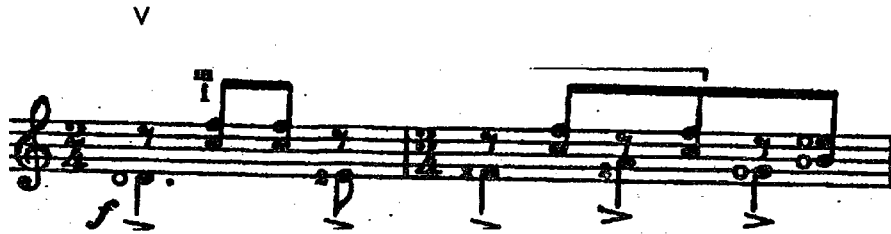
This piece can be seen as a tremolo exercise; therefore, different combinations can be practiced other than the one suggested in the score. This combination will help to develop a balanced right hand, both rhythmically and technically. The articulation and dynamic markings in this etude are less explicit than in the first two, but the principles learned, especially in Etude I, are totally applicable. For example, measures five and six are exactly the same, but just the former has a dynamic marking. It would thus be fitting to change either the tone or the dynamic, starting in measure six.

#### *Etude IV*

Etude four mainly presents elements already discussed, though a feature worth mentioning, in terms of Cuban idioms, is the constant alternation of binary and ternary measures throughout the etude. In my opinion, this alternation is not just a 5/4 feel but yet another of Brouwer’s transformation of the 3/4 and 6/8 meter alternation in the *Punto Guajiro*, discussed on the previous etude. If we examine the first two measures we may observe that by taking off the eighth note rest in the first measure’s first beat in the upper voice, it becomes immediately a 6/8 that is followed by the 3/4 in measure two:



**Example 14a. Etude IV. Measures 1-2 (original).**



**Example 14b. Etude IV. Measures 1-2 (as a hemiola).**



The overall result of the bi-measure structure would have the *Punto Guajiro* feel and would make complete sense to the Cuban student and/or performer. It seems that Brouwer challenged predictability by applying slight rhythmic alterations that transformed the music into an overall 5/4 meter, but still keeping the binary-ternary alternation of the *guajira*, adding some rhythmic dissonance.

This proposal opens the pedagogical possibilities of this etude. If practiced as it is, the student will have the challenge of keeping the flow of the phrases through an uncommon meter, but if the student is asked to visualize this music as a hemiola then it becomes an interpretive tool that will prepare the player for this type of figuration, so common among the guitar music of Spanish origin.

*Etude V*

The first idiomatic element that stands out in this etude is the term “*montune*” that follows the tempo marking “*Allegretto*.” *Montune* or *montuno* in Spanish, is related to the word *monte* which translates exactly to forest, woods, or woodlands, where peasants live. It is a term that may have different connotations. For one thing, it refers to the rhythmic *tumbao* or “groove,” pertinent to the *nengón*, *changüí*, or *son* ensembles. The term is also associated with the second section of a typical *son*.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the term *montuno* implies not just a mere speed choice, but also a mood, the recreation of the feel of the peasant music (*música campesina*). This recreation of the *montuno* mood is reflected in Brouwer’s music through the concept of “*Lo Son*,” which is probably translated as “the sonness.” Brouwer’s idea of “*Lo Son*” refers to the Cuban way of behaving and thinking, a product of the innate pluralism of its nature. It is the convergence of a cultural identity. Brouwer understands that there is an important difference between “*Lo Son*” and “*Lo Sonero*,” the latter of which is the archetypical element that defines Cuban music. Understanding the concept of “*Lo Son*” is understanding Cuban culture more closely and particularly its different musical manifestations. However, understanding the elements of “*Lo Sonero*” may also work very well as a start. The “*Sonero*” elements appear from the very beginning of the piece, since the constant rhythmic figure of the first four measures is a perfectly spelled “*cinquillo*” (Cuban quintuplet).

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<sup>59</sup> See glossary of terms.

**Example 15. Etude V. Measure 1.**



The *cinquillo* is also known as the “*danzón clave*” and is a recurrent figure throughout the all of Brouwer’s oeuvre. As opposed to the hidden statement of the same figure in etudes one and two, in this case its presence is evident. In a typical *danzón*, the *cinquillo* will be present in the first section that includes an intro of eight measures, followed by a sixteen bar melody. However, at the beginning of the 20th century, a new element was added to the *danzón*. It was a vamped section called *montuno*, and it had an improvisatory character. The *danzón* came prior to the *son* in the history of Cuban music. The *son* inherited its structure from the *danzón*. One of the main convergences is precisely the vamped section. Here in measure five, the *cinquillo* stops and a typical *montuno* figure appears.

**Example 16. Etude V. Measures 5-6.**



This figure is idiomatic in the *son* and is normally played by the *tres*. The *tres* played an important role in other genres that preceded the *son*: the *nengón* and the *changüí*. The *tumbao* (groove), or *montuno*, played on the *tres* in the *changüí* and

*nengón*, was steadier and perhaps less improvised. It seems apparent that those figurations may be the source of Brouwer's inspiration for this etude. Especially remarkable are the accentuations suggested by the composer, since those help tremendously to resemble the original, syncopated sound. The following example shows a rhythmic pattern that features elements of "*Lo Sonero*."

**Example 17. Etude V. Measures 13-14.**



A curious anecdote is associated with this etude. In 1967, Brouwer incorporated this etude into the soundtrack of the cartoon animation *La Lechuza* (The Owl) produced by ICAIC. One of the most gracious scenes is the chicken fight. The composer used this etude as the basis for it, but this time with a flute line added.

Second Volume

*Etude VI*

The concept of "*Lo Son*" means for Brouwer everything that symbolizes the Cuban musical identity. When asked, Brouwer has mentioned that "*Lo Son*" comes out unconsciously during his compositional process.<sup>60</sup> Two "*Lo Son*" elements are present in etude six. The first one is related to note and harmonic choices. The *Punto Guajiro* appears here one more time. This peasant music is based on *décimas*, which is a specific

<sup>60</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 62.

type of improvised poetry, originally from the Canary Islands. The accompaniment is played with a *laud* and a *tres*, and revolves around a basic I-V progression. A typical *tres* line that will precede the poetry is as follows:

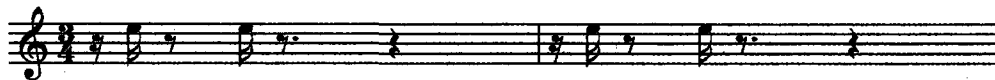
**Example 18. Typical *Guajira* melodic pattern.**

also possible that even moderately advanced students will get confused with this issue, if no previous information or reference is provided.

The I-V progression is developed with insertion in between a descending progression that has the high e note (first open string) always on top and that will end on the expected E major chord that works as a dominant here, and in the *Punto Guajiro* as well. This progression is not only beautiful, but also technically oriented. This is arguably the first etude that presents similar challenges for both hands. The left hand has to maintain the chords and execute the changes using pivot and common fingers in order to produce a smooth transition between harmonies. The right hand has to keep an interesting pattern that implies the knowledge of finger preparation and planting techniques. As we will see, this right hand pattern is not just a simple succession of sixteenth notes over a ternary meter.

Two rhythmic nuances happen naturally when playing this etude. The first one is the effect that the recurrent high (E) note has over the overall sound, especially when playing fast. It produces the following rhythmic figure throughout the 3/4 section.

**Example 20. Etude VI. Pedal of the open E string.**



The second one is related to the fingering that Brouwer proposes for the etude which employs the use of the thumb (p) not only on the evident bass line (first and last sixteenth note of every measure), but also on the last sixteenth note of the second beat. If

only those two elements were isolated and played together, the result will be something like this:

**Example 21. Etude VI. Pedal of the open E string and bass pattern.**



As we can see, the syncopation is very interesting and complex. Furthermore, it is disguised as a very simple pattern. However, those elements should be brought up in order to play more accordingly to the idea of “*Lo Son.*”

*Etude VII*

Etude VII does not show any other use of Cuban folkloric elements than those mentioned before, such as the use of triplets as in etude three, and the use of binary and ternary meters, in this particular case, both compound. However, Brouwer’s predilection for certain intervals, such as the ascending or descending thirds and sevenths (either major or minor) are shown here clearly. According to Isabelle Hernandez, those intervals show Brouwer’s interest in African religious chants.<sup>61</sup>

This etude shows another feature that Brouwer uses in other occasions, the use of the symmetric elements on the fret-board. Orlando Fraga mentions that Brouwer uses the fret board here idiomatically, just as Villa-Lobos did in his twelfth etude.<sup>62</sup> In any case, it

<sup>61</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 153.

<sup>62</sup> Orlando Fraga, *Dez Estudos Simples para Violão de Leo Brouwer*. Brazil: Editora DeArtes UFPR. 2006, 56.

is apparent that Brouwer exploits the musical possibilities present on the fretboard's symmetry, by using fingering patterns that travel in parallel motion.

**Example 22. Etude VII. Measure 17.**

3 0 0 [ 2 0 0 simile...

Brouwer uses this concept widely in many of his guitar pieces. Furthermore, this technique exemplifies Isabelle Hernandez's definition of chromatism, modality and atonality as "*a la Brouwer*" (according to Brouwer's style), meaning that it does not follow a specific trend of composition by anyone else.<sup>63</sup>

The symmetric approach to the fretboard is a clear characteristic of Brouwer's style that may be worthy of further analysis in the future. Although the present dissertation does not focus precisely on this particular issue, it may be an educated guess to relate it to Brouwer's fascination with Paul Klee and the Bauhaus Academy of Design, which influenced Brouwer early in his life. Another source of influence may be the filming techniques that started to be a big part of Brouwer's career as a composer precisely during those years. In 1960, Brouwer composed and finished both the first and second series of etudes and at the same time the music for the Cuban picture *Historias de la Revolución*.

Etude VII is widely used and acknowledged as an etude for the left hand. It is full of slurs, both ascending and descending. The symmetry of the patterns allows the student

<sup>63</sup> Isabelle Hernández. *Leo Brouwer*, 150.





with Brouwer's fascination with flamenco music<sup>67</sup> suggests that this etude could also be meant for a second purpose. The flamenco guitar widely explores the right hand's thumb possibilities. *Alzapúa* is the name of the technique used by the flamenco guitarists in which the thumb (p) produces both down and up strokes. The thumb's upstroke is not used in classical guitar technique other than for strumming purposes. In this particular case a suggested *Alzapúa* would work the following way:

**Example 24. Etude VII. Alzapúa pattern.**



p.....

The only finger necessary here would thus be the thumb, as the thumb would sweep over the C minor chord on the first triplet in a down stroke motion. In the second triplet, the thumb will attack the B natural, followed by a left hand slur, to produce the D and a thumb upstroke to produce the last note of the triplet, again a D natural. This pattern will repeat until the end of the piece.

It is my opinion that the use of the *Alzapúa* is idiomatic for this etude and that that use enhances the rhythmic quality of the music. I also believe that the composer had this intention. This pattern will naturally present a softer upstroke, which is also a free stroke and a natural accent on the down-stroke, also a rest stroke. That stroke, along with the

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<sup>67</sup> Leo Brouwer and José Padrón, *Leo Brouwer*.

slurred note in the middle of the triplet, provides a very consistent articulation throughout the whole piece.

### *Etude VIII*

The melodic material of this etude was used previously in the third movement of Brouwer's guitar piece *Tres Apuntes* in 1959, the same year he began the first series of *Estudios Sencillos*.

#### **Example 24a. Tres Apuntes. Third Movement. Measures 1-3.**

### **III - (Sobre un canto de Bulgaria)**

*Molto animato* ( $\text{♩} = 120$ )

This melody is apparently based on a Bulgarian song, as could be inferred by its title. The same melody was used by Brouwer much later on his *Volos Concerto* for guitar and orchestra (1997).

This etude is the first of these etudes to use a key signature. The key of E minor is established just at the end of the A section in measure eight.

**Example 25. Etude VIII. Measure 8.**



Before measure eight, the music presents a dialogue between two voices in canon, the first theme in A minor pentatonic, the answer in B minor pentatonic. A minor and B minor may have here a dual quality. For one thing, they are no more than the fourth and fifth degree of E natural minor scale, but the fact that the key is not clearly established from the beginning provides a certain impression of bitonality.

Bitonality, along with the use of pentatonic scales, are elements present in Afro-Cuban music. One example of that is the tuning of the *batá* set, which presents a duality between F major and E major. However, in this case the pentatonic nature of this melody might have not come out of Afro-Cuban tradition since the title of it states, “*Sobre un canto de Bulgaria*” (Based upon a Bulgarian chant). Brouwer has stated that his affection for the pentatonic scale comes from its ancient historical background, also mentioning that the proper use of it adds a sense of universality and a timeless feel to the music.<sup>68</sup>

The contradiction between universal and nationalistic elements within art music has been a discussion in which Brouwer has always had a strong opinion. Instead, he puts universalism and nationalism into his concept of spiral, in which both feed upon each other.

The B section of the piece continues with the dialogue between two voices, but now instead of a canon there is just simple alternation. The triplet figuration previously seen

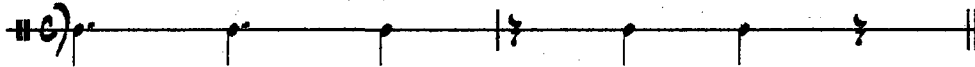
<sup>68</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 254.



### *Etude IX*

Etude IX is based in its entirety on variations of the *Son* clave. The *Son* clave is a two-measure rhythmic motif. It has a syncopated measure regarded as the “strong” or “black” part and a steady measure regarded as the “weak” or “white” section. The grouping of the beat subdivision of the syncopated part is 3-3-2, as can be seen on the following example:

#### **Example 28. *Son* clave pattern.**



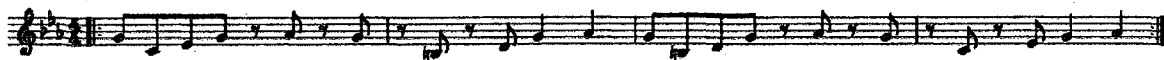
The syncopated part of the clave appears all over the etude, as opposed to the weak side, which appears altered sometimes. That alteration is nothing else but the simple insertion of the weak side of the *danzón* clave, also known as *cinquillo*.

The syncopated section of the *danzón* clave was already covered on Etudes I and especially Etude V. In the present etude what matters is the weak side. It is important to understand that Brouwer is using here the clave both in a traditional and a non-traditional way. The basic idea of the clave is to serve as the “rhythmic spine” for Cuban genres such as the *son*, *rumba*, *danzón* and *timba*. When the clave sounds, the rest of the instruments revolve around it, but do not play at the same time with it, though they may coincide sometimes, especially on weak beats.

The following example will show how the clave works against the *tres* and bass lines, on a basic *son montuno*.

**Example 29. *Tumbao, son montuno.***

(i) *Tres* (keyboard) pattern



(ii) *Clave* rhythm

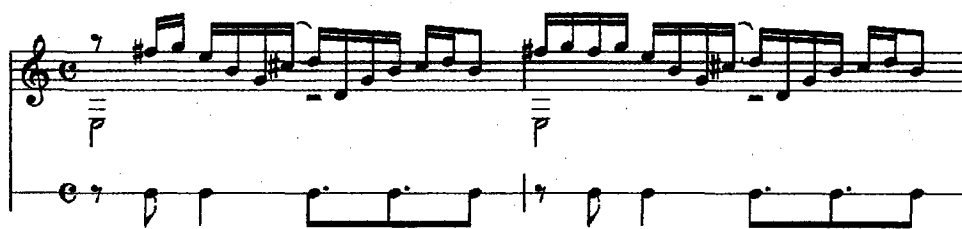


(iii) Bass line



The example above represents the folkloric or traditional function of the *clave*. The only passages where Brouwer uses the *clave* traditionally is in measures five, six, eight, and nine. Those passages resemble the *tumbao* of a *tres* player and will work around the *clave* just as in a traditional ensemble. The following diagram will show the way *clave* interacts with the aforementioned passages:

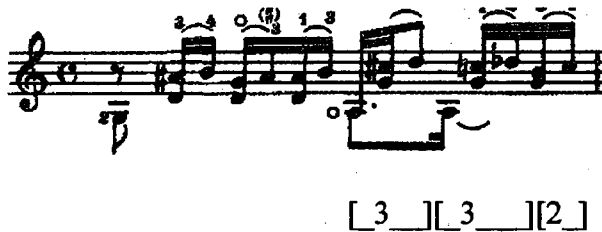
**Example 30. Etude IX. Measures 5-6 against *clave* pattern.**



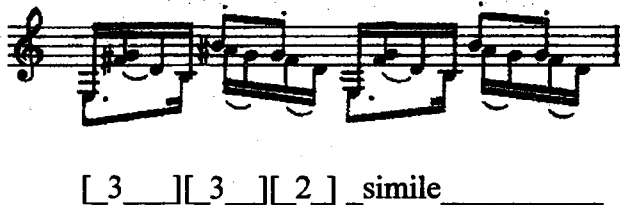
A good exercise for the player could be to vamp measures five and six over a drum machine looping the *clave*. This exercise will provide a better understanding of this Cuban element not only from the intellectual point of view, but also in terms of internal feel.

The other way Brouwer uses the clave is by imitating its rhythmic pattern. The player will need only to identify the subdivisions and accentuate accordingly. The following examples show how these subdivisions occur and where the accents should be placed, in measures one and eight, respectively.

**Example 31. Etude IX. Measure 1.**



**Example 32. Etude IX. Measure 8.**



Besides the Afro-Cuban elements, this etude leaves the double stops via the slurring of just one of the voices. The interpreter has to make an artistic decision whether to use free or rest stroke for the slurs. The following example shows that the upper note of the double stroke does not need to ring more than its value. Therefore, a rest stroke will actually serve as a muting element.

**Example 33. Etude IX. Measure 14.**





However, Brouwer has suggested in master classes to allow those upper notes to ring a little bit more for melodic purposes, suggesting the use of free stroke slurs. Since the string (on a descending slur) already comes with vibration, a slight lift of the finger involved will suffice to provide the proper articulation.

### *Etude X*

The 3-3-2 subdivision returns in Etude X but is sometimes disguised in many ways throughout the rest of the twenty etudes. In the previous etude this subdivision appeared in a more traditional way, always staying within the boundaries of a single measure. But in this case, Brouwer plays with this element, expanding it across two bars. Both bi-measureness and clave elements are combined in yet another creative way:

#### **Example 34. Etude X. Measures 1-2.**

*f stacc.*

[ 3 ] [ 3 ] [ 2 ]

The phrasing of these first two bars is clearly guided by the accents above the notes which make the sound more like three different measures of  $3/8 - 3/8$  and  $2/8$  respectively. A “*Lo Son*” element appears in mm. 12-13. This rhythmic figure is also related to the *montunos* and the *tres*.

**Example 35. Etude X. Measures 12-13.**



Tanenbaum mentions in his analysis of this etude that Brouwer turns a mere exercise into music, referring specifically to the passage between measures three and four<sup>69</sup>.

**Example 36. Etude X. Measures 3-4.**



The concept of this passage is similar to that of the symmetry found in Etude VII. Brouwer uses the structure of the fretboard to produce his own chromaticism. The passage in mm. 15-16 and its repetition in mm. 19-20 show a similar concept, but now in arpeggio:

**Example 37. Etude X. Measures 19-20.**



The fingerings repeat an exact shape across the first three strings and again in the next group of three, starting on the second one. The harmonic result is the following:

Bb minor – Eminor/G | Fmaj 7/E - E minor |

<sup>69</sup> David Tanenbaum, and Jim Ferguson. *Leo Brouwer's 20 Estudios Sencillos*, 20.

In terms of technique, this etude is regarded as a good practice for the alternation between free and rest stroke. Tanenbaum mentions in his analysis that, according to Brouwer's testimony during a masterclass held in Berkeley during the late seventies, the issue in this etude is not speed but string crossing.<sup>70</sup>

String-crossing proficiency can be systematically achieved by using finger preparation and planting. However, string crossing is necessary only if two fingers are involved. By adding another finger (i-a-m) the crossing is totally avoided and highly effective. The only passage that really presents an issue in string crossing is the one in mm. 11-13.

**Example 38. Etude X. Measures 11-12.**

④ ..... ③ ..... ② .....

i m i

a m i a m i a m i

As can be seen in the example, the string change falls always on the (a) finger, and the pattern over the strings remains equal. Although there are four notes per beat, the right-hand articulation has a ternary feel since just three notes need to be stroked. The alternative proposed here thus may deserve more consideration since it helps both in articulation and accuracy of execution.

<sup>70</sup> David Tanenbaum, and Jim Ferguson. *Leo Brouwer's 20 Estudios Sencillos*, 21.

### Introduction to the Third and Fourth Volumes

In 1981, Leo Brouwer composed the third and fourth series of the *Estudios Sencillos*, consisting of ten pieces that continued the pedagogical ideals started twenty years before with the previous ten etudes. The “new” etudes synthesize some of the difficulties introduced in the previous two volumes and at the same time approach new technical challenges. As were its predecessors, the new etudes are serious pieces that combine pedagogical goals with strong musical and expressive content. The Afro-Cuban rhythmic structures are developed further as well as the phrasing and dynamic possibilities of the instrument.<sup>71</sup> The 1981 etudes, however, show a different formal approach, and the main difference is length. The new etudes still keep the format of a miniature or album page each, but are considerably longer than the first ten.

The compositional elements of these etudes show many formal and structural similarities to other pieces composed the same year such as “The Black Decameron” and *Preludios Epigramáticos*. The new etudes are generally ternary in form and cover techniques such as double-note slurs, thumb passages, slurred chords, ornaments and three or four voice chords.

Regarding editorial issues, Leo Brouwer mentioned to J. Tosone in an interview for the article “Bad timing? Tempi in the *Estudios Sencillos*”:

The tempo should be closer to Tanenbaum’s recording which is faster and more logic. At the same time the tempi should be according to the necessities and development of the student. Not too slow becoming impossible to sing, not too fast becoming impossible to articulate. Many soloists are performing the etudes although that was not my real purpose. Each etude encompasses a specific

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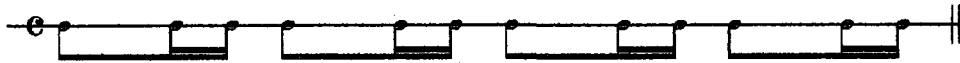
<sup>71</sup> Isabelle Hernández. *Leo Brouwer*, 212.

technique and musical problem, just one recommendation: follow your sensorial intuition and the rhythm, the fingers are wise...<sup>72</sup>

### *Etude XI*

The A section of this etude presents an *ostinato* figure similar to *changüí* music. The *changüí*, as predecessor to the *son*, has several differences with the latter, the absence of *clave* (instrument) being the most relevant. Instead of a *clave*, the *changüí* uses a different instrument, called the *güiro*. The rhythmic pattern of the *güiro* within a *changüí* ensemble is the following:

#### Example 39. Etude XI. *Güiro* rhythmic pattern.



The *güiro* pattern appears at the beginning of the piece, as the following example shows.

The same feature was mentioned by Brouwer in his analysis of Roldán's music.

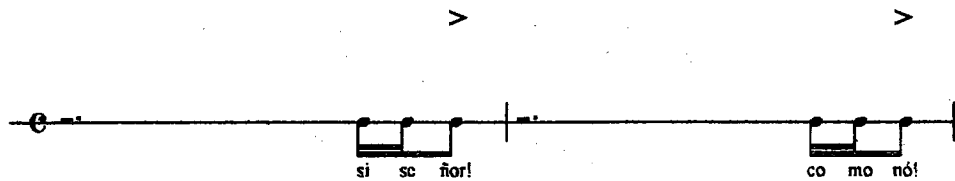
#### Example 40. Etude XI. Measure 2.



The previous example shows the pattern used by the *güiro*, and this study features exactly that same pattern. The B section, starting in measure nine, shows a slight variation of a pattern also used in *changüí* and *son* music as a popular “ending” figure.

<sup>72</sup> Isabelle Hernández. *Leo Brouwer*, 203.

**Example 41. Typical *son* ending.**



**Example 42. Etude XI. Measure 9.**



However, Brouwer repeats this figure and adds two more elements that enrich the rhythm, making it more complex than they appear. The first one is the tie between the last and first eighth notes of subsequent measures:

**Example 43. Etude XI. Measures 10-11.**



In this case the syncopation of the tie steals the strength of the down beat of the next measure, making the repetitive figure less predictable. The second element is the double bar at the end of the B section (measure 12) where it calls for a repetition of the section. The beginning of the B section has a different effect the second time it is played. The transition from the A section to B section flows naturally since they share the same rhythmic pattern.

**Example 44. Etude XI. Measures 12 and 9.**



Measure 12



Measure 9

This rhythmic nuance then becomes stronger, since the beginning of the B section reiterates the natural accent of the first beat that is hidden by the syncopation.

The C section, starting in measure thirteen, is a typical *tumbao*. As in Etude IX, Brouwer uses the clave in both a traditional and non-traditional way. The first four bars of section C are an example of the traditional style and could be played against the clave. Mm. 19-20 form just a 3-3-2 or *clave* subdivision that imitates the *clave pattern*, and is clearly grouped on the score.

**Example 45. Etude XI. Measures 19-20.**



The subtitle of this etude: "*Para los ligados y las posiciones fijas*" (For the slurs and the fixed positions) implies that the technical elements to develop are slurs over fixed positions. In general terms this is true, but as in other etudes, many other technical elements can be found. Particularly, in this etude one may find opportunities to exercise planting techniques, extension of the right hand fingers, left hand finger grouping and different articulations.





outstanding natural talent who had never before played a guitar. In her first lesson, she played perfectly a chromatic scale and right hand exercises throughout the whole fretboard. I was so impressed that I had to compose immediately an etude with a minimum of music for that woman who was holding a guitar for the first time.<sup>73</sup>

The woman Brouwer was talking about was Sharon Pryor, and the etude dedicated to her was lost for several years. When it finally appeared, it was included as the second of the third series (Etude XII) as it was published by the *Editora Musical de Cuba* in 1985.<sup>74</sup> This explains the lack of continuity of this etude among the last ten.

### *Etude XIII*

Elements of the early etudes, specifically I and IV, are also present in Etude XIII such as the melody in the bass, the responsorial character of the dyads (double strokes) above the bass line, and meter changes. In this etude the meter changes are more varied, and therefore less predictable than those found in Etude IV. This irregularity gives a recitative kind of mood to the first section.

The 3-3-2 subdivision is again present in this etude in varied ways. In mm. three and four the 3-3-2 subdivision encompasses both bars and pervades both voices.

Mm 13-14 show a similar situation.

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<sup>73</sup> Isabelle Hernández, *Leo Brouwer*, 49.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

**Example 47. Etude XIII. Measures 3-4.**

[ 3 ] [ 3 ] [ 2 ]

Both mm. 18 and 19 include the *clave* subdivision, but it does not fill each measure:

**Example 48. Etude XIII. Measure 18.**

[ 3 ] [ 3 ] [ 2 ]

Measure 20 consists entirely of *clave* subdivision:

**Example 49. Etude XIII. Measure 20.**

[ 3 ] [ 3 ] [ 2 ]

Measure sixteen is preceded by a breath mark and a parenthesis. It is apparent that this measure is the start of a new theme. The responsorial relation between the dyads and the melodic bass line seen in previous etudes remains, but with the inclusion of a new voice in the upper register.

**Example 50. Etude XIII. Measures 21-22.**



After the second statement of the first theme in measure 33, a contrasting element resembling material previously seen on Etude XI re-appears.

**Example 51. Etude XIII. Measure 46.**



The meter at this point remains a steady 4/4. A tendency to continue with the clave subdivision could be tempting when it comes to phrasing this passage; however, special attention should be paid to the articulations and grouping of the notes on the score, which suggest a more conventional phrasing.

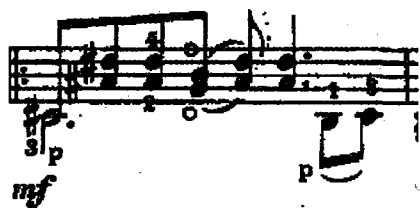
**Example 52. Etude XIII. Measures 47-48.**



Not only does the score call for a more conventional approach, but the material that comes afterwards presents again a marked clave subdivision. Therefore, for the sake

of contrast, the passage between mm. 46-49 should be played “regularly.” The B section, in mm 50-60, presents a steady 4/4 meter and a clave subdivision between the two voices.

**Example 53. Etude XIII. Measure 50.**

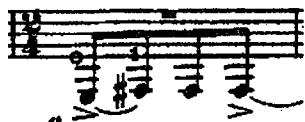


[ 3        ] [ 3        ] [ 2    ]

The clave pattern is very strong in this passage and the suggested rhythm is almost dance-like. The rhythmic contrast that this section produces, in relation to the previous material, resembles that of the *son* genre between its initial verse (*largo*) and the *montuno*.

The subtitle of this etude says: “*Para los Ligados y las Posiciones Fijas*” (For slurs and fixed positions). It is important to mention that two types of slurs are used. One type is the single note slur, both as a hammer on (ascending) and as a pull off (descending). Even the ornamental *appoggiatura* (G sharp) in measure thirteen is also a descending slur.

**Example 54. Etude XI. Measure 3. Ascending.**



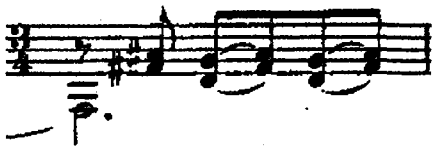
**Example 55. Etude XIII. Measures 12-13. Descending.**



This *appoggiatura* should be performed as a faster slur in comparison to those found along the melodic lines, and also using a rest stroke-slur with the third finger/left hand, since the f# has an accent.

The other type of slur is the one using double strokes. For the first time throughout the *Estudios Sencillos* the left hand is slurring two strings at the same time; however, it is just in ascending motion:

**Example 56. Etude XIII. Measure 2.**



*Etude XIV*

This etude is both stylistically and technically an extension of the previous one. The clave subdivision is less important in this etude. The only clear statement is in mm. 13-20.

**Example 57. Etude XIV. Measures 11-12.**

*pp* (un poco sul tasto)

3      3      2

The subtitle says: “*Para los Ligados y el Pulgar*” (For the slurs and the thumb). It is evident that the slurs are the main focus of this etude, since it shows a clear evolution from the previous piece. It does not show any particular interest for the thumb other than those found on previous etudes, such as number I or IV.

Both the single and double slurs show an increase in difficulty from the previous etude. The new theme starting in measure forty three (*muy poco meno*) implies a more complex phrasing. It combines different types of articulations, including the legato on different strings, the ascending and descending slurs, descending *appoggiaturas*, short *glissandos* and ascending trills.

**Example 58. Etude XIV. Measures 45 – 48.**

*f* *p* *p* *p* (*mf*)

**Example 59. Etude XIV. Measures 51-52.**



The first *appoggiatura* that appears in measure forty six has an accent on both the ornament and ornamented notes, which from the stand point of technique implies an accent with the thumb of the right hand, and a rest-stroke slur. For the first time in the *Estudios Sencillos* a trill is included. The fact that the accent is placed on the first note of the trill (E) is probably a suggestion to play the trill on the beat.

**Example 60. Etude XIV. Measure 48.**



This nuance is one of many hidden lessons inside of the etudes. In this case it represents a performance practice exercise for ornaments. The baroque era has fascinated Brouwer since the very early stages of his career. His knowledge of the style is extensive: he has been invited to European festivals as a lecturer on the topic. The inclusion of baroque-like ornaments in these pieces matches Brouwer's self description as a postmodern artist. This feature of Brouwer's oeuvre, which becomes apparent in this etude, can be very useful for pedagogic purposes. Such a piece enables the instructor to introduce ornamentation techniques within a more contemporary sonority, (probably closer to the understanding of the student).

The phrase in mm. 51-52 combines slurs, ornaments, and a short glissando. The instructor has here an opportunity to convey not only the proper way to execute those articulations, but also how all these possibilities are part of the expressive potential of the guitar. As mentioned regarding a similar passage present in etude XI, it is very important to maintain the proper timing of the notes throughout the different articulations. At the same time, Etude XIV presents descending double slurs for the first time.

**Example 61. Etude XIV. Measure 18.**



The only way to execute a descending double slur is using free strokes with the left hand. Besides understanding its technical aspects, it is also important to know that this etude is quoted by Brouwer in his piece *Paisaje Cubano con Campanas* (1986) (Cuban Landscape with Bells) as can be observed if compared with Example No. 58.

**Example 61a. *Paisaje Cubano con Campanas*. Fourth system.**





*Etude XV*

The subtitle of this etude reads as follows: *Para los Acordes de Tres Notas* (For Three-Note Chords). Three note chords are indeed found all over this etude, but what is interesting about them is that the melody is found sometimes in the upper voice and sometimes in the lower voice. Etude II addresses the problem of bringing out the melody in the highest voice of the chord. Additionally, the melody in the bass has been the problem addressed in various other etudes. The difference here is that Etude XV represents a real technical challenge.

The melody in the bass appears for the first time simultaneously with the rest of the notes in the chord. In such etudes as numbers I, III, and IV, the bass line alternated with the rest of the voices which made it stand out naturally. In this case, the technique of the thumb must be refined further, in order to project the melody effectively.

There are three basic techniques that can be used to highlight a melody with the thumb. Two of these techniques imply an increase of volume and the other a contrast of color. First, the most obvious way to increase volume with the thumb or any other finger is by using rest strokes. In this case, it may not be the most comfortable technique to apply since the angle needed to produce it may become intrusive when simultaneously playing the other voices of the chord. Second, it is possible to obtain the same results by using free stroke and emphasizing the pressure on the string. The more pressure is applied on the string towards the soundboard by means of planting before the stroke, the more positive vibration and volume will be obtained. Finally, another way to get more volume is just by means of color contrast between the melody and the rest of the voices.

This contrast is produced by using more or less fingernail with the thumb. Combinations of pressure and color will result in a more effective separation of the voices.

Two important stylistic elements are present in this etude. The first one is related to the hidden lessons regarding performance practice, which started in the previous two etudes. The tempo marking at the beginning of the piece says *Sarabande*. As a typical baroque *sarabande*, this piece is in triple meter and emphasizes the second beat by means of rhythmic extension. The tempo should be slow (according to the baroque style) without losing the dance air.

**Example 62. Etude XV. Measures 1-2.**

**Sarabande**

The second stylistic element is the one present in the second part of this etude (at measure forty), where it clearly shows a 6/8 subdivision without stating a meter change in the score.

**Example 63. Etude XV. Measures 40-43.**

**Movendo il T<sup>o</sup> un poco  
lirico**

This is another example of the Spanish hemiola characteristics found in the peasant music of *punto guajiro*, previously discussed. It is interesting, though, to note the way this section is presented in the score. The meter of the melody is clearly in 6/8, but the accompaniment underneath maintains the *sarabande* rhythmic air in 3/4. This rhythmic ambiguity starts to fade out toward the end of this section, slowly returning to the triplet figuration of the beginning.

**Example 64. Etude XV. Measures 52–54.**



The beginning of this section also calls for a faster tempo that then should decrease towards its end, continuing with the recapitulation of the initial theme and the conclusion of the etude.

*Etude XVI*

Etude XVI is the first from the last volume of the *Estudios Sencillos* and the first to use a different tuning. In terms of technique and style, this etude is more related to numbers XIII and XIV than to its immediate predecessor. Those etudes combined elements of “*Lo Son*” with sophisticated articulation and some ornaments, and there were performance practice lessons embedded into the works. In contrast, this etude openly shows its purpose with a subtitle that states: “*Para los Ornamentos*” (For the Ornaments).

What was suggested before now is clearly emphasized. Furthermore, the Afro-Cuban elements decrease to give space to specific Baroque idioms and performance practices. The most important performance practice lesson is found in the inclusion of two *ossia* measures, showing the ornament symbols under the main score.

**Example 65. Etude XVI. Measure 2.**

**Example 66. Etude XVI. Measure 3.**

The ornaments include two mordents, an ascending turn, and an *appoggiatura* anticipating another mordent. The double-dotted rhythm and the fast and short *grupettos* suggest that Brouwer is recreating a French baroque style here.

**Example 67. Etude XVI. Measure 1.**



Assuming that the etude starts in the first position, the first note that needs to be muted is the first note of the etude, an open (E):

**Example 69. Etude XVI. Measure 1.**



It is assumed that the E is open since the next note (D) should be played on the second string with the fourth finger. The technical procedure to play the first beat of the etude (pickup included) could be the following:

- To place the left hand over the first position with the fourth finger fretting the (D) on the second string, third fret.
- To plant the right hand fingers over the strings between the resonant position and *sul tasto*, looking for a *marcato* intention. The “a” finger will be planted over the first string, the “m” finger will be planted over the second string and the “p” over the sixth string.
- To play the E using the first string open with a rest stroke of the right hand.
- To play the low and high (D) and simultaneously muting the previous open (E) with the fourth finger of the left hand. The bass line requires constant muting throughout the etude. The most critical spots are those where thirty-second notes are followed by a double-dotted eighth note:

**Example 70. Etude XVI. Measure 5.**

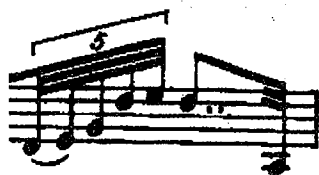


If both notes in the bass are to be played with the thumb, then a rest stroke would be appropriate for the low D since it automatically mutes the A. It is also possible to mute the A with the "i" finger.

The *gruppettos* probably represent the biggest challenge here since they require speed, articulation, and muting. Proper muting will benefit the articulation, in that they do not allow the notes to overlap; therefore, they eliminate unwanted dissonances. Two basic skills are necessary to develop a good muting here. First, the thumb (p) should be able to play free strokes and rest strokes with equal ease as well as stop the vibration of adjacent strings by using the back of the finger to stop a string below, or the flesh around the fingernail for a string located above. Second, any finger of the right hand should be able to stop the string that was immediately played, which also is a way to come back to the planting position.

The following *gruppetto* in measure ten is a clear example of the techniques described above.

**Example 71. Etude XVI. Measure 10.**



p p i m i

The succession of events thus could be as follows:

- With a rest stroke, the thumb will play the D that will turn into an E by a slur.
- The same thumb will fall into the G and, while the previous E is articulated by the left hand, wait to play the G in time.
- When the next note is played by the index, the thumb will return to the G string muting it and also the fourth string with the flesh around the fingernail.
- The last note of the *grupetto* (the open E) is played with the middle finger which also will be muted by the same, after the index plays the D on the second string.

The idea behind this etude will continue through etudes XVII and XVIII.

*Etudes XVII, XVIII, XIX, and XX.*

The last series continues with more etudes that focus on ornaments. The “*Lo Son*” concept and Afro-Cuban elements continue, however, with a smaller presence. The ornaments in Etude XVII are written as either single, double, or triple *appoggiaturas* that result in either mordents or trills. Although later in the etude the ornaments are realized, the way the beginning of this piece is written will require certain knowledge of performance practice. The player will have to decide whether to play on the beat or before the beat, and from how much value the real note should be removed.

Though the technical application of ornaments continues, the musical content prevails. The reason for this is that more of Brouwer’s stylistic elements are present here than in the previous two etudes. The so-called “*estilemas de Brouwer*,” or Brouwer’s idioms, discussed earlier, appear as early as the first bar:



**Example 72. Etude XVII. Measures 1–4.**



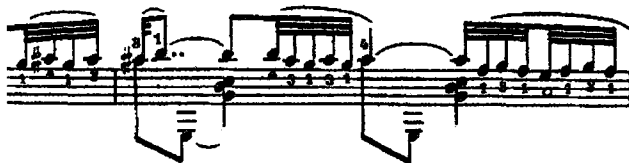
The first bar is evidently a misprint of the edition since it encompasses three measures in time. Nevertheless, some of Brouwer’s “favorite” intervals, such as the ascending major second and third, dominate the whole passage.

Finally, it is also important to mention that Etude XVIII is quoted in Brouwer’s *Concerto Elegiaco* (1989), specifically mm. 18-19 from the etude are similar to measure 13 from the second movement of the concerto.

**Example 72a. Concerto Elegiaco. Measure 13.**



**Example 72b. Etude XVIII. Measures 18-19**



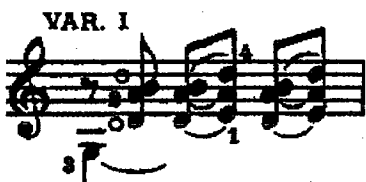
The last two etudes share the same opening material. Etude XIX works as a prelude to etude XX. It also reiterates such previously-seen “*Lo Son*” elements as the hemiola and

such technical elements as the multi-string ascending slur over pedal notes, as seen in examples 67 and 68, respectively:

**Example 73. Etude XIX. Measures 2-3.**



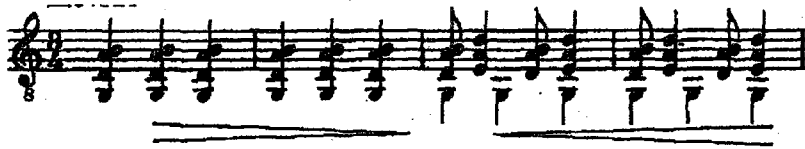
**Example 74. Etude XIX. Measure 17.**



Etude XX starts with the same material present at the beginning of etude XIX followed by a rather pentatonic passage, which is divided into two sections. Both of the sections are mildly aleatoric, in that the amount of repetitions is left to the interpreter. The clearly-marked crescendo dynamic is accompanied by a color change marking, which moves from *sul tasto* to *son ord.* (ordinary sound, that sound normally being between the sound hole and *sul ponticello* area, or area near bridge).

Both the A and B sections are in E-Minor pentatonic, and the latter presents more tonal elements. The crescendo and decrescendo markings are constant throughout this etude.

**Example 75. Etude XX. Measures 1-4.**



Brouwer finishes the *Estudios Sencillos* with an etude that seems to be intentionally aimed toward the novice student with little or no knowledge of the twentieth-century language. It seems apparent that Brouwer's intention is to introduce elements of twentieth century music while at the same time incorporating rather traditional and "mainstream-sounding" elements.

Brouwer defines aleatorism as the contribution of mathematical probability to the music. According to Brouwer, musical ties to chance or randomness fuse the composer's concepts with the performer's practice, thus resulting in a "co-creation."<sup>75</sup> An elementary example of this aleatorism can be observed in etude XX and a much more elaborate one in his masterpiece, *La Espiral Eterna* (1971).

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<sup>75</sup> Leo Brouwer, Isabelle Hdez., and Nisleidys Flores Carmona. *Leo Brouwer: Gajes del Oficio*. La Habana, Cuba: Letras Cubanas. 2004, 62.

## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

The *Estudios Sencillos* represent a great showcase of the different facets of Brouwer, the most important being his Afro-Cuban culture, his pedagogical point of view, and his mastery as a guitarist. Brouwer's acknowledgment of his own roots along with the incorporation of the European tradition allowed him to produce a very distinctive sound that was embraced by the music world almost instantly. Nevertheless, this universalism of his music can be deceiving. In general terms, the classically trained guitarist, unaware of Brouwer's roots and folkloric traditions, may still provide a valuable rendering of Brouwer's pieces. Nevertheless, the knowledge of these aspects will result in a superior understanding and therefore in a better interpretation of Brouwer's music.

Scholarly endeavors dealing with the analysis of Brouwer and his oeuvre are endless. His musical world is a sophisticated, complex realm of mixture and dialectic convergence. Therefore, it is important for the guitarist to ponder the non-guitarristic output of Brouwer. His contribution to film scoring, music for theatre and for many instrumental formats other than solo guitar music is quite relevant. The study of the whole panorama of Brouwer's music enhances the understanding of his guitar works.

It is also important to consider Brouwer's pedagogical side. His teachings have inspired several generations of guitarists all over the world. The modern Cuban educational system and many of today's Cuban musical legends owe much to his teachings. His legacy, though, relies more on his personal influence rather than on his pedagogical literature. Apart from a harmony book that Brouwer wrote when appointed as a theory and analysis teacher at the *Amadeo Roldán* conservatory, there is no other

book in which he directly expresses his pedagogical point of view towards music or the guitar.

In my opinion, the *Estudios Sencillos* represent his written legacy for the guitar world in that sense. Every etude can be seen as a prescription for solving many technical or interpretive problems. The etudes contain a great deal of embedded information that ranges from the obvious technical approach to more sophisticated elements of rhythm, harmony, phrasing and performance practice. Afro-Cuban elements reside in the inner layers of Brouwer's music, notably in the etudes, and they can be considered the core of his music language. His mastery over these elements represents both his music style as well as his social self-awareness, since he is a *criollo*.

Brouwer's idea of postmodernism and its relation to the definition of *criollo* is worthy of further analysis. The pluralistic nature of the Cuban persona is, for Brouwer, its greatest asset and value. Brouwer embraces the world, becoming one of the most universal composers for the guitar, but yet he was able to disseminate *Cubania* in every possible way. The concept of "*Lo Son*" and "*Lo Sonero*" are two abstractions also worthy to analyze in many more of his compositions; however, it is necessary for the guitarist who is unaware of the Afro-Cuban tradition to be exposed to it in order to discover substantial elements that define, in great part, "the Brouwer sound."

## APPENDIX A

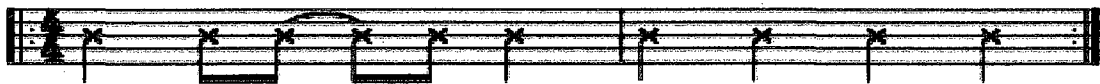
## GLOSSARY

**Batá:** Three drums from the *Yoruba* tradition. They have different sizes and have playable membranes on the edges: the largest is also called *iyá* (F-A), the second, *itótele* (E-G sharp), and the smallest, *kónkolo* (B-B).

**Bembé:** A type of African dance. In the dialect Congo, *mbembo* means song, hymn, or funeral prayer. Also, it is the name of a drum from Sudan, and-or a party or celebration in honor of the *Orishas*. The tradition may have arrived to Cuba via the slaves from the *Mandinga* tribe.

**Changüí:** A type of dance from eastern Cuba, more specifically from Guantánamo. Presumably the word comes from the African “Congo,” where *changüí* translates as dance. The instrumental ensemble includes: *marímbula*, *bongó*, *tres*, *guayo*, and singers.

**Cinquillo cubano:** Rhythmic pattern characteristic of Cuban traditional music.

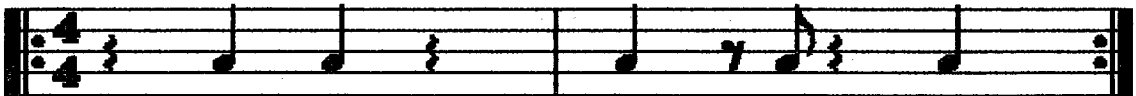


**Clave:** Clave is a typical rhythmic pattern present in several genres of Cuban popular music. It usually is two measures in length. There are different types of clave patterns according to genre. The instrument used to play these patterns is also called a clave; the same for the person who plays it.

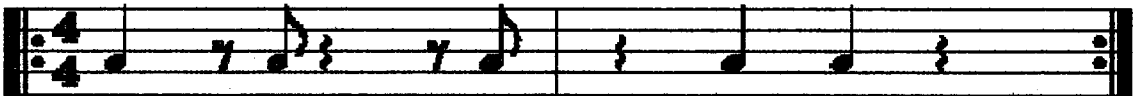
## Son clave 3-2



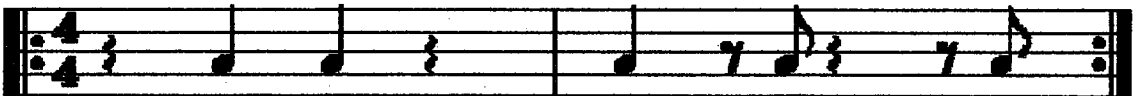
## Son clave 2-3



## Rumba clave 3-2



## Rumba clave 2-3



**Danzón:** Cuban dance originated from the combination and evolution of the Cuban *contradanza* (counter dance) and the *danza* (dance).

**Décima:** Ten-line verses. The first line establishes the rhyme of the subsequent verses.

This type of verses is usually used in the *Punto Guajiro*.

**Güiro or Guayo:** A percussion instrument usually made out of the fruit of the *güira* tree. It is played with a fork. The *güiro* player scrapes the fork along the instrument's surface to create its characteristic scratching sound.

**Grupo de Experimentación Sonora:** "Sound experimentation group," a group of musicians led by Leo Brouwer: it was founded in 1969. One of the tasks of the group was to compose music for Cuban films.

**ICAIC:** Cuban Institute of the Art and Cinematographic Industry. Instituto Cubano del Arte y la Industria Cinematograficos.

**Marimbula:** Wood instrument of African origin. The structure is similar to a wooden box, on which the performer sits. It has small metal plates, which are plucked with fingers, attached to the wooden structure.

**Montuno:** The word comes from the Spanish word *monte*, meaning mount, mountains or forest. In Cuban music it refers to the last section of a *son* which is more rhythmically driven and parallel to a chorus. It can also mean *tumbao*.

**Nengón:** One of the earliest types of *son*. It originated in the east provinces of Cuba.

**Punto Guajiro:** Vocal genre that emerged in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the countryside of Cuba. The roots of this genre are found in the vocal genres coming from the Canary Islands.



**Rumba:** Cuban musical song and dance genre, in which the principal instruments are the drums of the different types, and the Cuban clave. It has no religious connotations.

**Son:** Genre of popular Cuban dance music, which can be vocal, instrumental, or both. It originated in the eastern provinces of Cuba around the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the beginning, its form consisted of just a single section. Later, with the addition of the *montunos*, the *son* became a multi-sectional genre.

**Trés:** A traditional Cuban string instrument closely related to the guitar. It has three doubled steel strings, with each pair tuned in unison, plucked with a tortoise shell plectrum.

**Trova:** Vocal tradition with guitar or piano accompaniment, originating in Cuba during the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the influence of the Spanish song and the French opera. It developed into what it is known as traditional *Trova*, being of patriotic character, and later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century into *Movimiento de la Nueva Trova*, (The New Trova Movement).

**Tumbao:** Cuban groove played by every instrument of a given ensemble. It is especially related to the melodic lines played by the *tres*, which also suggests the harmony and rhythm of the *song*.

***Yoruba***: one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa who immigrated to Cuba during the slave era. They brought their traditions, religion, and music all of which suffered due to assimilation on the island, thus affecting the Afro-Cuban phenomenon.

APPENDIX B  
DEGREE RECITALS

The University of Southern Mississippi  
The College of Arts and Letters  
The School of Music  
Present

Carlos Castilla  
Guitar

Solo Recital

Program

<b>Sonata Clasica</b> -Allegro	Manuel Maria Ponce (1882-1948)
<b>Sonata K380</b> <b>Sonata K14</b>	Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)
<b>Hungarian Fantasy</b>	Johann Kaspar Mertz (1806-1856)
<b>Five Bagatelles</b>	William Walton (1902-1983)
I. Allegro II. Lento III. Alla Cubana IV. Lento V. Con Slancio	
<b>Un Tiempo fue Itatica Famosa</b>	Joaquin Rodrigo (1901-1999)
<b>Anyway</b>	Roland Dyens (1955- )
<b>La Catedral</b> -Preludio Saudade -Andante Religioso -Allegro Solemne	Agustin Barrios Mangore (1885-1944)

March 6, 2008.  
4:00 pm  
Marsh Auditorium.

This recital is given in partial fulfilment of the DMA in Guitar Performance and Pedagogy.  
Carlos Castilla is a student of Dr. Nicholas Ciraldo  
AA/EOE/ADA

The University of Southern Mississippi  
The College of Arts and Letters  
The School of Music

Present

**Carlos Castilla**  
Guitar

**Doctoral Lecture Recital**

**Program**

**Twenty Etudes Simples**

**Leo Brouwer (1939- )**

**April 27, 2008.**  
**2:30 pm**  
**Marsh Auditorium.**

**This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the DMA in Guitar Performance and Pedagogy.**  
**Carlos Castilla is a student of Dr. Nicholas Ciraldo**  
**AA/EOE/ADA**

The University of Southern Mississippi  
 College of Arts and Letters  
 School of Music

Present

## Carlos Castilla, guitar

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

4:00 p.m.

Marsh Auditorium

### Program

**Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5**

**Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959)**

Aria (Cantilena)

Carlos Feller-flute, Carlos Castilla-guitar

**Tres Canciones Españolas**

**Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999)**

En Jerez de la Frontera

Adela

De Ronda

Patricia Ramirez-mezzo soprano, Carlos Castilla-guitar

**Histoire du Tango**

**Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)**

Café 1930

Nightclub 1960

Luis Gustavo Alberto-violin, Carlos Castilla-guitar

### Brief Intermission

**Notturmo D. 96**

**Franz Schubert (1797-1828)**

Moderato

Menuetto - Trio I - Trio II

Lento e patetico

Zingara. Andantino – Trio

Tema con variazioni

Carlos Feller-flute, Alejandro Salgado-violin, Ursula Miethe-cello, Carlos Castilla-guitar

This recital is given in partial fulfilment of the DMA in Guitar Performance and Pedagogy.

Carlos Castilla is a student of Dr. Nicholas Ciraldo

AA/EOE/ADA

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