

Summer 8-2008

## **A Stylistic Analysis of Six Pieces for Solo Piano by Rodion Shchedrin and a Stylistic Analysis of Trespreludiosa Modo de Toccata, Dos Danzas Cubanas, and Estudio de Contrastes by Harold Gramatges**

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The University of Southern Mississippi

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *SIX PIECES FOR SOLO PIANO*

BY RODION SHCHEDRIN

AND

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *TRES PRELUDIOS A MODO DE TOCCATA, DOS DANZAS CUBANAS*, AND *ESTUDIO DE CONTRASTES* BY HAROLD GRAMATGES

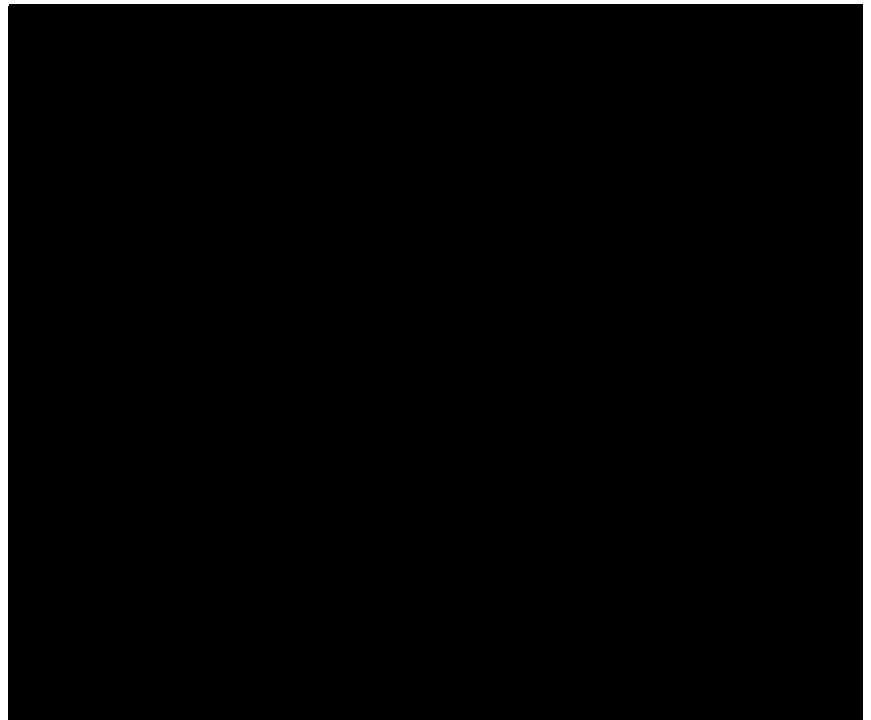
by

Amanda Virelles del Valle

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

Approved:



August 2008

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The University of Southern Mississippi

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *SIX PIECES FOR SOLO PIANO* BY

RODION SHCHEDRIN

AND

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *TRES PRELUDIOS A MODO DE TOCCATA, DOS*

*DANZAS CUBANAS*, AND *ESTUDIO DE CONTRASTES* BY HAROLD GRAMATGES

by

Amanda Virelles del Valle

Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office  
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August 2008

ABSTRACT

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *SIX PIECES FOR SOLO PIANO*

BY RODION SHCHEDRIN

AND

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *TRES PRELUDIOS A MODO DE TOCCATA, DOS DANZAS CUBANAS*, AND *ESTUDIO DE CONTRASTES* BY HAROLD GRAMATGES

by Amanda Virelles del Valle

August 2008

This document compiles stylistic analysis for performance of selected works by the Russian composer Rodion Shchedrin and the Cuban composer Harold Gramatges. The piano music of these composers has been gaining international acclaim since the 1950's. The unique harmonic language, the elements of folklore, and the virtuosity found in these pieces make them very attractive for performance and research.

The document unites two papers, each supplementing lecture recitals offered on April 16 and 28, 2008. In each paper, after a brief biographical summary and an account of the piano repertoire of the respective composer, the pieces are examined, and matters of historical background, harmony, structure, piano technique, and performance practice are discussed. This analysis, which includes musical examples, is followed by a bibliography and appendices including the recital programs offered at the two lectures and other degree recitals.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my main advisor Dr. Lois Leventhal, for her precious help in the process of completion of my studies at The University of Southern Mississippi. Her advice in every step was always timely and wise. Appreciation must also be expressed to the rest of the members of my committee, Dr. Dana Ragsdale, Dr. Elizabeth Moak, Dr. Chris Goertzen, and Dr. Joseph Brumbeloe, for their dedication and willingness to work with me throughout this process, as well as to Dr. Edward Hafer for his advice in the early stages of this project.

I would like to thank my husband, Carlos Castilla, for his support in every aspect of my life; and to my children Carlos José and Claudia, who are my inspiration. Finally, to my family in Cuba, whose perseverance and impulse guided and encouraged me, in spite of more than twenty years of distance.

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The University of Southern Mississippi

LECTURE RECITAL I

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *SIX PIECES FOR SOLO PIANO*

BY RODION SHCHEDRIN

by

Amanda Virelles del Valle

A Lecture Recital  
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

April 2008

## Introduction

Although Rodion Shchedrin's music is performed today around the world in some of the most prestigious halls and by some of the most acclaimed performers, his work remains relatively unfamiliar to the general public, even in his native Russia. Shchedrin's works represent diverse tendencies, combining elements of the Russian style from the eighteenth and nineteenth-century composers to more recent generations.

My interest in Shchedrin's music goes back to the 1980s when I first saw the ballet *Carmen*, based on Bizet's opera. The first choreography of this ballet was made in 1967 by Cuban choreographer Alberto Alonso, brother-in-law of the Cuban legend of classical ballet Alicia Alonso. Alberto Alonso thereby became the first foreign choreographer to ever work for the Moscow Bolshoi Ballet.<sup>1</sup> As a result of this collaboration of Alonso with Shchedrin and ballet dancer Maya Plisetskaya (Shchedrin's wife), as well as the constant assistance of Russian music teachers in the island, Cuban pedagogues and musicians began to pay attention to Shchedrin's music, more specifically, to the piano repertoire. In a short period of time, iconic piano pieces like *Basso Ostinato* were played all over the country by students and professionals in all kind of venues, from concerts and recitals to competitions, conferences and festivals.

The set of compositions, *Six Pieces for Solo Piano*, analyzed in the present work dates from 1951 to 1962. It is a clear representation of Shchedrin's early period. This set

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<sup>1</sup> Selected from an article published on the occasion of Alberto Alonso's death. 2008. [Internet on line] Available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1574859/Alberto-Alonso.html>. [Accessed on January 15, 2008].

of pieces makes a fine contribution to the repertoire of any pianist, and enhance the technical capabilities of the performer, as they require a high level of skill. The purpose of this document is, therefore, to aid in bringing to the attention of the general public, as well as the connoisseur the music of an important and influential composer.

### Biographical Information for Rodion Shchedrin

Rodion Konstantinovich Shchedrin, born in Moscow on December 16, 1932 is considered both in his native country and abroad as one of the most important composers of the generation after Dmitri Shostakovich.<sup>2</sup> He began his musical career as a singer in the Moscow Choir School of his birthplace, where he studied from 1945 to 1950. Shchedrin states, "I had a good voice so I went to a choral school, (for boys only), singing every day Bach, or Lasso, or Josquin de Pres, Prokofiev, Shostakovich."<sup>3</sup> Shchedrin's father was a violinist and also secretary to Shostakovich.<sup>4</sup> When Shchedrin's father was appointed as a teacher at a Moscow Choral School, Rodion enrolled as a student.<sup>5</sup> While at this school, he had the opportunity to hear such prominent Russian musicians as composers Dmitri Shostakovich, Sergei Prokofiev, Aram Khachaturian, Dmitri Kabalevsky, and pianists Sviatoslav Richter, and Emil Gilels. Inspired by such an environment, the young Shchedrin decided to study piano.<sup>6</sup>

In 1950, Shchedrin graduated from the Moscow Choral School and went to pursue studies at Moscow State Conservatory "Tchaikovsky" with Yuri A. Shaporin

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<sup>2</sup> Yun-Jin Seo, "Three Cycles of 24 Preludes and Fugues by Russian Composers: D. Shostakovich, R. Shchedrin and S. Slonimsky." D.M.A. diss., University of Texas, Austin, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Claire Polin, "Conversations in Leningrad." *Tempo, New Series*, No. 168, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1939-1989. (March, 1989): 15-20.

<sup>4</sup> Shchedrin's works from an interview with Bruce Duffie. [Internet on-line]. Available from <http://www.kcstudio.com/shchedrin3.html> [Accessed on June, 2008].

<sup>5</sup> Michail Markov, *Rodion Shchedrin Piano Works*. MUSICOM distribution. Booklet notes. 19-? CD.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



(composition) and Yakov Flier (piano). In the booklet included with a CD on which Shchedrin plays his own works, the composer writes about his piano skills, “Apparently my playing was not bad, for the strict Flier turned out to be intensely disappointed when through the years my work as a composer increasingly got in the way of my career as a concert pianist.”<sup>7</sup> Shchedrin pursued postgraduate studies at Moscow Conservatory from 1955 to 1959.

In 1958, he married the prima ballerina of the Bolshoi Theatre, the legendary Maya Plisetskaya, who later became the dedicatee of much of his music. A special place in his vast body of compositions is occupied with ballet music to honor her. The composer’s output also includes works for voice, piano solo, piano and orchestra, strings and wind instruments, opera, orchestra, various chamber ensembles, and chorus, as well as incidental music. Prominent Russian conductors such as Alexander Rozhdestvensky, Evgeni Svetlanov, and Kiril Kondrashin, premiered most of Shchedrin’s compositions, including some of the piano concerti featuring Shchedrin himself as soloist, who is a brilliant pianist.

In 1965, Shchedrin was appointed as professor at the Moscow Conservatory, where he taught until 1969. During this time, one of his most famous works was premiered, the ballet *Carmen*, based on Bizet’s opera. In 1973, he succeeded Shostakovich as president of the Union of Composers of the Russian Federation. He is an active member of musical organizations around the world, among them the “Bavarian

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<sup>7</sup> Rodion Shchedrin, *Rodion Shchedrin, Sonata, Notebook for the Youth, Piano Pieces*. Edition Rodion Shchedrin. Mainz, Germany: Wergo, 2007. CD.

Academy of Fine Arts” (1976), the “Berlin Academy of Arts” (1989), the “State Moscow Conservatory Tchaikovsky” (1997), and an honorary member of the “International Music Council” (1985) and the “Academy of Fine Arts” of the former German Democratic Republic (1983). During his long career, he has also received many prizes and awards, among them: Russian State Prize (1992); Dmitri Shostakovich Prize (1993); Crystal Award from the World Economic Forum, Davos (1993); nomination for the Grammy Award for the “Best Contemporary Composition for his work Concerto Cantabile” (2001); and “Composer of the Year” of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (2002).

Shchedrin’s piano repertoire is extensive and includes solo works such as preludes and fugues, sonatas and sonatinas, character pieces, as well as *Hommage à Chopin* for four pianos, *Romantic Duets* for four hands, and six piano concertos. Shchedrin's output has been divided into three periods: the early period, influenced by Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Stravinsky, with a tendency to use marked rhythms and the simplicity of the forms; the second period from 1960 through 1979, where Shchedrin incorporates different styles of music, such as Neo-classicism, pop, and jazz,<sup>8</sup> into a texture full of polyphony and highly charged virtuosity; and the third period, from 1980, where Shchedrin's music has acquired more spiritual depth. The composer in this period also produced instrumental works that evoke childhood memories and church music.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Yun-Jin Seo, pp. 31.

<sup>9</sup>The division in three periods was made by Onno van Rijen in the catalogue of works and biographical notes about the composer. [Internet on-line]. Available from <http://home.wanadoo.nl/ovar/shched.htm>, [Accessed on January 10, 2008]. Similar division in three periods was also pointed out by Mikhail Tarakanov in his book *Tvorchestvo Rodiona Shchedrina*, as well as by Yun-Jin Seo in her dissertation about Shostakovich, Shchedrin and Slonimsky’s Preludes and Fugues.

Throughout all of his works, Shchedrin combines elements of folklore with the traditional style of the Russian Neo-classicists, such as Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Stravinsky. The versatility of his music is the result of the combination and juxtaposition of lyrical and dramatic sections and a colourful treatment of the solo instruments, as well as the orchestra. Valentina Polokhova points out Shchedrin's use of freely serial procedures and avant-garde techniques such as pointillism, sonoristic and aleatoric methods rubbing shoulders with complex polyphony, collage and, on the other hand, reflections of various types of Russian folk music.<sup>10</sup> In some of his instrumental compositions Shchedrin introduces the use of the *Chastushki*.<sup>11</sup> Although a true exponent of modernism, his music harks back to that of previous generations. In an interview with Shchedrin, Lorin Maazel said, "It is encouraging to see composers who write music that is music, and not simply a concatenation of sounds that appeal to the eye of fellow note-designers, recognized and lauded."<sup>12</sup>

In the same interview with Lorin Maazel, Shchedrin makes the following statement about the music of today, which reflects the composer's ideals in terms of composition:

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<sup>10</sup> Valentina Kholopova, "Shchedrin, Rodion Konstantinovich." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. [Internet on line]. Available from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>. [Accessed on April 24, 2008].

<sup>11</sup> A type of traditional poetry from Russia that usually has humorous or satirical character. The verses are commonly put to music, often with accompaniment of folkloric instruments as the balalaika and the accordion.

<sup>12</sup> Lorin Maazel's words from an interview with Rodion Shchedrin on the occasion of the premier of Shchedrin's chamber opera *The Enchanted Wanderer* by the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Lorin Maazel at Carnegie Hall. Published on the web site of the International Maya Plisetskaya-Rodion Shchedrin Foundation. [Internet on-line]. Available from [www.shchedrin.de/shchedrin\\_interview\\_maazel\\_e.htm](http://www.shchedrin.de/shchedrin_interview_maazel_e.htm). [Accessed on January 13, 2008].

I don't like the term "contemporary music." It is a kind of indulgence. As if to say, "Well, sorry, but you're going to be listening to a mess. This is contemporary music and you aren't educated enough to appreciate it yet." There is music of today, which may have been written yesterday or today. There is a date on every composition. It is just a marker, an orientation point. It is not an *a priori* rehabilitation of, or an excuse for, artificiality, inexpressiveness, lack of spirituality or simply dreary composing. Music written today must, as before, move the listeners, grab them, take them away, and settle into their hearts and souls. No explanations by mentors and false prophets will change the essence of the matter. There is music and there is "not-music." There is inspiration and there is forced writing. There is innate musicality and there is painstaking, studied effect. There is intuition and there is the desire to be in step with musical fashion and the desire to please its trendsetters. Human emotions-and human ears-are basically the same as they were one or two hundred years ago. Is that something to regret?<sup>13</sup>

Shchedrin's music has been performed and recorded by many of the most important musicians of the world. Among them are classical musicians Leonard Bernstein, Mstislav Rostropovich, Lorin Maazel, Seiji Ozawa, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yehudi Menuhin, Yuri Bashmet, and Maxim Vengerov, as well as jazz pianist Chick Corea.

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<sup>13</sup> Shchedrin's words from an interview with conductor Lorin Maazel on the occasion of the premier of Shchedrin's chamber opera *The Enchanted Wanderer* by the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Lorin Maazel at Carnegie Hall. Published on the web site of the International Maya Plisetskaya-Rodion Shchedrin Foundation. [Internet on-line]. Available from [www.shchedrin.de/shchedrin\\_interview\\_maazel\\_e.htm](http://www.shchedrin.de/shchedrin_interview_maazel_e.htm). [Accessed on January 13, 2008].

### Rodion Shchedrin's Piano Music

Performing music gives one a clearer sense of music as an art in time. It increases the value of each and every small contrast and nuance, every tiny shift in tempo. It opens wider the curtain that conceals the secrets of subjugating the audience's attention to the composer's will. The composer moves closer to the "breathing of the hall" and away from intellectual exercise and abstract calculation.<sup>14</sup>

Shchedrin's catalogue of piano music is vast, including music for piano solo, music for two or more pianos, piano concertos and piano chamber music. Also, the piano is an important instrument in much of his incidental music. Since he is a brilliant performer, his works are very idiomatic for the instrument.

Shchedrin's early compositions (from 1950 to 1954), were in the field of choral music. In 1954, however, he decided to enter the piano world with the Piano Concerto No. 1, which he premiered on the seventh of November of the same year. For the concert, the Tchaikovsky Conservatory Student Orchestra was conducted by Genady Rozhdestvensky. In 1974, Shchedrin re-orchestrated this concerto. The first performance of the re-orchestrated version was in Moscow in 1974 with the composer as soloist and Evgeni Svetlanov as conductor of the USSR Symphony Orchestra. *Variation on a Theme by Glinka* (1957) and *Toccata* for piano (1958) are the next works in Shchedrin's piano catalogue, followed by the *Six Pieces for Solo Piano*, written between 1952 and 1961, which are the topic of this document. Although other recordings of these pieces exist, the

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<sup>14</sup> Shchedrin's words from the interview with conductor Lorin Maazel.

composer recorded them himself on the labels *Olympia* and *Melodiya*, the last one including the *Notebook for the Youth* from 1981.

In 1962 Shchedrin wrote his First Piano Sonata in C Major. The first performance of this piece was by Dmitry Bashkirov on April 24, 1968. This work has several recordings including those of Alexander Tselyakov and three recordings of the composer on the labels *Hanssler*, *Melodiya* and *Olympia*. The Second Piano Sonata was written in 1997 and is dedicated to Yefim Bronfman. The first performance was by the dedicatee of the piece in Oslo, in the same year.

Inspired by Shostakovich's preludes and fugues<sup>15</sup>, Shchedrin wrote the first volume of the *Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues* in 1964 (1 to 12, in sharp keys). As usual Shchedrin premiered this collection in Moscow in 1965. Murray McLachlan recorded the *Twenty Four Preludes and Fugues* together with the 25 of the *Polyphonic Notebook*, written by Shchedrin in 1970 on the label *Olympia*. The composer also has a recording of these pieces with *Melodiya*. The composer wrote the second volume of this collection (No. 13 to 24 for flat keys) in 1970. Shchedrin premiered this part of the set in Moscow in 1971.

Among his large output are the six piano concertos, plus a concerto for piano solo, entitled *Chastuschki*, 1999, which is a version of his Concerto for orchestra No. 1, written in 1963, and entitled *Naughty Limericks*. Shchedrin also premiered his Second Piano Concerto (1966), which is dedicated to his wife Maya Plisetskaya. The performance was

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<sup>15</sup> Yun-Jin Seo, pp. 32.

once again a collaboration between Shchedrin and Rozhdestvensky, in 1967. Besides the recording of the composer and conductor Evgeni Svetlanov, there are also the recordings of Nikolay Petrov with *Melodiya* and Marc-Andre Hamelin with *Hyperion*. The Third Piano Concerto (1973) entitled “*Variation and Theme*”, was premiered by Shchedrin in 1974 with the USSR Symphony Orchestra and Svetlanov as conductor. The Fourth Piano Concerto (1991) entitled “*Sharp Keys*” was first performed by Nikolay Petrov and the Washington National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich. The Fifth Piano Concerto composed in 1999 and dedicated to Olli Mustonen, was premiered in the same year by Mustonen at the piano with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen. The last to the day of his piano concertos is entitled “*Concerto Lontano*” (2003), and was commissioned by the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam. Ekaterina Mechetina premiered this piece conducted by Dimitri Sitkovetsky.<sup>16</sup>

Shchedrin’s most recent piano pieces to date include: *Diary, seven pieces for piano* (2002), *Questions*, eleven pieces for piano (2003), *Sonatina Concertante* (2005), *A la Pizzicato* (2005), *Hommage a Chopin*, for four pianos (2005). This piece is a revision of the piece written by Shchedrin in 1983 and that was premiered in the same year by the composer together with Chick Corea, Nicolas Economou and Paul Gulda. Shchedrin’s last published work for solo piano dates from 2007 and is entitled *Romantic Duets*, seven pieces for piano four hands, which was commissioned by the Verbier Festival, and premiered by the composer and Roland Pontinen at the Festival.

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<sup>16</sup> From biographical notes of pianist Ekaterina Mechetina. [Internet on-line] Available from <http://eng.mechetina.ru/main.mhtml>. [Accessed on February 01, 2008].

### Stylistic Analysis of *Six Pieces for Solo Piano*

Though Shchedrin had undergone a great development in his composing and kept experimenting with new means and forms, in his piano works there are a number of returning elements to be found. On the whole his idiom is fairly dissonant, with a preference for sharp intervals in the treble, obsessively repeated motives, very fast motoric passages, unison playing and the simultaneous use of the extreme registers of the piano.<sup>17</sup>

The *Six pieces for Solo Piano* were written between the years 1954 and 1961.

Mikhail Tarakanov points out that this is the period of the establishment of Shchedrin's style.<sup>18</sup> Each of the pieces has a very particular inspiration and history behind it.

Although it is the *Basso Ostinato*, the last of the pieces of this set, which is the most well known and often performed, the rest of the pieces are also valuable. They are suitable to play as either an entire set or as single pieces. They are often performed for their effectiveness and brilliance as encores. There is either a focus on the technical, the folkloric, or the humorous, but what makes these unique pieces delightful is the combination of all three. Modern elements such as jazz and the avant-garde as well as Russian folk music, and pianistic references to the old school appear throughout the set.

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<sup>17</sup> Michail Markov, *Rodion Shchedrin Piano Works*. MUSICOM Distribution. Booklet notes. 19-? CD.

<sup>18</sup> Tarakanov, Mikhail. *Tvorchestvo Rodiona Shchedrina*. Moscow: Soviet Composer, 1980.



### *Poem*

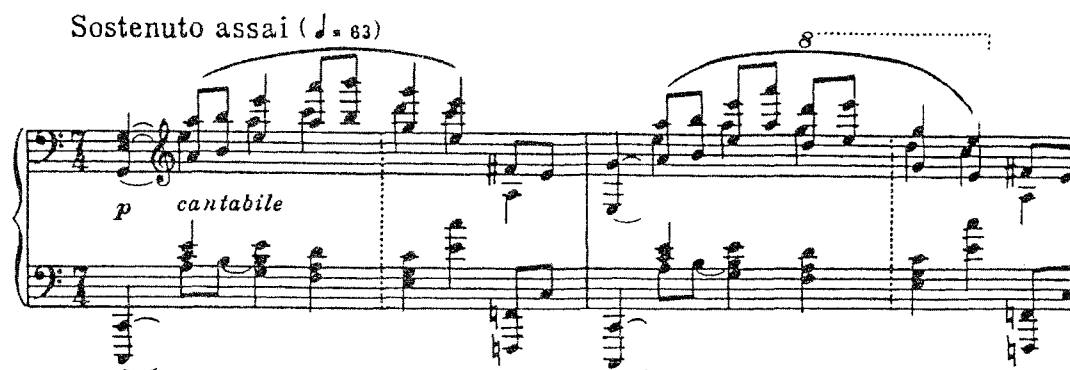
The first piece of this collection is entitled *Poem*. This piece was written in 1954. The title itself is programmatic. The poem, as a musical genre or character piece, is commonly associated with Alexander Scriabin. In Shchedrin's *Poem*, this link is very palpable in terms of melody, as well as in the character and mystic atmosphere. There are also allusions to impressionism, such as unresolved dissonances, parallel intervals of 3<sup>rd</sup>s, 4<sup>th</sup>s, and 6<sup>th</sup>s, and triads with added seconds. The harmonies and textures are reminiscent of both Messian and Rachmaninoff, and, as in most of Shchedrin's compositions, the national element is also prevalent.

Shchedrin's *Poem* starts with a C major chord in *p* in the lower register, followed by a *cantabile* motive doubled at the octave. Immediately after the first C major chord, planing<sup>19</sup> occurs, evocative of Debussy. After the first C major chord there is a direct transition to the sixth scale degree. The chords in the left hand move in contrary motion. However, an F major seventh chord in the last beat of the second measure breaks this pattern and leads us back to a variation of the first motive. Example No. 1 shows a passing appoggiatura on the F# of the F major 7 chord, to which it gives a dissonant flavor.

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<sup>19</sup> Also known in music theory as harmonic planing or parallel voice leading.

Example No. 1. *Poem*. Measures 1 and 2.



The piece uses multi-meter. It starts in 7/4 and it has small transitions to 5/4 and an episode in 3/4, beginning in measure 9 through measure 14, then returns to 7/4. The note values remain simple, with the predominance of quarter and eighth notes. Only in measure 9 to 14 do the note values change, in this case varying between sixteenth and eighth notes. (Example 2)

Example No. 2. *Poem*. Measures 9 to 11.



The entire piece is constructed upon the base of the motive appearing in the first four measures. The form of the piece is A-B-A'. Section A, from measure 1 to 8, consists basically of the presentation of the initial theme and the repetition of it. However, in measure 7 and 8, although rhythmically similar to measures 3 to 4, the harmonic structure is altered.

Section B starts in measure 9. This is a very short section of 6 bars, which could actually be considered a transition, but the thematic material is different. In measure 15 he returns to section A. The piece then maintains the same thematic material to the end, but the composer uses different combinations of chords to present the same material, sometimes minor chords, and sometimes major chords. At the end there is a prolongation of the appoggiatura that was present throughout the piece, this time the desired effect fading to a pianissimo ending. The appoggiatura figures prominently throughout *Poem*. Each new phrase begins after the repetitive motif which first appears in beat 7, measure 1. This figure consists of a passing appoggiatura on the pitches F# to E. This important unifying motif occurs 13 times throughout *Poem* and plays an important part in the structure and performance of the piece.

#### *Four Pieces from The Little Humpbacked Horse*

The second piece in this collection *Four Pieces from The Little Humpbacked horse* is based on Shchedrin's ballet of the same name. The ballet itself is a setting of a very popular Russian fairy tale, written by Pyotor Yershov (1815 – 1869)<sup>20</sup> in 1834. This is a very long tale written in the form of a poem, where all the characters speak in rhyme. It is a favorite among Russian children. The poem tells the story of Ivan, a peasant's son who is asked by the Tsar to carry out many unreasonable demands, in order to please the Tsar Maiden. If Ivan completes all the tasks, at the end the Tsar can marry the Tsar Maiden! The story also touches upon other popular Russian fairy tales like the *Tsarevicht*

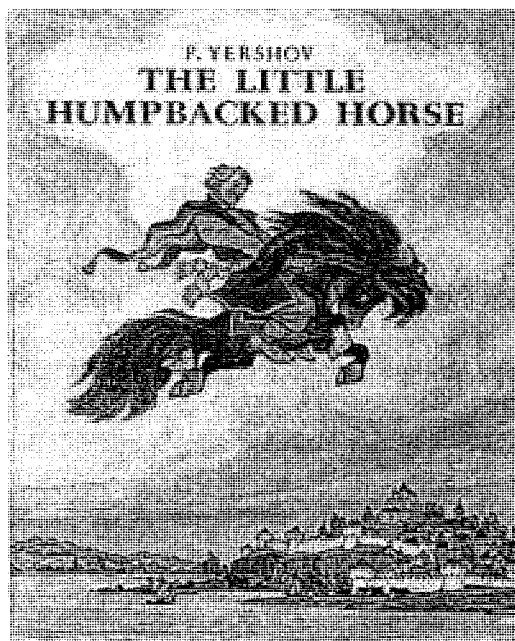
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<sup>20</sup> Russian poet, author of several fairy tales, including Ilya Muromets, and Tsarevicht Ivan, a huge poem in ten volumes and more than 100 songs, which has not survived in its entirety.

*Ivan, The Fire Bird, and The Gray Wolf. The Little Humpbacked horse* was banned for more than 20 years in the nineteenth century because it exalts the foolishness of the Tsar.

The first ballet adaptation of the story, that of Arthur Saint León with music of Cesare Pugni (1802 – 1870)<sup>21</sup> was premiered in 1864. In 1961, Alexander Radunsky choreographed a new version to the score written by Rodion Shchedrin. The premier had Maya Plisetskaya, the composer's wife, in the role of the Tsar Maiden.

Illustration No. 1. Ivan and the horse, as they appear in a 1966 English edition of the folktale *The Little Humpbacked Horse*.<sup>22</sup>




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<sup>21</sup> Italian composer, violinist and pianist, known for his ballet music, of more than 100 original scores.

<sup>22</sup> A complete version of the poem is available in English, with illustrations, 1966 edition, at <http://home.freeuk.com/russica2/books/horse/ch1.html>, [accessed on January 10, 2008], and in Russian at <http://lib.ru/LITRA/ERSHOW/konek.txt>, 1964 edition. [Accessed on January 10, 2008].

Shchedrin adapted the score of his ballet to present a lovely set of 4 pieces for piano solo in 1955. In these pieces we feel the connection with Prokofiev's piano music as well as to Stravinsky's.<sup>23</sup> The first piece of the inner set is entitled *Elder Brothers and Ivan*. This section of the story describes how Ivan and his brothers are spending time in the country, in a lazy way of living where the brothers do not have anything to do but sing silly songs. Ivan, the youngest, spends time playing his flute.

The piano version is vivid and cheerful with a marked folk flavor. It is written in polyphonic style. At the beginning of the *Elder Brothers and Ivan* (movement I) as shown in Example 3, we hear the entrance of each of the brothers.

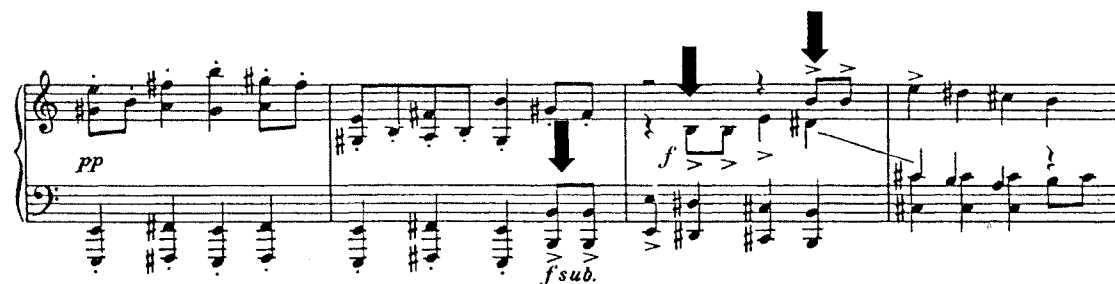
Example No. 3. *Elder Brothers and Ivan*. Measures 1 to 11.

Allegro risoluto (♩ = 108)

<sup>23</sup> Mikhail Tarakanov, *Tvorchestvo Rodiona Shchedrina*. Partial translation A. Virelles.

The theme appears first in the middle register and it will appear several times between measures 1 to 33, creating a fugal effect. There are sections where the theme appears in a *stretto*, as shown in Example 4.

Example No. 4. *Elder Brothers and Ivan*. Measures 16 to 19.



The tempo marking indicates *Allegro risoluto*, which immediately gives us the idea of the character of the piece, as do the indications in the first two measures of *f* and *ben marcato sempre*. Also, the use of staccato markings accents and *sforzandos* confirm the idea of a march in polyphonic style.

The second movement of the inner set is entitled *Girls' Roundelay*. It is based on one idea repeated throughout the piece. The composer recreates the voices of the girls singing a folk song in duet. Example 5 shows the entrance of the movement, the voices of the girls singing in thirds. The ornament in measure 2 is a very characteristic and idiomatic gesture of Russian folk singing, as is the interval of a fourth. It is based on the Aeolian scale of D, which contributes to its typical Russian flavor.

Example No.5. *Girl's Roundelay*. Measures 1 to 8.



The piece starts *pianissimo* and as it progresses toward the middle section it increases in dynamic and thickens in texture. The naïve motive of the beginning transforms into a more energetic one, simulating that all the girls of the little town are singing. At the close of the movement the texture becomes transparent again, with only the opening two voices remaining. The form is a loosely constructed theme and variations/ostinato. The six-bar theme appears ten times, each time with new material.

The third movement *Scherzino*, is the fastest. The specific combination of eighth and sixteenth notes brings out the playful character. The rhythmic element dominates here. The chromaticism in measures 1 to 4 and 12 to 15 accentuates the character, and makes the harmony ambiguous. Example No.6 shows the movement of the melody with an alternation of half and whole steps.

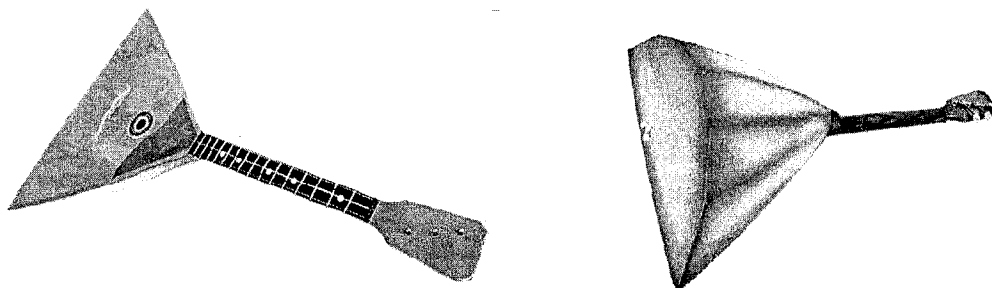
Example No.6. *Scherzino*. Measures 1 to 4.



The movement is written in binary form A-A', with the addition of a Coda, and it is based on a four-bar motive. Section A extends from measure 1 to 30, section A' from measure 31 to 60, and the Coda from 61 to the end.

The fourth movement *I Play the Balalaika* serves as a festive ending to this inner set. Here the composer takes the same thematic material presented in *Girls' Roundelay* and transforms its character. In *Girls' Roundelay* the melody represents the singing of the girls; here the same melody with two voices imitates the playing of the balalaika.<sup>24</sup>

Illustration No. 2. Balalaika. (view from front and rear of the instrument)

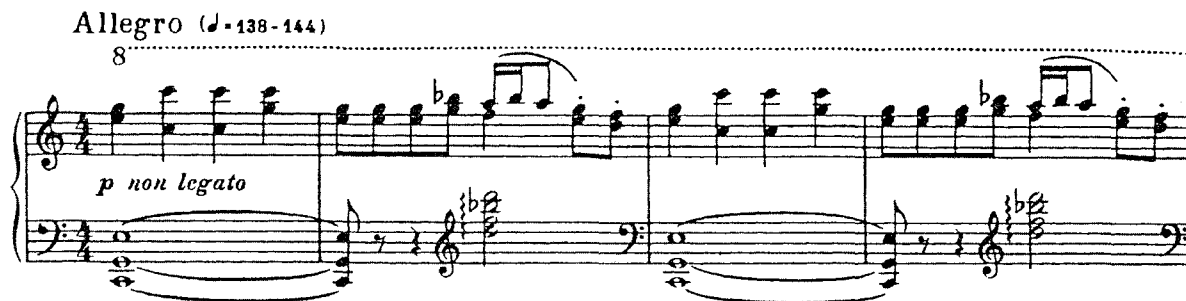


<sup>24</sup> The balalaika is a stringed Russian folk instrument from the lute family, with a triangular body, with the back slightly bowed. It has 3 strings, sometimes 6, in 3 pairs. The modern balalaika is found in piccolo, prima, seconda, alto, bass, contrabass and sub-contrabass.



The instrument has a variety of sizes and shapes; the one shown in the Illustration No. 2 is the most common. The composer uses several techniques to suggest the sound of the instrument. First of all, the register: he uses the upper register of the piano, since the balalaika has a very high register; secondly, staccato markings imitate the plucked nature of the instrument. Example 7 shows both elements together in the opening of the movement.

Example No. 7. I *Play the Balalaika*. Measures 1 to 4.



### *Humoresque*

*Humoresque*, written in 1957 is the third piece in this collection. Its name reflects the sarcastic element typical of Shostakovich and Prokofiev. *Humoresque* is one of Shchedrin's most often performed piano work. The first six notes of the piece immediately predict its humorous character and as seen in Example 7 the closing motive, a passage in 3<sup>rd</sup> s in the bass, marked *p secco* is charged with satirical humor. Dynamic contrasts, a variety of articulation markings, syncopated accents, and wide leaps, all are elements which serve to further accentuate the character. The piece is written in 2/4, in D

b Major, however, the last chord is E b Major, marked *fortissimo sforzando* and takes the audience by surprise.

Example No. 8. *Humoresque*. Measures 61 to 66.

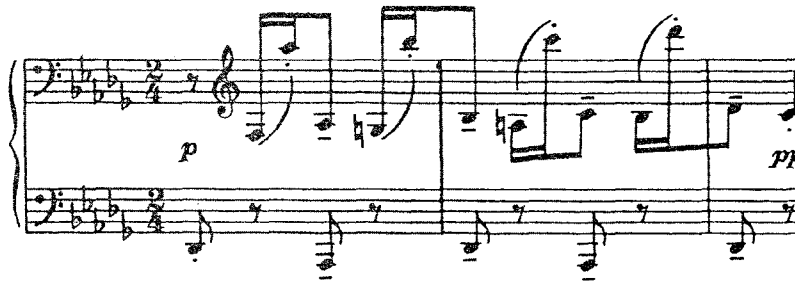


Examples 9 and 10 show two different types of texture in the treatment of the melodic material. Example 9, shows the main theme which is a chordal line, where the inner voices are to be projected alternatively. Example 10 shows an extremely disjunct melodic line which appears in measures 13 -14. Shchedrin uses wide leaps marked with portamento signs, (-) combined with staccato in the upper notes, for a humorous effect.

Example No. 9. *Humoresque*. Measures 5 to 8.



Example No. 10. *Humoresque*. Measures 13 to 14.



The piece is written in binary form A-A'. A small eight-bar transitional phrase separates the A section from A'.

*A la Albéniz*

In the fourth piece of the set *A la Albéniz* (*Imitation of Albéniz*), Shchedrin exploits the musical language of the nationalistic Spanish composer Isaac Albéniz. This work, written in 1959 and dedicated to Maya Plisetskaya, contains guitar-like sonorities, elements from dance and typical Spanish flourishes. Tarakanov states, *In A la Albéniz*, Shchedrin suddenly revived the images of “Russian Spain”.<sup>25</sup> This piece has an extensive number of transcriptions and arrangements for various instruments and ensembles, which include Shchedrin’s own transcription for violin and piano.

As shown in Example 11, the piece begins with syncopated chords, (measures 1 to 3) which serve as a brief introduction and return at the close. The material is followed by the theme presented by the right hand in measures 4 to 10 and is repeated in measures 16 to 24 and measures 52 to 57.

<sup>25</sup> Mikhail Tarakanov, *Tvorchestvo Rodiona Shchedrina*. Partial translation A. Virelles.

Example 11. *A la Albéniz*. Measures 1 to 3.

Con passione (♩ = 126)

*ff marcatissimo*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

The atmosphere of a Hispanic dance is created by the use of half step intervals inserted into the scale, as well as chords in *p* and *staccato* that simulate the clapping and tapping of dancers. The ascending chromatic sixteen notes passages seen in bar 7 evokes the graceful movements of the dancer's hands, as seen in Example 12.

Example No. 12. *A la Albéniz*. Measures 6 to 10.

*p*

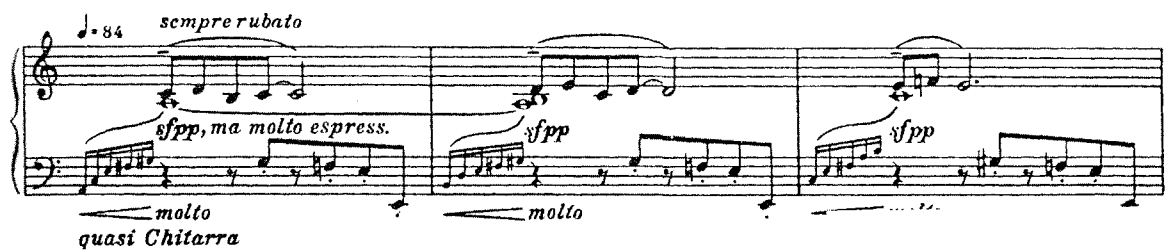
*f*

*secco*

*con Ped.*

In measure 25 the texture, rhythm and tempo change drastically. Starting in measure 29, as shown in Example 13, the intention of the composer is to imitate the sound of the Hispanic guitar. The arpeggios in the left hand accompanied by the *sfpp* marking accentuate this effect, as well as the phrase *quasi chitarra*, (like a guitar), which idea continues until bar 44 where the “ritmico” of bar 25 returns.

Example No. 13. *A la Albéniz*. Measures 29 to 31.



The composer presents the theme in this section first, from measure 29 with a very simple and transparent texture. As seen in Example 14, in measure 37 and 38, he repeats the same theme but now with an expanded texture that creates a dramatic contrast.

Example No. 14. *A la Albéniz*. Measures 37 – 38.



A surprising change of tonality occurs in measure 50. The same material originally presented in the key of A minor, in measure 5, is now presented in the key of G minor. At the close of the piece Shchedrin returns to the introductory material, finishing with a chord marked with the Russian word “кулаком”, meaning fist, suggesting the idea of striking this chord with the hand closed, and quickly releasing it, capturing in the pedal a full and resonant sonority.

The texture of this piece, as in almost all pieces in this collection, balances counterpoint and homophony. The harmonic language is predominantly tertian, although there is some use of quartal harmonies, for example in measures 1, 14, and 59 to the end. Both melodic and rhythmic patterns show the influence of Hispanic music. The chromaticism presented in the scales in measures 7, 10, 24 and the triplets in measures 11, 16, 22, are similar to the characteristic elements of Moorish music, a vital component in Hispanic folklore. Referring to the influence of Arab (or Moorish) music in Spain, Robert Stevenson states, “Arab influences and the use of Persian modes have been assumed in melodic notations including augmented seconds or changing chromatic elements.”<sup>26</sup>

Some elements of dance are noticeable in the triplets appearing throughout the piece. As shown in Example 15, these triplets are almost always preceded by a pause indicated in the score, creating a kind of folksy lilt.

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<sup>26</sup> Robert Stevenson, et al. "Spain." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. [Internet on line]. Available from <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com lynx.lib.usm.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/40115pg2>>. [Accessed on April 30, 2008].

Example No.15. *A la Albéniz*. Measures 55 to 56.

The form of the piece is A-B-A', with a short Introduction. Section A extends from measure 1 to 24, section B from 25 to 44 and section A' from 45 to the end. The third section is a colorful expansion and variation of the first section, ending with the same material presented in the introduction. Shchedrin uses a change of key to start section A', enhancing the original material.

### *Troika*

*Troika* was written in 1959. Some similarities to the *Troika* in Tchaikovsky's Four Seasons are found in this piece, but the idiom is much more modern.<sup>27</sup> The Russian word *troika*, (ТРОЙКА) means a collection of three of anything. For example it might refer to a three horse team used to pull a carriage or it might indicate a folk dance where the man dances with two women.

<sup>27</sup> Michail Markov, *Rodion Shchedrin Piano Works*. MUSICOM Distribution. Booklet notes. 19-? CD.

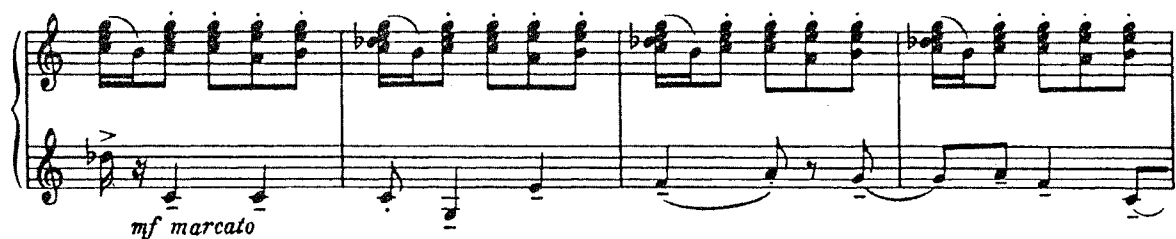
In this piece Shchedrin creates a wonderful programmatic effect suggesting the trotting of the horses by the use of an ostinato chordal motif, within a recurring 5/8 meter, as shown in Example 16.

Example No. 16. *Troika*. Measures 53 to 56.



As seen in Example 17, together with this persistent rhythm Shchedrin presents a *marcato* line that appears, first in the left, later in the right hand. This theme constitutes the principal melodic idea of the first section. The same melodic line is presented later in measure 31, this time expanded to the intervals of a tenth, which presents a technical challenge.

Example 17. *Troika*. Measures 5 to 8





Measures 32 to 34.



The piece is written in 5/8 meter, with small sections in 2/8 inserted into the big structure. The form is A-B-A'. The B section starts in measure 53 and extends until measure 116. Here the rhythmic pattern presented at the beginning persists but the character changes dramatically. The melodic element now predominates with a *cantabile* indication in the score, shown in Example 18.

Example No. 18. *Troika*. Measures 57 to 64.



This phrase of 8 bars (measures 57 to 64) is presented first within a transparent texture of three to four voices. From measures 65 to 72 the texture thickens into full chords and octaves in the left hand, and the dynamic increases from *p* to *f*. Section A was originally in C major. In section B the tonality shifts to D b Major. In measure 89 the

theme of the B section recurs, this time in E b Major but in contrast to the beginning of this section, it is presented first *forte* and later *piano*, as in a type of dynamic mirror.

Interesting are the *pp* chords in measure 73 which appear out of nowhere. They present a kind of echo effect. The 4-8 bar motive in 2/8 which occurs sporadically throughout clearly serves as an abrupt interruption of the “trotting” motif.

### *Two Polyphonic Pieces*

The *Two Polyphonic Pieces* are dedicated to Shchedrin's teacher Jakov Flier. *Two-part Invention*, written in 1961, serves as a preamble to the *Basso Ostinato*. Although these two pieces are often performed separately, they are originally conceived like the preludes and fugues of Shostakovich as a set, in this particular case an Invention and an Ostinato. The invention is based on the repetition of the 7 bar theme, a total of twelve times throughout. It outlines a F minor triad and it is also highly chromatic. (See Example 19).

Example No. 19. *Two-Part Invention*. Measures 1 to 9. Theme.

Allegro moderato (♩ = 98-100)

The musical score is for a piano piece in F minor (three flats) and 2/4 time. It is titled 'Allegro moderato (♩ = 98-100)'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows measures 1 through 5, with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The second system shows measures 6 through 9, with dynamics including mezzo-forte (mf) and piano (p). The melody is highly chromatic and features many slurs and accents. The bass line is mostly rests, with some activity in measure 9.

Shchedrin modifies the theme with each appearance. The theme itself has two ideas, the second part of which Shchedrin chooses to change. With the exception of the theme appearing in measures 55 to 62, in the left hand, it is always played by the right hand. The line that accompanies the theme consists of simple eighth notes with staccato marks which accentuate the character. Both the theme and the second voice are marked with syncopated accentuation, over the weak beat, sometimes an accent symbol, others a *sforzando*, as shown in Example 20.

Example No. 20. *Two-Part Invention*. Measures 8 to 10 and 46 to 48.



As shown in example 21, measure 56, Shchedrin inserts improvisatory material of *leggerissimo* 32<sup>nd</sup> notes in the extreme upper register, accompanying the theme, which will repeat at the end of the piece. At the end however, it appears without the theme, simply over a tonic pedal. He ends the invention with a Picardy third.

Example No. 21. *Two-part Invention*. Measures 56 to 59.

*Basso Ostinato* is Shchedrin's best-known work for solo piano. This piece was written as the required selection for the second edition of the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition, held in Moscow in 1962.<sup>28</sup> It is a polyphonic piece which presents two contrasting melodic ideas simultaneously. The bass line, which is the *ostinato*, is marked with rhythmic octaves in staccato almost throughout the whole piece with a continuous quarter note beat. This material is presented in exact duplication in measures 3 to 42, 58 to 104 and 127 to 166. The first 4 bars of the *ostinato* appear in example 18 below:

<sup>28</sup> Mikhail Tarakanov, *Tvorchestvo Rodiona Shchedrina*. Partial translation A. Virelles.

Example No. 22. *Basso Ostinato*. Measures 2 to 6.



Over the *ostinato* line there is an improvisatory-type melody which reflects the jazz influence in Shchedrin's music. It might be counted as a countersubject to the bass line, as it continues to outline the same melodic contour with each restatement.

The harmony in this piece is permeated with strong dissonances, with which Shchedrin creates tension and expands the sonority of the instrument. The form is A-B-A'. In the B section although new material is presented (measures 43 to 57) there is a return to the initial theme in measure 58, this time with a change in tonality. In measure 79 Shchedrin repeats the material of the beginning of the piece, and in measure 105 he introduces a new idea. Example 23.

Example No. 23. *Basso Ostinato*. Measures 106 to 108.



He finishes with this new material in measure 127, where he starts the recapitulation of section A. The B section is a combination of the initial theme and the two new ideas, in alternation. The piece is full of brilliant coloristic effects contrasting with pianissimo sonorities. The character is always vigorous and sometimes mysterious.

Technically this piece is difficult, requiring excellent rhythmic and tonal control. In measure 121 to 126 as shown in Example 24, there is a demanding passage with hand crossings, using the extreme upper and lower registers of the piano simultaneously.

Example. 24. *Basso Ostinato*. Measures 121 to 126.

Although in this period of Shchedrin's output his music is tonal, there are still some passages in which he exploits new sonorities and makes use of tone clusters and dissonances, as shown in Example 25.



## Conclusions

Rodion Shchedrin is an influential Russian composer of the present generation. His music for piano features a combination of elements that makes it attractive for all kind of performers. Both the intermediate and the concert artist can find enjoyment in this repertoire, which ranges in difficulty from the relatively accessible pieces found in *The Little Humpbacked Horse* set, filled with elements of dance and folklore, to the highly virtuosic *Basso Ostinato*. The juxtaposition of elements of jazz, folk music, traditional and non traditional harmonies, the imaginative use of contrasting textures and the exploration of the sonorities of the piano, allows Shchedrin's music to be accessible for performers as well as for the audience. Since these pieces range in level of difficulty, from intermediate to advance, they are also a good asset for pedagogical purposes.

The works discussed in this document were conceived over a period of nine years, from 1951 to 1962, exposing elements of the evolution of the compositional style of Rodion Shchedrin. Although conceived separately, they function perfectly as one set, (with a complete duration of approximately 35 minutes) also as single pieces, and for their brilliance and virtuousness, as encores. After exploring and studying these pieces in depth my hope is that they will find their way into the mainstream of the pianist's repertoire.



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The University of Southern Mississippi

LECTURE RECITAL II

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *TRES PRELUDIOS A MODO DE TOCCATA, DOS DANZAS CUBANAS*, AND *ESTUDIO DE CONTRASTES* BY HAROLD GRAMATGES

by

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A Lecture Recital  
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

April 2008

## Introduction

In 1987, I was accepted into the Instituto Superior de Arte, ISA (Higher Institute of the Arts) in Havana, Cuba, to continue my music studies. During that year I had the privilege of attending music history and analysis classes with Maestro Harold Gramatges. His personality, charisma and profound knowledge drew students of all majors to his classes, which were always full. His lectures covered a broad range of topics, from Western Music to the most authentic Cuban folklore.

The present work is a humble attempt to honor the legacy of Harold Gramatges. His music occupies an important place in the repertoire of prominent Cuban pianists of our time, and his piano music is often performed as part of international competitions and festivals.

The purpose of the study will be to explore the life and piano works of Harold Gramatges focusing on *Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata*, *Dos Danzas Cubanas*, and *Estudio de Contrastes*. It will serve to increase the knowledge of the existing literature pertaining to Gramatges's work in general, and will specifically provide a stylistic analysis of the works selected, including a description of techniques and procedures. The study will serve as a reference for the performance of these works and will target the elements of harmony, melody, rhythm, texture, tonality, form and piano technique.

The analysis and description of these elements will illuminate specific aspects of the compositional panorama, in a time frame when Gramatges was one of the first Cuban composers to respond to the European avant-garde movement. His works, which are technically demanding, exhibit a synthesis of this movement with Cuban folklore. His

methods and pieces for children are taught as a mandatory part of every music curriculum in Cuba. As Marta Rodríguez Cuervo said in the Prologue to the *Harold Gramatges Catalogo de Obras*, “Gramatges’s contribution to the Cuban piano repertoire in the second half of the twentieth century cannot be ignored.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> José Amer, *Harold Gramatges: Catálogo de Obras*. Madrid: Ediciones y Publicaciones Fundación Autor, 1997. Prologue by Marta Rodríguez Cuervo.

## Biographical Information for Harold Gramatges

Harold Gramatges is a Cuban composer, pianist and educator, born in the city of Santiago de Cuba on September 26, 1918. His long trajectory as a composer and cultural advocate has been recognized not only in Cuba but also in Europe. Gramatges is the recipient of numerous national and international awards and his music is frequently performed in festivals and concerts around the world. He has also received awards from the government for his work in education and as director of artistic institutions on the island.

Gramatges began his musical education privately until the foundation of the *Conservatorio Provincial de Oriente* in 1927, where he studied piano and harmony. From the very beginning of his studies, he was considered a brilliant performer. He continued his education at the Havana Conservatory under the guidance of Maestro Amadeo Roldán (1901-1939)<sup>2</sup>, who helped catapult his career and “infused him with the respect and rigor of the profession he had chosen, with the academic rigor that he [Roldán] used to teach to his students.”<sup>3</sup> After Roldán’s death he studied with Jose Ardévol (1911 – 1981).<sup>4</sup> He also became involved with such musical organizations as the “*Grupo de Renovación Musical*”, (Group of Musical Renewal), in which he participated not only as a composer,

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<sup>2</sup> Composer, professor, violinist, and conductor. He was born in Paris and died in Cuba. For several years he was the conductor of the Havana Philharmonic Orchestra, and also directed the Havana Conservatory. He was one of the promoters of Afro-Cuban music. His works had been played in Cuba and abroad. He is considered to be a pioneer of Cuban’s modern symphonic art.

<sup>3</sup> Marta Rodríguez Cuervo, “Tendencias de lo Nacional en la Creación Instrumental Cubana Contemporánea” (National Tendencies in Cuban Instrumental Contemporary Music). (D.M. diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain, 2002), 263. Partial translation A.Virelles.

<sup>4</sup> Composer of Catalan origin, who settled in Cuba and was a founder of the *Grupo de Renovación Musical*, in which Gramatges also took part.



but also as a writer and critic, and later as president.

In 1942, at a concert of the Havana Chamber Orchestra, six composers premiered their piano sonatas, one of which was to be chosen for a scholarship offered by the Berkshire Music Center in the United States. Gramatges's Sonata (*Sonata en Sol Sostenido*), played by the composer himself, won the competition, and as a result, he went to Tanglewood to study composition with Aaron Copland and conducting with Serge Koussevitzky.<sup>5</sup> Among his classmates were Alberto Ginastera and Leonard Bernstein.<sup>6</sup> Soon afterwards Gramatges founded the Orchestra of the Conservatorio Nacional de la Habana, where he also taught until 1958. At this time he also served as assistant director of the National Chamber Orchestra.

From 1944, Gramatges began incorporating elements of Cuban and Afro-Cuban folklore into his music. During this period he wrote the *Trio for Piano, Clarinet and Cello* and the *Sinfonía en Mi*, a work that received a prize in the United States from the Detroit Symphony. During this period he also wrote the *Concertino for Piano and Wind Instruments*, and *Dos Danzas Cubanas* (1949).

In 1958, Gramatges was selected as a judge for the First International George Enescu Piano Competition. Among the other judges was renowned professor Nadia Boulanger with whom he traveled to Bucharest, Romania. Upon returning to Paris, he met with Copland who invited him to the premiere of Stravinsky's *Lamentations of Jeremiah*. He was invited to Boulanger's reception in honor of Stravinsky at her Paris

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<sup>5</sup> Victoria Eli Rodríguez, "Gramatges, Harold." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. [Internet on line] Available from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>. [Accessed January 30, 2008].

<sup>6</sup> Leonel F Maza Gonzalez, and Sánchez, Lourdes Castellon, *Harold Gramatges. La Armonía de la Vida*. 2008. [Internet on line]. Web site of the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí. Available from <http://www.bnjm.cu/sitios/revista/2004/01-02/harold.htm>. [Accessed on January 30, 2008].

apartment, where other important composers were also present, including Pierre Boulez and his student Leonard Bernstein.<sup>7</sup>

Although Gramatges has said, “I don’t believe in periods, mine of any other composer”,<sup>8</sup> his output is commonly divided in four periods. Marta Rodríguez Cuervo describes Gramatges’s first period from 1950, as “the rooting in popular urban expressions and its concretion in genres such as the *canción*, *danza*, *habanera*, *guajira*, *son*, among others.”<sup>9</sup> From 1969, he avoided worn-out forms.<sup>10</sup> The works composed in the 70s and 80s are marked with experimentation, using twentieth century techniques such as microtonalism, serialism, aleatorism, and indeterminacy. In the 90s, there is a return in Gramatges’s style to the genres of traditional Cuban music.

Gramatges has taught composition at the Havana and Oriente Universities, at the National Conservatory, and at the High Institute of the Arts (Instituto Superior de Arte, ISA) where he also taught History and Aesthetics. During the 50’s, he was the president of the Cultural Society *Nuestro Tiempo* and adviser at the Music Department of the General Direction of Culture (Dirección General de Cultura), since 1959. In this position he had the task of reforming the entire music education system in the country as well as creating the National Symphony Orchestra. From 1960 to 1964, he was designated Cuban Ambassador to France. From 1965 to 1970 he was the Director of the Music Department at the institution *Casa de las Américas*, which develops cultural relationships between

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<sup>7</sup> Milvia Rodríguez, “Eclecticism in Modern Cuban Music as Reflected in Selected Piano Works by Harold Gramatges: An Investigative Analysis.” D.M.A. diss., University of Nebraska, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Leonardo Acosta, *Del Tambor al Sintetizador*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1983. Partial translation A. Virelles.

<sup>9</sup> José Amer, and Cuervo, Marta Rodríguez, *Harold Gramatges: Catálogo de Obras*. Madrid: Ediciones y Publicaciones Fundación Autor, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Cuba and Latin-American countries. Since 1993 he has been the president of the UNEAC (National Union of Artists and Writers), and since 1994 he has been an Honorary Member of the *Consejo Iberoamericano de la Música* (CIMUS). He has been the adviser of the Music Direction of the National Culture Council and Vice-president of the Cuban Committee of the International Music Council of the UNESCO. He is currently the adviser to the Minister of Culture and President of the Artistic Committee of the *Editora Musical de Cuba*, positions he has held since 1970.

Gramatges's articles relating to Cuban music, history and esthetics have appeared in *Cuadernos de Cultura Musical*, *Nuestro Tiempo* and *Música*, among other publications. He has received the following prizes for his works: *Reichold del Caribe y Centroamérica*, awarded by the Symphonic Orchestra of Detroit for *Sinfonía en Mi*; the National Prize in Chamber Music, for *Quinteto*, in 1950; and the *Tomás Luis de Victoria* prize, awarded to a Latin American composer for the first time in 1996.

For his teaching career of more than 45 years, Gramatges has been given the title of Professor Emeritus at the *Instituto Superior de Arte*, in *Havana*. He has also received numerous government awards for his outstanding work as pedagogue, composer and arts promoter, including the Orden Félix Varela, Medal Alejo Carpentier, the Medal de la Clandestinidad, and the Medal Raúl Gómez García.

Gramatges's vast catalogue of works includes solo, chamber, symphonic, ballet, and incidental music. His compositions have been performed throughout Latin America, Europe, Asia, and the United States.

## Harold Gramatges's Piano Music

Harold Gramatges' first work for piano was written in 1937, entitled *Pensando en ti* (*Thinking of You*), a piece that he dedicated to his future wife Ena Susana Hartmann (Manila). It was first performed in Havana in 1997, by Cuban pianist Roberto Urbay, who also recorded it in 1997 with the label EGREM, in a compilation of Gramatges' piano work entitled *Harold Gramatges: Obra Completa para Piano*.

In 1942, Gramatges composed his *Sonata en Sol Sostenido*, which won him a scholarship to study with Copland and Koussevitzky in Tanglewood, Massachusetts. He performed it internationally for the first time in August at the Festival in Tanglewood with a dedication to Jose Ardévol, his former teacher. Originally written for harpsichord, it won also the National Music Prize, in 1942.

The next piece in Gramatges' catalogue of piano works is *Pequeña Suite, Homenaje a Ravel* (*Little Suite, Homage to Ravel*) written in 1943. It was premiered by Josefina Megret in Havana in the same year and recorded by Roberto Urbay. A transcription of this work for solo guitar was written by Cuban guitarist and pedagogue Jesús Ortega.

In 1947, Gramatges wrote *Tres Danzas para Piano, Homenaje a Ignacio Cervantes*, (*Three Dances for piano, Homage to Ignacio Cervantes*).<sup>11</sup> It was premiered by Josefina Megret at The Brooklyn Museum in New York, the same year. Two years later, Megret premiered Gramatges's *Dos Danzas Cubanas*, at the New York Library. During the next decade Gramatges wrote *Preludio para el Album* (1950) and *Tres*

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<sup>11</sup> Ignacio Cervantes, (1847-1905) is one of the most notable composers and pianists from the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Cuba. His most remarkable compositions are his dances for piano, characterized by the use of rhythmic cells of traditional Cuban music.

*Preludios a Modo de Toccata* (1952 – 1953) the first premiered in Havana in 1955 by Margot Fleites and the latter by Harry McClure in the Hall of the Americas, U.S.A in 1956. This piece has also been recorded by Jorge Gómez Labraña for the label EGREM, as well as by Roberto Urbay. In 1956, Gramatges wrote *Suite Cubana para Niños: Suite Infantil*, dedicated to Maria Antonieta Enriques, and *Guajira*, premiered in 1957 and dedicated to Martucha Bacallao. In 1957, he wrote *Sonatina Hispánica*, a work that was originally written for harpsichord, and that was premiered by Melba Pascual in Havana, in 1980.

During the next ten years Gramatges wrote for various vocal and instrumental ensembles. In 1969, he wrote *Móvil I*, which marked a completely new direction in his style. *Estudio de Contrastes* (1974) was premiered in 1976 by Roberto Urbay and *Incidencias*, (1977) was premiered the next year by Adolfo Fernández. In 1988, Gramatges returned to the roots of traditional Cuban music with his *Seis Danzas Antiguas* (*Six Antique Dances*). Gramatges has also written piano chamber works, works for voice and piano and a *Concertino for Piano and Wind Instruments* (1945).

Gramatges' piano music has been published by SOCH (Cuba) Ediciones Musicales Fondo del Pianista (Cuba) EUP (Washington, USA) EVC (Philadelphia, US) SMP (New York, USA) Ricordi Americana (Argentina), Peer International Corporation (New York, USA), Editio Musica (Budapest), among others. His entire output for piano became available on record with Roberto Urbay's compilation "*Harold Gramatges: Obra Completa para Piano*", in two volumes, recorded in 1997.

*Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata*

Gramatges wrote *Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata* (*Three Preludes in the Style of a Toccata*) between 1952 and 1953. *Preludes I* and *II* were internationally premiered by pianist Harry McClure in the United States, at the Hall of the Americas. The first prelude was premiered by Lilia García Valladares in Havana, Cuba and has several recordings, the first made by Jorge Gómez Labraña.

The preludes are conceived as a toccata in three movements. The first prelude *Allegro*, is based on syncopated motifs and rhythmic formulas of the Cuban dance genres. The second prelude, *Andante e Molto Espressivo*, has an improvised character that evokes Cuban folklore. The last prelude *Allegro*, is based on the rhythms of Cuban rural music. Milvia Rodríguez states, “*Three Preludes in the form of a Toccata* is a work of quasi-sonata structure that could be considered the most accomplished neo-classical work in Cuban piano music”.<sup>12</sup>

The three movements of the work adhere to the typical sonata form structure. Not only is the work conceived as a three movement whole: fast-slow-fast, but also the structure of the first movement itself is sonata-like. In an interview with Milvia Rodríguez, the composer states, “I added the term “Toccata” to connect them more; it could have been named *Sonata* as well, if applying the freedom with which modern composers since Stravinsky approach the genre.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Milvia Rodríguez, “Eclecticism in Modern Cuban Music as Reflected in Selected Piano Works by Harold Gramatges: An Investigative Analysis.” D.M.A diss., University of Nebraska. Lincoln, Nebraska, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 68. Interview of Milvia Rodríguez with Harold Gramatges.

This work was composed after a period when Gramatges was experimenting with neo-classicism, and preceded a period of more avant-garde tendencies, when he experimented with aleatoric techniques.

Almost all Cuban academic music contains elements of Cuban folklore which encompasses both the Hispanic influence and the African influence. The Hispanic influence is commonly seen in the melodic contours, the African in the driving rhythms. In *Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata*, Gramatges freely plays with these two elements. While in his dances, for instance, *Dos Danzas Cubanas*, *Seis Danzas Antiguas*, the dance-like qualities serve as generating motives, in these preludes the elements of Cuban dance genres like *son*<sup>14</sup> are present, but under the surface.

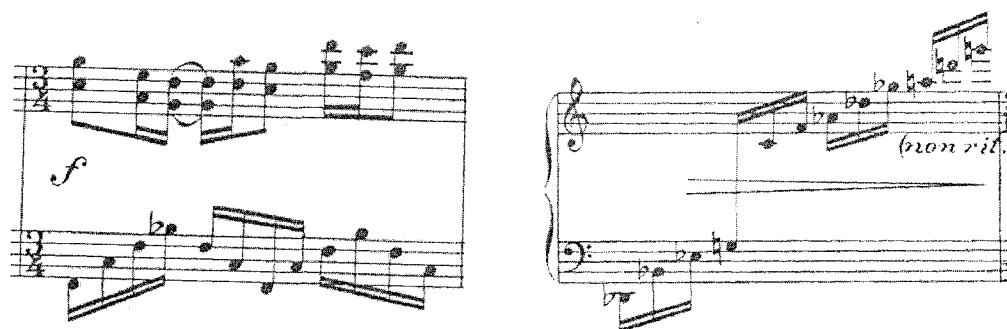
The harmonic and melodic treatment of Gramatges's *Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata* is based, among other elements on pitch class sets. *Preludes I* and *II* use pitch class 4 – 23 (0257) and *Prelude III* pitch class 7-35 (013568T).<sup>15</sup> Also, in *Preludes I, II* and *III*, as shown in Example No. 1, there is a frequent use of fourths and fifths, presented both melodically and harmonically.

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<sup>14</sup> The *son* is a genre of the popular music that was originated in the eastern provinces of Cuba around the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning was uni - sectional, later with the addition of the *montunos*, the *son* became a multi sectional genre. The *montuno*, also in two sections, consist of a repeated refrain (*montuno*) sung against a contrasting solo. It is one of the most influential genres of the Cuban popular music. Many other popular genres evolved from the *son*, including modern genres such as *salsa*.

<sup>15</sup> A complete analysis of the pitch class sets used in Gramatges' "*Preludes*" and other of his piano works is discussed in Milvia Rodriguez, "Eclecticism in Modern Cuban Music as Reflected in Selected Piano Works by Harold Gramatges: An Investigative Analysis." (D.M.A diss., University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, 2006).

Example No 1. *Prelude I*. Measures 20 and 37.



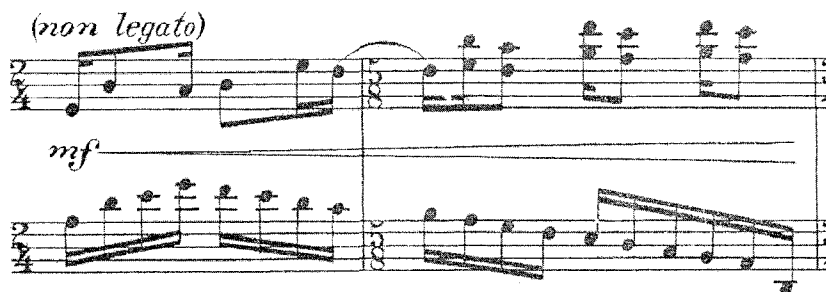
*Prelude I*. Measures 28 to 29



*Prelude I* is a multi sectional movement beginning with an Exposition from measure 1 to 37, a Development from 39 to 58, a Recapitulation from 59 to 93 and a Coda from 95 to 106. The movement begins with the juxtaposition of two notes in the low register, a fortissimo chord in octaves that will be the same used to end the piece. After this introductory chord, Gramatges presents a two-measure phrase, which will constitute the main melodic and rhythmic gesture of this prelude. The composer plays with this idea sometimes highlighting the melodic contour, others the rhythmic. Example 2, shows the theme in its first appearance in measures 2 and 3.

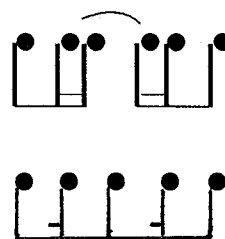


Example No. 2. *Prelude I*. Measures 2 to 3.



In measure 13, Gramatges introduces a rhythmic pattern characteristic of Cuban traditional music, the so called *cinquillo cubano*, Cuban quintuplet, shown in Example No. 3. It consists of a five note pattern derived from the Cuban contradanza<sup>16</sup>, often present in other genres of popular Cuban music, such as the *son*, the *danzón*<sup>17</sup> and the *danzonete*.<sup>18</sup>

Example No. 3 *Prelude I*. Measure No. 13. *Cinquillo cubano* (Cuban quintuplet)



<sup>16</sup> Cuban contradanza was 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>17</sup> Cuban dance originated from the combination of the Cuban *contradanza* and the *danza* (Dance).

<sup>18</sup> Cuban dance originated around 1930 that combines elements of the *danzón* and the *son*.

The toccata element of this prelude is more palpable in its texture, which is a combination of two contrapuntal lines in continuous sixteenth notes, sometimes interrupted by the *cinquillo cubano*, as well as other typical rhythms. Gramatges changes the metric in almost every measure, using meters ranging from 5/4 to 15/16. The sixteenth notes unify the piece in a *perpetuum mobile* effect.

In terms of performance *Prelude I* presents several technical issues important to address. The rapid figurations of sixteenth notes in *Allegro*, in passages of non conventional scales, require a meticulous touch and the ability to produce a variety of articulations and dynamics. The rhythmic complexity also requires a rock solid sense of pulse. He uses chords and intervals of 9th, mixed with fast figurations, which require hand elasticity and precision.

*Prelude II* serves as the slow, contrasting section among the three. It opens with a lyrical melody in the right hand, which serves as contrast to the recurrent rhythmic pattern of the Cuban quintuplet, already presented in the first prelude. In measure 9 the rolls are interchanged: the left hand has the melody and the right plays the quintuplets, or a variation of them. Besides quintuplets, there is a third recurrent element in this prelude that accompanies the melody - a metrically displaced sixteenth-note figuration that moves in intervals of fourths, and appears either as accompanied material or as an isolated element. It effects an atmosphere of mystery. Example No. 4 shows both the initial melody as well as the accompanying fourths, and later the sixteenth notes motive.

Example No. 4. *Prelude II*. Measures 1 to 10

*Andante e molto espressivo* ♩ = 48

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system contains measures 5 through 8. The third system contains measures 9 and 10, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The tempo and mood are indicated as *Andante e molto espressivo* with a quarter note equal to 48 beats per minute (♩ = 48). The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and dynamic markings.

*Prelude II* is written in modified strophic form, with four defined sections, based on the melodic idea presented in measures 1 to 8. Section A extends from measure 1 to 26, section A' from 27 to 45, section A'', more developed, from measure 46 to 111. In section A'', the composer introduces short motives and phrases which emphasize characteristic Cuban rhythmic formulas. Also, in this section the prelude reaches its culmination dynamically. In measure 112, Gramatges returns to the material of the first

section A (fourth section) repeating it two times, first in the lower octave and in bar 122 in its original setting, with its original dynamic creating an echo effect between the two statements of the theme. There is also in this prelude a hidden rhythmic element, also characteristic of the Cuban popular music: the *clave*<sup>19</sup>.

Example 5 shows the rhythmic pattern of the Cuban *clave* and an example of a variation of this pattern in Gramatges's *Prelude II*. The illustration No. 1 shows the instrument which is used to play the rhythmic pattern, which is also, called *clave*.

Example No. 5. *Prelude II*. *Clave* pattern. Measure 74

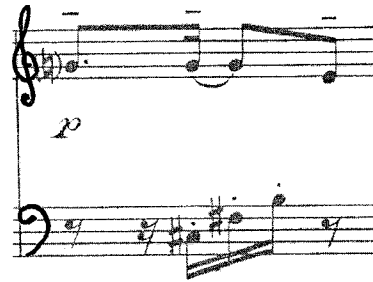
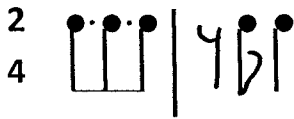
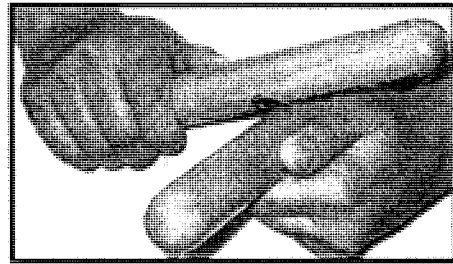
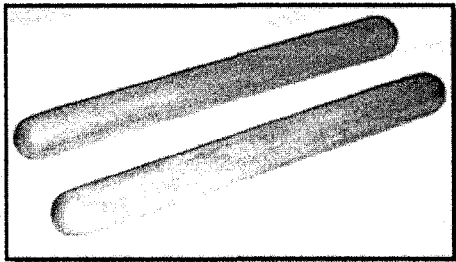


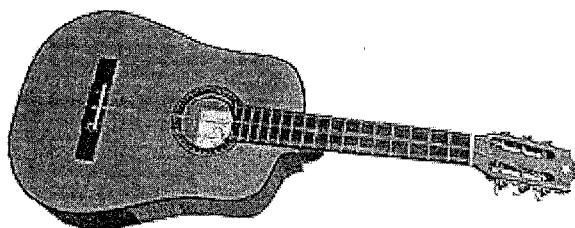
Illustration No. 1 Claves.



<sup>19</sup> Clave, is a typical rhythmic pattern of the Cuban traditional and popular music, that is usually two measures in length and serves as structural basis for the composition of most of the folk music from Cuba. There are different types of clave patterns according with the genre; the one shown in example 5 is the specific clave pattern for the *son*.

*Prelude III* is based on another Cuban dance or song, the *guajira*. The *guajira* is a musical genre of the western and central regions of Cuba, associated with Cuban peasant music, which has its roots in Spanish music of the region of Andalusia, and the Canary Islands. It is a song usually with guitar accompaniment, percussion instruments, and the *tres*.<sup>20</sup> The melodic and rhythmic elements of the *guajira*, are also present in musical genres of similar characteristics, in other countries of the Caribbean region.

Illustration No. 2. Cuban *Tres*



The tempo marking of a typical *guajira* song is 6/8, with a figuration of six eighth notes and three quarter notes, which can be written out in  $\frac{3}{4}$ , or as a hemiola in 6/8. In *Prelude III* Gramatges plays with the idea of the *guajira* rhythm, occasionally presenting the pattern in its simplest form, as shown in Example 6, but frequently distorting the pattern by cutting or adding beats. The piece, as in *Prelude I*, has a change of meter in almost every measure, alternating the 6/8 with 5/4,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , 5/8, 12/8, 9/8 a device that adds irregularity to the phrases, here the eighth note serving as the rhythmic unit.

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<sup>20</sup> A traditional Cuban string instrument, closely related to the guitar. It is strung with three double steel strings, which are tuned in unison. It is plucked with a tortoise shell plectrum. The *tres* is mainly used in the *son* and *guajiras*.

Example No. 6. *Prelude III*. Measures 1 to 9.


The form of this prelude is ternary- A-B-A'. Section A extends from measure 1 to 146, has a predominantly contrapuntal texture, and is toccata- like. It contains highly contrasting dynamic, accentuation, and a fast tempo. A contrasting slow and lyrical section B, starts in measure 147. Both section A and A' are constructed upon the base of two short melodic ideas, shown in Example No. 7. The harmonic language is predominantly quartal.

Example No. 7. *Prelude III*. Measures 1 to 2 and Measures 8 to 9.



### *Dos Danzas Cubanas*

*Dos Danzas Cubanas* (Two Cuban Dances) were written in New York in 1949 and premiered in the same year, at The New York Library by Josefina Megret. With allusive names, *Montuna* and *Sonera*, these dances evoke rhythms of native music of the eastern region of Cuba, where the composer was born. Gramatges orchestrated these dances and premiered them in the orchestral version in 1950.

As the name suggests, the first dance *Montuna* is based on the *montuno*<sup>21</sup>, which is one of the two sections of the son, also called refrain. Also, the name *montuno* is often used to imply the rhythmic figuration , which is typical of the *son*. This figuration is often performed at the beginning of a piece by the *tres*. Example 8 shows a contrast of some of these same rhythmic gestures used by Gramatges in his dances, as well as in compositions by other Cuban composers.

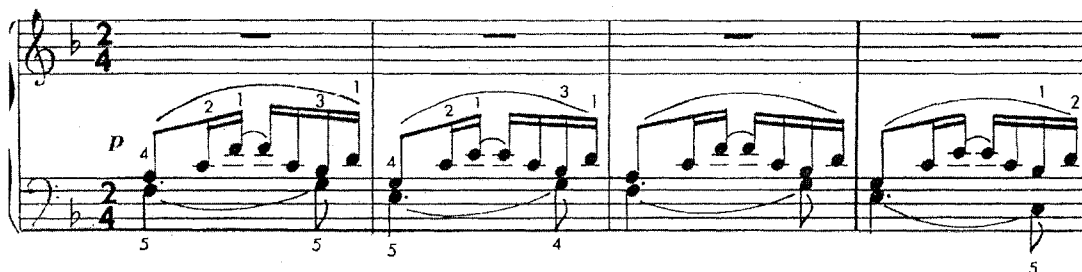
<sup>21</sup> The word comes from the Spanish *monte*, mining mount. In its adjectival form *montuno*, its meaning is: from the mountain.

Example 8. Typical rhythmic gesture of the *montuno*, used by several Cuban composers, each in his own unique way.

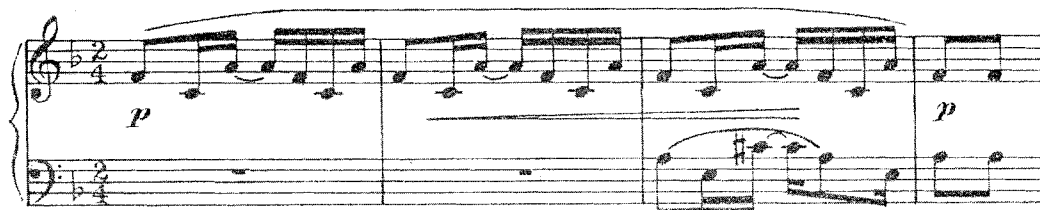
Harold Gramatages. *Dos Danzas Cubanas: Montuna*. Measures 1 to 3.



Alejandro Garcia Caturla (1906-1940) *Berceuse campesina*. Measures 1 to 4.



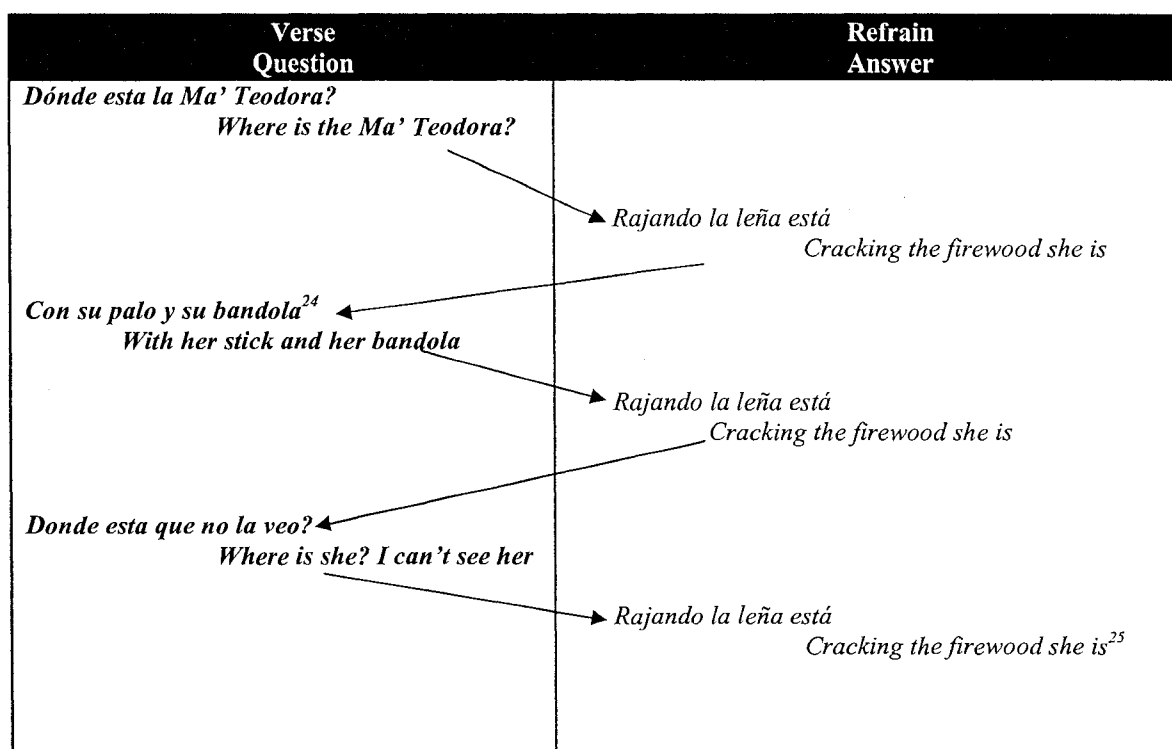
Carlos Fariñas (1934 - 2002). *Sones Sencillos, No. 4*. Measures 1 to 4





The early *sones*, as described by Miguel Matamoros and Adams Cisneros, consisted of a single section made by repeating a short harmonic rhythmic cycle. This cycle supported different events, such as improvised texts or statements of a refrain, or *estribillo*, sung by a chorus. An example of this early type of son is the *Son de la Ma' Teodora*<sup>22</sup> with a strophic section followed by a short repeated refrain. The short-cycle section appended to a strophic form, as in *Son de la Ma' Teodora*, is called a *montuno*.<sup>23</sup>

Table 1. Relationship between verse and refrain in *Son de la Ma' Teodora*.

| Verse<br>Question  | Refrain<br>Answer  |
|--|--|
| <i>Dónde esta la Ma' Teodora?</i><br><i>Where is the Ma' Teodora?</i>                  |  <p><i>Rajando la leña está</i><br/><i>Cracking the firewood she is</i></p> |
| <i>Con su palo y su bandola</i> <sup>24</sup><br><i>With her stick and her bandola</i> | <p><i>Rajando la leña está</i><br/><i>Cracking the firewood she is</i></p>   |
| <i>Donde esta que no la veo?</i><br><i>Where is she? I can't see her</i>               | <p><i>Rajando la leña está</i><br/><i>Cracking the firewood she is</i><sup>25</sup></p>  |

<sup>22</sup> The "Son de la Ma Teodora", is a very popular song which is considered one of the first documented examples of the genre *son*. The origin and veracity, however, is uncertain.

<sup>23</sup> James Robbins, "The Cuban son as Form, Genre and Symbol," *Latin American Music Review*, 11, No.2, (winter 1990), 182-200.

<sup>24</sup> String instrument of the guitar family.

<sup>25</sup> Partial translation A.Virelles.

Other definitions as that of Alejo Carpentier, described the son as a two-section genre in which the first section is called *largo* and the second *montuno*.<sup>26</sup> In other definitions we find the first section called *tema* (theme) and the second, *son*. What is characteristic of every type of *son* is that the first part is sung by the singer 1 (*cantante primero*) whereas the *montuno* or second part is sung by the chorus (*coro*) alternating with the solo. The *son* entitled *El Paralítico*, by Miguel Matamoros is a typical example of bi-sectional type of *son*, where there is a larger strophic first section, called *largo*, followed by the *montuno*, which is a responsorial section that alternates chorus and improvisation by the soloist.

Table 2. *El Paralítico* - Miguel Matamoros<sup>27</sup>

| Tema (theme)<br>Cantante Primero - Solo   | Montuno (coro)<br>Coro - Solo alternating  |
|---|--|
| <i>Veinte años en mi término<br/>Me encontraba paralítico<br/>Y me dijo un hombre místico<br/>Que me extirpara el trigémino</i> | Instrumental accompaniment. The members of the instrumental ensemble may say words out loud to complement what the soloist is singing. Usually these words will have comic connotations. |
| <i>Improvisation</i>  | <i>Suelta la muleta y el baston y podrás bailar el son</i>   |
| <i>Improvisation</i>  | <i>Suelta la muleta y el baston y podrás bailar el son</i>   |
| <i>Improvisation</i>  | <i>Suelta la muleta y el baston y podrás bailar el son</i>   |

<sup>26</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *La Música en Cuba*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1979.

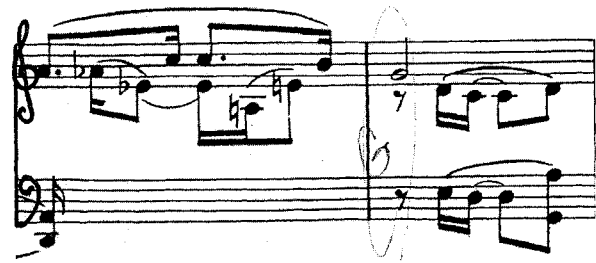
<sup>27</sup> Miguel Matamoros, *El Paralítico*. 2008. [Internet on line] Available from [http://www.producciondelmar.com/longina/Autores/Miguel\\_Matamoros/index.html](http://www.producciondelmar.com/longina/Autores/Miguel_Matamoros/index.html). [Accessed on April 30, 2008].

Syncopation, a defining element in the dance rhythms of Cuba, is the main component of the rhythmic structure of Gramatges' dances. Several settings of this native syncopation are shown in Example 9, and enhance the marked Cuban flavor of this dance.

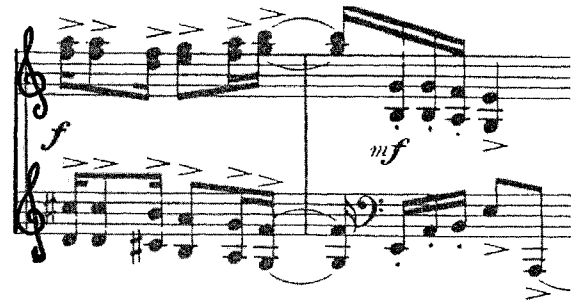
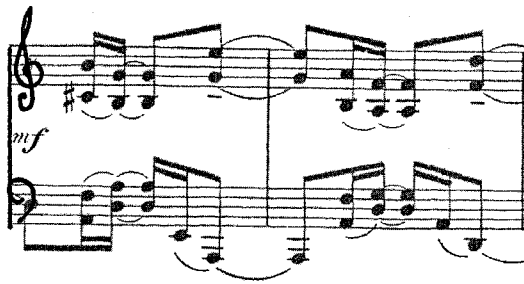
Example No. 9. *Dos Danzas Cubanas. Montuna*. Measures 4, 9 to 10, 57 to 58, and 73 to 74.



57- 58,



73 -74



Cuban music is based primarily on the combination of elements from both Spanish and African cultures. The piece is constructed upon 8-bar phrases. However, on a small scale there are many motives of two bars each, which are based on the Cuban clave. Although the rhythm of the *clave* is not generally explicit, with the exception of some sections (mm. 21, 24, for instance) it lays in the background as if continually

accompanying the melody. As a result there is a subdivision into phrases of two bars each, mimicking the phrase structure of the *clave*.

The composer marks the piece with breath marks (’), as in measures 72, which simulate the structure of the *son*, indicating refrain and solo. Harmonically this piece is divided in five sections, plus an introduction. According to the harmonic division, the piece is structured as follows:

Table 3. Harold Gramatges. *Montuna*.

|          | Introduction | Section 1 | Section 2 | Section 3 | Section 4 |
|----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Measures | 1-6          | 7-37      | 38-72     | 73-84     | 85-108    |
|          | G            | G-A/f#    | A – D     | D         | G         |

The Introduction is constructed upon two rhythmic motives and consists of a rhythmic pattern typically found in the *montuno* section of the traditional *son*. The second motif is a short three - bar tag that the composer places before the entrance of section 2, and 4, and functions as a dominant cadence to the theme. This tag also features a characteristic fermata over the last chord.

Section 1 presents the main theme in G Major, which is shown in example 10, characterized by its transparent texture and marked syncopation. It also features a modulation (measures 19 to 26) which leads to a second idea, in A Major. A characteristic harmonic device common to traditional Cuban music is also featured in measures 25 to 26, switching back and forth from F# minor to its relative A Major (measures 23 to 34). In measure 35, the three - bar tag appears, this time in E Major, leading to the main theme, in A Major, which is the beginning of Section 2. This section

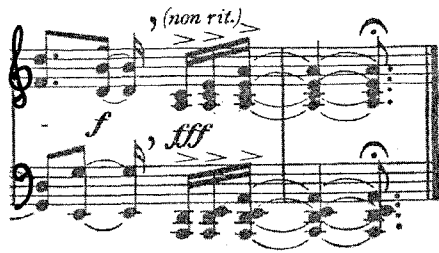
features the theme in its original setting with a thicker texture in measures 46 to 49. The introductory material appears again from measures 50 to 53, marked *ff* and from measure 57 to 60 the first chorus in D Major, after the main theme again appeared in measure 54. Measure 73 demarks the beginning of Section 3, which simulates the principal chorus, or *refrain*. The composer again places the three - bar tag in measure 8, which leads into the last section starting in measure 85. Here the principal theme appears in G Major, followed in measure 105 by the introductory material, to end the piece. Tertian harmonies predominate throughout the dance. The *montuno* section (*estribillo, coro*) is presented in measures 73 to 80, with a remainder, representing the *cantante primero, solo*.

The title of the second dance, *Sonera* is even more suggestive of the genre upon which it is based. Many of the same features of the first dance are present in this second dance. It starts with an introduction of 4 bars, which has a marked syncopated rhythm.

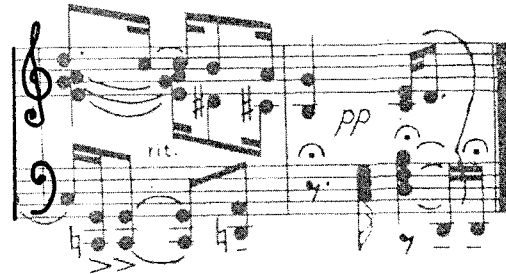
At the end of the introduction, Gramatges uses an interesting rhetorical gesture (measure 9). The *son* is a dance that it is usually sung, therefore it is not uncommon to find in instrumental music elements that recall words used in the original danced/sung version. For instance, the three accentuated chords at the end of measure 9, shown in Example 12, simulate a three - syllable phrase such as “*co-mo-no*”, “*si-se-ñor*”, “*va-mo’a-ver*”, “*se’a-ca-bó*”. Gramatges incorporates this gesture for the ending of the dance. It accentuates the dominant function, which is common in Cuban peasant music, and is a typical ending of the *guajiras*. To recall this vocal gesture, Gramatges ends the piece on Ab Major, dominant to the key of the piece, which is Db Major. Next to Gramatges’ piece, as shown in Example 10, the ending of Fariñas’ *Sones Sencillos No. 1*, in G major, appearing also ending on the dominant harmony.

Example 10. Harold Gramatges *Dos Danzas Cubanas. Sonera*. Ending. Carlos Fariñas *Sones Sencillos*, No. 1, in G major. Ending.

Harold Gramatges



Carlos Fariñas



The harmonic structure organizes this dance as follows:

Table 4. Harold Gramatges. *Sonera*.

|          | Introduction | Section 1 | Section 2 | Section 3 | Section 4 | Section 5 |
|----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Measures | 1-9          | 10-41     | 42-66     | 67-82     | 83-98     | 99-119    |
|          | Db           | Db        | Ab        | Ab- F     | Ab        | Db        |

As in *Montuna*, most of the sections of this dance are repetitions of the same thematic ideas, modified each time and presented in different keys, as occurs frequently in the traditional setting. Here the sections simulating the *montuno* extend from measures 48 to 51 and 59 to 66.

This piece also features a distinguishing element of the genre, and one that it is frequently found in traditional Cuban music, that is an ambiguous tonality, often passing from major to relative minor mode, as shown in Example 11.

Example 11. *Dos Danzas Cubanas. Sonera*. Measure 21 to 28.

The image displays a musical score for measures 21 to 28 of 'Dos Danzas Cubanas. Sonera'. The score is written for piano and features two systems of staves. Each system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff, both in the key of B-flat major (two flats). The music is characterized by dense, complex chordal textures and rapid sixteenth-note passages. A dynamic marking of *fff* (triple forte) is present in the first system, indicating a very loud section. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, ties, and accidentals, reflecting the intricate harmonic and melodic structure of the piece.

Tertian harmonies predominate and the dynamic range is extremely wide, culminating in a triple forte in the final two bars.

*Estudio de Contrastes*

Gramatges's *Estudio de Contrastes* (*Study of Contrasts*) written in 1974, was first conceived as the musical accompaniment for a dance for women that Cuba presented in an international dance contest.<sup>28</sup> Although written two decades after *Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata*, the *Estudio de Contrastes* has stylistically many similarities with the *Preludes*. Jorge Luis Prats<sup>29</sup> said about *Estudio de Contrastes* that "because of its huge technical demand and its structural maturity, this work is in for 20th - century pianists a warning for those who want to explore in an innovative language that respect the harmonic heritage received from the previous European schools."<sup>30</sup> Indeed, this is a work that stands as an icon to the Cuban pianistic school. Although originally conceived as incidental music, it presents all aspects and technical demands of a Concert Etude.

*Estudio de Contrastes* was premiered in Havana in 1976 by Roberto Urbay. The first recording was made by the label EGREM, from a live performance of the pianist Victor Rodriguez at the International Piano Competition Tchaikovsky, in Moscow in 1986. Roberto Urbay included it in the recording he made of Gramatges's complete work for solo piano, in 1997.

As in *Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata*, the harmonic language is predominantly

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<sup>28</sup> Harold Gramatges, and Urbay, Roberto, *Obra completa para piano*. Ciudad de La Habana, Cuba: EGREM, 1997.

<sup>29</sup> Jorge Luis Prats is one of the most significant Cuban pianists, winner of many international piano competitions, among them The Marguerite Long - Jacques Thibaud International Piano Competition, Paris, France, 1977.

<sup>30</sup> Pedro de la Hoz, Harold y Fariñas: Memoria y Anticipación. *La Jiribilla*. No. 126, 2003. Partial translation A. Virelles.



quartal and the toccata-like character of the first and third preludes is also present, however it is here even more accentuated. Although the composer states, “I think that I’m a composer who nurtures himself in popular sources. All my work is purely Cuban and that is not altered by the changes in the musical language”<sup>31</sup>, nevertheless, the language used by Gramatges does not imply the use of gestures inherent in traditional Cuban music on the surface of this etude. It is now a more universal language, more similar to that of western music. We find in this piece style characteristics reminiscent of Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and especially Ginastera.

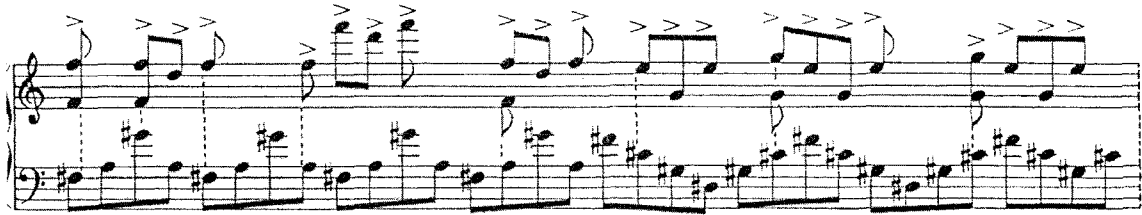
The work does not have a written out time signature and measures are divided by dashed lines which do not mark an equivalent number of beats. They show the divisions of the different rhythmic – melodic patterns that Gramatges uses for the construction of the piece. After every dashed line, a new rhythmic – melodic pattern begins. The eighth note serves as the unifying note value.

The *Study of Contrasts* is divided into three sections, A-B-A’. The first and third sections focus their attention on the rhythmic element, which is presented in a kind of *motuo perpetuo*, whereas the middle section, *andante molto espressivo*, is contrasting in tempo and character. This section features a wider melodic contour, although it is also based on the interval of a fourth. The entire section is written in one measure, allowing the performer the freedom to interpret. However, the composer does indicate 7 pause signs (’) which help to shape the phrases. In the first and third sections, although focusing primarily on the rhythm, the right hand plays an important melodic motif which appears in the fourth line of the first section, shown in Example 12.

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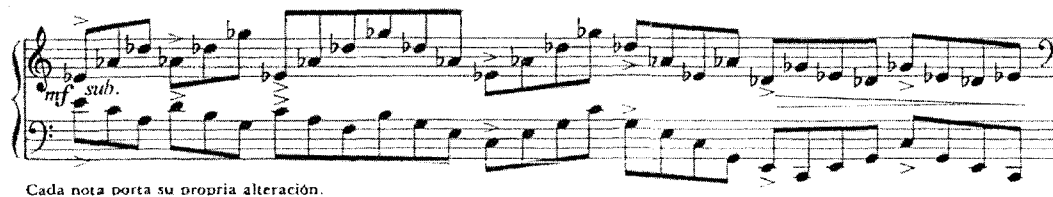
<sup>31</sup> Ciro Bianchi Ross, Harold Gramatges Profile. *Cubanow.net*. Digital magazine of Cuban arts and culture. [Internet on line]. Available at <http://www.cubanow.net>. [Accessed on February 15, 2008].

Example 12. *Estudio de Contrastes*. Fourth line. First page.



Another feature of this piece is related to the configuration of the hands on the keyboard. For the most part each hand plays in a different register of the keyboard simultaneously, on either all white or all black keys. This device, shown in Example 13, which is used by composers like Ginastera, (for instance, *Danza del Viejo Boyero*, from *Tres Danzas Argentinas*) is used occasionally by Gramatges also in *Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata*, but in the *Estudio de Contrastes* the device is featured prominently throughout the entire first and third sections.

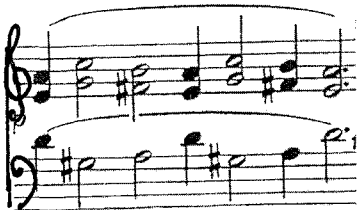
Example 13. *Estudio de Contrastes*. Fifth line. First page.



The *Study of Contrasts* does not have a key signature but the score includes the specific indication “*The accidental refers only to the notes they precede*”. The composer goes away from traditional tonal music to give us a bi-tonal piece. However, there are in this etude some tonal references, for instance the section shown in Example 12 (above), which is the only melodically shaped element that is presented twice in the first section, emphasizing C, the tonal center in which the first section stars and ends. The end of the

third section also emphasizes C (left hand) before the presentation of the surprising B Major last chord. On the other hand, the slow section visits several times the key of A. The motive shown in Example 14 appears 4 times and actually ends the second section. In a large scale, and within the confines of bi-tonal music, we also find in *Study of Contrasts* a loose harmonic structure of C (first section) A (second section) and C (third section) than rounds the piece.

Example No. 14 *Estudio de Contrastes*. Middle section.



## Conclusions

Harold Gramatges' piano music embodies a significant number of compositions that describe his evolution as a contemporary composer. He combines the most authentic elements of Cuban folklore with a universal musical language. With more than half a century of an uninterrupted musical career, Gramatges's work transcends the frontiers of his native land. His music has been played in Europe, Latin America, Asia and United States, not only by Cuban musicians, but by internationally recognized instrumentalists as well.

Gramatges's pieces were presented in this study in the context of the traditions inherent to Cuban folklore. It is the aspiration of this study that Gramatges's music, especially his piano works, will contribute to the repertoire of musicians interested in exploring the world of twentieth century music with particular emphasis on the elements and traditions of the music of the Caribbean region.

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

Present

Amanda Virelles del Valle

Piano

Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and String Orchestra op. 35 No.1

D. Shostakovich

(1906-1975)

- I. Allegro Moderato
- II. Lento
- III. Moderato
- IV. Allegro con brio

University of Southern Mississippi Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: Alejandro Drago

Trumpet: Dr. Daniel Kelly

December 6, 2006.

7:30 pm

Bennett Auditorium.

This Concerto Performance is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A.  
in Piano Performance and Pedagogy. Amanda Virelles is a student of  
Dr. Lois Leventhal.



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

Present

Amanda Virelles del Valle  
Piano

Solo Recital

Program

Prelude in B minor

J.S. Bach  
(1685-1750)  
Arrangement: A. Siloti  
(1863-1945)

12 Variations in C, K. 179, on a minuet by C.J. Fisher

W.A. Mozart  
(1756-1791)

*The Lark*

M. Glinka  
(1804-1857)  
Arrangement: M. Balakirev  
(1837-1910)

*L'Isle Joyeuse*

C. Debussy  
(1862-1918)

Brief Intermission

*Pictures at an Exhibition*

M. Moussorgsky  
(1839-1881)

December 4, 2007.  
4:00 pm  
Marsh Auditorium.

This Doctoral Solo Recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. in  
Piano Performance and Pedagogy. Amanda Virelles is a student of  
Dr. Lois Leventhal

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

Present

Amanda Virelles del Valle  
Piano

Lecture Recital I

Lecture: Stylistic Analysis of *Six Pieces for Solo Piano* by Rodion Shchedrin

*Performance*

*Six Pieces for Solo Piano*

Rodion Shchedrin  
(b. 1932)

1. *Poem*

2. *Four Pieces from "The Humpbacked Horse" Ballet*

- a. Elder Brothers and Ivan
- b. Girls' Roundelay
- c. Scherzino
- d. I Play the Balalaika

3. *Humoresque*

4. *A la Albeniz*

5. *Troika*

6. *Two Polyphonic Pieces*

- a. Two- part Invention
- b. Basso Ostinato

April 16, 2008.

6:00 pm

Marsh Auditorium.

This Lecture Recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. in Piano Performance and Pedagogy. Amanda Virelles is a student of Dr. Lois Leventhal

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

Present

Amanda Virelles del Valle  
 Piano

### Lecture Recital II

Lecture: Stylistic Analysis of *Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata*, *Dos Danzas Cubanas*, and *Estudio de Contrastes* by Harold Gramatges

### *Performance*

*Tres Preludios a Modo de Toccata*  
*Three Preludes in the Style of a Toccata*

Harold Gramatges  
 (b. 1918)

-Allegro  
 -Andante e molto espressivo  
 -Allegro

*Dos Danzas Cubanas*  
*Two Cuban Dances*

-Montuna  
 -Sonera

*Estudio de Contrastes*  
*Study of Contrasts*

April 28, 2008.  
 6:00 pm  
 Marsh Auditorium.

This Lecture Recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. in Piano Performance and Pedagogy. Amanda Virelles is a student of Dr. Lois Leventhal