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The creation-action process in the Portuguese guitar music of Carlos Paredes: oral tradition, performance style, and interpretative transcriptions

The nexus between (interpretative) creation and (embodied) action is central to the performing arts, but is especially relevant for cultural expressions, such as the oral tradition of Portuguese guitar concert music, where its significance entails the interdependency of acting performer, sounding music, and interpretative attributions. The hybrid (osmotic) figure of the centaur imaginatively invoked by the cultural theorist Eduardo Lourenço (2004) upon hearing and experiencing the performance of Carlos Paredes (1925-2004) aptly captures a music nexus implicating the performer's body and sound, which in turn resonates with cultural significance attributed by an active listener. The result is a tripartite complex relation (sounding music—body—interpreting listener), which in the case of the guitar music of Paredes has acquired a striking symbolic meaning in the construction of Portuguese contemporary national identity.

This paper takes the stance that an active and vigilant oral tradition relies on the framework of a continuous creative process, which both better understands the inherited cultural products and lays the principles for its recreation by new practices that might reinterpret and reinvigorate that tradition. This stance is especially urgent in light of the current touristic pressure that creates demand for live performances, and which often lead to an overabundance of poor-level and un-informed practices. The paper results from the collaboration between a professional music theorist and guitarist and an acclaimed performer of Coimbra-style guitar playing (and the music of Paredes in particular).

This effort proposes to approach Paredes' music in the tradition of the composer/performer as stylistic hybrid of embodied and culturally constructed sound, and centers around two vectors of inquiry: (1) the examination of the creative process of Paredes' performance style within the larger context of the Coimbra-style of playing, (through analysis of video footage and by one of the authors being a carrier for the oral tradition of the Coimbra guitar), including the examination of plucking and figuration based patterns, qualities of vibrato, the relation between the guitar tuning system and ergonomic issues; and (2) the first-hand research on the creation of notated transcription (and analysis of some existing transcriptions) as a place for negotiating performance idiosyncrasies, musical conventions and style, and the gestural and timbral imagination (of composition and reception), including aspects of stylistic-based characterization of the music corpus and range of formal designs.

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(Ph.D. U of Chicago, Mus. History/Theory; Master in Music Performance) is currently FCT-Principal Researcher and Vice-Director at CITAR, the Research Center for Science and Technology of the Arts at Universidade Católica Portuguesa. Previous faculty appointments include the Eastman School of Music (USA) and the School of Music of the U Iowa. His research explores the analytical modeling of multilayered pitch organizations in twentieth-century music, and the oral tradition of Coimbra-style Portuguese-guitar music. His publications appear in the *Journal of Music Theory*, *Perspectives of New Music*, *Theory and Practice*, *Mathematics and Computation in Music*, *Bridges*, *Portuguese Journal of Musicology* and others. Co-organizer of the 2016 *Musical Gesture as Creative Interface* conference, and chief-organizer of the international symposium *Música Analítica 2019*. Currently writing two books: on multilayered harmony in twentieth-century music, and on the music of Carlos Paredes, a major Portuguese-guitar virtuoso.

PAULO SOARES

Independent musician

Is one of the most versatile and generous guitar players of the Portuguese guitar. He studies and investigates the instrument for more than 35 years, seeking the excellence of sonority and musical discourse. His innovative synthesis of the techniques and stylistic convention of the traditional guitars of Coimbra and Lisbon are the foundation for his musical and guitar versatility and depth. Both in Portugal and traveling around the globe, Soares has given numerous solo recitals in some of the most important guitar festivals, has been a soloist with several classical orchestras, and has collaborated with some outstanding artists of Portuguese music. He is the author of a significant body of original contemporary compositions for the Portuguese guitar and has a vast experience as a fado accompanist (especially Coimbra style), and has brought the Portuguese guitar to other genres and groups such as the classical string quartet, saxophone quartet, jazz quintet, pop music, and others. He has also debut numerous contemporary pieces, some written for him, and has produced a number of arrangements. As a soloist he has always been present in the most important festivals of Portuguese guitar. As pedagogue and promoter of the Portuguese guitar, he is the author and publisher of a *Method of Portuguese Guitar* (in two volumes), a reference work for the learning of the instrument.