

THE AFRO-CUBAN AND THE AVANT-GARDE: UNIFICATION OF STYLE AND
GESTURE IN THE GUITAR MUSIC OF LEO BROUWER

by

John Bryan Huston

(Under the Direction of Susan Thomas)

ABSTRACT

Leo Brouwer is the most influential guitarist/composer of our time. This thesis will present an examination of his guitar music by exploring the simultaneous interaction of Afro-Cuban rhythms and musical gestures with contemporary (European and related) art music. Through the application and fusion of these two styles in his guitar music, Brouwer creates original techniques and textures for the instrument. From an analytical or performance perspective, specific knowledge of this stylistic and gestural synthesis is vital to understanding Brouwer's musical expression and compositional process. For this study I will examine *Danza característica* (1957), *El decameron negro* (1981), *Paisaje cubano con rumba* (1985), and *Rito de los orishas* (1993).

Brouwer's use of Afro-Cuban musical referents will be shown to fall into three non-exclusive categories: Specific derivation from Afro-Cuban forms and genres, general derivation from rhythms and gestures widely used in Afro-Cuban (and derived) musical styles, and folkloric/historical derivation where Afro-Cuban sociological and religious elements serve as poetic or programmatic referents. By drawing on the works of numerous Cuban music scholars, I will document these Afro-Cuban genres and musical traits, and demonstrate Brouwer's methods of derivation and reference in his music for guitar.

I will also demonstrate the incorporation of contemporary compositional procedures in Brouwer's guitar music. To that end, post-tonal harmonic and melodic analysis will give new insight on musical meaning and expression when combined with knowledge of Afro-Cuban forms, styles, and gestures.

Additionally, I will present a technical performative analysis of specific original gestures that find their derivation in the fusion of Afro-Cuban and avant-garde musical elements. Brouwer incorporates a dynamic interplay of right-hand articulation, left-hand slurring, position variety, and use of open strings to create original textures and musical effects. Technical analysis will reveal Brouwer's mastery of the guitar's sonic variety, and the close association between instrumental articulation and the synthesis of musical style.

INDEX WORDS: Leo Brouwer, Guitar, Cuba, Rumba, Santería, Postmodernism, Afro-Cuban, Folklore, Transculturation

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DEDICATION

For Tamara,
my everything and my always.

And for little Julian,
our syncretic original.

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PREFACE (HOMENAJE A ANTONIO BENÍTEZ-ROJO)¹

From the vantage point of history, the movements of entire communities can be seen over vast periods of time. Large groups of autonomous individuals move about our planet's landscape. While acting autonomously, these individuals simultaneously construct their communal society. History observes these communities acting with purpose, reflecting overarching cultural values and the social hierarchy. Sometimes these communities thrive, existing in some form of social continuity for a number of years. Some societies fail, and some communities find themselves existing side-by-side others, interacting, colliding, fighting, co-mingling, and communing.

History's simplest stories are those told with the least detail. This is true for a number of reasons, perhaps one more than any other: all things must pass. The air we breathe, so vital to life, is gulped down and exhaled. The food we have consumed quickly turns to waste, and becomes food for another form of life. The words we speak, expressions of our developed intellect and our honored souls, pass quickly into the noise of the earth. All artifacts of our existence are in the process of decay even when intentionally preserved. Some things last longer than others, so books or paintings can speak for a past culture. Likewise, pottery and cookware often speak for lost culinary arts. Temples and tombs stand as monuments to forgotten souls and their desire for the eternal.

¹ This preface is an homage to Antonio Benítez-Rojo, author of the seminal work *The Repeating Island: the Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

History loves large monuments. They survive many years if they are well-built and maintained. Their creation frequently involves multiple levels of a given society. Scholars recreate societies based on these monuments. They help us to reflect on the stories, values, and culture of a community, sometimes from a very distant past. But in looking for the details, history grumbles. Details are like significant digits in the solutions to our cultural equations. The more they are limited, the easier the story is to tell.

In order to be content with the broad narrative, and not challenge its interpretations, we are taught to avoid the details. Do not be concerned with the travel log of a particular Greek trading vessel. Such things did not survive, if they ever existed to begin with. Be content to know that Hellenic culture spread throughout the Mediterranean basin by the 3rd Century BCE. We can see proof of it in the great monuments of Europe and North Africa. Do not be concerned with a particular *gitano* clan in Southern Spain. Be content to know that middle-eastern modalities and musical style arrived there with the Moorish Caliphate in the 8th Century CE. We can hear evidence of it in the surviving music of various composers and contemporary *flamenco*. Do not be concerned with a particular African-American musician, just know that the 12-bar blues riff comes from the interaction of two disparate and diasporic cultures, coming together in the New World.

Broad historical narratives have reasons for such exclusions; but we can assume that there was one particular American (or a fairly small group) that first put a shuffle-rhythm to a simple chord progression in that oh-so-familiar way on the guitar. The moment is lost in time, but not the social impact of that moment. American society has maintained that moment of anonymous creation and has added to it ever since. Our society has taken the cross-pollinated

seeds of individuals and cultivated a remarkable musical garden, expressing itself and its values in the doing.

But what if we could go back? What if we could see the moments of first meeting, and first interaction? Could we be there when the legends were first written? It might be something like the reverse of History's big stories; it might be a taking-apart. Understanding two separate cultural entities before they have merged helps us to understand that which the aggregate chooses to honor, and that which it fails to sustain. "Roman Catholicism" is a cultural identifier and a religious movement that has existed almost 2000 years now, surviving through periods of growth, dominance, strife, and decline. It is easy to forget that there was a first-time confrontation between a Roman official (Pontius Pilate) and a Jewish religious figure (Jesus of Nazareth) that started it all. It is a strange tale, yet all too human, that begins in violence and ends in union.

On the small island nation of Cuba, scholars have observed the gradual adjustment of a particular cultural matrix over the last four hundred years. Spanish colonial culture mixed with African slave culture, with repressive and sometimes violent results. Actively trading, holding, and working slaves later than any nation in the Americas, one might expect post-colonial Cuba to be more racially divisive than any other American culture today. Yet close examination might surprise the uninitiated.

Melville Herskovitz, an American anthropologist, coined the term *acculturation* in 1938, writing about African culture in the New World. He was attempting to describe the past, and predict the future, of African culture in the United States. His observation and prediction was that African-Americans have acculturated, and would continue to acculturate, to the dominant paradigm in the U.S. Responding to Herskovitz and countering his assertion as well, Cuban

anthropologist Fernando Ortiz coined the term *transculturation*. Ortiz observed that the minority (or marginalized) culture would have its characteristics assumed and adopted by the majority, and vice versa.² Transculturation was a threatening concept to the dominant class. An in-depth study of contemporary North American society is not necessary to demonstrate which concept more accurately describes the past 75 years. In our (U.S.) popular music, in our dance, in our economy and politics, African culture has been transculturated. We validate it every moment we speak, as African influence rolls off our tongues in our idiosyncratic way of speaking. Cultural appropriation we know too well.

In Cuba, Ortiz documented and supported his theories by examining the interrelation of African and Spanish characteristics in Cuban music. But transculturation was not a phenomenon restricted to music: it was happening everywhere. In religion, fiction, poetry, politics, propaganda, and the propagation of the Cuban people, Africa and Spain have been transculturated. It affects all things in Cuba. It affected Leo Brouwer. And because it affected Leo, it has affected all that love the guitar.

² Katherine Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 192.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Leo Brouwer, in his various roles as guitarist, composer, conductor, and mentor/teacher, is counted among the great artists of our time. His guitar compositions are a core part of the contemporary literature for the instrument at all levels. What contemporary guitarist has not studied Brouwer's twenty *Estudios Sencillos*? His concert works are programmed more frequently than any other living composer. His eight concerti for guitar and orchestra are brilliant accomplishments demonstrating the vitality and adaptability of the form. While his entire oeuvre features works for nearly every instrument in a variety of genres, his imagination and compositional art seems most at home on the instrument on which he began his study of music.

Brouwer was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1939. His studies in guitar began at the age of thirteen, first with his father, and then later with the renowned Cuban guitarist Isaac Nicola.³ As a composer, Brouwer is nearly self-taught, with his only formal compositional training coming from the Hartt School of Music and the Juilliard School (1959-1960), where his teachers included Vincent Persichetti and Isador Freed.⁴ Brouwer's compositional output for guitar has been grouped into three broad periods, and Paul Century has done fine work in categorizing Brouwer's compositions. Century has described the first period as Cuban/nationalist/quasi-tonal (1954-1964). Major works from this period include *Danza característica* (1957), *Tres Apuntes* (1959), and *Elogio de la Danza* (1964). The guitar compositions of this period reflect an intuitive approach to composition, with frequent use of national idioms. The second period (1968-1978) is remarkable for its incorporation of avant-garde techniques of the post-war period.

³ Paul Century, "Idiom and Intellect" (master's thesis, University of California Santa Barbara, 1985), 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

Major works of this period include *Canticum* (1968), *La Espiral Eterna* (1971), and *Parabola* (1974).⁵

In 1981, Brouwer composed *El decameron negro*, a work in three movements for solo guitar (dedicated to Sharon Isbin). This was a water-shed work for Brouwer, signaling the beginning of his third period of composition. Scholars and musicians have had a difficult time categorizing this latest period. Guitarist and critic John Duarte has referred to this period as “modified Romanticism.”⁶ Perhaps Paul Century has best labeled this period as “stylistically eclectic.”⁷

Labels such as “eclectic,” “synthetic,” or “nationalist” are useful only when they serve to summarize or reference specific and detailed analyses. Generally describing the first period as “nationalist” without investigating the nature and source of “Cuban nationalist idioms” leaves the contemporary non-Cuban guitarist or scholar lacking in vital interpretive and analytical information. Further, simply describing Brouwer’s current compositional style as “synthetic” or “eclectic” without specificity is unsatisfying in light of his extraordinary music of this period. At the intersection and synthesis of musical referents, Brouwer’s music finds its unique voice and, in the combination of discursive musical topics, derives much of its musical meaning.

It is my intent, therefore, to investigate Brouwer’s guitar music for the specific fusion (syncretization or transculturation) of Afro-Cuban musical characteristics and contemporary compositional techniques associated with Western art music. In the process of locating and investigating these nexus points, my study will shed new light on the gestures, content, and

⁵ Ibid., 51.

⁶ John Duarte, “Rodrigo-Berkley-Brouwer,” in *Guitar Concertos-Rodrigo, Berkley, Brouwer*, Julian Bream, compact disc, BMG Classics 09026-61605.

⁷ Century, “Idiom and Intellect,” 14. While Century’s nomenclature is more accurate, his study did little to detail the use of Afro-Cuban music in Brouwer’s “synthetic” procedures.

musical meaning of these compositions. Ultimately this study will aid in understanding Brouwer's compositional process, and his role as Cuban musician in post-colonial Cuba. Additionally, I will provide specific interpretive recommendations and solutions for the performance of the guitar compositions I examine. Knowledge of the Cuban musical context and Afro-Cuban genres will help guitarists understand Brouwer's musical progenitors and inspirations, and assist guitarists in interpreting these works (and component gestures) with appropriate nuance and style.

Review of Literature

This dissertation responds to a critical gap in the English-language literature on Leo Brouwer's guitar music. Journal and magazine articles focus on interviews with Brouwer; his appearances; and the publishing, performance, and recording of his works. At the heart of the existing academic studies on Brouwer there is unease with the difficulty of analyzing his work. Analysis using strictly traditional (European and North American) formal, harmonic, and melodic analytical methods consistently lacks vital cultural information and therefore cannot properly inform interpretations, or draw meaningful conclusions. It is my opinion that this approach is essentially the square-peg-in-the-round-hole. While adopting European compositional techniques, Brouwer's compositions for guitar (most specifically those works which I include in this study) are Cuban music: a tradition that evolved quite apart from European analytical procedures. Understanding Brouwer as a part of this Cuban tradition will give performers and scholars alike a better grasp of his music.

The works of contemporary and historical Cuban scholars will give cultural grounding and contextualization for discussion of pertinent musical and cultural elements and referents.

The works of Fernando Ortiz and Alejo Carpentier are of particular historical importance. Both scholars were active at a time of great cultural change in the post-colonial Cuban Republic.

Carpentier's history of Cuban music is an excellent overview of the five-hundred year history of music in Cuba.⁸ Ortiz's classifications, transcriptions, and recreations of Cuban folklore, music, and history are presented in a number of volumes, and figure prominently in any research on Cuban music, as they do here.⁹

Works by contemporary scholars include Robin Moore, whose book *Nationalizing Blackness* explores the emerging importance of Afro-Cuban influence in Cuban national and cultural identity.¹⁰ Additionally, Moore's latest book, *Music and Revolution*, assists in contextualizing the institutional role of music in post-revolutionary Cuba, and the cultural impact of the socialist regime.¹¹ Ned Sublette's general history, *Cuba and Its Music*,¹² fills in gaps and details not available in the time of Carpentier's history. Other contemporary musicological and cultural research focuses on Cuban genres that have survived from the colonial era and evolved, reflecting Cuban society today. Katherine Hagedorn's work on *Santería*¹³ and Yvonne Daniel's work on *rumba*¹⁴ both use this methodology of genre survival as a means of understanding cultural expression and evolution. Two chapters of this document rely heavily on their research and documentation.

⁸ Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, trans. Timothy Brennan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

⁹ A number of works by Fernando Ortíz figure prominently, including *La africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba*, *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana*, and *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en el folklore de Cuba*.

¹⁰ Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997).

¹¹ Robin Moore, *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

¹² Ned Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2004).

¹³ Katherine Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Yvonne Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

Brouwer's own words are of vital importance to any research on his music. Far from being silent on the subject of music, Brouwer is a prolific writer and frequent lecturer/teacher. He has composed a number of essays (for lecture and publication) and frequently gives interviews. His writings can be used to examine a number of different topics: Cuban musical culture, Marxist/socialist perspective on contemporary and historical music, official Cuban policy in regards to the arts, and (most important to this study) compositional and contextual framing for the study of his music.

Despite the importance of Brouwer as a guitar composer and the popularity of his works for the instrument, there are few English-language studies of his music. Three dissertations and one master's thesis have been published since 1985 focusing on his guitar compositions, with mixed results. The most successful of these is the 1991 Ph.D. dissertation by Paul Century: "Principles of Pitch Organization in Leo Brouwer's Atonal Music for Guitar."¹⁵ This work focuses on Brouwer's modernist period of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Century's primary analytical tool is trichordal analysis, examining intervallic content of pitch collections in Brouwer's *Canticum* (1968), *La espiral eterna* (1971), *Parabola* (1974), and one movement of the *Concerto para guitarra y pequeña orquesta* (1972). Additionally, Century also presents an interesting approach to grasping the relationship between pitch ordering and selection with idiomatic guitar techniques and fingerboard mechanics used by Brouwer. Overall, the work functions as a theoretical analysis informing this particular period of Brouwer's compositional output.

¹⁵ Paul Century, "Principles of Pitch Organization in Leo Brouwer's Atonal Music for Guitar" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1991).

Century also completed a Master's thesis on Brouwer in 1985 titled "Idiom and Intellect: Stylistic Synthesis in the Solo Guitar Music of Leo Brouwer."¹⁶ Despite the title of this work, it bears little relation to the study I have proposed. This thesis examines *La Espiral Eterna* and the first movement of *El decameron negro*, but little attention is given to the kind of "synthesis" I am studying. Afro-Cuban music is mentioned briefly as elemental to the compositional process, but few specific examples are given. The analysis of these works focuses on form and harmonic analysis.

The remaining two theses on Brouwer use analytical approaches derived from writings of Fred Lerdahl and David Lidov. Loyda Camacho's work, "Interactions, Cross-Relations and Superimpositions" is a Ph.D. thesis in music composition that forces Brouwer's *Concierto Elegiaco* (1986) and *Sonata* (1991) to conform to Lerdahl's concepts of musical grammar.¹⁷ Outside of the introduction, the reader would have no idea that Brouwer was a Cuban musician. There is no mention of Afro-Cuban gestures or derivations, and the thesis is a jumble of generalized statements about form and little else. The thesis of Bartholomew Crago also uses Lerdahl's and Ray Jackendoff's theories (among others) in examining the rhythm of the first movement of *El decameron negro*.¹⁸ Crago's thesis avoids Cuban topics and musical elements as well.

However, my methodology in this dissertation is not without precedent. There are two dissertations that examine the adoption of Afro-Cuban musical traits in modernist art-music of the first half of the 20th century. José Lezcano has studied the presence of Afro-Cuban rhythmic and metric elements in the choral and vocal music of Alejandro García Caturla and Amadeo

¹⁶ Paul Century, "Idiom and Intellect" (master's thesis, University of California Santa Barbara, 1985).

¹⁷ Loyda Camacho, "Interactions, Cross-Realations, and Superimpositions" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1998).

¹⁸ Bartholomew Crago, "Some Rhythmic Theories Compared and Applied in an Analysis of *El decameron Negro* by Leo Brouwer" (master's thesis, McGill University, 1993).

Roldán,¹⁹ and Charles Asche has done similar work on the solo piano music of these two composers as well.²⁰ Both studies show that the approaches of Caturla and Roldán bear a high degree of similarity and affinity with Brouwer's own work. Caturla and Roldán both studied composition in Europe in the early part of the 20th century. Both composers were clearly attempting, in the heyday of Cuban nationalism and the *grupo minorista*, to mesh Afro-Cuban musical traditions with the avant-garde techniques of European art music in an effort to create genuinely Cuban art music.²¹ In combination with these studies, Brouwer's guitar music in the mid and late 20th century can be understood as a continuation of the musical spirit of Roldán and Caturla.

Cultural Context in Musical Analysis

Most of the time music is analyzed on the basis of its technical components (a partial analysis), and the context—philosophical-social, political, and particular—in which the composer created such music is almost always excluded. This context, which synthetically can be called the composer's experience, influences music—in the long run—to a greater extent than the technical aspects, which are nevertheless indispensable.²²

Despite diverse influences and the compositional variety of his oeuvre, it is important to stress that the guitar music of Leo Brouwer is first and foremost Cuban music. In his own writing Brouwer consistently validates the importance of context in analyzing music and

¹⁹ José Manuel Lezcano, "Afro-Cuban Rhythmic and Metric Elements in the Published Choral and Solo Vocal Works of Alejandro García Caturla and Amadeo Roldán" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1991).

²⁰ Charles Byron Asche, "Cuban Folklore Traditions and Twentieth Century Idioms in the Piano Music of Amadeo Roldán and Alejandro García Caturla" (DMA diss., University of Texas, 1983).

²¹ Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness*, 191-214. The *minoristas* were artists and intellectuals interested in promoting a new vernacular art rooted in folklore popular music.

²² Leo Brouwer, "La música, lo cubano y la innovación" in *Gajes del oficio* (Habana, Letras Cubanas: 2004), 23. Reprinted from the original article of the same title in *Cine Cubano*, ICAIC, La Habana, no. 69, 1970. All translations from Spanish to English in this document were performed by Andrea Campatella unless otherwise noted. "La música se analiza, las más de las veces, a partir de sus componentes técnicos (análisis parcial) olvidando casi siempre la circunstancia que rodea al creador—circunstancia de orden filosófico-social, ambiental y político. Esto, en apretado resumen, es lo que se califica de vivencia e influye—a la larga—mucho más que la información técnica, por otro lado, imprescindible."

references context frequently in discussing musical meaning. In the quote above, he mentions three subsets of the larger concept of context: philosophical-social, political, and particular. He also implies the possibility of other potential subsets when he synthetically groups all such subsets as “the composer’s experience.” Since the revolution in 1959, Brouwer has chosen to live, work, and participate in the arts in his native Cuba. Given Brouwer’s own emphasis on “context” in understanding music, his musical output must be considered in light of the Cuban environment in which he has lived for the majority of his life.

When I stated that the composer’s experience radically influences his work, I was referring to the everyday-life world into which the artist is immersed. This world mostly includes lived experiences. But the past, sometimes the distant past, that “founded” the values and historical categories of Cubanness, isn’t something that can be experienced, but studied. We search our history in order to have our own truths. It is absolutely necessary that we know the historical past to create in the present, in our “today.”²³

Brouwer has certainly clarified his opinion on the importance of his own (Cuban) context. Furthermore, his essays are vital for those examining musical meaning in his compositions. Brouwer’s words serve as clear direction for scholars seeking perspective on Brouwer’s sources for inspiration and his own musical/cultural referents. This study of Brouwer’s guitar music seeks to balance (or inform) the technical aspects of his music with an incorporation of the cultural context from which it has come. Therefore I shall begin, end, and frequently return to the island of Cuba as a stage on which Brouwer’s guitar music is created. And through his music I will demonstrate how the musical legacy of Cuba continues to be transformed through Brouwer’s compositions: metaphorically and metaphysically repeating the island’s syncretic processes.

²³ Leo Brouwer, “La música, lo cubano y la innovación,” 24. “Cuando se planteó que la vivencia influía radicalmente sobre la obra, se hacía referencia al mundo vivo y cotidiano en el que se sumerge el creador. Este universo debe abarcar la mayor cantidad de experiencias vividas. Pero el pasado, a veces lejano, que ha “fundado” los valores y las categorías históricas de lo cubano, no se experimenta, se estudia. Se busca en nuestra historia para tener verdades propias. Es absolutamente necesario conocer el pasado histórico para crear en el ‘hoy.’”

Pre-Revolutionary Cuba and Transculturation

In *Music in Cuba*, Alejo Carpentier describes an island which “at every moment of its history... elaborated a sonorous and lively folklore of surprising vitality, receiving, meshing, and transforming diverse contributions, all of which led to the creation of new and clearly defined genres.”²⁴ Carpentier describes a pre-revolutionary (1959) Cuba that is a musical meeting place for such diverse influences as Afro-Cuban music, European art music, indigenous folk music, and popular music. Axiomatic to Carpentier’s musical history is the cultural mix of 19th century Cuba: the dominant class of ethnically Spanish property owners and slave holders, and the African slave under-class (from a variety of sub-Saharan, West-African regions).²⁵

When informed by the work of Fernando Ortiz (the first scholar to classify Afro-Cuban instruments, transcribe unwritten Afro-Cuban musical practices, and emphasize the importance of Afro-Cuban musical innovations in Cuban popular music), and the work of contemporary scholars, it is impossible to ignore the influence of Afro-Cuban musical elements in the variety of styles we currently think of as Cuban. When we consider the Afro-Cuban forms of *rumba*, *Santería* ritual music and drumming, *changuí*, and *son* or the well Afro-Cubanized (yet less recognized as such) *danzón*, *contradanza*, and *habenera*, the influence of African musical elements is clear.²⁶ In this sense, the music of Cuba *is* Afro-Cuban music. Brouwer has explored the topic of synthesis in Cuban musical style in the essay “La música, lo cubano y la innovación.” The essay is important in clarifying Brouwer’s own understanding of the Cuban musical context.

²⁴ Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, 59.

²⁵ Robin Moore has identified Carpentier as an early advocate of *afrocubanismo*, yet Moore has also shown Carpentier as being frequently ambivalent toward Afro-Cuban expression, and conciliatory toward its opponents in Cuban intellectual circles. See *Nationalizing Blackness*, 175-176.

²⁶ With the exception of the traditional music of the *guajiro* (Cuban rural peasant music, linked with more European lineage and using Spanish *décima* form in their *Punto* song genre), one would be hard pressed to find a Cuban genre that does not significantly reflect Afro-Cuban influence.

Two centuries with a unifying ethnic trait have resulted, unquestionably, in roots that are bicephalous: in the beginning it was African blackness and Spanish whiteness, the result was Cubanness. But of course our analysis should not be so simplistic.²⁷

Brouwer's art consistently valorizes the importance of the Afro-Cuban musical contribution, yet he sees the broad narrative (of the Spanish mixing with the African creating the Cuban) as "simplistic." Brouwer's musical analysis of the historical Cuban culture mix requires the elucidation of specifics. For Brouwer, what Cuba adopts or discards from its cultural mix is the precise expression of Cubanness that he is looking for.

Which are the elements of the past that persist in the present? Is it valid to freeze definite elements from a particular historical moment? A regressive perspective that repeats the past in a literal manner would be of course an absurdity, above all in a universe such as ours that is based on the dialectics of continuous transformation. We know that music is created on the basis of fundamental ideas, elemental ideas, matrix cells. In order not to attribute these ideas to a wrong or alien source, is it valid to study these ideas and trace them back, via synthesis, to their roots?²⁸

Brouwer demonstrates great interest in the cultural roots of Cuban music and its impact on contemporary Cuban composition. Axiomatic to his own approach is the "continuous transformation" that is elemental to all cultural expression and innovation. And whether we are speaking of the synthesis of dialectical transformation (Hegelian) as referenced by Brouwer, or the synthesis that Ortiz witnessed (transculturation), the results are not in dispute.²⁹ Brouwer uses this synthesis in a reverse manner: deconstructing the Cuban cultural synthesis to

²⁷ Leo Brouwer, "La música, lo cubano y la innovación," 24-25. "Dos siglos caracterizados por un rasgo étnico unificador han dado una raíz bicéfala innegable. En el principio fueron lo negro africano y lo blanco español; resultado: lo cubano. Por supuesto que el análisis no puede ser tan simplista."

²⁸ Leo Brouwer, "La música, lo cubano y la innovación," 24. "¿Cuáles son los factores del pasado que pueden permanecer hoy? ¿Es válida la congelación de elementos definidores de un momento histórico? Por supuesto que se trata de demostrar el sin sentido que tendría una visión regresiva de repetir el pasado literalmente, sobre todo en un universo que se basa en la dialéctica de la transformación continua. Sabemos que la música se elabora sobre la base de ideas fundamentales, elementales, células matrices. Para no tomarlas de una fuente equivocada o extraña, ¿vale estudiar esas ideas y llevarlas por síntesis hasta sus raíces?"

²⁹ Brouwer has consistently identified himself as a Marxist, and has frequently referenced the dialectical laws of Marxism as connected with the laws of nature. See Paul Century's dissertation "The Principles of Pitch Organization," 9-10.

understand the original source material. Under a new sectional heading of “The Style of Cubanness in the Past,” Brouwer outlines elements that have defined Cubanness:

1. Rhythm (fundamentally drums). African roots.
2. Instrument (guitar and its variants). Spanish roots.
 - a. in the *trova*
 - b. in the *controversia campesina* (with its variant: Creole *laúd*)
 - c. in the *septeto de sonos* (with its variant: the Cuban *tres*)
3. Voice
 - a. Spanish language (for the *guajira*, the *salón* song, the end-of-the-century opera imported from Italy but Cubanized through language and amorous song).
 - b. African language (for ritual religious chanting).
4. Musical form or structure. Dance forms in the first place.
 - a. Elemental: ritual and celebratory (African)
 - b. Elaborated: festive and of *salón* (Spanish)The union of these two components took place during a first stage we could define as “Creole.”
5. The union of rhythm and instrument in all the remaining Cuban instrumental forms through the rhythmic factor, of African origin and features—which have persisted until today—all the other musical parameters coalesced.
6. Guitar plucking forms passed onto Manuel Saumell’s piano *contradanzas* (with Schubertian harmony). Also, guitar arpeggio forms passed onto the *montunos* (in the piano parts) in *danzones*.
7. Rhythmic forms of the nineteenth-century *danzón*, *danza* and *contradanza* passed onto Ignacio Cervantes’ piano works (with Chopinesque harmony).³⁰

³⁰ Ibid., 25.

1. El ritmo (fundamentalmente tambores). Raíz africana.
2. El instrumento (la guitarra y sus variantes). Raíz española.
 - a. En la trova.
 - b. En la controversia campesina (con su variante: el laúd criollo).
 - c. En el septeto de sonos (con su variante: el tres cubano).
3. La voz.
 - a. Lengua española (para la guajira, la canción de salón, la ópera finisecular importada de Italia, pero *cubanizada* por la lengua, y la canción amorosa).
 - b. Lengua africana (para cantos rituales religiosos).
4. La forma musical o estructura. Primeramente formas de danza.
 - a. Elementales: rituales y de celebración (africanas).
 - b. Elaboradas: festivas y sociales o *de salón* (españolas).La unión de estos dos componentes se da en una primera etapa que podemos definir de “criolla.”
5. La unión del ritmo y el instrumento de todas las demás formas instrumentales cubanas. Mediante el factor rítmico de procedencia y rasgos africanos—que sobreviven hasta hoy—se cohesionan todos los demás parámetros de la música.
6. Las formas del “punteado” guitarrístico son asimiladas por las contradanzas pianísticas de Manuel Saumell (con armonía schubertiana). También las formas arpegiadas de la guitarra pasan a los montunos (en la parte de piano) de los danzones.
7. Las formas rítmicas del danzón, la danza y la contradanza populares del siglo XIX, están presentes en la obra pianística de Ignacio Cervantes (con armonía chopiniana).

While points 1 through 4 of Brouwer's outline deal with very general cultural inputs, points 5 through 7 specifically reference synthesis of established genres, with the introduction of European (Chopin, Schubert) harmonic styles. The incorporation and adoption of Afro-Cuban musical elements by Cuban musicians into European art music genres has a well documented history. Manuel Saumell and Ignacio Cervantes were two prominent Cuban musicians and composers of the 19th century who were interested in creating Cuban art music by incorporating Cuban rhythms and gestures into the genres of European concert music and salon piano music.³¹ This interest was continued in the early 20th century when Cuban composers Amadeo Roldán and Alejandro García Caturla sought to create avant-garde music of the modern era by adopting specific Afro-Cuban genres and gestures to their concert music.³² Today, Brouwer's guitar compositions can be partly understood as participating in the ongoing *transculturation* of Cuban music.³³

From his seven points of historical Cuban style, Brouwer goes on to state the following conclusions:

1. The most representative sound elements of the popular music from our past have nowadays the same force—*all the current sound paraphernalia is an expansion or a transformation of percussion and guitar.*
2. *The seeming opposition between African and Spanish roots dissolved, as both parts integrated without any of them being weakened.* No element was relegated either—a situation that would have been very likely—despite white society's dominance over black society in our colonial past.
3. *Some of the constitutive elements of our music came from European culture, and they were integrated as parameters (harmony, instrumentation, form).*

³¹ Ned Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music*, 150-155, 252.

³² This topic is more thoroughly explored in two dissertations: "Afro-Cuban Rhythmic and Metric Elements in the Published Choral and Solo Vocal Works of Alejandro García Caturla and Amadeo Roldán" by José Manuel Lezcano (Florida State University, 1991); and "Cuban Folklore Traditions and Twentieth Century Idioms in the Piano Music of Amadeo Roldán and Alejandro García Caturla," by Charles Byron Asche (University of Texas, Austin, 1983). For a more thorough-going discussion of the socio-cultural-intellectual environment of that particular time see *Nationalizing Blackness* by Robin Moore.

³³ An 8th point could be added to the 7-point list: Afro-Cuban percussion patterns, rhythmic cells, and syncopated loops (inspired by rumba and the ritual music of *Santería*) passed onto contemporary art music for guitar by Leo Brouwer.

4. *I consider our lack of a long and developed cultural European tradition a — relative—advantage, as it would pose difficult problems when the time for breaking with disagreeable traditions comes. Our colonial “tradition” is merely a couple of hundred years old, and the properly Cuban tradition is barely a hundred years old (it was cut short by the failed republic).³⁴ [Emphasis added]*

With an extensive knowledge of Brouwer’s music for guitar, one cannot miss the parallels between his oeuvre and this four-point conclusion. Any analysis of his compositions should note how these four points are consistently met or elaborated upon musically.

Contemporary Cuba and Postmodernism

Cuba is part of Hispanic America and the Caribbean, and as such it rests on a platform of mixed cultures. Since the end of the sixteenth century, this mix and superimposition of lifestyles has been identified with the label of “Creole.” Aggregation, integration, pluralism, mix—and hence bountifulness—are the true roots of our idiosyncrasy, which directly connects with postmodernism’s essence.³⁵

Any exploration of Brouwer’s compositional context that simply focuses on the cultural inputs of colonial Cuba more than 100 years ago would be out of date indeed. Since the work of Carpentier and Ortiz in the early part of the 20th century, Cuba has undergone a radical re-alignment with the revolution of 1959 and the adoption of a socialist government thereafter. In

³⁴ Leo Brouwer, “La música, lo cubano y la innovación,” 26-27.

1. Los medios sonoros más representativos de lo popular en el pasado tienen, hoy día, igual vigencia (todo el aparataje sonoro actual es una ampliación o transformación de la percusión y la guitarra).
2. La aparente diferencia entre las raíces españolas y africanas se integró sin que sufrieran desangramiento sus partes. Tampoco se relegó elemento alguno—lo que hubiera sido probable—a pesar del dominio de la sociedad blanca sobre la negra en nuestro pasado colonial,
3. Parte de los elementos constitutivos provenían de la cultura europea y se integraban como parámetros al todo (armonía, instrumental, forma).
4. Considero como una ventaja—relativa—el no tener una larga tradición cultural europea desarrollada que nos plantee problemas complejos a la hora de romper tradiciones ingratas. Nuestra “tradición” colonial tiene pocos cientos de años y la propiamente cubana anda por los cien años cortos (mutilada por la fracasada república).

³⁵ Leo Brouwer, “Música, folklor, contemporaneidad y postmodernismo” in *Gajes del oficio* (Habana, Letras Cubanas: 2004), 49. Reprinted from *Clave* no. 13, April-June 1989. This lecture was originally a conference-talk given in the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, on October 27, 1988, during the Fourth Congress of Cooperation with Central America and the Caribbean. “Cuba es parte de América Hispana y el Caribe, y como tal, vive sobre una plataforma formada por culturas mezcladas. Esta superposición de modos de vida crea una tipología que, desde fines del siglo XVI, se conoce por “criollo.” Suma, integración, pluralidad, mezcla – y por tanto riqueza – forman las verdaderas raíces de nuestra idiosincrasia, la cual se entronca directamente con la esencia postmodernista.”

the West, the cultural repression of socialist China, and the artistic appropriation (for propaganda) of the socialist Soviet Union is well known. Yet recent experience in Cuba has shown its artistic policy to be an exception. Peter Manuel has argued this point after years of scholarship and study in Cuba:

Musical policy in Cuba, of course, has never been as repressive and totalitarian as that under Stalin, or the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Modern Cuban painters and filmmakers have also felt quite free to explore all manner of avant-garde styles, synthesizing, in some cases, contemporary Western trends with stylizations of Afro-Cuban art. And as we have seen, since the mid-1970s, imported genres like rock and, for that matter, European art music have not been regarded as subversive vehicles for nihilistic or reactionary values.³⁶

Armando Hart, the former Cuban Minister of Culture, expressed the official cultural policy of the Cuban government:

I repeat that the cultural policy we have followed since 1959 is one of cultural relations with the whole world, based on a principle stated by Martí. The fact that we defend national culture and at the same time open ourselves up to the rest of the world may seem like a contradiction between what is national and universal, and even if it were, that contradiction would be fruitful. We work on Martí's principle: "Graft the world on to our republics, but the trunk must be our republics." I don't think we are going to lose our cultural characteristics for anything in the world. On the contrary, we've fully recovered our identity – which in other ways is unchangeable – by liberating ourselves from all forms of colonialism. I reiterate that a country that isolates itself in the arts impoverishes its arts, and that's why we want cultural relations with the whole world.³⁷

Similarly, the comments of artist/cultural critic Coco Fusco, in reference to the visual arts, further helps us to characterize the artistic atmosphere in Cuba in the late 1980s, at the height of Soviet-style centralization:

Rather than locating an essential Cuban identity in a past indigenous culture or a homogenized future one, the most sophisticated commentary and artwork now focuses on the syncretic, synthesizing procedures by which Cubans make the foreign their own. To understand the present, they suggest, is to understand how the material conditions of Cuban socialism force this "recontextualization" to become a part of everyday life. The latest chapter in this procedure is the importation of what some Cuban artists perceive as

³⁶ Peter Manuel, "Musical Pluralism in Revolutionary Cuba" in *Essays on Cuban Music: North American and Cuban Perspectives*, ed. Peter Manuel (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 307.

³⁷ Century, "Principles of Pitch Organization in Leo Brouwer's Atonal Music for Guitar," 9.

a “postmodern attitude”—which conveniently removes the stigma of dependence from the act of appropriation, celebrates eclecticism and skeptically disavows the rhetoric of authenticity.³⁸

In his official positions within Cuban institutions, Leo Brouwer has had close dealings with Cuban cultural institutions and significant influence on official policy. The comments of Manuel, Fusco, and Hart are in part a reflection of Brouwer’s own ideas and institutional influence. His most recent official duties include heading the Music Division of the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC), advisor to the Cuban Minister of Culture, Artistic Director of the Havana Symphony since 1981, and the Cuban Representative on the International Music Council of UNESCO.³⁹ Since 1961 when he first visited Europe to attend the Warsaw Autumn Music Festival, Brouwer has been greatly influenced by the European avant-garde music scene. His comments below reflect the contemporary Cuban perspective on avant-garde music, and show affinity with Fusco’s “postmodern attitude.”

For Europeans, it is common to speak of the influences of Stockhausen and Xenakis, the important festivals (Darmstadt, Venice, Zagreb), and many other factors that take place in Europe as formative constants, as elements of continuity for the avant-garde movements. It is a fundamental part of their daily life. For us, in another hemisphere, these constants are information, not determinants; they can be used as referential formations in the total balancing of the technical and the aesthetic.⁴⁰

More recently, in an interview with David Reynolds, Brouwer expressed a more decidedly postmodern attitude:

For many years the German school of the so called avant-garde, which is very old-fashioned now, was considered the pinnacle of modern composition. But that has been over for a long time now. Now we have a new way to analyze musical evolution. Now music is approaching fusion.⁴¹

³⁸ Coco Fusco, “Drawing New Lines,” *The Nation*, 24 October 1988, 400.

³⁹ Century, “Idiom and Intellect,” 2-3.

⁴⁰ Century, “Principles of Pitch Organization in Leo Brouwer’s Atonal Music for Guitar,” 7.

⁴¹ David Reynolds, “Estudio sin luz: A Conversation with Leo Brouwer,” *Guitar Review* no. 126 (Summer 2003): 9.

Fusion (the synthesis of disparate genres or styles) is at the heart of this study, as it has been a consistent trait of Cuban culture for the last four hundred years. Cultural fusion has created all of the musical styles we think of as Cuban, and fusion describes Brouwer's compositional approach as well. Fusion is also at the core of the contemporary postmodern movement in the arts and music. Discussion of the avant-garde and its important figures in music, and the more contemporary concept of postmodernism, might initially seem contradictory to the earlier discussion of folkloric and historical/cultural roots of Cuban music. Yet for Brouwer, the concepts of avant-garde music and folklore do not contradict each other. On the contrary, he argues that, for a composer in the Americas, the concepts go hand in hand, and are brought together in the postmodern approach to art music. For Brouwer, postmodernism defines the contemporary musical environment with its fusing genres and variety of musical informants. Brouwer has combined these topics in an essay titled "Música, folclor, contemporaneidad y postmodernismo" (Music, folklore, contemporaneity and postmodernism). Brouwer begins by describing the avant-garde music scene (or the post-war aesthetic innovations) of Europe that he witnessed in the 1960s and 70s:

After World War II another cycle of experimentation or renovation of artistic languages began. It was the so-called modern "vanguard" in which Boulez, in France, expanded the serialism that Schoenberg had put forward thirty years earlier. The festivals of Köln and Darmstadt, among others, emerged as centers of neo-vanguard music, seeking to recreate themselves in a way that would put behind the dreadful role of Hitler's Germany—the cycle world war-aesthetic innovation repeated itself once more. This vanguard movement, of undoubted relevance, brought together the innovators of the time: Messiaen, Nono, Henze, and many others. Integral serialism, aleatorism, and electro-acoustics have been offered as unique models of this era so much talked about and so far removed from the conservative and routine symphonic traditions. This modernism was followed by the postmodernism I am concerned with in this article, a postmodernism that has been classified as minimalism, hyper-realism, new simplicity, fusion—the convergence of popular and cultivated music—and a whole series of sub-

classifications—such as new age—promoted by the market for their most convenient exploitation.⁴²

Brouwer acknowledges some of the difficulties with the terminology, which is seemingly contradictory: it is certainly logical for Western scholars, in academic contexts, to assume modernism contradicts or counteracts folklore, and the same could be said of postmodernism as it relates to modernism. Yet Brouwer sees these artistic concepts and movements as related:

Folklore? Yes. Because a great part of the folklore from the Caribbean and from our geographic areas is still alive, unchanged, without adulterations, and the best of it is still unknown thanks to the fact that its roots are not fully susceptible to tourist commercialization.

Contemporaneity? Because it is the damned topic in a century that ends convulsed and burning with theses, styles, aesthetic currents following each other in rapid succession, stylistic births and sudden deaths, fashions and modes, rites and myths; all of them seen from a European perspective many times too removed from our American home.

Postmodernism? As a recently refurbished concept that allows us to deal with this moment, a moment brimming with the absolute freedom that generates pluralism in terms of artistic culture.⁴³

Brouwer continues by exploring modernism as a concept that attempted to claim universalism as both its goal and privilege. Yet at its heart, this modernism was opposed to

⁴² Brouwer, “Música, folklor, contemporaneidad y postmodernismo,” 46. “Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial se recomienza con otro ciclo de experimentación o renovación de los lenguajes artísticos. Es el llamado período de la moderna “vanguardia”, en el cual Boulez, en Francia, amplía el serialismo propuesto por Schönberg treinta años antes. Los festivales de Köln y Darmstadt, entre otros, se erigen como centros de la música de una neovanguardia y tratan de renacer con una nueva propuesta que ayuda a olvidar el espantoso papel de la Alemania hitleriana— repitiéndose una vez más el ciclo: guerra mundial-apertura estética. Éste fue un resurgimiento de indudable importancia, que reunió a los renovadores de entonces: Messiaen, Nono, Henze y muchos otros. Serialismo integral, aleatorismo, electroacústica, han sido ofrecidos como modelos únicos en esta etapa tan mencionada y a la vez tan alejada de las tradiciones sinfónicas, conservadoras y rutinarias. Este modernismo es seguido por el postmodernismo que nos ocupa, clasificado como minimalismo, hiperrealismo, nueva simplicidad, fusión— acercamiento de las músicas popular y culta—y toda una serie de subclasificaciones—como el *new age*— promovidas por el mercado para su más conveniente explotación.”

⁴³ Ibid., 46-47. “¿Folklore? Sí. Porque gran parte del folklore del Caribe y de nuestras áreas geográficas sigue vivo, invariable, sin adulteraciones y lo mejor de él permanece desconocido gracias a que muchas de sus raíces no son susceptibles de comercialización turística.

¿Contemporaneidad? Porque es el tema maldito de un siglo que termina convulsionado y ardiente en tesis, estilos, corrientes estéticas en rápida sucesión, nacimientos estilísticos, muertes repentinas, modas y modos, ritos y mitos; todos vistos desde la óptica europea, muchas veces demasiado lejana de nuestros lares americanos.

¿Postmodernismo? Como concepto remodelado actualmente, lo cual permite tratar este momento, lleno de esa absoluta libertad que da el pluralismo en términos de cultura artística.”

particular cultural localities. Showing a great breadth of knowledge on the subject, Brouwer cites Correa Azevado, Mariano Etkin, Gilbert Chase, Leonard Meyer, and Octavio Paz, demonstrating that part of the postmodern critique of modernism was a critique of European universalism. Brouwer describes a modernist movement that, earlier in the 20th century, implied an opposition between universalism and nationalism, ultimately claiming universalism for its own.⁴⁴ Yet this Europe-centered attitude could ultimately be seen in the new world as a kind of artistic colonialism:

Why, then, do we complain, once and again, about the “first world’s” disregard for our culture when many of our nations, institutions, and even we individuals exercise a self-embargo that ultimately results in our own self-colonization? Colonization and cultural blockage go hand in hand. I do not need to explain the mechanisms of the transnational exportation of commercialized art, the way it feeds into mass culture and causes the unavoidable aesthetic poverty that results from the serial production of art.

The modern results neither from novel classifications or schemes nor from a purposeful search for rupture. The modern results from a new way—intimately found—of dealing with languages and codes that might or might not be part of our historical culture. The contemporary offers to the artist a wide variety of options in diverse modules or patterns, whether national or universal. These options become influences only when the artist chooses them and uses them in his oeuvre.⁴⁵

Brouwer views art as going through “...cycles that are like ascending spirals. Each cycle of changing esthetics negates the immediately prior cycle and searches for roots going

⁴⁴ Ibid., 47.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 47-48. “Entonces, ¿por qué quejarnos, una vez más, de la desatención que sufrimos o del desconocimiento que profesa el “primer mundo” hacia nuestra cultura, cuando buena parte de nuestros países, instituciones y hasta individualidades ejercemos un autobloqueo que desemboca finalmente en autocolonización? Colonización y bloqueo cultural van de la mano y no es necesario explicar la mecánica de grandes transnacionales exportadoras de arte comercializado, alimentando así la cultura masiva y acompañándola de la inevitable pobreza estética que engendra la producción en serie del arte.

Lo moderno no responde a una clasificación de novedad, tampoco a esquemas y búsquedas formales de rompimiento, sino a un nuevo tratamiento—íntimamente encontrado—de lenguajes y códigos que pueden o no formar parte de la cultura histórica. La contemporaneidad ofrece una enorme variedad de opciones con los diversos módulos o *patterns* que un creador encuentra frente a él, tanto en lo nacional como en lo universal. Estas opciones se convertirán en influencias solamente cuando hayan sido seleccionadas por el creador y vertidas en su obra.”

backwards in time—although transforming the references it finds.”⁴⁶ Brouwer describes how the cycles ascended through the 1960s and 70s and arrived at postmodernism. Brouwer states:

During the last twenty years the sound patterns or schemes that identify contemporaneity have changed several times. First, these sound patterns intensified and developed what was “novel,” and later on they negated such “novelty” with elements of contradictory style. Serialism countervailed tonalism, aleatoric music countervailed determined writing, and we are finally witnessing the birth of a supra-tonalism that sometimes is minimalist and sometimes hyper-romantic, a supra-tonalism that countervails the vanguard that has rigorously prevailed for more than two decades. From the incessant classificatory mania that characterizes us as heirs of Western culture arises the need for a new label. Could it be postmodernism?⁴⁷

As a contemporary artist, Brouwer identifies with postmodernism in method and in national heritage. As a Creole nation, in many ways Cuba was a “postmodern” culture before the concept existed. When contextualizing Brouwer’s music, we must be aware of “aggregation, integration, pluralism, mix,” as the birthright and the idiosyncrasy of the Cuban musician.⁴⁸ Compositional methods that take advantage of such pluralism in the creation of art today are directly related to the essence of postmodernism. Whatever label we might choose, this document will demonstrate that Brouwer has consistently brought together his Afro-Cuban musical context and avant-garde techniques, creating unique and powerful contemporary guitar music.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 45. “...ciclos en espiral ascendente. Cada ciclo de cambio estético niega al período inmediato anterior y busca raíces hacia atrás en el tiempo, aunque transformando dichas referencias.”

⁴⁷ Ibid., 48. “Los patrones o esquemas sonoros que identifican la contemporaneidad han variado en los últimos veinte años unas cuantas veces. Primero, intensificando y desarrollando los esquemas de la “novedad” y más tarde, negándola con los elementos de estilo más contradictorios. El serialismo se opuso al tonalismo, el aleatorismo, a la escritura determinada, y finalmente vemos nacer una serie de supratonalismo, minimalista unas veces, hiperromántico otras, que se opone a la vanguardia que imperó rigurosamente por más de dos décadas. En la incesante manía clasificadora que nos caracteriza como herederos de la cultura occidental, surge la necesidad de una nueva etiqueta. ¿Será ésta el postmodernismo?”

⁴⁸ Ibid, 49. “Suma, integración, pluralidad, mezcla – y por tanto riqueza – forman las verdaderas raíces de nuestra idiosincrasia, la cual se entronca directamente con la esencia postmodernista.”

CHAPTER 2: PAISAJE CUBANO CON RUMBA

In the 1980s Brouwer wrote a series of compositions for guitar (or guitar ensemble) known as *Paisajes cubanos* (Cuban Landscapes). Clearly evoking visual or programmatic connections in their titles, these are minimalist musical landscapes: *Paisaje cubano con lluvia* (Cuban Landscape with Rain) 1984, *Paisaje cubano con campanas* (Cuban Landscape with Bells) 1986, *Paisaje cubano con tristeza* (Cuban Landscape with Sadness) 1989, and *Paisaje cubano con rumba* (Cuban Landscape with Rumba) 1985. This chapter will focus on *Paisaje cubano con rumba* for guitar quartet. For the compact disc recording of this work by the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet, Brouwer composed an English-language introduction for his composition:

I am Cuban, and Cuban black rumba has very little in common with the dance themes popularized in Europe in the 1950s songs. On the contrary, it is an intensely dramatic ritual which perpetuates an Imperial Bull issued by Spain in the 16th Century: this gave black slaves the right to gather just once a year to dance and make merry. This ritual and its periodicity is still handed down by oral tradition, long after the ordinance which caused it fell into oblivion. The feast is held at the end of the month in the open to dance the rumba in couples and sing all together (with a song leader) in the language of the Yoruba people (eastern Guinea), accompanied by a percussion instrument (if no drum is available, a wooden chest is used). Musically speaking, the rumba avails itself of low frequency sounds (carried better in the humid Caribbean air) accompanied by a rhythmic architecture which is not complete at first but to which elements are added as the dance progresses. A phonic environment made to measure for the minimalist structure of *Cuban Landscape with Rumba*.⁴⁹

In this brief introduction, Brouwer chooses to discuss the cultural phenomenon dubbed the “*rumba complex*” by scholars.⁵⁰ This socio-cultural-musical event combines singing (both solo and choral refrain), dancing, and percussive accompaniment. Despite its African character, *rumba* is not a surviving, sustained music of another culture. It exists as a result of the

⁴⁹ Leo Brouwer, “Cuban Landscape with Rumba,” in *New Works for Guitar Quartet*, Minneapolis Guitar Quartet, CD TROY 207, Albany Records, 1996.

⁵⁰ Yvonne Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, 29.

confluence of Spanish and African culture (perhaps Neo-African), and the roots of modern *rumba* can be traced with certainty back to 19th century Cuba.⁵¹ Given Brouwer's emphasis on the cultural and historical roots of his composition, a more in-depth look at the history of *rumba* is called for.

A Brief History of *Rumba* in Cuba

While the Imperial Bull described by Brouwer originated in the 16th century, the complex of percussive music and dances known today as *rumba* (*guaguancó*, *yambú*, and *columbia*) can be traced back to its origins in 19th-century Matanzas province. *Rumba* is a genre that involves singing, dancing and percussive accompaniment. The genre originated in the poor, Afro-Cuban sectors of urban centers, in run-down neighborhoods near sugar mills and shipping docks. Specifically, *rumba* appears to have originated with Afro-Cuban men of Bantú and Congo heritage.⁵² In the 19th century, *rumba* became common in all of the places where Afro-Cuban men would congregate. On the docks, and in the warehouses of La Marina (a merchant zone of docks and warehouses), *rumba* was danced and performed by manual laborers.⁵³ But the dance was not restricted to the docks. *Rumba* was also associated with the *cabildos* (mutual aid societies authorized by the Cuban colonial government), where ethnically related groups of Africans maintained their cultural heritage and social connections. *Rumba* was a part of life in the slave barracks, and also a part of urban life in the *solar*.⁵⁴ While Bantú language was first sung with *rumba* dances and particular *cabildos* were highly influential in the early *rumba*, soon

⁵¹ Ned Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music*, 267.

⁵² Yvonne Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 63-64.

⁵³ Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music*, 257.

⁵⁴ An outdoor common area for high density housing. Similar to an internal courtyard for urban apartments.

Afro-Cubans of varying lineage (*carabalí, arará, gangá, lucumí, etc.*) were participating in the “*rumba complex*.”⁵⁵

The instrumentation of the *rumba* was highly flexible from its earliest inception. On the docks, shipping crates (*cajones*) and shipbuilder’s pegs were used as the first percussion instruments of *rumba*.⁵⁶ It is common now to consider the percussive group as consisting of three pitched conga drums played with the hands: the lowest is known as the *tumbador*, the mid-range known as the *segundo* (second) or *seis-por-ocho* (six-by-eight), and the highest pitched *quinto* (referring to the 5th interval above the lowest drum).⁵⁷ Added to this group are the *clave*: two sticks of hard wood struck together to provide an asymmetrical rhythmic backbone to the music.⁵⁸ (See Examples 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 for common *clave* rhythms.)

Early *rumberos* used materials at hand on the docks for drum construction. Clave sticks were originally shipbuilders’ pegs. Shipping crates and barrels were especially prized for the quality of their wood. The crates and barrels were frequently taken apart, sanded or reshaped, put back together in tighter form and finished to improve the sound.⁵⁹ Yet there were other reasons for the use of percussion alternatives or substitutes. In the late 19th century (after 1880), at the end of the slave trade in Cuba, Fernando Ortiz has described:

...a violent and senseless repression against all the surviving African [tendencies] in Cuba, even those that were cultural, esthetic, and deeply rooted in the popular expression as if the Bourbonic colony wanted in that way to clear its conscience, its hidden feeling of culpability, for having maintained slavery in America long after the other metropolitan nations of Europe.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Ibid., 258-259.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 264.

⁵⁷ Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, 80.

⁵⁸ Sometimes *palitos* are also used: hard sticks of wood beaten against the body of one of the drums.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 264-265.

⁶⁰ Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music*, 265.

Example 2.1

*Yambú clave.*⁶¹



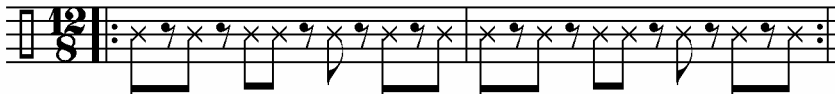
Example 2.2

Guaguancó clave.



Example 2.3

Columbia clave.



In an environment where drums were not immediately available (on the docks or in the warehouses) or at a time when African drums were illegal (and being confiscated and destroyed), *rumberos* worked with various sorts of percussion alternatives. Drawers from dressers could be removed and played with spoons. The top of a wooden table (bottles, doors, etc.) could be struck.

The vocal component of *rumba*, most frequently carried by a solo singer and a choral refrain, often uses improvised melodies and lyrics.⁶² The sung portion of *rumba* helps to delineate form, with the verses by the soloist creating one section, and the call-and-response section acting as the alternative. Additionally, in *yambú* and *guaguancó* there is a short

⁶¹ Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, 73.

⁶² Philip Pasmanick, "'Décima' and 'Rumba:' Iberian Formalism in the Heart of Afro-Cuban Song," *Latin American Music Review* 18/2 (1997) 252-277.

introductory segment known as “La Diana” which is sung by the soloist and generally presents the pitch gamut in syllables that are frequently fragments of African languages (such as Yoruban) or might simply be nonsense syllables.⁶³ The *décima* poetic form (so dominant in Spain in the “Golden Age”) remains the most common poetic rhyme structure used to this day in improvising and composing song lyrics for *rumba*.⁶⁴ Musical analysis of contemporary *rumba* melodies has revealed triadic outlining, with frequent use of melodic sequence. Pitch material is most often from heptatonic major or minor scales, furthering the argument for European influence. Yet subtle pitch inflection and microtonal variants sometimes make clear attribution difficult.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, *rumba* is clearly a musically syncretic Cuban original, born of the Spanish-African mix of the colony, and preserved today in the Cuban nation.

Scholar Yvonne Daniel has explored the change that has occurred culturally in Cuba as it relates to *rumba* since the rise of the socialist regime in Cuba in 1959. Her work clearly shows how the Cuban government has reversed the previous trend of repression and bigotry that was traditionally associated with the *rumba* dance/music complex and the Afro-Cuban culture that created it.⁶⁶ There are currently a number of professional companies that perform *rumba* both locally and internationally and exist with funding and support from the Cuban government. At the time of Daniel’s early research, the Conjunto Folkórico Nacional, Folkórico de Oriente, and

⁶³ Larry Crook, “A Musical Analysis of Cuban Rumba,” *Latin American Music Review* 3 (1), 95-96.

⁶⁴ Philip Pasmanick, “‘Décima’ and ‘Rumba,’ 252-277.

⁶⁵ Crook, “A Musical Analysis of Cuban Rumba,” 94-95. The attribution of *rumba*’s melody to solely Spanish origin has essentially been discarded since early studies on *rumba*.

⁶⁶ Despite the interest of contemporary musicologists and musicians, it might be surprising that the first barrio style *rumba* recording happened in 1947, in New York City! An adulterated *rumba* had been adopted in the theaters of Havana, and had been internationalized in ball-room dance as “Rhumba” in the first half of the 20th century, but the true Afro-Cuban *rumba* was still derided in its native Cuba at mid-century. The “Rhumba” existed at mid-century for upper-class white Cubans and international dancers (U.S. and Europe) as a kind of dance in black-face with very little musical similarity and nearly no physical movements retained from the original complex. See Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, 17-20.

Cutumba were the only companies supported by the Cuban government.⁶⁷ To this day those companies are still active, and still retain government support. But fifteen years after the publication of Daniel's book, a number of other smaller companies that specialize in the professional performance of *rumba* are supported institutionally as well.⁶⁸ While inherently recognized as art, *rumba* is here presented and conceived as "folklore" of the Cuban nation and people. Despite the professionalization of the musicians, dancers, and singers, *rumba* continues to survive as a spontaneous street and social dance performed by contemporary Cubans.⁶⁹

As detailed earlier, Leo Brouwer has been closely associated with the ministries of the Cuban government. He is also a frequent participant at informal *rumbas*.⁷⁰ He knows the success of the professional ensembles in representing national art both at home and abroad, and he knows the spontaneous and indigenous *rumba* that exists in the streets of Cuba to this day. *Paisaje cubano con rumba* represents a further transculturation of Afro-Cuban music beyond the original *rumba* complex. Brouwer's *Landscape* is not *rumba* in the important aspect that it is music for listening, not for dancing. It is further removed from its source by its venue: the concert hall, as art music, participating in the musical style known as minimalism. Further removing it from the *rumba*, there are no drums, there is no singing, and there are no clave sticks. So where do the similarities lie, and why can this still be considered Afro-Cuban?

Brouwer's Minimalist *Rumba*

Brouwer, in an interview with Vladimir Wistuba-Álvarez, has clearly described the presence of specific rhythm cells derived from *rumba* in *Paisaje cubano con rumba*. In fact,

⁶⁷ Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, 93.

⁶⁸ Susan Thomas, personal communication.

⁶⁹ Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, 93-105.

⁷⁰ Vladimir Wistuba-Álvarez, "Lluvia, Rumba y Campanas en los Paisajes Cubanos de Leo Brouwer y Otras Temás (Una conversación con Leo Brouwer) *Latin American Music Review* vol. 10, no. 1 (Spring, 1989), 138.

Brouwer has said that this piece is not just one *rumba*, but all three of the traditional forms: “I took all of the *rumba*’s cells, the *columbia*, the *yambú*, the *guaguancó*... all of them.”⁷¹ Yet *Paisaje cubano con rumba* is not pure, or authentic (vernacular), *rumba* music. There was one musical topic in Brouwer’s English language introduction (page 25) vital to any analysis that concerns western art music more than Afro-Cuban music: minimalism. Brouwer describes the *Paisaje cubano con rumba* as having a “minimalist structure.” The concept of creating a series of minimalist sonic “landscapes” of Cuba can be linked with some certainty to Brouwer’s early interest in painting and visual art. In fact, in his youth, Brouwer was drawn to the art of Paul Klee, himself a kind of proto-minimalist dealing with fundamental concepts of line and color. It is significant that Brouwer has been known to refer to his own compositions as “*retratos*” or paintings. Brouwer has frequently brought Klee’s artistic concepts to bear on his own teaching of composition.⁷²

Musical minimalism in its early days of the 1960s and 70s was closely associated with its sister movement in abstract art. Ultimately, musical minimalism came to be seen as both an alternative to, and a reaction against, modernism in music (as represented by such mid-century composers as Babbitt, Carter, and Boulez). As a musical style, minimalism has been greatly influenced by the non-Western (that is, non-academic) music of rock, jazz, and their non-Western (African) predecessors. Minimalist music frequently features a reduction of artistic materials to essential pitch and harmonic material with gradual, additive rhythm adjustments and a regularity of formal design.⁷³

⁷¹ Wistuba-Álvarez, “Lluvia, Rumba y Campanas en los Paisajes Cubanos de Leo Brouwer y Otras Temas,” 139. “Yo tomé todas las células de la rumba, la columbia, la yambú, la guaguancó...todas.”

⁷² Century, “Idiom and Intellect,” 12-13.

⁷³ *New Grove Dictionary Online*, “Minimalism,” (by Keith Potter), [http: www.grovemusic.com/](http://www.grovemusic.com/) (accessed 01/08/06).

When listening to Brouwer's *Paisaje cubano con rumba* or analyzing the score, the minimalist texture and approach to composition is clear (as will be seen in the set-class analysis that follows). It is a remarkable stylistic feature that Brouwer's musical "landscapes" for guitar(s) draw upon, and reflect, the artistic interests of his youth. From the first bars of *Paisaje cubano con rumba*, the sparse and regular characteristics of minimalism are evident (see Example 2.4).

Example 2.4

Paisaje cubano con rumba, mm. 1-8.

The musical score for Example 2.4 consists of two systems of four staves each. The first system is marked with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 92$ and the instruction "Sord." above the first staff. The first staff contains a sparse melody of quarter notes: G4 , A4 , B4 , C5 in the first measure, followed by rests, and then B4 , A4 , G4 , F4 in the second measure. The second staff is marked "Sord." and contains rests. The third staff is marked "Sord." and contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes: G4 , A4 , B4 , C5 in the first measure, followed by rests, and then B4 , A4 , G4 , F4 in the second measure. The fourth staff is marked "Sord." and contains rests. The second system follows the same pattern. The first staff has a sparse melody of quarter notes: G4 , A4 , B4 , C5 in the first measure, followed by rests, and then B4 , A4 , G4 , F4 in the second measure. The second staff is marked "Sord." and contains rests. The third staff is marked "Sord." and contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes: G4 , A4 , B4 , C5 in the first measure, followed by rests, and then B4 , A4 , G4 , F4 in the second measure. The fourth staff is marked "Sord." and contains rests. The piece ends with a "dim." marking and a double bar line.

Beyond minimalist texture and simple initial rhythm, the timbre of the initial passage might be the most remarkable and interesting sonic effect. Listeners unfamiliar with the piece

might not realize that they are listening to guitars in the first eight measures. The entire first section of the work, almost half of the eight minute piece, is played with mutes on the guitars. The use of mutes in written and recorded literature for the guitar is quite unusual (the very low volume of sound created might be one reason). Brouwer's mutes do not function merely to reduce the sound of the ensemble, but work in a similar manner to John Cage's prepared piano: they entirely alter the timbre, pitch, and duration of sound produced by the guitar quartet. On the first page of the score Brouwer specifies that a variety of mutes should be used for each instrument, and gives examples of his recommended mutes.⁷⁴ One such mute he calls "Faverey's mute," which entails entwining two wooden matchsticks in the strings (see Example 2.5).

Faverey's mute sharply reduces duration and dramatically changes timbre. Additionally, the displacement of the strings by the wooden matchsticks causes an alteration of pitch: the opening A in the 3rd guitar can be sharp by anywhere from 5 to 20 cents depending on matchstick placement.⁷⁵ Therefore the opening eight bars sound quite different than written. With the 1st guitar using an alternative mute that does not alter pitch (such as a thin piece of cloth), this is no longer a simple unison. The pitching of the quartet must be understood as microtonal during the first half of the work while the mutes are in place.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Leo Brouwer, *Paisaje Cubano con Rumba per quattro chitarre* (Ricordi: Milan 1985), 1.


⁷⁵ Pitch analysis was performed by the author on a Seiko SAT 500 chromatic tuner.

⁷⁶ This use of alternative sonority on guitar is by no means an isolated phenomenon in Brouwer's oeuvre. Examples of percussion-like passages and extended techniques can be found in *Paisaje Cubano con Campanas*, *Paisaje Cubano con Lluvia*, and *La Espiral Eterna*.


Example 2.5

Faverey's mute.


AVVERTENZE

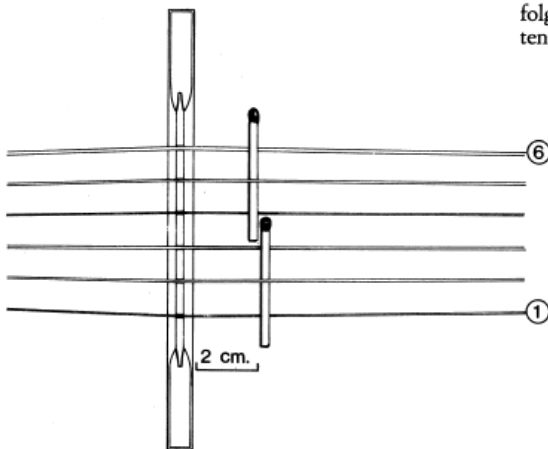
Dalla prima battuta fino a [F] le quattro chitarre dovranno usare diversi tipi di sordine così concepite:
a) di cartoncino (tipo per violino ) , posta vicino al ponticello;
b) di stoffa, posta sotto le corde vicino al ponticello;
c) la sordina "Faverey",¹ cioè fiammiferi svedesi inseriti attraverso le corde in questo modo:

NOTICE

From the first measure to [F] the four guitars should use various types of mutes as follows:
a) cardboard mute (of the violin type ) , placed near the bridge;
b) piece of cloth placed under the strings near the bridge;
c) "Faverey's mute",¹ i.e. wooden matches inserted across the strings:

ANWEISUNGEN

Vom ersten Takt bis zu [F] müssen die Gitarren verschiedenartige Dämpfer, wie nachstehend beschrieben, einsetzen:
a) aus dünner Pappe (Typ Violine ) , der nahe beim Steg anzubringen ist;
b) aus Stoff (ist unter den Saiten, in der Nähe des Stegs, anzubringen);
c) den "Faverey" -Dämpfer,¹ d.h. Sicherheitsstreichhölzer, die auf folgende Weise zwischen die Saiten einzuschieben sind:



d) di qualsiasi altro materiale che possa caratterizzare il timbro dello strumento, seguendo i metodi sopra descritti e provandoli a diverse distanze dal ponticello.

Per esecuzioni in "ensemble" si usino sordine uguali per ogni gruppo di strumenti.

d) any other sort of material which will influence the timbre of the instrument, following similar procedures as before and trying different distances from the bridge.

For group performances homogeneous mutes should be used for each group of instruments.

d) aus jedem beliebigen Material, das die Klangfarbe des Instruments zu charakterisieren vermag. Dabei sollen oben beschriebene Methoden angewandt und aus verschiedenen Entfernungen vom Steg ausprobiert werden.

Bei Ensemble-Ausführungen sollten für jede Instrumentengruppe gleichartige Dämpfer eingesetzt werden.

Other mutes are recommended, such as the use of cloth or cardboard. The recording of this work by the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet follows Brouwer's recommendation that "any other sort of material which will influence the timbre of the instrument..." be used. One guitar in their ensemble uses a thin strip of paper between the strings, which does not cause significant pitch alteration, but does produce a loud buzzing with the pitch, imitating gourd-like percussion

devices that are shaken or scraped.⁷⁷ The mutes transform a guitar ensemble into a percussion ensemble reflecting the *rumba* ensembles of past and present. Perhaps we can see Brouwer's compositional technique as reflecting the time honored technique of the *cajones*: making drums out of wooden items at hand, in this case, four guitars.

While similarities to *rumba* should be pointed out, so should the lack of similarity as well. The beginning is rather slow for a *rumba* at quarter-note = 92 BPM. *Yambú* is the slowest of the three main types of *rumba*, but 92 BPM is still a little slow for that dance. There is no melodic *Diana* introduction. And most prominently, there is no actual *clave* line. In Cuban *rumba*, as mentioned earlier, the *clave* serves as a constant asymmetric rhythmic backbone to the polyrhythmic percussive undulations and improvisations of the ensemble. (See Examples 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 for common *clave* rhythms.)

The beginning of *Paisaje cubano con rumba* has stronger musical ties to minimalism than to *rumba*. The presence of minimalist procedures is further evidenced by examining the entire pitch content of the quartet. Examining the pitch classes present in each repeating rhythmic group, and the set classes that these pitches form, one can see how Brouwer gradually builds into larger collections and emphasizes particular set classes. While rhythm and harmonic content initially develop in four-bar groups, pitch content changes subtly after the unison opening, and the feeling of syncopation and asymmetry grows with each passing rhythmic cycle.

Brouwer's handling of pitch collection is clearly minimalist in this work. The first half of *Paisaje cubano con rumba*, mm. 1-82, is pandiatonic, with an implied tonic of A. Additionally important is the gradual build into the entire seven-note collection which corresponds to rehearsal letter E (measure 73). Also noteworthy is the use of the collection to make

⁷⁷ Minneapolis Guitar Quartet, *New Works for Guitar Quartet*, CD Troy 207, Albany Records: 1996.

symmetrical sets ((0257) (024579) (02479)) and also the frequency of pentatonic collections as set class (02479).

Example 2.6

Pitch and Set-class analysis for *Paisaje cubano con rumba*.

Measures	Pitch Classes	Set Class
1-8	a	n/a
9-12	a,c,d,g	0257
13-16	a,b,c,d,e,g	024579
17-24	a,c,d,e,g	02479
25-32	a,c,d,e,g	02479
33-36	a,b,c,d,e,g	024579
37-42	a,b,c,d,e,g	024579
43-48	a,b,c,e,g	01358
49-56	a,c,d,e	0247
57-64	a,c,d,e,g	02479
65-68	a,b,c,d,e,g	024579
69-72	a,b,c,d,e,g	024579
73-76	a,b,c,d,e,f,g	013568T
77-83	a,b,c,d,e,f,g	013568T
83-86	a,b,d,e	0257
87-90	a,b,c,d,e,g	024579
91-94	a,b,c,d,e,g	024579
95-96	a,b,c,d,e,g	024579
97-98	a,c,d,e,g	02479
99-100	a,b,c,d,e,f#,g	013568T
101-012	a,b,c,d,e,f#,g	013568T
103-106	a,b,c,e,g	01358
107-108	a,b,c,d,e,f#,g	013568T
109-111	a,b,c,d,e,f#,g	013568T
112-114	a,b,c,d,e,f#,g	013568T
115-118	a,b-flat,g	013
119-120	a,b,c,g	0135
121-122	a,c#,d,d#,e,g	0123479
123	a,b,c,c#,d#,e	013457
124	a,b,c,d#,e,f	012568
125	a,b,c,c#,d#,e,f	0124568
126	a,c,c#,d#,e,f,g	0134579
127	a,a#,c,c#,d#,e,f,g	0124578T
128	b,c,c#,e,f,g	012568
129	b,c,d,f,g,a-flat	023679
130	a,c,d,f,g,a-flat	012497

131	a,b,c,d,e,f,g#	0134689
132	a,b,c,d,e,f,f#,g#	0124578T
133	a,b,c,e,f,f#	012578
134	a,b,c,e,f	01568
135	b,c,d,d#,e,f,g,g#	01345689
136	b,c,d,d#,e,f,g,g#	01345689
137-138	b,c,d,e,g,a	024579
139	c,d,e,g,a	02479
140-143	d,e,g,a	0257
144-146	e,g,a	025
147-150	g,a	n/a
152-156	a	n/a

While pitch selection and evolution may signal a minimalist conception or inspiration, it is in the rhythmic unfolding of this work that we can identify its Afro-Cuban connections. As stated earlier, the initial eight bars may sound minimalist in rhythm due to the throbbing regularity of the pulse. But the regularity of pulse grows more obscure through an additive and syncopated process that demonstrates a clear connection to Afro-Cuban rhythmic procedures. In a minimalist texture, Brouwer is utilizing rhythmic aspects of *rumba* in his compositional design.

Before continuing with this analysis, I would like to clarify some of the peculiarities of discussing a work for guitar quartet. As an ensemble of four instruments, exactly alike in range, it is difficult to apply certain time honored terminology in discussing chamber music. I will refer to the guitars in the ensemble by their staff placement on the score and as labeled by Brouwer. The top staff on the score is the 1st guitar, the next staff down is the 2nd guitar. Likewise the numbering continues for the guitars in the ensemble. However, the reader should not assume that the 1st guitar is always featured in the highest register of the work. Brouwer frequently crosses voices with this ensemble, and it is not uncommon for the 4th guitar to be in the highest register.

Measure nine sees the entry of the 2nd guitar with a syncopation commonly used in Cuban music: the dotted-eighth-to-sixteenth-note division of the beat. This asymmetrical figure is the cornerstone to the *habanera* rhythm (see Example 2.7). And while the *habanera* rhythm is not formally complete here, Brouwer's ultimate plan with this work is to grow the *rumba* out of progressive additions and alterations. Also significant is the lack of downbeat in two of the three guitars performing at this point. Silent downbeat is a common rhythmic feature of both African and Afro-Cuban music.⁷⁸ As *Paisaje cubano con rumba* progresses, the lack of a unified downbeat, or the staggered entrances of each instrument, will be a significant feature, creating a growing sense of polyrhythm.

Example 2.7

The *habanera* rhythm.



Traditional *rumba* is not notated or measured. The identifiable two-bar patterns are created by the specific interaction between the *claves* and the two lower pitched *congas*. The polyphonic and syncopated rhythmic groups are developed and built on this backbone and led by the *quinto* player, who improvises regularly. In the process of adapting an un-notated form to a notated and metric score, Brouwer transculturates *rumba* into a new musical environment.

At rehearsal letter B (Example 2.9), one finds the first use of a *rumba* cell: the *yambú*. The 2nd guitar and the 3rd guitar are syncopated in a one-bar rhythmic loop, with the 3rd guitar now carrying a neo-habanera rhythm. The 4th guitar has a new rhythm cell that is two bars in length, with an accent on beat one, followed by backbeat hits for the remainder of the cycle.

⁷⁸ Lezcano, "Afro-Cuban Rhythmic and Metric Elements in the Published Choral and Solo Vocal Works of Alejandro García Caturra and Amadeo Roldán," 35-37.

Example 2.8

Sample yambú two-bar cell.⁷⁹

Clave 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Quinto (free improvisation)

Seis por ocho (in Havana) (in Matanzas)

Conga

Guagua

Madruga (at montuno)

Detailed description: This block contains six staves of rhythmic notation for different Cuban instruments. Each staff begins with a 4/4 time signature and a repeat sign. The Clave staff shows a sequence of 8 notes: x, x, x, x, x, x, x, x. The Quinto staff shows a sequence of 8 notes: x, x, x, x, x, x, x, x. The Seis por ocho staff shows two variations: (in Havana) and (in Matanzas). The Conga staff shows a sequence of 8 notes: x, x, x, x, x, x, x, x. The Guagua staff shows a sequence of 8 notes: x, x, x, x, x, x, x, x. The Madrugá staff shows a sequence of 8 notes: x, x, x, x, x, x, x, x.

Example 2.9

Paisaje cubano con rumba, mm. 33-38.

Detailed description: This block contains four staves of musical notation for a piano solo. The first staff is marked with a 'B' in a box and contains a complex melodic line with many accidentals and fingerings. The second staff contains a simpler melodic line. The third and fourth staves contain a rhythmic accompaniment with many accidentals and fingerings.

⁷⁹ Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, 82.



This unifying two-bar loop is a hallmark of each of the three main types of *rumba*. Brouwer has said of this salient feature, “...the *rumba* is a two-bar cell rhythmic complex, not a one-bar. The original music, the purer African forms are one-bar cells.”⁸⁰ Yet against this two-bar grouping, the 1st guitar is of particular interest (see Example 2.9). The 1st guitar is functioning here as the *quinto* player. While pitch selection is more open for guitar than for the *quinto*, and Brouwer is using such choices more broadly than before, the 1st guitar is clearly the “lead” here and is grouping in three-bar cells. This is clear in the surprise downbeat for the 1st guitar in bar 36, and its asymmetrical split of the two-bar cell of the 4th guitar. The surprise downbeat is an obvious manifestation of the lead role that the 1st guitar plays, and identifies the *quinto* as its parallel in traditional *rumba*. In order to feel the *clave* line in this quartet, and in order to hear the *yambú* cell, one must recognize the way in which Brouwer has overlapped pitch and rhythm in the quartet to create the two-bar cell. In the *yambú clave*, there must be a clear downbeat on the first beat of the second bar (see Example 2.8).

⁸⁰ Wistuba-Álvarez, “Lluvia, Rumba y Campanas en los Paisajes Cubanos de Leo Brouwer y Otras Temas, 139.

Example 2.10

Paisaje cubano con rumba, 2nd guitar, 3rd guitar, and 4th guitar composite rhythm mm. 43-44.⁸¹



Example 2.11

Cinquillo rhythm cell.



Brouwer transitions from the *yambú* group by forming a new one-bar composite rhythm (Example 2.10) that has clear links to the *cinquillo* cell of Afro-Cuban origin (Example 2.11). Six of these cells lead into the *guaguancó rumba* of *Paisaje cubano con rumba* at rehearsal letter C. The section is 8 measures in length and repeated in its entirety (unique in the work). The 4th guitar has a bass melody dominated by the *habanera* rhythm and the section is made up of two-bar segments (enhanced by the use of forte/piano contrasts from bar to bar). Also, an implied *guaguancó clave* line appears (see Example 2.12), though it is present in the ensemble's composite, and is not represented in complete form by any one single part (Example 2.13). Implied *clave*, or “*clave* feeling,” is a feature of a number of styles of Cuban music.⁸²

⁸¹ There are a number of difficulties in attempting to represent the rhythms and pitches of this quartet on grand staff. Nonetheless, grand staff notation will assist guitarists and non-guitarists alike in representing musical content in the course of this document. To that end, I have reproduced the music with some stratification of range (octave transfer being the most common), but no change in pitch-class, rhythm, or part line.

⁸² Peter Manuel, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 38-41.

Like the time-line, the *clave* rhythm provides an ostinato background which serves as a point of reference for ... melodic phrasing and for the more variable rhythmic figures played by the piano, brass instruments, and percussion instruments. Being able to hear or sense the *clave* rhythm provides Afro-Cuban musicians with a clear indication of how their parts should fit into the overall rhythmic texture; the ability to “sense” the *clave* even when it is not present is called “*clave* feeling” (perhaps the Afro-Cuban equivalent of the African’s “metronome sense.”)⁸³

Example 2.12

*Guaguanco clave.*⁸⁴



Example 2.13

Composite ensemble from *Paisaje cubano con rumba* mm. 49-56.



Example 2.13 shows the composite ensemble at rehearsal C on grand staff, with emphasis markings to demonstrate the implied *clave* line. Brouwer’s composite implied *clave* could also be heard in diminution as well. *Clave* rhythms are normally in a two-bar metric loop. Brouwer’s tempo creates an implied *clave* loop that is potentially audible in one-bar and two-bar groupings.

Brouwer has built two *rumbas* within a minimalist structure through careful control of the rhythm of the ensemble. Of particular interest is his manipulation of materials. The economy of

⁸³ Lezcano, “Afro-Cuban Rhythmic and Metric Elements in the Published Choral and Solo Vocal Works of Alejandro García Caturla and Amadeo Roldán,” 55.

⁸⁴ Daniel, *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, 73.

his rhythmic vocabulary is remarkable as well. He has not yet changed the beat division (which remains duple thus far) and eighth notes, dotted-eighths, and sixteenth notes make up the rhythms. Staccatos and accents are the only additional articulations present. His compositional materials are concise and economical, yet the musical effect is one of growth and expansion up to and beyond rehearsal C. In fact, the implied *clave* is present through rehearsal letters D and E.

At rehearsal letter E the ensemble becomes the most polyrhythmic and least cyclic. The 2nd guitar has the only repetitive line, which remains the organizing force and is closest to the implied *clave*. The remaining three guitars act as improvisers around their respective pitch cells and rhythms. Also noteworthy at this time is the use of the entire (024579) pitch collection, simultaneously providing the greatest rhythmic variety and widest pitch selection to this point in the piece. This having been achieved, the ensemble comes to an abrupt and fragmented halt at the grand pause in bar 82.

When the ensemble resumes in bar 83, the tempo is 66 BPM, and the sound has been radically altered by the removal of the mutes. True (unaltered) guitar pitch and timbre are heard clearly for the first time. Additionally, the arpeggiated chord, the prototypical guitar technique, is heard bouncing back and forth through the ensemble, executed at least twice by each quartet member. This second half contrast in sound is accentuated by the polymetric splitting of the ensemble. In bar 91 the 1st guitar and the 4th guitar are in 12/8, and the 2nd guitar and the 3rd guitar remain in common time. This triple against duple vertical polyrhythm is common in Cuban music, and is a particular feature of *columbia* style *rumba* (see Example 2.14).

Brouwer works this rhythmic contrast, gradually shifting from common time to 12/8 (one instrument at a time) from measure 87 to 103 where all four guitars are again monometric. Brouwer is now peppering his ensemble with syncopated rhythmic cells. They are sometimes

quite clearly derivations of Cuban rhythms, like the *cinquillo*. Such figures can be heard in the 1st guitar mm. 95-96, 99-100; 2nd guitar mm. 99-100 (as a mirror of 1st guitar in the same bars), mm. 101-102; 3rd guitar mm. 97-98, 101-106; 4th guitar mm. 109-115. The entire section drives toward measure 115, with a dramatic increase in rhythmic density and pitch variety.⁸⁵

The final structural section of *Paisaje cubano con rumba* begins with a sharp change in texture, pitch (all four instruments sound unison A), and tempo (which has returned to 92 BPM). Throughout this section, pitch variety is greatly increased, with chromatic set classes of great variety being used, and changed frequently. By measure 123, the collective sets are changing with each passing bar. Popular Afro-Cuban rhythms become much less common, with only one Afro-Cuban-derived cell being handed back and forth between 3rd guitar and 4th guitar in mm. 121-132. Brouwer is moving away from the *rumba* in the final section of this quartet. Polyrhythms and other complexities are still present, but there is no implied *clave*, and the guitars begin to use scale-like formulations.⁸⁶ The highly chromatic vertical sonorities give the ensemble a dissonant bite not heard to this point in the music. From here to the end the guitars move into their upper registers, ultimately ending the work in the upper strata of harmonics available to the instruments.

⁸⁵ Also note the inclusion of the F-sharp in this section, making the pitch set more akin to e minor/G major.

⁸⁶ See the 1st guitar in bars 122, 125, 127, 129, and 131-135.

Example 2.14

Sample two-bar cell from *columbia rumba*.⁸⁷

Clave 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
|| 12/8 || : x x x x x x x x | x x x x x x x x :||

Quinto Totally free
|| 4/4 || : - | - :||

Seis por ocho
|| 12/8 || : x x x x x x x x | x x x x x x x x :||

Conga
|| 12/8 || : x x x x x x x x | x x x x x x x x :||

Guagua
|| 4/4 || : x x x x x x x x | x x x x x x x x :||

Madruga
|| 4/4 || : x x x x x x x x | x x x x x x x x :||

Example 2.15

Paisaje cubano con rumba mm. 95-96.

Musical score for Example 2.15, showing a four-staff musical score. The top staff is in 3/8 time, the second staff is in 3/8 time, the third staff is in 3/8 time, and the bottom staff is in 3/8 time. The score includes various rhythmic patterns and dynamics, with a final measure marked with a double bar line and a 12/8 time signature.

⁸⁷Ibid., 84.

In *Paisaje cubano con rumba*, Brouwer has fused the musical traits of minimalism and Afro-Cuban *rumba*. In summoning the percussive sounds of *rumba*, Brouwer creates new sounds and textures for guitar quartet. His use of familiar Afro-Cuban rhythms (*habanera*, *cinquillo*), implied *clave* lines, and *rumba* cells (*yambú*, *columbia*, *guaguancó*) is a vital part of his compositional process and style. Far from unique in his oeuvre, the fusion of Afro-Cuban elements and avant-garde techniques will be further demonstrated in the following chapters as fundamental to his compositional process.

CHAPTER 3: DANZA CARACTERÍSTICA

Unlike the *rumba*, the *danza* of Cuba had a short life in the island's history. Cuba's *contradanza* was extremely popular, and the *danza* was an evolutionary step between the *contradanza* and the *danzón*. The *danza* was a further elaboration of the *contradanza* by the addition of a second section to allow for couples to dance embracing. While the *danza* was in 2/4 time, the new section was in 3/8, influenced by the waltz, and called the *cedazo*. This appears to have occurred around 1830. The *danza* was soon overtaken by the *danzón* as the next evolution in social dancing that was to dominate 19th century Cuban dancing.⁸⁸

History notwithstanding, Brouwer's *Danza característica* sounds a great deal different than music for social dancing in 19th century Cuba. Indeed, Brouwer's work seems to owe less to historical derivation than to what he perceived as a gap in the guitar literature of the mid-20th century:

Where was the Bartók for the guitar? There was no Bartók for the guitar... Where was the Concerto for Cembalo and Instruments that de Falla did? There was no Octet like Stravinsky's, no *Danse Sacrée* and *Danse Profane* of Debussy for harp and strings ... all this music was a discovery for me.⁸⁹

Brouwer set a high goal for himself in his youth: to fill the Bartók/Stravinsky gap in guitar literature. Of course, Brouwer was not going to write music based on Rumanian or Russian folk music. He was going to use the characteristic elements of Cuban music, and that meant Afro-Cuban music. So how is Brouwer's *Danza* characteristic of Cuban music, and at the same time, how does it relate to the precedents in the music of Bartók and Stravinsky?

From its opening, *Danza característica* demonstrates Brouwer as an innovative composer on the guitar. At the age of eighteen, Brouwer was creating entirely new musical textures and

⁸⁸ Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music*, 135.

⁸⁹ Paul Century, "Leo Brouwer: Portrait of the Artist in Socialist Cuba" *Latin American Music Review* vol. 8 no. 2 (Autumn 1987), 153.

techniques for guitar by synthesizing vernacular music and the music of the avant-garde (see Example 3.1).

Example 3.1

Danza Característica mm. 1-4.

The image shows a musical score for guitar, Example 3.1, from the piece *Danza Característica*, measures 1-4. The tempo is marked *Allegro* with a quarter note equal to 116-120 beats per minute. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The notation is for a single staff, likely representing the guitar. It features a chromatic set of notes in the upper voice, starting on C5. The bass line has a 3+3+2 rhythmic grouping. The piece is characterized by percussive articulation and slurs.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the technique featured in Example 3.1. This opening figure represents something entirely new in the guitar literature in 1957. Harmonically and melodically static arpeggio/ostinato figures similar to this are not to be found in guitar literature of the early 20th century. Similar figures are used throughout Brouwer's guitar oeuvre.⁹⁰ This kind of figure has become a Brouwer compositional hallmark and understanding its technical performance on guitar (not just the notational direction) will give the reader a clearer grasp of Brouwer's transcultural compositional technique. I will begin by deconstructing what is on the page.

In the first bar, Brouwer has sounded a chromatic set that forms set class (012357). Yet we could consider alternatives for segmenting this structure: There is a clear syncopated rhythmic grouping of 3+3+2 when grouping the first two bass notes (with a down stem) with two upper voice pitches connected by a slur. This 3+3+2 grouping is closely associated with earlier discussed *cinquillo* and *tresillo* rhythm patterns (for *tresillo* rhythm, see Example 3.2). In this

⁹⁰ Passages using bar technique and featuring a variety of right-hand articulation (specified use of thumb against fingers) and left-hand articulation (slurring and use of stopped strings against open strings) like this one are quite common in Brouwer's oeuvre. These percussion inspired passages can be found in *Concierto Elegiaco*, *Sonata (1991)*, and *Paisaje cubano con campanas*, as well as the other music examined in this document.

rhythmic segmenting (assuming octave equivalence) we have a minor 3rd in the first three notes (G, B-flat), a major 2nd in the next three (C, D), and a minor 2nd in the final two notes of the bar (A-flat, A-natural). In this way, the figure is a kind of intervallic collapse from a relatively consonant minor 3rd to the ultimately dissonant minor 2nd/major 7th. This kind of intervallic manipulation where harmony and melody are constructed on the basis of intervallic content (as opposed to the use of functional tonal harmony) is closely associated with the approaches to art music composition in the early part of the 20th century: including Bartók, Stravinsky, and Scriabin, among others. But just looking at the pitches is an incomplete analysis. Brouwer has provided a great deal of specific direction, and we have only begun to deal with what has been indicated.

Brouwer has given a number of articulation signs, some of which are meant to communicate articulations to the performing guitarist. The letters (p, i, m, a) correspond to the guitarist's right hand (that is the plucking hand) articulation: (p) is for the thumb, (i) for index finger, (m) for middle finger, and (a) for the ring finger (not specified in this passage). The capital C of "C5" stands for *cejia* and is a left hand indication to use the first finger to depress all of the strings on the fingerboard in the 5th position. (This technique will result in a change in some note durations from those written in the score because the bar prolongs duration while depressed.) The accent markings are also important, and Brouwer is showing a special preference for the *tresillo* rhythm in the bass (see Example 3.2). While there is no accent on the downbeat as we might expect, there is an implied downbeat, due to the use of the thumb for striking and the implied metric accent of the first note of the bar.

Example 3.2

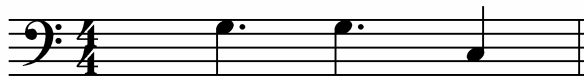
The *tresillo* rhythm cell.



In articulating the passage, Brouwer has specifically used the thumb, as many guitarists/composers/arrangers do, to articulate a bass line on the guitar (note the downward stemming). The thumb is the strongest digit of the hand, and it moves in opposition to the motion of the fingers. In proper guitar technique, the thumb is placed in a slightly extended position over the strings somewhat like making a fist with the thumb sticking out. This alternative placement serves to accentuate the sonic differentiation between the thumb and the sound created by the use of the opposing fingers. The result is a subtle change in tone, and an inherent implied accent on thumb articulations. Additionally, Brouwer has stemmed the bass line separately, and it is clearly similar to one bar of a sample *tumbador* ostinato pattern from *rumba*:

Example 3.3

Basic *tumbador* pattern.⁹¹



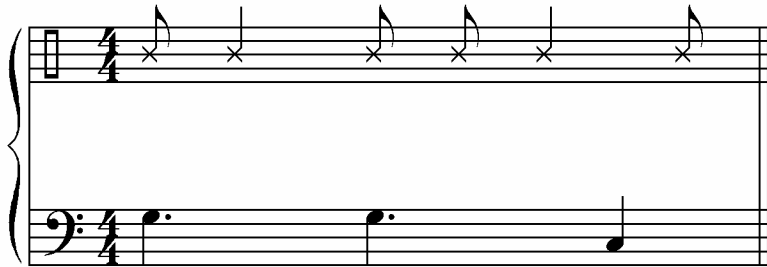
Brouwer's bass is a diminution of the first bar *tumbador* pattern (see Example 3.1). Brouwer's ostinato is in precisely the same proportions, but set in 2/4 time. We can even look further in *rumba* ostinatos to find more similarities. Example 3.4 shows a *rumba* pattern in

⁹¹ Crook, "A Musical Analysis of Cuban Rumba," 99-100.

which there is an obvious bass line similarity. Inclusion of the *palitos* pattern demonstrates similarities to the upper-voice rhythm that Brouwer has created.

Example 3.4

Tumbador pattern for *guaguancó* and *yambú* with *palitos*.⁹²



Brouwer has indicated two left-hand slurs. Guitarists articulate these slurs by using a right-hand finger to pluck the first of the two notes (the first slur is initiated by the (i) finger in this passage). The second note of the slur is created when the left-hand finger holding the pitch on the fingerboard (in the first instance the pitch is B-flat and is held by the fourth finger of the left hand) lifts off of the note in a plucking motion, known as left-hand pizzicato on a bowed string instrument. This creates an alternative, and quite different, implied accent on the initial note of the gesture. Brouwer has given an accent mark to the B-flat. He is reinforcing the guitarist's instincts here, and indicating that the first of the two left-hand slurs should be louder. At the same time the use of the slur action creates yet another kind of articulation in the weaker second note, further increasing the variety of the passage.

Yet in both slurs, the second note of each group is sustained by the bar technique as indicated by the "C5," producing pitch durations that are significantly longer than written. This is frequently the case with guitar music in notation. The complexities of some of the techniques

⁹² Ibid., 99.

are too difficult to notate properly on one staff of music. This notational simplification can result in the musician or analyst assuming that the notation represents an actual sonic event. In this case the notation obscures the musical reality. I have re-notated the first four bars, using the grand staff. Some pitches are taken out of treble clef (the guitar treble clef sounds an octave lower than written) and put into bass clef. Durations are altered to reflect the peculiarities and necessities of performing on guitar, and a new strata of accents are used to indicate thumb articulation (*), and left-hand slur initiation (V). Written accents will be marked by their traditional notation (>) (see Example 3.5).

Example 3.5

Danza característica mm. 1-4 notated on grand staff to reflect true note duration and variety of articulations.

The musical score for Example 3.5 is presented on a grand staff with two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 2/4. The music consists of four measures. The upper staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with slurs (V) and accents (>) above the notes. The lower staff features a simpler rhythmic pattern with thumb articulation marks (*) below the notes.

At the tempo of 120 BPM and given the physical and positional restrictions of the gesture, notes ring longer than their written duration on the score.⁹³ The use of the new accent markings is a notational attempt to represent the variety of articulation that is created by the particular techniques called for in the score.

The sonic reality of the passage is something resembling a pitched percussion ensemble. Brouwer has transculturated to guitar the sounds of Afro-Cuban hand percussion patterns and

⁹³ This is true in my own performance of the work, but it is also borne out in performances of this passage by other guitarists. Ricardo Cobo's performance of *Danza Característica* on his Naxos compact disc "Brouwer: Guitar Music vol. 1" (Naxos 8.553630) audibly reflects this approach as well.

syncopations. While not owing any of its musical content to any one particular style, the influence of the *batá* percussion ensemble of *Santería*, and the percussion ensemble of *rumba*, can both be heard as musical progenitors. In performing the passage, the variety of attack and articulation is fundamental to the characteristic sound. Variety of articulation is found in *batá* drumming, where there are two pitches available to each of the three traditional drums. Articulation in the *batá* ensemble is greatly augmented by the peculiarities of open hand slaps, or muffled strokes, which when combined with the double drum heads creates as many as five different pitches for each of the three drums.⁹⁴ When considering the 3+3+2 syncopation, the *tresillo* rhythm in the bass, the wide range in pitch (which is static), and variety of duration and attack, the cultural/musical links are clear. This is an Afro-Cuban drum ensemble transferred or syncretized or transculturated to the guitar. Combined with Brouwer's compositional intent and his post-tonal harmonic language, we have a remarkable blend of Afro-Cuban and avant-garde music.

In the next four bars Brouwer reinforces his bass line *tresillo* rhythm by two measures of bass octave forte statements built on the minor 3rd interval. In the composite two-bar statement, repeated, *rumba*-style *clave* can be clearly felt. Brouwer has called this two-bar loop a conga cell.⁹⁵ Bars 9-10 serve to reference the *tresillo* rhythm in the upper register before returning to the initial four bar percussion-like ostinato/arpeggio figure. At the end of bar 14 (the second bar of Example 3.6), this figure gives way to an imitative passage.

⁹⁴ John Amira and Steven Cornelius, *The Music of Santería: Traditional Rhythms of the Batá Drums* (Reno: White Cliffs Media, 1999), 35-38.

⁹⁵ Wistuba-Álvarez, "Lluvia, Rumba y Campanas en los Paisajes Cubanos de Leo Brouwer y Otras Temas," 139.

Example 3.6

Danza característica mm. 13-20.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for Example 3.6. The top staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and a *>* accent, followed by a *dim.* marking. It features a melodic line with a sixteenth-note pick-up and a triplet. The bottom staff starts with a *pp* dynamic, followed by *p* and *f*. It includes a *rasg.* marking and a *sfz* marking. Both staves contain various articulation marks such as accents, slurs, and fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4).

Example 3.7

The *cinquillo* rhythm cell.

The image shows a single staff of musical notation for Example 3.7. It is in 4/4 time and contains a rhythmic cell consisting of a quarter note followed by four eighth notes.

In Example 3.6, Brouwer breaks out into clear two-voice counterpoint. The subject of this imitative passage (upper register voice beginning on the end of second measure of the example) is clearly a *cinquillo* rhythm with a sixteenth-note pick-up. (Brouwer's figure is a diminution of Example 3.7.) At the end of bar 15, the subject is handed to the middle voice and the upper voice creates a counter subject. That counter subject is based on the *tresillo* rhythm. Brouwer's subject is repeated with exact replication of intervallic content until the fourth and final repetition, where it creates a kind of surprise ending to the short fugue-like passage.

In the rest of the A section of the work (up to measure 53) the initial percussion-like ostinato is repeated twice, each time at a new tonal level. At bar 25 the figure is shortened by one note (the last sixteenth) and transposed down a perfect fourth. All articulation signs are maintained. This figure builds into a series of rising chords beginning in measure 32. The

chords are set class (0167), a rather chromatic sounding structure, built by two tri-tones that are formed a minor 2nd apart. Brouwer planes this chord up the fingerboard, alternating his articulation by first arpeggiating the chord, then sliding it up a half-step and sounding all notes simultaneously. The planing covers the distance of a tri-tone from the lowest (0167) chord (built on a bass of E-flat) to the highest statement of the (0167) chord (built on A). Brouwer then transfers the percussion-like ostinato up a major 2nd from its previous statement. This treatment is note-for-note transposed up a major 2nd from the earlier music, leading into the same chord planing and ending on a (0167) built on B this time, with A and D drone notes in the bass in bar 51.

The middle section of *Danza característica* begins with a marked change in sonority (see Example 3.8). The artificial harmonics create a significant register shift from the earlier music. Note the linear polyrhythm of 3 against 2. This kind of horizontal hemiola is a hallmark of Afro-Cuban rhythmic style and was frequently adopted by García Caturla and Roldán in creating Afro-Cuban music a generation earlier.⁹⁶ Yet this section is further connected to popular Cuban music by its melody: *Quítate de la acera* (Get off the sidewalk), a folk tune frequently sung by children in Cuba.⁹⁷ Brouwer harmonizes the tune in parallel 6ths and 10ths, giving the section a more tonal grounding, with less chromaticism. Also notice the change in harmonization from bars 64-65 to 66-67. The latter creates a minor 7th between bass and treble, giving the flavor of a traditional dominant harmony in measure 67. This harmony goes unresolved in the traditional

⁹⁶ Lezcano, "Afro-Cuban Rhythmic and Metric Elements in the Published Choral and Solo Vocal Works of Alejandro García Caturla and Amadeo Roldán," 46-47.

⁹⁷ Leo Brouwer, personal communication October 22, 2000. Brouwer taught a master-class on his guitar music at the Guitar Foundation of America conference in October of 2000 in San Antonio Texas. It was the occasion of his conducting debut in the United States, and in his master-class he explained that this section quotes this well-known Cuban Children's song: *Quítate de la Acera*.

manner, and the following pianissimo gesture of rising slurred octaves creates a charging return of the A section.

The return of the opening material (the A section) is unaltered, and only a short five-measure codetta, resulting in a “*humorístico*” ending, has been attached. The “V-I” conclusion in octaves from A to D acts as an ironic ending, due to its musical distance from the chromatic style of the A section.

Example 3.8

Danza característica B section, mm. 54-69.

The musical score consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with the tempo marking *poco meno* and the instruction *Arm. 8*. It features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes, a slur over a quarter note, and a circled 3. The bass line includes a triplet of eighth notes and the instruction *pp*. The second staff continues the melodic line with a circled 2 and a slur, and the bass line with a circled 1 and a slur. The third staff includes the instruction *rit.* followed by *accel.* and a dense rhythmic pattern. The score concludes with the instruction *D.C. al* and a double bar line with repeat signs.

Yet, returning to earlier material, the listener is drawn to the importance of the percussion-like ostinato figure that opened the work. Such figures can be found throughout Brouwer’s music for guitar and will be seen frequently in this study. Listing and adapting all such examples to grand staff notation would fill a book and would become redundant. Guitarists

seeking to perform such passages to proper effect can extrapolate from the examples contained in this document. The similar technical content of these ostinatos will be obvious, and the overall approach to execution can be easily applied to any such passage. After all, a great part of Brouwer's compositional innovation is the adaptation of percussion techniques and characteristic rhythms in an idiomatic way on the guitar.

CHAPTER 4: *EL DECAMERON NEGRO*

El decameron negro was a watershed work in Brouwer's guitar oeuvre. Written in 1981, it signaled a stylistic change in Brouwer's compositional practice that the composer himself termed "hyper-romantic."⁹⁸ The importance of this work can be understood by placing this composition historically, and comparing it to that which came before and that which followed. This study began with a work for four guitars from 1985 (*Paisaje cubano con rumba*) and then tracked back in time to look at one of Brouwer's earliest works from 1957 (*Danza característica*). In selecting *El decameron negro*, this study leaves an important time gap in Brouwer's oeuvre: the late 1960s and 1970s. This period, as stated in the historical background section, has been called Brouwer's "modernist" period.⁹⁹ A brief summary of this time in Brouwer's career is in order.

Brouwer's Modernist Period (1965-1978)

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, Brouwer spent a great deal of time in Europe. Drawing on cultural and political ties between Cuba and the Soviet bloc, he spent much of that time in Eastern Europe, but not exclusively. He attended what he has since called "the important festivals..." of Darmstadt, Venice, Zagreb, Berlin, Warsaw, and Köln, which for him acted "as formative constants, as elements of continuity for the avant-garde movements."¹⁰⁰ He was exploring what he saw as the innovations of the modernist movement: "Integral serialism, aleatoric music, and electro-acoustics have been offered as unique models of this era so much

⁹⁸ Century, "Idiom and Intellect," 51.

⁹⁹ Century, "Idiom and Intellect," 14.

¹⁰⁰ Century, "Principles of Pitch Organization in Leo Brouwer's Atonal Music for Guitar," 7.

talked about and so far removed from the conservative and routine symphonic traditions.”¹⁰¹

Brouwer’s involvement in the modernist movement was a reflection of his own personal interests in modernist music as well as an influence on his composition.

Brouwer’s major works for solo guitar from his modernist style period are *Canticum* (1968), a solo guitar arrangement of Hans Werner Henze’s *El Cimarrón* (1970), *La Espiral Eterna* (1971), *Parabola* (1972), and *Tarantos* (1974).¹⁰² Each is connected to the post-World War II modernist movement: *Canticum* is a serial work in two movements with its title and approach influenced by medieval vocal music, and Henze was closely associated with the post-World War II avant-garde movement. *La Espiral Eterna* is atonal and highly chromatic. Its rhythm, pitch, and durations are influenced by the aleatoric elements present in almost every section of the work. Additionally, *La Espiral Eterna* uses the concept of the spiral, present in the natural world as the nautilus shell, the spiral galaxy, and the “golden mean,” as a formal plan.¹⁰³ Similar geometric concerns influence *Parabola*. Its manipulation of pitch and emphasis on two whole-tone scale collections clearly identify it as a part of the modernist period of Brouwer’s composition. Lastly, *Tarantos* is a thorough-going aleatoric work, with repeated chromatic cells that link and interact with each other at the performer’s discretion.¹⁰⁴

Brouwer’s modernist period can be generally summarized by referencing the following compositional techniques present in the major works from the period: the use of chromatic cells

¹⁰¹ Brouwer, “Música, folklor, contemporaneidad y postmodernismo,” 46. “Serialismo integral, aleatorismo, electroacústica, han sido ofrecidos como modelos únicos en esta etapa tan mencionada y a la vez tan alejada de las tradiciones sinfónicas, conservadoras y rutinarias.”

¹⁰² I do not wish to leave out other important works that Brouwer composed at this time for solo guitar. Such works are more traditional and Cuban in orientation, and are adaptations of folk songs or highly influenced by folk idioms. Yet the works are short (approximately two pages in length, or less) and show themselves to be in a more popular vein than the concert works listed above. Such works include: *Guajira Criolla* (on a theme of Jorge Anckerman); *Zapateo*; *Cancion de Cuna* (on a theme of Eliseo Grenet); *Ojos Brujos* (on a theme of Gonzalo Roig); and *Danza del Altiplano*, among others.

¹⁰³ Century, “Idiom and Intellect,” 27-35.

¹⁰⁴ For more information on this period of Brouwer’s output and for a close theoretical analysis, see Century “Principles of Pitch Organization in Leo Brouwer’s Atonal Music for Guitar.”

as constructive elements that evolve and determine harmonic and/or melodic structure; the free (not tonal) use of intervallic values to create pitch sets, harmony, melody, and texture; the use of aleatoric notation to express rhythmically free, indeterminate, or improvisatory passages; and the use of extended techniques to explore new and innovative approaches to guitar sonority. By contrast with other works of Brouwer's oeuvre, these compositions omit Afro-Cuban musical references, and use almost no traditional musical characteristics.¹⁰⁵

Beyond Modernism

The significance of *El decameron negro* lies in a number of factors: first, it was Brouwer's first major concert work for solo guitar in seven years; a self-imposed compositional exile that is unprecedented in his career. Second, there is a clear return to Afro-Cuban folklore (African folklore as inspiration or program, Afro-Cuban folklore in musical treatment). And finally, *El decameron negro* shows a marked departure from the earlier modernist period in harmonic and melodic style. Brouwer has called this style "hyper-romantic," but no matter what title is used, Brouwer's compositional style for guitar has changed dramatically from the works of the modernist period.¹⁰⁶ In this new style, Brouwer takes full advantage of pluralism in art music, returning to Afro-Cuban folkloric musical elements and themes and adapting his avant-garde techniques in the overall balancing of the technical and the aesthetic.

It should be noted that works following *El decameron negro* confirm this style shift and compositional approach. A number of his compositions show Brouwer's continuing interest in alternative sonority, as was demonstrated in *Paisaje cubano con rumba*. We know from

¹⁰⁵ Paul Century argues for the influence of two Afro-Cuban melodies in *Parabola* in his dissertation "Principles of Pitch Organization..." One would be hard pressed to find an audible link. Certainly Brouwer was not being overt in his reference to Afro-Cuban music, but perhaps there is some influence in the intervallic construction of *Parabola*.

¹⁰⁶ Brouwer, "Música, folklor, contemporaneidad y postmodernismo," 48. "Hyper-romantic" is one of the sub-strata of titles Brouwer used when explaining the postmodern movement in music composition. Other titles in that sub-strata are "minimalism," "hyper-realism," "new simplicity," and "supra-tonalism." At the heart of these concepts is the "fusion" or the "convergence of popular and cultivated music."

Brouwer's words and musical sounds that he has adopted minimalism in formal, harmonic, and rhythmic procedures, and yet this work is closely tied to the Afro-Cuban *rumba*. Aleatoric elements, first explored by Brouwer in the 1960s, are also utilized in a number of his postmodern period works. Aleatoric techniques are found in *El decameron negro* 1981, *Rito de los orishas* 1993, and *Paisaje cubano con campanas* 1986 (which is not examined in this document). In *Paisaje cubano con campanas*, Brouwer incorporates aleatoric rhythmic elements by allowing cycle repetition to be decided by the performer, and also uses extended techniques to create drum sounds by striking or drumming both right and left hands on the strings against the fingerboard. Later in this document, *Rito de los orishas* will be examined for the use of Afro-Cuban devotional music in contemporary art music. In this chapter similar procedures can be seen in *El decameron negro*. At the beginning of the 1980s, Brouwer returns to rhythmic structures and sonic events highly reminiscent of his earliest compositional period. Yet, the avant-garde techniques of his modernist period are present as well, demonstrating a new sophistication of pitch, interval, and set selection.

African Folklore as Musical Program

Brouwer has clearly identified his textual program for *El decameron negro*. Brouwer explained that all of the movements are based on *Die Schwartzte Decameron* by Leo Frobenius, a collection of African folktales translated into Spanish by Gladys Anfora.¹⁰⁷ Brouwer stated that all three movements are based on one particular tale from Frobenius's collection.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Leo Frobenius, *El Decameron Negro*, trans. Gladys Anfora (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada S.A., 1971).

¹⁰⁸ I attended a master-class taught by Brouwer in October of 2000 as a part of the Guitar Foundation of America annual conference. A student in that master-class played *El Decameron Negro* and Brouwer took some time to summarize for the class the program that he derived from the collection by Frobenius. He did not specify which tale was used.

To paraphrase Brouwer, the first movement is a musical portrait of a man who refused to fight for his tribe. He was a warrior, but he desired to play his harp and be a musician instead. He was exiled from his tribe for his refusal to fight. The warrior loved the daughter of the Chief of his tribe. By fighting one last time for his tribe, he earned the right to marry her, and they fled their home together. The third movement is a musical portrait of the daughter of the Chief who loved the exiled warrior. The second movement is a musical telling of their escape, through the “Valley of Echos.”

I. El arpa del guerrero

There is no tale in the collection by Frobenius that exactly corresponds to Brouwer’s summary, yet two bear great similarities: “Buge Korroba” and “Samba Kullung.” In both tales the lead characters (whose names are the titles of each respective tale) refuse to go to war. In each tale a *tabele* is heard, which is described in the glossary of Frobenius’s edition as a “*toque* of war.” *Toques* are drum calls (in African and Afro-Cuban tradition) containing particular rhythmic cells. Each rhythmic cell can be translated into specific meanings. Therefore, a *toque* of war is a drum call that summons a tribe to war. Both “Buge Korroba” and “Samba Kullung” feature a drum call to war which their protagonists refuse to obey, each for reasons of his own.

Buge Korroba had four women. His favorite was named Njelle. Because of her Buge Korroba never paid attention to the *tabele*, he loved Njelle so much that he never abandoned her. Besides, he had everything he needed: slaves, horses, and cattle. The other three women were jealous of Njelle and hence they told the city women: “Because of Njelle, Buge Korroba does not go to war. It is a shame for the city.” The city women said: “When Njelle comes to the well we will give her a good beating so that she learns a lesson and sends her husband to war.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Leo Frobenius, *El Decameron Negro*, 136. (Buge Korroba tenía cuatro mujeres. Una de ellas, que se llamaba Njelle, era su preferida. A causa de ella no escuchaba nunca el *tabele*, el tambor de guerra; nunca la abandonaba pues la amaba por sobre todas las cosas. Además, tenía todo lo que necesitaba: esclavos, caballos, ganado . . . Las otras tres mujeres estaban celosas y por eso les dijeron a las mujeres de la ciudad: “A causa de Njelle no va Buge Korroba a la guerra. Es una lástima para este lugar.” Las mujeres de la ciudad dijeron: “Cuando venga al pozo le daremos una buena paliza a esta Njelle para que mande a su marido a la guerra.”)

Samba Kullung's family tried to coax Samba to war by offering him a woman:

Samba Kullung went immediately into the house... He stayed inside with Kumba for a whole day. When the next day *diali* Sirima asked him what had happened, Samba Kullung said "Listen *diali* Sirima, you have acted wrongly in not telling me during all this time that something so beautiful existed on this earth. When she brushed me aside I spanked her bottom, and while doing so I felt so good that I was very attentive to what could happen afterwards, and hence I slept with Kumba. Oh *diali* Sirima! Why did not you tell me that something like this existed on this earth!"

Several days later the *tabele* was heard because there was a battle nearby. The *diali* went to see Samba Kullung, sat at his side and told him "Listen to the *tabele*. Are not we going to war?" Samba Kullung said "Ah! Perhaps you think that because you all gave me Kumba I should do something in return, and I should go to war? I will not do it. I will stay at home." Samba's father asked him: "So, my son, have you not gone to war?" The young man answered: "No, I do not have any desire to go to war, I want to stay at home." The father said: "I am ashamed of you. Get out of my sight." Samba's mother told him: "I am so ashamed when I look at you. Get out of my sight." Samba Kullung went away.¹¹⁰

Brouwer begins *El arpa del guerrero* with a short declamation of a whole-tone scale fragment (D – E – F-Sharp) spanning two octaves. In the passage that follows, there is an alternation between two very different musical ideas: an ostinato/arpeggio and a melodic response. The ostinato/arpeggio figure clearly reflects the sound of Afro-Cuban drumming (see Example 4.1, beginning in bar 3 and returning intermittently in bars 7 and 13). This figure is closely related to other such figures (found throughout Brouwer's guitar oeuvre) in performance

¹¹⁰ Leo Frobenius, *El Decameron Negro*, 119-120. "Samba Kullung entró enseguida en la casa... Se quedaron un día allí adentro. Cuando al día siguiente el *diali* Sirima le preguntó qué había pasado, Samba Kullung dijo: "Escucha mi *diali* Sirima, has hecho mal en no haberme dicho hace tiempo que sobre la tierra existía algo tan hermoso. Cuando ella me volvió a apartar, le pegué en el trasero, y al hacerlo me sentí tan bien que presté atención a lo que podía suceder después y, entonces, dormí con Kumba. ¡Oh, *diali* Sirima! ¡por qué no me habías dicho antes que existía una cosa así sobre la tierra!"

Algunos días después, sonó el *tabele* (tambor de guerra) porque se estaba combatiendo en la vecindad. El *diali* Sirima fue adonde estaba Samba Kullung, se sentó a su lado y le dijo: "¡Está sonando el *tabele*!" Samba Kullung no dijo nada. El *diali* Sirima dijo después de un rato: "El *tabele* está sonando. ¿No vamos a marchar a la guerra?" Samba Kullung dijo: "¡Ah! ¿Piensas quizás que porque me habéis dado a Kumba, tengo yo también que hacer algo y deba marchar a la guerra? No pienso hacerlo. Me quedaré en casa." El padre de Samba Kullung le preguntó a éste: "Y bien, hijo mío, ¿no has marchado a la guerra?" El joven dijo: "No, no tengo ganas de ir a la guerra, quiero quedarme en casa." El padre dijo: "Me avergüenzo de ti. Quítate de mi vista." La madre de Samba Kullung le dijo a su hijo: "Cuando te veo, me avergüenzo. Quítate de mi vista." Samba Kullung se fue."

technique. The time signature has an inherent syncopation of 2+3, as does the music, but the notation obscures the figure. I have, as before, recast the notation in grand staff to better reflect the actual sonority (Example 4.2).

Example 4.1

El decameron negro I, mm. 1-23.

I. La Harpe du Guerrier
EL ARPA DEL GUERRERO

Example 4.2

El decameron negro I mm. 13-16 transcribed to reflect true duration.

Brouwer's notation reflects his concept of the bass line (to be articulated with the thumb of the right hand) but does not show true duration in the upper line of the figure and the bass. It is technically unwieldy to mute the upper-line eighth-notes, and the activity of the thumb in the bass makes it impossible to truly mute the line in the manner notated in the score.¹¹¹

Examination of Example 4.1 reveals that all of the pitch material (mm. 3-23) comes from one scale collection: the octatonic scale. Specifically the collection is OCT_{1,2}, which is C-sharp, D, E, F, G, A-flat, B-flat, B (or enharmonic equivalents). There is one missing pitch from the collection: B-flat. Yet within this same collection Brouwer sets up an alternation between the ostinato figure and a melodic fragment (see mm. 5-6). Upon repetition in bar 7, the ostinato is longer by one cycle, and the melody has been extended in bars 10-12 with an extra bar and the addition of the pitch E. In the final repetition (mm. 13-16) the ostinato is now four measures long, and the melody (mm. 17-23) is expanded to its full seven-measure statement. The melody in its full form ends with a reflection of the initial declamatory statement of measures 1-2.

El decameron negro should be considered programmatic music, based on these stories from Africa collected by Frobenius. I believe also that this is further evidence for the drums (both African and Afro-Cuban) as sonic inspiration for the ostinato/arpeggio pattern that begins *El decameron negro*. Which particular tale was used by Brouwer is not particularly important, as elements of both appear in the music. Buge Korroba's love of a particular wife seems to correspond to elements of the third movement and some of the second. In *Samba Kullung*, Samba is rejected by his family and cast out of his tribe. Additionally, Samba hears the *tabele* drums a number of different times in his tale. Brouwer, in the first movement of *El decameron*

¹¹¹ The notation in Example 4.2 reflects my own performance recommendation and also realizes the recorded performances of this figure by Ricardo Cobo on "Tales for Guitar," Ess.a.y Recordings CD 1034; William Kanengiser on "Rondo allaTurka," GSP Recordings CD 1004; and Elena Papandreou on "Brouwer, Guitar Music vol. 2," Naxos CD 8.554553.

negro sets the ostinato figure four different ways: mm. 3-16, mm. 57-70, mm. 111-114, and mm. 145-158.

Brouwer's pitch selection here is interesting and demonstrates a composer in full command of post-tonal harmonic language. The initial figure at the beginning of the movement contains pitch classes A-flat, B, D-flat, G, and F. This sonority could be parsed a number of different ways. The prominence of two tritone intervals (G to D-flat, F to B) is clear. Also the presence of a D-flat major triad in inversion in the bass, combining with the remaining major 3rd built on G might suggest to some analysts the presence of a bi-tonal function.¹¹² Yet simply identifying its set class (02368) will be sufficient until examining other instances of the figure. The third appearance in measures 111-114 is different than the first. There is emphasis on the second eighth-note C in the articulation marking. The pattern here is not static in pitch as before: in the second bar of this pattern, in the same rhythmic placement as the previous bar, there is now pitch-class D. The following two bars repeat this alteration between C and D. Yet interestingly the set class remains constant: the first group (F, C, B, A, E-flat) is (02368) and the second (F, D, B, A, E-flat) is also (02368). The two sets are related by inversion: by the alternation of a single pitch, Brouwer sounds two different sets that are inversionally related at I_2 . Now follow this procedure by looking at the fourth occurrence of the pattern at measures 145-158. Here too, we have an alternating group of two different sets of pitches: the first (E, B, C-sharp, G, F) is a member of set class (02368) and the second (G-sharp, B, C, G, F) is also a member of (02368). And paralleling the earlier alternating group, these two instances of the same set-class are inversionally related, this time at I_0 .¹¹³ With the change of one pitch in each

¹¹² Paul Century made this argument in his MA thesis "Idiom and Intellect."

¹¹³ Another analyst might choose to see these alternating groups as together completing one single set. Such an analysis is also valid, in that the resulting set-classes, (023568) for the former and (013479) for the latter, are both sub-sets of different octatonic collections. This would link each group to the opening passage quite clearly.

group, Brouwer shows a mastery of pitch and set that demonstrates clear links between each of the *tabele* ostinato/arpeggio figures.

There is one instance of the *tabele* that is subtly different. The second appearance of the ostinato contains the pitches (E, B, C-sharp, A-sharp, G-sharp) which is a member of set-class (02358). While still a subset of the octatonic collection, this set has clearly different intervallic content than the other similar cells in the movement. This could be an adjustment to account for formal considerations of the section. The tale of Samba Kullung offers a programmatic explanation:

Fatumata observed Samba's behavior from her house for a while. When she realized that there were no preparations whatsoever at Samba's house, she went there, threw herself to his feet and said: "Samba, the *tabele* has called to war. Have your horse ready and march against the enemy with the King's soldiers!" Samba answered: "I will not go! My father and my mother have cast me out from my house because I dislike war. I am called Samba Kullung because I dislike war. Because I am Samba Kullung another beautiful lady has thrown me away from her side. And although your father had an ox killed in my honor, I will not march to war. If you do not like how I am, I will leave."

Fatumata was beautiful, proud, and very cunning. She had talked with Samba a lot during the previous days. She understood his character and, as Samba was very charming, she loved him very much. She told Samba: "Even if you are Samba Kullung, I will not leave you. But I will wear your clothes, I will mount on your horse, and I will march against the enemy. It is so dark that nobody will recognize my face, but they will recognize the horse." There were several slaves that saw and listened to everything. Fatumata put on Samba's trousers and cape and told the slaves: "If you ever tell anyone what is happening here, I will have you killed." Fatumata mounted on Samba's horse and rode into the night. Samba Kullung followed her for a long time with his gaze.

The *tabele* had called in vain, it had been a false alarm. Everybody returned that very same night, and Fatumata changed into her clothes again.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Leo Frobenius, *El Decameron Negro*, 122. "Durante algún tiempo, Fatumata observó desde su casa la conducta de Samba. Cuando vio que en su vivienda no pasaba absolutamente nada, se dirigió allá y se arrojó ante sus pies y le dijo: "Samba, ha sonado el *tabele*. ¡Haz enjaezar tu caballo y marcha tú también con la gente del rey contra el enemigo!" Samba dijo: "¡No iré! Mi padre y mi madre me han arrojado de mi casa porque no me gusta la guerra. Me llaman Samba Kullung porque no me gusta la guerra. Porque soy Samba Kullung me ha echado de su lado otra hermosa muchacha. Y aunque tú padres haga matar bueyes en mi honor, no marchare a la guerra. Si no te gusta como soy, me iré."

In “Samba Kullung” one of the *tabele* was a false alarm. Brouwer’s evocation of this false *tabele* in pitch and set-class selection can be understood as another significant demonstration of programmatic composition, or “text-painting.” There are certainly a number of prominent musical devices in all three movements of this work that point to very specific programmatic intentions. The first movement’s title specifies a harp as the musical instrument of the warrior who refuses to go to battle. There are two sections that are demonstrably harp-like: measures 80-106 and 165-174 (see Example 4.3).

Example 4.3

El decameron negro I, mm. 75-106. The harp figure begins at *tranquillo*.

The musical score for Example 4.3 consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a harp-like figure. The tempo is marked *Tranquillo*. The second staff continues the harp figure with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *p oscuro* marking. The third staff features a *dolce* marking and a *poco* marking. The fourth staff concludes with a *Rall.* marking and a *poco* marking. The score includes various chord symbols (C3, C1, C4, C7, XII VII) and performance instructions.

Fatumata era hermosa, orgullosa y muy astuta. En esos días ya había hablado mucho con Samba. Conocía su carácter y, como Samba era muy hermoso, lo quería mucho. Ella le dijo a Samba: “Aun cuando seas Samba Kullung, no te dejaré. Pero yo no pondré tus ropas, montaré tu caballo y marcharé contra el enemigo. Está tan oscuro que nadie podrá reconocer el rostro, pero sí el traje.” Había allí algunos esclavos que oyeron y vieron todo. Fatumata se puso los calzones y el manto de Samba Kullung y le dijo a los esclavos: “Si hoy u otro día alguno de vosotros llega a contar lo que está pasando acá, os haré matar.” Fatumata montó el caballo de Samba Kullung y se alejó cabalgando hacia la noche. Samba Kullung la siguió a escondidas durante largo rato con la vista. El *tabele* había sonada en vano, había sido una falsa alarma. El enemigo no llegó, sólo era una noticia falsa.”

Rhythmically set off from the previous and following sections by fermatas, and contrasted additionally by the *tranquillo* marking, the harp figure (beginning at the 6th measure of Example 4.3) stands in stark contrast to the rest of the movement. Chords are frequently rolled. The first chords harmonically create an augmented triad that resolves by a single half-step adjustment to a minor triad. In a movement that frequently features the arpeggio technique for guitar, this section is clearly the most evocative of a harp, and the texture stands in stark contrast to the rest of the movement. Perhaps Brouwer was trying to evoke the *Kora* harp of Africa, closely tied to the *diali* caste of musicians.¹¹⁵

II. La huida de los amantes por el valle de los ecos

In the second movement one can recognize a number of programmatic features. The movement's title is perhaps the most evocative of the work: "La huida de los amantes por el valle de los ecos," (The Flight of the Lovers through the Valley of Echoes). In both tales that appear to be related to this work, Buge Korroba and Samba Kullung have particular female love interests (Njelle and Fatumata respectively), however, there is no mention of a "valley of echoes" in the entire 351 pages of Frobenius' text. One is left to assume that this is the product of Brouwer's imagination. In this movement, Brouwer creates programmatic musical gestures that reflect the movement's evocative title and also blend with Afro-Cuban musical elements.

At the beginning of the movement, Brouwer presents a theme that is the basis of the entire movement. The theme is marked *Declamato pesante* and features additive rhythm as a means of expansion. The theme is made up of three separate statements, with each single pitch accented. Brouwer completes the entire pitch group by the second bar, yet the rhythm does not expand to its full form until the third bar is complete (see Example 4.4).

¹¹⁵ *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Kora" (by Roderic Knight), <http://www.grovemusic.com/> (accessed April 20, 2006).

Three new statements follow in the section marked *Presage*. Each statement is begun by a large and rapidly arpeggiated chord. The first consonant chord is a perfect 5th with octave and unison doublings. With the next two chords Brouwer develops the dissonant content, with the second chord containing one tri-tone (set class (01346)) and the final chord sounding two tri-tones a minor 3rd apart with a minor 2nd thrown in (set class (01379)). Brouwer creates a growing sense of dissonance and complexity with each chord.

Example 4.4

El decameron negro II, Theme mm. 1-3.

6

II. La Fuite des Amants par la Vallée des Échos
LA HUIDA DE LOS AMANTES POR EL VALLE DE LOS ECOS

LEO BROUWER
(1981)

A **Declamato pesante**

The “Primer galope de los amantes” (First gallop of the lovers) follows. This new section is highly evocative of Brouwer’s program and is created through the use of additive rhythms. As can be seen in Example 4.5, Brouwer has essentially taken the time signature away (0/4), creating a non-metric environment with a gradual *accelerando*. He does, however, identify eighth-note groups in brackets, adding two eighths to each group in the first bar of the figure. The pitch content here is clearly derived from the initial theme and its interval structure. The first theme (Example 4.4) features a prominent E – B – D-sharp cell in the first two bars. In the third bar, this becomes E – B – D-sharp – E – D-sharp – B. Examination of Example 4.5 shows that the figure makes the same interval journey, this time transposed to the new psuedo-tonic pitch class A.

As a guitar gesture, this figure looks and sounds a lot like one of Brouwer's ostinato/arpeggio figures discussed earlier. It has all of the earmarks of the previous examples: string-crossing to create alternate durations, left-hand slurring, right-hand articulation variety with the thumb on the bass for rhythmic grouping and sonic variety, and relative harmonic stasis. When recast in grand staff notation, the figure clearly shows similarity to the other ostinato/arpeggio figures so closely related to Afro-Cuban percussion (see Example 4.6). Other significant Afro-Cuban characteristics present here are the use of silent downbeat in the upper parts, the consistent off-beat rhythm of the tenor (for lack of a better identifier) voice, and the slurring action in the alto voice (creating articulation variety).

Example 4.5

El decameron negro II, mm. 8-19.

Primer Galope de los Amantes
 Poco a poco accel. ---
 [x4] *pp* (2⁰, 3⁰, 4⁰, = rapido)

f *f molto* *dim. poco a poco* *pp* *crescendo*

(cresc. 3⁰ et 4⁰)

Example 4.6

El decameron negro II, mm. 11-12 transcribed to grand staff to reflect true duration.

The image shows a musical score for two measures of music on a grand staff. The first measure is divided into four rhythmic groups of 4, 6, 8, and 10 notes. The second measure is a 20-note arpeggio. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Yet Brouwer has given this particular ostinato a longer life, gradually changing it over time. The entire ostinato is adjusted by pitch selection and bass note. Notice the strength of A as a tonic in the first five rhythmic groups (Example 4.5). The bass note changes to E in the sixth and seventh cycles, creating a pseudo-tonic-dominant relationship between the new group and the previous ones. At the same time the G-sharp disappears, making the chord from bass to treble two perfect 4ths joined by a major 2nd. By the seventh group, all relation to percussion has disappeared and the figure has expanded to a wide-range arpeggio in a 14-note rhythmic group. The B is removed and C-sharp appears at the lower end, creating an A major triad with the 5th in the bass. This is Brouwer's final pitch collection for the gesture. From here until bar 19 he gradually reduces the rhythmic size of the arpeggio groups, ultimately dwindling to a two-pitch alternation in bar 18.

From this point, C-sharp becomes a new tonal center, and at rehearsal letter E, the first theme is stated in C-sharp. At rehearsal F there is a statement in A, but it is only an initial statement of a two-voice bi-tonal counterpoint of the theme. The bass sounds the theme in C-sharp two bars later, echoing the initial statement a quarter note later.

At rehearsal G, Brouwer begins another significant programmatic gesture where he has marked "Por el valle de los ecos" and *rapido* (*galopante*). The initial theme of the movement

(see Example 4.4) is clearly in the bass, set to alternate in two groups. The first statement is an exact restatement of the first theme, here set in a triplet 16th-note group against two open-string drones of E and B. The “echo” occurs immediately following as marked, with *subito piano* dynamic, and a repetitive preoccupation with the final notes of the theme. Brouwer carries the additive rhythm of the opening theme to extraordinary lengths. His first call is in 5/8, the response adds an eighth-note to that. The next call is in 7/8, responded to in 8/8. The next three calls are in 9/8, 11/8, and 15/8. In fact, during the entire 30 bars of the section, there are only two consecutive bars that share the same time signature. In this way, Brouwer is not only using a rhythmic technique common to African and Afro-Cuban practice, he is also elaborating on a fundamental element of the initial *declamato* theme statement. He brings these two musical referents together simultaneously in a gesture that is highly evocative of his musical program: the Valley of Echoes.

III. Ballada de la doncella enamorada

In the last movement, “Ballada de la doncella enamorada” (Ballad of the Maiden in Love), Brouwer changes his focus to create a musical portrait of the female love interest of the warrior. In the tale of Buge Korroba, his love is named Njelle. She was introduced in the previous citation (page 62). Njelle was Buge Korroba’s favorite wife, and his three other wives were jealous of her.

The city women spied on Njelle. One day she went to the well and some women told her: “You will see!” Njelle answered: “What do you want from me? I have not done anything to you.” The women said: “Look, because of you Buge Korroba stays at home and does not go to war, which is bad for the city.” They took their bracelets and with them they beat Njelle, who ended up with three wounds, one next to the other, on her

forehead. The women said: “Do you know now why we have beaten you?” And Njelle answered: “You are right in beating me.”¹¹⁶

In the other tale, Samba Kullung had been cast out of his home and tribe for refusal to go to war. After some time he was accepted by a wealthy king who ruled over a large city. Samba won over the King’s beautiful and intelligent daughter with his good looks. Her name was Fatumata, and she was bold (excerpt found on page 67). She cared so much for Samba that she went to war, disguised as Samba on his horse, in order to fool the people into believing that Samba had gone to battle.

From the beginning of the movement, Brouwer sounds another rhythmic ostinato (although not an arpeggio in this instance) that is highly reflective of Afro-Cuban percussion and rhythm patterns (see Example 4.7).

Example 4.7

El decameron negro III, mm. 1-3.

III. Ballade de la Demoiselle Amoureuse
BALLADA DE LA DONCELLA ENAMORADA

LEO BROUWER
(1981)

Moderato
P i
sempre lirico

As before, a performative deconstruction is necessary to understand the true sonic quality of Example 4.7. Simply repeating D and C on a score does no justice to the kind of variety that is achieved when properly performed.

¹¹⁶ Leo Frobenius, *El Decameron Negro*, 136. “Las mujeres de la ciudad espieron a Njelle. Un día ésta fue al pozo. Algunas mujeres le dijeron: “¡Ya verás!” Njelle dijo: “¿Qué queréis de mí? Yo no os he hecho nada.” Las mujeres dijeron: “Mira, por tu culpa permanece Buge Korroba continuamente en la casa y no va a la guerra, y eso es malo para la ciudad.” Le pegaron a Njelle. Se sacaron sus pulseras y con ellas le pegaron a Njelle. esta quedó con tres heridas en la frente, una al lado de la otra. Las mujeres dijeron: “¿Sabes ahora, Njelle, por qué te pegamos?” Njelle dijo: “Teneis razón en pegarme.””

Example 4.8

El decameron negro III, mm. 1-2 transcribed to reflect cross string articulation and duration.

The sound of the first two bars is better viewed on the musical staff by breaking the repeated note D into two separate voices, with opposing stem direction (as in Example 4.8). Brouwer has designed the articulation such that one D is played on the fifth string of the guitar with the left hand stopping the string on the fifth fret. The other D is played by striking the open fourth string. Not only is the difference in timbre quite audible, but the open D is allowed to ring, creating a different sustained rhythm pattern. The fingered D is sometimes articulated by the right hand, and sometimes articulated by a left hand slur, which has a slightly weaker sound. In the end, for the analyst, Brouwer is actually creating a far more complex and interesting gesture than what appears on the staff to be a simple single voice line.

Note the lack of downbeat in the two bars of Example 4.8. Silent downbeat is a rhythmic trait that figures prominently in African rhythmic style and was carried to Cuba where it was passed on into Afro-Cuban music.¹¹⁷ The silent (or weak) downbeat is a prominent feature throughout this movement. In Example 4.9 one can see the first theme (beginning in measure 3), marked *sempre lírico*. The first note of the theme occurs on the 16th-note anacrusis to measure 3. This pitch is slurred to the downbeat of bar 3. This is created by a left-hand slur that, by its

¹¹⁷ Lezcano, "Afro-Cuban Rhythmic and Metric Elements in the Published Choral and Solo Vocal Works of Alejandro García Caturra and Amadeo Roldán," 35. Also, for a better understanding of African rhythm, see Kofi Agawu's studies of West African Rhythm, specifically "The Rhythmic Structure of West African Music," *Journal of Musicology* (Summer 1987): 400-418.

nature, creates a weaker second pitch. The first beat of each measure of the theme is articulated in the same way, creating a consistent weak or shifted downbeat. Combined with the syncopation in the upper voice and backbeat drones in the bass, the middle-register notes of the inner voice can be heard as the pulse.

Example 4.9

El decameron negro III, mm. 1-13.

In the section marked *piú mosso* beginning at measure 23 (Example 4.10), Brouwer combines two separate elements from the first theme (mm. 1-4 in Example 4.9). He brings together the percussion style ostinato (shown first in Example 4.7, and deconstructed in Example 4.8) and the descending motive from the *sempre lírico* theme (mm. 3-4 of Example 4.9). Examination of Example 4.9 reveals a descending line in the upper register of the theme beginning in measure 3 (G-F-sharp-E-D). The middle voice parallels the descent of the upper voice, at an eighth-note distance (B-A-G-F-sharp). The two voices moving together create

descending parallel 6ths. These elements simultaneously interact (Example 4.10) demonstrating Brouwer's combinatorial skill. The ostinato from the first measures of the movement has been transposed up a perfect fourth. Additionally Brouwer has included a strong and clear bass downbeat to begin this faster section.

Example 4.10

El decameron negro III, mm. 23-37.

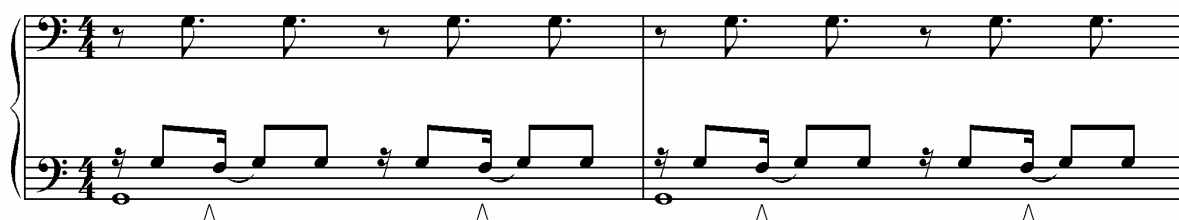
The musical score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with the tempo marking 'Piú mosso' and the melodic motif 'i m m i'. It features a series of eighth-note patterns with dynamic markings 'p' and 'sfz', and includes fingerings such as '(4) 0' and '(4)'. The second staff continues the melodic line with similar rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings. The third staff shows a change in meter and includes a 'sfz' marking. The fourth staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with dynamic markings 'p i p i p' and 'P i p i p'. The fifth staff includes a 'C 3' marking and continues the melodic and rhythmic development.

Brouwer has specifically preserved the cross-string articulation of the ostinato to retain the polyrhythmic effect. And while he has given downbeats at the beginning of each bar, the lack of articulation on the third beat and the mixed meter preserves the effect of shifted beat. The surprise nature of the second, and especially the third, G in the bass is of particular interest. This downbeat surprise is enhanced by the *sfz* on each bass note. Metric orientation is also

shifted by the alternation of 2/4 with 4/4 in this section, serving to enhance the “surprise” downbeat that follows. Brouwer combines a motivic fragment with the ostinato. He takes the downward motion of the upper-voice of the first theme and transposes it to F. (The descent F-E-D preserves the interval structure of the first theme’s upper-voice descent of G-F-sharp-E.) That descent continues over the same ostinato in measure 29, where Brouwer transposes it to D, descending D-C#-B.

Example 4.11

El decameron negro III, mm. 23-32 transcribed to reflect cross-string articulation and duration.



Further motivic manipulations continue throughout the movement. Brouwer enhances the falling motive by harmonizing it (in mm. 33-39) with a parallel voice a major 3rd lower. By the same procedure he creates a falling perfect 4th (mm. 46-48) and a falling minor triad in 1st inversion (mm. 50-52). All of these figures are performed over the percussion ostinato. He inverts this relationship in mm. 61-66 where the ostinato rhythm is assumed in the upper-voice and the bass creates descending, parallel, chromatic major 3^{rds} (see Example 4.12).

Example 4.12

El decameron negro III, mm. 61-66.



Brouwer's compositional mastery can be seen in his ability to use a variety of musical concepts and referents and reshape them, evolving new gestures and harmonies. All of the third movement of *El decameron negro* can be understood as an extrapolation and re-composition of foundational motives in the first theme. While that approach is closely associated with modernism and avant-garde methods, his choice of pitch, use of Afro-Cuban musical figures and rhythms, and his use of African folk tales as programmatic reference clearly set this work apart from the modernist movement. Twenty-five years later, *El decameron negro* can be understood as narrating another tale for guitarists: Brouwer's compositional style has moved beyond modernism.

CHAPTER 5: RITO DE LOS ORISHAS

Drawing on Afro-Cuban religious and musical practices, Brouwer composed *Rito de los orishas* in 1993. The title is a clear reference to the practice of *orisha* worship known in Cuba as *Regla de ocha*, or more popularly *Santería*. A syncretic, Afro-Cuban religion, *Santería* brings together religious practices from various parts of coastal West Africa (reflecting the African Diaspora in Cuba) and Roman Catholicism (the religion of the colonial Cuban authorities). The ritual practice of *Santería* involves singing (both solo and choral refrain) and percussion (performed on *batá* drums). Brouwer's original music does not use quotation in an attempt to transfer *Santería* musical content to the guitar. Attempting exact recreation for solo guitar is futile, given the rhythmic, timbral, and melodic complexities of the *Santería* ritual music. Brouwer uses the folkloric musical and religious practice as a musical referent, drawing on general musical characteristics to create a *Santería*-inspired fantasy for solo guitar.

West Africa and Cuba in the Nineteenth Century: Slaves and Sugar

In the 19th century, social and cultural changes were set in motion on two separate continents that were to have a dramatic impact on the demographic, folkloric, cultural, and musical environment of Cuba. On one side of the Atlantic, the island colony of Cuba and its economic system of plantation sugar production was coming to its zenith. On the other side of the Atlantic, political and religious strife was creating numerous *Lucumí* (or *Yoruban*) slaves. In the colonial/transnational economic system of the day, the two events fed into one racial and cultural exchange that was to alter the socio-cultural essence of Cuba, and its music, to the current day.

In 19th century Cuba, the demand for sugar and the importance of that export grew dramatically in terms of the island's real income. Prior to the 1790s, Haiti had been the largest sugar producer in the Americas. Yet the outbreak of a slave revolt in Haiti in 1791 and the subsequent overthrow of the French colonial authority left a gap in supply, and sugar prices rose accordingly.¹¹⁸ Additionally, increasing world demand for sugar, particularly in Europe and the United States, made sugar production even more attractive. Cuba began to re-tool its colonial economy in light of the world sugar market. From the period of 1790-1839, the real income of the colony increased by a factor of *fifty*.¹¹⁹ What had been a relative backwater in the colonial system of trade and exploitation quickly became one of the wealthiest holdings in the Spanish empire. The sugar producing plantation system that created that wealth relied on slavery.

In that economic environment, Cuba began importing slaves at the fastest annual rate in its history.¹²⁰ But in general, the European colonial powers were slowly turning away from the morally unsustainable practice of slave trading and slave ownership. Britain and the United States banned the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1808. In 1820, British naval forces began the policy of patrolling the West-African coast searching for slave ships. Yet the trade continued clandestinely.¹²¹ While precise numbers are impossible due to the contraband nature of the trade, one estimate puts the number of African slaves arriving alive on Cuba's shores at one million between 1791 and 1841.¹²² 1841 was the peak year for the importation of Cuba's African slave population, with slaves and others of African descent reaching 58.5% of the total population.

¹¹⁸ Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness*, 15.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹²⁰ Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, 68.

¹²¹ Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances*, 184.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 185.

While other Latin American colonies had reduced or eliminated the legal importation of slaves, Cuba continued the practice in earnest, feeding the remarkably profitable sugar industry.¹²³

A great majority of the African slaves exploited for the purposes of the Cuban sugar industry in the 19th century were ethnically known as *Lucumí* or *Yoruban*.¹²⁴ This ethnic group was geographically located in the area of present-day Nigeria and Benin. *Lucumí* culture centered around a political power known as the Oyó Empire. The Oyó Empire was an important trading and military power at approximately the beginning of the 17th century, and lasted until the 1830s. Internal political and religious strife between the *Lucumí* people and Muslims (converted locals, Fulbe herdsmen, and enslaved Hausa Muslims) lasted approximately 13 years (1823-1836) and brought down the Oyó Empire.¹²⁵

The synchronicity of the two events on opposite sides of the Atlantic brought huge numbers of *Lucumí* slaves to Cuba. Before the 19th century, when slaves were brought to the colony they were generally of mixed culture and they came in far fewer numbers. By 1850, when Cuba was the last slave-importing colony or nation in the Americas, ships were still arriving on the island's shores filled with *Lucumí* people. They were refugees from ethnic and religious strife, further victimized by the then illegal practice of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.¹²⁶ After the fall of the Oyó Empire, a broad cross-section of an entire society was essentially picked-up en masse and brought to Cuba. This social group included musicians and religious officials, and they were taken primarily to the west part of the island: to Havana and to the region known as Matanzas province. The musicians that arrived were drum masters, bringing with

¹²³ Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness*, 16.

¹²⁴ Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music*, 211.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 210-211.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

them the highest form of the percussive art as it evolved in Africa. The religion that accompanied them was the *Yoruban* religion of West Africa: the religion of *orisha* worship.¹²⁷

The religious culture of the *Yoruba* was polytheistic, as many of the cultures of coastal West Africa were at the time. The *Yoruba* worshiped various gods and goddesses known as *orishas*. *Orisha* worship was practiced throughout coastal West Africa, but was generally dedicated to local, or preferred, deities. There were, at the time, hundreds, maybe thousands of recognized *orishas* that were worshiped and fed with the blood of sacrificed animals.¹²⁸ As the West African Diaspora in Cuba brought together a variety of ethnicities with a variety of *orishas*, these *orishas* were grouped together as a pantheon of deities worshiped in Cuba as *Regla de Ocha* or *Santería*. It remains the purest form of African cultural expression (music, language, dance, sacrificial practice) in the New World.

Santería did not just unite different *orishas* under a single pantheon. It also syncretized the worship of saints encountered in Spanish Roman Catholicism. In Cuba, *santeros* saw similarities to their religion in the pantheon of saints in the Catholic tradition. For example, Changó (*orisha* of thunder and lightning), with his red and white colors and his double-bladed axe, was reconciled with the Catholic St. Barbara, whose colors were similar and also carries an axe in her sculptural representations in cathedrals and churches. Similarly, Babalú-ayé, *orisha* of sickness that suffers from smallpox and/or leprosy, was syncretized with St. Lazaro. Yet despite the combinatorial nature of the religion, the ritual practice of *Santería* in Cuba remains closely associated with its African roots.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Ibid., 211-212.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 214.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 216-218.

Communing with the *Orishas* through Rhythm and Pitch

The musical elements of *Santería* practice are not merely supplemental as in various Christian traditions. The musical elements are vital and fundamental. The musical practice of *Santería* allows worshipers to commune with the various deities and to request favors. The drums of *Santería* practice are known as *batá*. The *batá* drums are believed to be holy, possessing the spirit of *Aña*. In this way, when played by *Santería* drum masters, the *batá* are known as “talking drums.” They communicate directly with the spirit world of the *orishas*.¹³⁰ Simultaneously, a *Santería* ritual features the singing of praise songs, led by a soloist and accompanied by a choral refrain of the various practitioners.¹³¹ These *orishas* are called to a religious ceremony through the performance of their specific rhythmic calls (known as *toques*) and praise song melodies. In the process of a ceremony, when an *orisha*’s *toque* is performed, the *orisha* may appear in the form of a “possessed” (or more literally translated “mounted”) follower.¹³² That follower will then embody that *orisha*’s nature and personality through dance and/or utterance. The ceremonies are led by a religious official known as a *Babalawo*.¹³³

The percussion accompaniment is performed by a three-man ensemble playing the double-headed *batá* drums. Each member of the ensemble plays a single drum, which is held in the lap. The rhythms performed on the drums are polyrhythmic and complex. In opposite fashion of the *rumba* percussion ensemble, the *batá* ensemble is lead by the lowest pitched instrument of the group. That drum, the *iyá*, controls the rhythmic sequence of the performance, initiating the specific *toques* and calls for conversation between it and the other drums of the

¹³⁰ Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances*, 91.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 80-81. I am here using Hagedorn’s terminology for the *Yoruban* text songs that are part of the *Santería* ritual. Such references should not be confused or likened to praise songs of Western/European tradition.

¹³² *Montado*, from the verb *montar*: to mount, or to ride.

¹³³ For further specific information on the cultural significance and religious practices of *Santería*, the reader may wish to consult a number of references listed in the bibliography of this book. See works by Katherine Hagedorn, María Teresa Vélez, and Ned Sublette.

ensemble. The *itótele* is the middle voice drum, and is frequently in “conversation” with the *iyá*. The highest pitched drum, the *okónkolo* is the most rhythmically stable of the group, keeping the more regular rhythmic backbone for the ensemble.¹³⁴ Added to this percussion group is the melodic vocal aspect, carried by a lead singer and the choral response of the various participants.¹³⁵

Santería: Afro-Cuban Folklore and Persecuted Practice

The first secular/scholarly performance of *batá* drums occurred in 1936, under the auspices of Fernando Ortiz at an “ethnographic conference.”¹³⁶ Performed on unconsecrated drums, the event was the first in a recent history of attempts by secular ensembles and government groups to preserve and present Cuba’s “folkloric” heritage. First accepted by Argeliers León (a student of Ortiz) and the Teatro Nacional, the Department of Folklore was entirely shaped by León, who was the key figure in the utilization and conceptualization of Cuba’s folklore. Later, in 1962, the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional was founded by Rogelio Martínez Furé to continue the folkloric work of the Teatro Nacional. The Conjunto continues the secular performance and recreation of the *Santería* ritual to this day.¹³⁷

While *Santería* music and ritual have been preserved and recreated by government sponsored entities for number of years, the authentic and religious practice was persecuted up until the 1980s. Katherine Hagedorn has closely studied and documented the double-sided nature of the Cuban government’s policy. While still heavily influenced by Soviet-style socialism and centralization, the official policy of Cuba has been one of scientific atheism.¹³⁸ As

¹³⁴ Amira and Cornelius, *The Music of Santería: Traditional Rhythms of the Batá Drums*, 19-29.

¹³⁵ Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances*, 75.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 138-141.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 197.

such, practicing *Santería* openly in post-revolutionary Cuba evoked the same kind of discrimination that existed before the revolution. Practitioners were routinely arrested en route to initiations, clearly identifiable by their *collares* and *idés*,¹³⁹ wearing all white clothing, and driving on the road with cars or trucks packed with animals to be used for sacrifice.¹⁴⁰ The practice of the religion was deemed intellectually inferior and primitive. The animals would be subject to confiscation, and practitioners would be thrown in jail for a few weeks. Due to the lack of “political integration,” practitioners were denied opportunities for government jobs.¹⁴¹

There has been a significant change in Cuban policy since the late 1980s. The change was brought on by the collapse of the Soviet Union and its economic and political support of the Cuban nation. Dubbed the “período especial económico” (special economic period), the last 15 years have been marred by a severe economic collapse. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union also went the discounted Russian oil, the propped up sugar prices (as much as three times market value), and all other forms of aid.¹⁴² The political forces that insisted on scientific atheism as a government policy suffered set-backs as well. In a time of severe hardship, the use of government resources to pursue and incarcerate practitioners of *Santería* made little sense.¹⁴³ This relaxation of religious persecution has resulted in a number of changes. First, practitioners of *Santería* have come out of the closet, so to speak, fearing persecution less in recent years.¹⁴⁴ Second, the economic hardship has swelled the ranks of Cuban practitioners, seeking aid from *orishas* in their everyday struggles to survive in the post-Soviet, U.S. blockade environment.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ Consecrated beaded necklace and beaded bracelet (respectively). *Collares* and *ides* are worn by practitioners of *Santería* who have completed various rites, such as “making” saint or being given the *mano de Orula*, or “hand of Orula.”

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 220.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 220.

Third, religious tourism to Cuba, seeking initiation into *Santería*, has exploded into a relatively common phenomenon, bringing more hard currency to the island and expanding the influence of the religion, both locally and internationally.¹⁴⁶

It was in this environment of the “special economic period” that Brouwer composed his *Rito de los orishas* in 1993. Musically, it is a kind of fantasy that is inspired by the *Santería* rite, but not specifically derivative. As stated before, the musical essence of *Santería* music can be grouped into two categories: the melodic aspect of the praise songs, and the accompanimental rhythm (and pitch) of the *batá* drums.

General Musical Characteristics of *Santería*

The music of *Santería* is not notated as a part of its ritual practice, instruction or dissemination. Publications on the specifics of the music of *Santería* are hard to come by. Practitioners carefully guard the secrets of their religious music. Outsiders and academics are not trusted with the musical details, or texts of the ritual music, because as such, the rhythms and the music are sacred and possess spiritual power.¹⁴⁷ The knowledge of this music is not meant for just anyone, nor is it to be performed on just any occasion.¹⁴⁸ Nonetheless, one can find written scores that approximate this music.¹⁴⁹ The most thorough are the collected works of Fernando Ortiz. Additionally, Katherine Hagedorn’s text provides some written musical examples, and her audio recordings of the ritual music are especially valuable. Specifically focusing on the *batá* drums, John Amira and Steven Cornelius explain performance practice and

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 204-210.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 100.

¹⁴⁸ Perhaps it is respect for the tradition of the music that partly kept Brouwer from using specific borrowing or quotation.

¹⁴⁹ I use the word “approximate” because the rhythms are not notated and are not fundamentally metric.

gives notated examples of *toques* for the various *orishas*.¹⁵⁰ Combining these sources, one can begin to define the essential characteristics of the music.

In discussing *Santería* music, a Western-trained scholar finds a number of difficulties in attempting to portray musical content accurately. Rhythmic content of the *batá* ensemble is not notated. Therefore, what a westerner might term “polymetric” might ultimately be an inaccurate description. The performance practice of the *batá* ensemble reflects West-African rhythm practice (rather than western metric notation and beat division) and as such Western notation and terminology is ultimately inaccurate.¹⁵¹ Similarly, the singing style used in praise songs for the respective *orishas* employs frequent use of subtle pitch inflections that are not reflected by the equal-tempered, 12 semi-tone per octave system of Western notation. Nonetheless, Brouwer’s music does use Western rhythmic notation and the guitar’s fixed pitch and equal-tempered tuning system. Any attempt to draw parallels between Brouwer’s composition and *Santería* music must confront these difficulties in terminology. Descriptions of ritual musical content will therefore use Western terminology for the ultimate purpose of relating such musical referents back to Brouwer’s score. Such terminology is used for convenience, and is in no way meant to be a complete or thoroughly accurate rendering of *Santería* music or practice.

Fernando Ortiz notated a number of the praise songs to the major *orishas*, and pentatonic formulations in his transcriptions are by far the most common.¹⁵² There is a noticeable lack of half-steps. In each of Ortiz’s notations, the praise songs always feature a whole-tone below tonic (or ultimate tone), never a half-step. Hagedorn’s notation of a praise song for Ogún features a

¹⁵⁰ Amira and Cornelius, *The Music of Santería: Traditional Rhythms of the Batá Drums*.

¹⁵¹ Kofi Agawu, “The Rhythmic Structure of West African Music,” *Journal of Musicology* (Summer 1987): 400-418.

¹⁵² Fernando Ortiz, *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en el folklore de Cuba*. (Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1981) 299-427.

key signature of three sharps. The voice part outlines an A major triad as a part of the initial solo vocalization and as a motive, but there is never a leading tone connection of G-sharp to A.¹⁵³

Example 5.1

Notation of *batá* tuning.¹⁵⁴

Tonalidades de los tambores "batá".

The image displays musical notation for the tuning of three batá drums: Iyá, Itótele, and Okónkolo. Each drum's tuning is represented by a set of staves in bass clef. Iyá has three tunings (I, II, III). Itótele has three tunings (IV, V, VI). Okónkolo has two tunings (VII, VIII). Arrows above notes in some staves indicate pitch relationships between different tunings or notes.

In addition to notating the rhythms as he understood them, Ortiz also included pitch for the drums. His indications are contained in Example 5.1. Tuning on these drums cannot be considered to correspond to absolute pitch. Tuning the *batá* ensemble is done in terms of relative pitch (i.e., not A=440). Genuine “consecrated” instruments can never have modern metal tuning machines.¹⁵⁵ The consecrated drums have drum heads that are tensioned by rope (or leather thongs) which are looped through two hoops and interlaced tightly along the body of the instrument.¹⁵⁶ This method introduces further uncertainty for any conception of fixed or absolute pitch for the ensemble, as tension of such natural fibers will gradually relax over time.

¹⁵³ Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances*, 92-95.

¹⁵⁴ Fernando Ortiz, *La africanía de la música folklórica de cuba* (Habana: Editora Universitaria, 1965), 376.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 19-21.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

Adding further uncertainty, the Amira/Cornelius text is in disagreement with the notation of Ortiz in Example 5.1.¹⁵⁷

Ortiz notated a rather chromatic range of pitches, with half-steps possible. Even the Amira/Cornelius text, which does not provide a specific notation of pitch, acknowledges that each drum, through the various styles of hand stroke, is capable of five different pitches and tones. Therefore, exact representation of *batá* content on solo guitar is not possible. However, while not quoting specific ritual music, Brouwer draws on both the general rhythmic characteristics and the pentatonic pitch sets of *Santería* ritual music in creating *Rito de los orishas*.

Summoning the Spirit of *Santería*

Rito de los orishas begins with a ternary-structure first movement titled “Exordium-conjuro.” The opening section (the A section of a ternary ABA form) is rooted in rolled chords and repeated notes. The texture alternates between sparse sections of single pitch quarter-notes (at tempo *lento* and *liberamente*) and very large, low, and arpeggiated chords. Brouwer has written this work for a guitar *scordatura* of the sixth string tuned to low D, and each of the opening chords features the two lowest strings as consistent drones. This low fifth acts as an underpinning to each of the chords in the opening. Example 5.2 shows the first 14 bars of this movement.

Brouwer maximizes his chord structures here, using all six strings, rolling through the chords to enunciate the pitch and interval content clearly. He also voices these chords in the lowest register possible, beginning the work with use of the low fifth in measures 2, 5 and 8. All of the large chords can be arranged in thirds: [D, F, A, C-sharp, E, G] in measure 2; [B-flat, D, F,

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 19-22. This text states that the lowest pitch of the *okónkolo* should match the highest pitch of the *itótele*, which is not shown by Ortiz.

A, C-sharp, E, G-sharp] in measure 5; and [B-flat, D, F, A, C-sharp, E] in measure 8.

Throughout the A section and its return the large six note chords can be spelled this way, and the repeating core of [D,F,A] is especially prominent harmonically.

Example 5.2

Rito de los orishas I, mm. 1-14.

1. Exordium-conjuero

Lento ♩ = 56-66
Liberamente

⑥ = Ré *ppp* *pp* *l.v.* *h. 12* *ben arpeggiato*

5 *l.v.* *pp* *articolato* *f* *p* *l.v.*

9 *pp* *mf* *l.v.* *l.v.* *p* *mp* *poco*

* préparer la position
prépare position

13 *l.v.* *7:8* *7:8* *rit.*

Example 5.3

Rito de los orishas I, Transposed scale forms from measures 12-13 and 23-24 respectively.

Yet there are other organizational procedures at work here. The initial A section itself is split into two parts which appear to be related on the interval of the whole-tone. The scale structure in bar 12, compared to the only other such entity in the first A section, reveals a whole-tone transposition (see Example 5.3).

In Example 5.3 there is a transpositional parallel between the two scales in interval, direction, and final pitch. With the addition of one pitch to the scale (the parenthetic note added in Example 5.3 so as to account for the differences in rhythm) the whole-tone transposition connection is clear. The use of the scale as a directional element is also obvious. The scale in bar 12 descends to D, triggering a new chord. The scale in bar 23 falls to E (returning us to the same chord as bar 8, harmonically returning to the first part of the A section). Another whole-tone parallel is to be found by comparing the chords in bar 5 and bar 18. The fingerboard chording in the left-hand guitar position (ignoring the open string drones), makes use of chord-planing. The two chords (one from initial section, the second at the culmination of the *quasi cadenza* of the second) are the same formulation, two frets apart. The melodic fragment which follows in measure 19 (at the crossroads of the bisected A section) is a subset of a pentatonic scale (Example 5.4), which will be the basis of the second movement.

Example 5.4

Rito de los orishas I, mm. 19-21.

4 **Lento** ♩ = 66
 Annonçant la danse rituelle
 Indication of the ritual dance

This brief passage acts as both a presage of coming music and a musical blender. The melody in the upper voice (a pentatonic subset and a second movement theme) is connected by (and participates in) the rolled chord technique of this movement. The G becomes the highest note in the rolled chord that ends bar 19 [A, F, B, G-sharp, G]. But this is just a momentary event, and the largest and central section of this ternary form movement follows. The music of the B section is a radical departure from the A section, and bears a high degree of similarity to the percussion ensemble of the *batá* (see Example 5.5).

Example 5.5

Rito de los orishas I, mm. 26-37.

The musical score for Example 5.5 consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins at measure 26 with a tempo marking of 'Vivace' and a quarter note equal to 120. The melody in the upper voice is marked 'p' (piano). The bass line features a rolled chord technique, with notes indicated by slurs and 'i' (fingerings). The second staff starts at measure 30, showing a change in dynamics to 'f molto' and 'sfz' (sforzando). The third staff begins at measure 35, marked 'metal.' and 'p' (piano), with 'L.v.' (legato) markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

The *batá* percussion ensemble is led by the lowest drum, the *iyá*. The highest drum, the *okónkolo*, is the most regular in its rhythms, frequently carrying time-line, or ostinato-like rhythmic features. Given the three drums, the double-head structure, and *batá* performance practice, exact guitar transcription is impossible without more than one instrument. Yet Brouwer is clearly evoking the spirit of the *batá* in the B section as seen in Example 5.5. The upper voice

carries the repetitive rhythmic ostinato. The bass voice acts as lead, not just carrying the melodic aspect (drums can be melodic too) but also controlling the phrase and rhythmic groups (see measures 33-35 of Example 5.5). The staggered entrance of the bass acts as a controlling mechanism for the metric structure. The repetitive upper voice is entirely in the hands of the bass voice, which controls the meter and changes it according to the figures that it executes. Comparison of Example 5.5 to Example 5.6, shows similar procedures in one of Ortiz's transcriptions of a *batá toque*.

Example 5.6

Second *batá toque* for Eléggua.¹⁵⁸

Toque lucumí de tambores *batá*.
 2º del Oru del Igbodu, a ELÉGGUA. II

And^{te}

Okónkolo

Itótele

Iyá

¹⁵⁸ Ortiz, *La africanía de la música folklórica de cuba*, 383.

It is not the intent of this study to link the passage by Brouwer (Example 5.5) to any particular *toque*. This particular transcription is presented for a number of reasons, not the least of which is to include one of Ortiz's important transcriptions. By comparison to the Brouwer excerpt in Example 5.5, similarities in upper voice ostinato rhythm are obvious. Finally, *Eléggua* is the *orisha* of the roads, and guardian of all paths in *Santería* rituals. As the opener of pathways, he is always saluted first in *Santería* worship ceremonies, as he makes contact with the other *orishas* possible.¹⁵⁹ Brouwer has created a *batá*-like, or *batá*-inspired gesture here.

At the same time the music is closely associated with the harmonic content which preceded it in the A section. Case in point: the bass line in measures 28-29 of Example 5.5. The bass melody in bar 28 is an outlining of the harmony found at the beginning of the first movement, and exactly the same as the sonority found in measure 5 of Example 5.2 (with an enharmonic re-spelling of A-flat as G-sharp, without the bass drone D). That same chord (including the D drone) is used as a violent sonic interruption of the dance-like figure in measure 29 and 30. These chords serve to interrupt the rhythmic flow of the section and frequently precede a transposition the figure. The upper-voice changes after the first interruption to E in bar 31, then it moves back to C-sharp in bar 37, but with an alternate bass harmony rooted on F-sharp this time (not shown in Example 5.5).

At measure 55, the *batá* figure returns at its original tonal position, but this time the chordal interruptions do not signal a transpositional shift. The harmony remains static, and the lower voice transforms into a new pentatonic melody in measures 61-62 through fragmentation of the existing line. As seen in Example 5.7, the new lower-voice melody appears in full in measures 63-70, using the pentatonic set [E-flat, F, A-flat, B-flat, D-flat/C-sharp]. After a

¹⁵⁹ Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music*, 215.

cadenza-like passage the A section returns in measure 80 and finishes the movement with a return to the broadly arpeggiated chords so prominently featured at the outset of the piece.

Example 5.7

Rito de los orishas I, mm. 55-70.

The image displays a musical score for Example 5.7, consisting of four staves of music. The first staff begins at measure 55 with the tempo marking "Vivace". The music is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line with various dynamics including *p*, *sfz*, and *f molto*. A first ending bracket labeled "l.v." spans measures 67-70. The second staff continues from measure 59, showing a change in dynamics and the appearance of *f molto* and *sfz*. The third staff starts at measure 63 and shows a change in time signature to 3/4. The fourth staff begins at measure 67 and includes the marking "rit." (ritardando) and concludes with a final cadence in 2/4 time.

Example 5.8

Rito de los orishas II, mm. 1-5.

2. Danza de las diosas negras

The musical score for Example 5.8, 'Danza de las diosas negras', measures 1-5, is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 10. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 72-76. The first measure is marked with a forte 'f' dynamic and a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction. The second measure is marked with a piano 'p' dynamic. The third measure is marked with 'III' and 'cresc. e accel.'. The fourth measure is marked with '4' and '3'. The fifth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The sixth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The seventh measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The eighth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The ninth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The tenth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The second system contains measures 11 through 20. It begins with a forte 'f' dynamic and a 'molto' instruction. The eleventh measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The twelfth measure is marked with 'III' and 'oscuro'. The thirteenth measure is marked with '4' and 'h. 12'. The fourteenth measure is marked with 'harm.'. The fifteenth measure is marked with 'p'. The sixteenth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The seventeenth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The eighteenth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The nineteenth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The twentieth measure is marked with '3' and '3'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

This sudden forte outburst (Example 5.8) begins the next stage of the *Rito*. The second movement carries the title “Danza de las diosas negras” (Dance of the Black Goddesses). It is a sprawling fantasy structured around three related dance sections (formally labeled Danza I, Danza II, and Danza III). The melodic material for the movement is pentatonic, with special emphasis on motivic fragments briefly featured in the first movement (see Example 5.4). Rhythmically, the movement is a mix of syncopations, meters, groupings, and accents. The gestures of the movement gradually transform through flowing figures, where melodic fragments change into arpeggios which further transform into dance sections. The Danza sections feature the ostinato/arpeggio technique that was first discussed in chapter 2 (page 53) and linked to Afro-Cuban percussion and rhythmic style. The inclusion of the ostinato/arpeggio technique within a specific Afro-Cuban folklore, percussion based setting (*Santería* and *batá* ensemble), further demonstrates that technique’s musical/cultural connections and derivation.

Example 5.9

Rito de los orishas II, Danza I, mm. 11-13.

DANZA I
Allegro ♩ = 108-112
f sub.

Example 5.10

Danza I, mm. 11-13 transcribed to reflect true duration.

piano accompaniment in 4/4 time, showing slurs and accents.

Example 5.9 shows Danza I in the original notation. Brouwer notates and specifies the performance of this dance to reflect the articulation recommendations made earlier in this study. The initial articulation of each left-hand slur is accented, reflecting the natural tendency of the technique. In fact, the technique was probably chosen for the express purpose of bringing out that particular feature. The result of that technical choice is a rhythmic grouping that has been discussed before in this study: the 3 + 3 + 2 syncopation at the heart of the *tresillo* and *cinquillo* rhythm cells. The Danza I in Example 5.9 is grouped in the ostinatos/arpeggio technique by a repeating bass-plus-slurring figure. There are two such figures, at the beginning and middle of the first 4/4 bar, which are each followed by an additional slur figure, without a bass note. The

Danza II (Example 5.11) begins with an explicit and repeated statement of the melodic figure that first appeared in the first movement (see Example 5.4). The familiar slurred accompanimental figures appear in bar 57, now beneath accented glissandi figures (referencing the minor 3rd motive of G to B-flat shown in Example 5.4). All of this is preparation for the “Tema” that follows in bar 61. The theme is created from a five-note set [A, C, E, F, G]. There is a one-bar melodic diversion that begins in measure 66 and lands us melodically on D in measure 67 (not shown in Example 5.11). That short figure bears a striking resemblance to scale figure from the first movement. (See Example 5.3.) The function here is to shift the tonal focus from A to D. After this short diversion, the theme returns in the original harmonic treatment and begins a further process of transformation.

Example 5.12

Rito de los orishas II, Danza III, mm. 120-126.

DANZA III

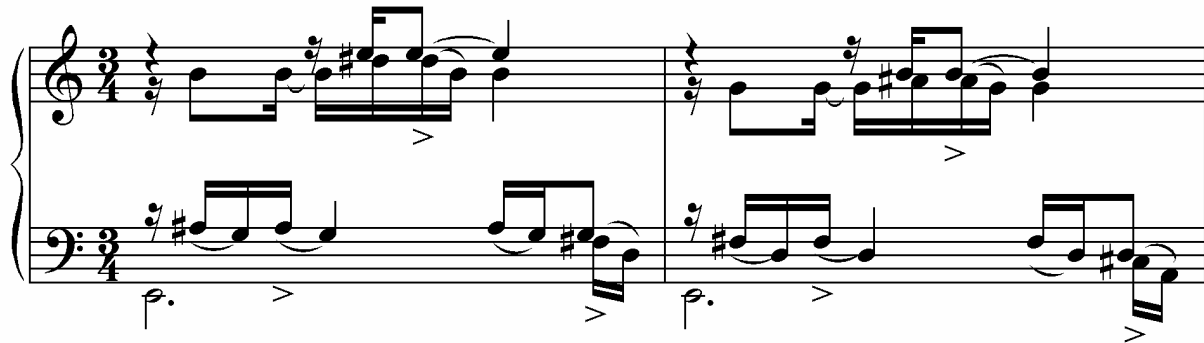
120 *f*

122 *contrasto* ② *come prima*

124 TEMA *pp* *marcato mf il canto*

Example 5.13

Danza III transcribed to show true duration.



Danza III is the most chromatic of the three Danza sections. It too is followed by the “Tema” from before, transposed by a whole-tone and set in the middle voice. Most notably, this theme creates an upper-voice counter melody that is also pentatonic. The two sets overlap, with the Tema set having a half-step interval between F-sharp and G. The countermelody does not contain G, but adds an E, using the form most familiar in this work. The two forms are set side by side in Example 5.14.

Example 5.14

Tema set from mm. 61-65; transposed Tema set from mm.125-128; Counter melody pentatonic set mm. 125-128 respectively.



Three non-rhythmic or aleatoric sections contrast the rhythmic Danza sections of the movement. These sections appear in extended bars (sometimes two lines long) with no time signature (indicated with a 0), and the instruction *legatissimo e irregolare*. With only minimal

indication of grouping provided (in the form of connected beaming) these passages are rhythmically determined by the performer. These passages appear at measure 54, 85, and 101.

Yet there are transitions between these Danza and aleatoric sections in which Brouwer takes theme fragments or rhythmic figures and gradually transforms them into new sections or ideas. Analysis of one such passage will demonstrate Brouwer's incorporation of contemporary compositional procedures and motivic manipulation. For example, beginning in measure 77 (see Example 5.15) just after the Danza II and Tema complex, Brouwer melodically brings back the pentatonic fragment which first appeared in the first movement: here it is set as the cell C – D – F. The familiar falling minor 3rd, rising major 2nd (set class (025)) can be seen in the upper voice of Example 5.15.

Example 5.15

Rito de los orishas II, mm, 77-82.

The pentatonic motive featured prominently as the melody for Danza II (Example 5.11) appears transposed a perfect 5th at the outset of this passage (Example 5.15) in the upper voice

with closely related accompanimental figures. The first down-stem accompaniment set (A, C, G) is a clearly transposed figure derived from the melody. Another transposed set follows (F, G, B-flat). Brouwer proceeds similarly in measure 78 with the motive falling an octave and accompanied by (025) pitch sets. At bar 79 the motive appears in the lower voice with an exact octave restatement and a new accompaniment in the upper-voice. This new accompaniment becomes a transitional figure in bar 82 linking the previous passage with the upcoming *Evocación I* at measure 85 (Example 5.16).

Example 5.16

Rito de los orishas II, mm. 83-85.

83

84

pp *mf*

EVOCACION I
Lento

85

pp *mf* *pp* *f sub.* *pp* *legato* *poco*

suono ord. *rit.* *l.v.* *rall.*

(85) *mp*

The use of the harmonic E as well as the repetitive, drone like use of E and B-flat in the transition connects the previous section with the *Evocación I*. The rhythmic freedom,

arpeggiated articulation (of the transition figure), and slow tempo (of the *Evocación*) are combined in measure 86, where a returning melody is also incorporated.

Example 5.17

Rito de los orishas II, mm. 86-91.

The musical score for Example 5.17 consists of three staves. The first staff (measures 86-87) is in 4/4 time, marked 'Quasi lento' and 'movendo poco a poco'. It features a drone arpeggio in the bass (measures 86 and 87) and a pentatonic melody in the upper voice. Dynamics include *mf* and *pp*. The second staff (measures 88-89) continues the drone arpeggio and melody, marked 'cresc.'. The third staff (measures 90-91) is in 3/4 time, marked 'ten.' and 'f', with a tempo marking of quarter note = 108. It features a drone arpeggio in the bass and a pentatonic melody in the upper voice.

The familiar pentatonic melody returns in the bass (measure 86 of Example 5.17) accompanied by a drone arpeggio set that is reminiscent of the transition set from measure 83. The figure accelerates up to measure 90 where there is a further transformation. The melody is fragmented in the upper voice (based on E with the G grace note figure), and inverted in the middle-voice (F, D, and G). The two drones (low G-Sharp and middle B) make up a minor 3rd, further reflecting that motivic fragment of the melody. The drone of B falls a half-step in measure 93, beginning a new full statement of the melody (Example 5.18).

Example 5.18

Rito de los orishas II, mm. 92-100.

Now the full melody is contrasted with a chromatically juxtaposed drone set. The melodic set is (F, G, B-flat), which is an exact transposition of the earlier melody down a perfect 4th. The drone set is now made up of two minor 3^{rds} (G-sharp, B, D), creating a harmonic expansion of the earlier drone accompaniment. Measures 95-96 feature a return of material from mm. 90-91, followed by a short 3/8 contrasting bar. The figure in mm. 98-99 is very similar to the earlier transition figure in mm. 82-83, but at a new tonal level (a minor 3rd lower). This sets up *Evocación II*, and also briefly evokes the first movement in measure 100.

Brouwer does not quote *Santería* music: he summons the spirit of that music in this fantasy for guitar. By incorporating general characteristics while avoiding specific musical

formulas for the ritual, Brouwer has created a musical work that can be understood as participating in the transformation of Cuban “folklore.” Creating music with such aims has precedent in Cuban music. This is an aspect of the compositional style of Amadeo Roldán as described by Alejo Carpentier,

Roldán, following the inevitable road that all who work in a nationalist orbit must traverse, distances himself from the true folk element ... to find Afro-Cuban motifs within himself. The rhythm has ceased to be a textual borrowing: it is more his own vision of the known cells—a re-creation. Roldán’s work gains in profundity, looking beyond folklore to the spirit of that folklore.¹⁶⁰

Carpentier is discussing the work *Rítmicas*, written for mixed chamber ensemble.¹⁶¹ In a similar vein, Carpentier describes related processes in *La rumba* by Alejandro García Caturla, a work for orchestra:

When García Caturla composed *La rumba*, he did not want a rhythmic movement for orchestra, just any old rumba that could be the first in a series. No, in *La rumba* he thought of the spirit of the rumba, of all the rumbas heard in Cuba since the arrival of the first blacks. He did not seek to experiment with the rhythm, building a crescendo until the end, according to a much abused formula in vogue for the last twenty years. On the contrary, right from the introduction, showing a strange confidence in the lower woodwinds, he proceeded with sudden pulsations, with violent and rapid progressions, with a sea-like swelling and release, in which all the rhythms of the genre were inscribed, inverted, crushed. He was not interested in the rhythms themselves, but instead in a general trepidation, a series of sonic outbursts, which would translate the essence of the rumba into a total vision.¹⁶²

Using the music of the *Santería* rite as compositional inspiration and some of the particular features as structural components, Brouwer has created a thoroughly new work out of his own musical context. The *Rito de los orishas* stands as one more example of the syncretization of the Afro-Cuban and the avant-garde in the contemporary language of this remarkable composer.

¹⁶⁰ Carpentier, *The Music of Cuba*, 274.

¹⁶¹ For flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, horn, and piano.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 278.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Brouwer's incorporation and adaptation of Afro-Cuban characteristics is fundamental to his compositional process. In genre (both sacred and secular) and gesture (percussive/rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic), his compositions for guitar fuse Afro-Cuban musical elements with contemporary art music. In this way, Brouwer's music can be viewed as participating in, and perpetuating, Ortiz's "transculturation:" a vibrant and living process.

This study demonstrates that Brouwer's synthesis of Afro-Cuban and avant-garde music results in innovative sonorities and new techniques. In *Paisaje cubano con rumba* Brouwer incorporates the Afro-Cuban *rumba* into concert music for guitar quartet. Brouwer uses minimalist techniques to gradually create the three different types of *rumba* through rhythmic adjustment and manipulation. Additionally, Brouwer creates original sonorities through the use of mutes (or prepared guitar), making the guitar quartet sound like the percussive *rumba* ensembles. At the same time, Brouwer's use of altered guitars metaphorically connects to the earliest *rumba de cajones*.

Even in his earliest compositions, Brouwer was interested in adopting Afro-Cuban percussion techniques and rhythm cells to guitar. *Danza característica* is the earliest example of such an adaptation, and the ostinato/arpeggio technique that opens the work has become a hallmark of his guitar oeuvre. Brouwer incorporated a number of Afro-Cuban figures (*tresillo*, *cinquillo*, hemiola) in a variety of settings: imitative passages, ostinato/arpeggio (in both bass line and upper voice figures), and chord-planing. At the same time Brouwer incorporated post-tonal harmonic language on the guitar, in the style of Bartók and Stravinsky.

Brouwer's use of the ostinato/arpeggio technique is ubiquitous in *El decameron negro*. African folktales collected by Leo Frobenius serve as a musical program for all three movements, as Brouwer goes beyond Cuban references and looks directly to Africa. Brouwer vividly evokes the sound of *toques* of war, a flight through the valley of echoes, and the harp of a warrior who will no longer go to battle. Simultaneously, Brouwer's inversions and transpositional use of set class, and manipulation of themes and motives demonstrate a composer fully versed in contemporary art music techniques.

The Afro-Cuban religion of *Santería* serves as inspiration for the two movement guitar fantasy *Rito de los orishas*. Drawing on the fundamental components of the *Santería* ritual, Brouwer evokes *batá* percussion and ritual praise song with ostinato/arpeggio figures and pentatonic melodic construction. At the same time, aleatoric sections, free use of dissonance, and sophisticated use of thematic transformation mark the style of this work as contemporary art music. Brouwer summons the spirit of Afro-Cuban devotional practice without a single quotation of the traditional music.

Brouwer's guitar music and writings consistently celebrate his Cuban musical heritage. The resulting fusion can be clearly differentiated from musical exoticism and nationalism associated with European practice of the 19th and 20th centuries. This study locates Brouwer and his music alongside other New World composers such as Heitor Villa-Lobos, Alberto Ginestera, Astor Piazzolla who were also interested in adopting European techniques to indigenous genres and styles. Additionally, Brouwer's compositions have had a significant impact on contemporary guitar composition, and guitarist/composers of a later generation such as Roland Dyens, Dušan Bogdanović, Jorge Morel, Carlo Domeniconi, and Sergio Assad who have shown a keen interest in creating contemporary art music using local and vernacular styles. Further

research may help to shed light on the link between Brouwer and the following generation of guitarist/composers and will demonstrate Brouwer's importance and influence.

AFTERWORD

Academic work on Brouwer's music is only just beginning, and his influence on the guitar will survive long into the future. His extraordinary contribution to guitar technique, composition, and pedagogy is unparalleled in contemporary art music. No single book or dissertation can exhaust all that could be said about this magnificent music, and my work will be greatly enhanced by other perspectives and alternative voices.

The prominence of Afro-Cuban musical and cultural referents in Brouwer's guitar compositions has important socio-cultural and philosophical implications. In the past, Cuban institutions and artists tried to diminish Afro-Cuban culture, and to belittle its influence on Cuban music and society. Brouwer has clearly taken another path. Far from dismissing it as "popular" or "primitive," Brouwer values Afro-Cuban culture, and recognizes its sources. Through Brouwer, that culture is now involved in contemporary art-music and the avant-garde.

Neglect of the cultural milieu in which Brouwer created, and about which he has given so much thought, leads to an impoverished (at best) understanding of his music. The application of strictly European parameters to the study and performance of this music reveals debilitating ignorance. My research into the history of musical genres and gestures in Cuba revealed to me the importance of such knowledge in the performance of Brouwer's music. It also revealed how poorly informed my early performances of his music were.

Like people throughout the Americas, I am the product of a New World culture with a particular cultural matrix; one that includes African and European heritage (among others). I am also a product of the North American music academy. It is impossible to separate African-American influence from the musical/cultural environment of the U.S. I am not certain that I could say the same for the academy. Perhaps my early affinity for Brouwer's music, my desire

to perform his compositions for guitar, and this study of his music can be linked to my immersion in an African-influenced culture. My earliest exposure to music in the U.S. was learning to play blues and rock music on an electric guitar. My interest in art music grew with my musical training, and my shift in learning environment (from band rehearsal space or night club, to university classroom and concert hall) came with an equally dramatic change in subject matter; no longer was North American music the focus.

The academy is currently in a period of change and expansion in the U.S. Changes in the fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, and music theory are opening new avenues for scholarship. Feminist theory, queer theory, post-colonial theory, and postmodern (or new) musicology are providing new approaches to music research and criticism. The changes are attributable in part to a change in values. The academy is gradually addressing the marginalization (often through absence) of particular minorities and cultures. The edification of European music and culture alone (to the exclusion of particular ethnicities and cultures) is a quiet form of racism and bigotry that is slowly being addressed.

In my early years in the academy, I was not aware of this bias. I had always thought (and had always been taught) that European music was the zenith of world musical culture. The last three years have been a gradual cultural awakening for me. This project and research occupies a central position in that very personal process. At the end of this document, I find myself indebted to Leo Brouwer for more than just his guitar music. I hope that this document will contribute in some small way to the evolution of the academy. It is also my hope that the academy will continue to expand its mission and embrace the great variety of music and culture that is so vital to human expression.

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APPENDIX

Glossary

Abakuá: Secret society of Afro-Cuban men originating in Havana and Matanzas province. Its members are known as *ñáñigos*, and the society was originally made up of men from the Carabalí region. The sect is closely associated with the origins of *rumba*.

Batá: Sacred or consecrated double-headed drums used in the performance of ritual *Santería* music. The drums are played with the hands, exclusively by men because of religious restrictions regarding their performance. The ensemble consists of three drums: the *Iyá*, the *Itotele*, and the *Okónkolo*, pitched from lowest to highest respectively.

Cabildos: From the Spanish word meaning “town council” and descending from Spanish Catholic practice, Cabildos were mutual aid societies. In Cuba, African slaves formed Cabildos societies grouped by ethnic associations (Carabalí, Arará, Congo, etc.) with the permission of the Spanish colonial authorities.

Clave: Percussion instrument that has its origin in Havana and Matanzas. *Clave* are two sticks of hard, sonorous wood approximately six inches in length, which are struck together. As a musical instrument, the *Clave* are evolved from wooden pegs that were used in the construction of boats. The *Clave* sticks are closely with Cuban *Clave* rhythm, which is the asymmetrical rhythmic backbone to many Cuban genres including *rumba* and *son*.

Columbia: A type of *rumba* dance and music closely associated with Abakuá practice featuring virtuosic solo dancing by men (though not exclusively.) Musically it is the fastest of the three main kinds of *rumba*, and the *Clave* line is commonly perceived in 6/8 time.

Campesino: A band that performs Cuban folk music such as the *punto guajiro*, the *zapateo*, and the *guajira*. Traditional instrumentation often includes various guitar-like instruments (*laud*, *tres*) and characteristic percussion (*claves*, *guiro*).

Guaguancó: Type of *rumba* that is best known and the most sexually overt. The dancing is in couples where the man pursues the woman in a stylized form of sexual conquest, culminating in the *vacunao* gesture. Musically the guaguancó is faster than the yambú, yet they share similar formal features in common.

Laúd: Stringed instrument of Arabic origin brought to Cuban by the Spanish in the early colonial period. The laud is widely used in *guajiro* music and *campesino* groups.

Palitos: Percussive sticks used to strike the side of a drum, often conga.

Septeto de Sones: A music group of the early 20th century that performed *son*. The *septeto* was directly evolved from the *sexteto*, with the addition of trumpet to the earlier configuration that featured guitar, *tres*, double bass, *bongó*, maracas and *claves*.

Solar: An external common area for high density housing. Similar to an internal courtyard for urban apartments.

Son: Vocal, instrumental, and dance genre that is one of the essential forms of Cuban popular music. As a genre it reflects African and Spanish influence, and also the influence of the eastern and western parts of Cuba. The genre became a widely popular couples dance in the 1920s and 1930s.

Tres: A traditional Cuban string instrument closely related to the guitar, from which it is derived. It is strung with three courses of strings which are made of steel and tuned in unison.

Trova: Genre of Cuban song closely associated with working-class singer-songwriters. Primarily self-accompanied on the guitar, its early form (known as *vieja trova*) was popular in the late 19th century, and is credited with the creation of the Cuban bolero. In the later part of the 20th century, a new wave known as *nueva trova* became a popular genre, and closely reflected the political “protest song” movement throughout the Americas. Leo Brouwer was closely associated with the fledgling *nueva trova* movement in the late 1960s and 1970s, acting as a musical mentor to major figures of the movement.

Yambú: One of the three main types of contemporary *rumba*. It is a couples dance that is significantly less aggressive in its music and dance steps than the more popular *guaguancó*. It is the slowest form of *rumba*, often danced with couples imitating the elderly in their dance steps.