

VILLA-LOBOS'S *CINQ PRÉLUDES*: AN ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCES

by

JOY HUETHER

A THESIS

Presented to the School of Music and Dance
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

June 2011

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Joy Huether

Title: Villa-Lobos's *Cinq Préludes*: An Analysis of Influences

This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the School of Music and Dance by:

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Jack Boss | Chairperson |
| Steven Rodgers | Member |
| David Case | Member |

and

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Richard Linton | Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies/Dean of the Graduate School |
|----------------|---|

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

Degree awarded June 2011

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Joy Huether

Master of Arts

School of Music and Dance

June 2011

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Approved: _____
Jack Boss

While musical styles from various parts of the world intermingled in the early twentieth century, Heitor Villa-Lobos sought to promote Brazilian music throughout the classical music world. Instead of presenting only Brazilian styles, Villa-Lobos, in an attempt to showcase the international adaptability of Brazil's musical culture, developed a style all his own, which was a combination of his classical training in the western tradition and his first-hand experience with both Brazilian popular and Native Brazilian music. Much of his music manifests these influences, but his music for solo guitar, Brazil's national instrument, also features new techniques and timbres. This thesis examines the interaction of the various styles and techniques used in his *Cinq Préludes* for solo guitar.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Joy Huether

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
Clayton State University, Morrow, GA
North Georgia College and State University, Dahlonega, GA

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts, Music Theory, 2011, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Music, 2007, Clayton State University

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Music theory
Music theory pedagogy
Classical guitar literature

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon, 2008-2010

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, for their unending love, encouragement, and support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As musical styles from various parts of the world intermingled in the early twentieth century, Heitor Villa-Lobos sought to promote Brazilian music throughout the classical music world. Instead of presenting only Brazilian styles, Villa-Lobos, in an attempt to showcase the international adaptability of Brazil's musical culture, developed a style all his own, which combined his classical training in the western tradition, his knowledge of Impressionism from both living in Paris and from interacting with modernists that came to Brazil, and his first-hand experience playing Brazilian popular music and researching Native Brazilian music. Much of his music shows signs of these influences, but his music for solo guitar, Brazil's national instrument, also features new techniques and timbres. This thesis examines the interaction of the various styles and techniques used in his *Cinq Préludes*, his last music for solo guitar, in which Brazilian music, European music, and new guitar techniques and timbres converge.

Cinq Préludes

Although his entire output is large, Villa-Lobos only wrote a small number of pieces for solo guitar. Published in 1940, the *Cinq Préludes* have become standards in the classical guitar repertoire. The varying styles of these preludes seem to suggest that they were not necessarily

intended to be performed as a set. The descriptive subtitles, listed below, will aid our examination of these different stylistic influences, or at least give us an idea of how Villa-Lobos thought the individual pieces should be interpreted.

Prélude No. 1: Lyric Melody – Homage to the Brazilian sertanejo (the man from sertão)

Prélude No. 2: Capadócia (rogue) and Capoeira (ruffian) melody – Homage to the Carioca [from Rio de Janeiro] Hustler

Prélude No. 3: Homage to Bach

Prélude No. 4: Homage to the Brazilian Indian

Prélude No. 5: Homage to Social Life – To the Young Teenagers Who Frequent Rio's Concerts and Theatres¹

These preludes capture different styles and fuse them into one in order to create a view of Brazilian life. As Wright said, “the Preludes comfortably settle the listener before the five windows, each open on a different aspect of the Brazilian scene.”² Even within these different Brazilian scenes, there is an openness to other cultures. Villa-Lobos wanted to show that Brazilian music could interact with other cultures and yet maintain its own identity. As we will see, the result was greater

¹ Gerard Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos: The Search for Brazil's Musical Soul* (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1994), 141.

² Simon Wright, *Villa-Lobos* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press), 104.

complexity and a more thoughtful way of composing that wove different European and Brazilian styles together while taking a fresh approach to the guitar that explored new timbres and techniques.

Within his solo guitar repertoire, Villa-Lobos's style grew more international with each set. All of his early guitar works were right in line stylistically with the popular music in Rio in the early 1900s. His *Suite Popular Brasileiro* is all that remains from this music. Next, he wrote his *Douze Études*, published in 1929, at the request of Andrés Segovia, who praised these studies for their innovative guitar techniques and also their musicality. By the time he wrote the preludes, he had travelled extensively and mastered the task of combining different styles of music with his new guitar techniques. This time, the music he was creating was art music with popular influences instead of the more obvious Brazilian popular music he had written before.

Stylistic Influences

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been a unique time in music history, in which musicians have been able to exchange ideas through technology, travel, and other modern conveniences, with the aim of sharing their own musical preferences with other musicians. Because modern composers are able to draw from many cultures and musical systems, much music has become rich and varied—incorporating a *mélange* of influences. Living from 1887-1959, Villa-Lobos was right in

the midst of this period of cultural exchange. During his lifetime, he travelled extensively throughout Brazil and Europe, and even lived for several years in Paris.³

One of the most important components of Villa-Lobos's mix of styles is Brazilian popular music. He performed with other street musicians in cafes, brothels, and theatres during his teenage years and early twenties. He was called, "the classical guitarist," because he "encouraged others to study 'legitimate' music,"⁴ but the popular styles he played influenced his own music, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged in his titles. Later, we will see how two main Brazilian genres, the *modinha* and the *choro*, which came out of Rio in the early twentieth century,⁵ subtly manifest themselves in *Prélude No. 1* and *Prélude No. 2*, respectively, and how *Prélude No. 5* pays homage to Brazilian society with a waltz.

The European component of Villa-Lobos's music comes from both his years spent in Paris and from his classical upbringing under his father's tutelage. In 1923, during his first stay in Paris, which lasted about a year, he met many musicians and composers, including Ravel,

³ Villa-Lobos's travels throughout Brazil will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

⁴ Garcia, *The Choro, the Guitar, and Villa-Lobos*, *Luso-Brazilian Review* 34, no. 1 (January 1997): 63.

⁵ Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 141-2.

Dukas, de Falla, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Honneger, Roussel, Schmitt, d'Indy, Varèse, and Segovia.⁶

Even before Villa-Lobos went to Paris, he had already heard of the modernist music being written in Europe through his close friendships with Arthur Rubinstein and Darius Milhaud. Rubinstein performed Villa-Lobos's music, but, more importantly, Villa-Lobos heard Rubinstein play some of Debussy's music in a series of recitals in Rio in 1918.⁷

Milhaud, who lived in Rio in 1917 and 1918, taught Villa-Lobos about the music that was being written at the time in Paris.⁸

Villa-Lobos's music was already considered revolutionary in Brazil, sometimes accepted and sometimes rejected, but these connections with Parisian musical society inspired him to add even more modernist ideas to his style. For example, the Impressionistic technique of planing plays a major role in much of Villa-Lobos's guitar music, since the guitar is particularly conducive to the shifting chords.

Villa-Lobos also latched onto the French composers' freedom from functional harmony. *Prélude No. 3* includes both of these features to some extent. Though a traditional underlying structure is present, the surface chords in this prelude do not always follow traditional chord progressions. Each series of surface chords is there for pure sonic

⁶ Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 16.

⁷ Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 10.

⁸ Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 9.

enjoyment, not necessarily to propel the piece forward, even though the deeper structural motion of the piece maintains its momentum, as further analysis will reveal.

As previously mentioned, although Villa-Lobos lived in the midst of Brazilian popular music, he also studied western classical music. As a result of these studies, he developed a lifetime love for Bach's music and made an effort to pay homage to him whenever possible. Several of his compositions, guitar and otherwise, were written in homage to Bach. In them, Villa-Lobos uses certain Baroque elements, of course tempered with a relaxed Brazilian flair that manifests itself in certain elements such as tempo fluctuation and metric shifts. *Prélude No. 3*, written in homage to Bach, features binary form, extensive use of sequences, and motoric rhythms. Later analyses will show how Villa-Lobos takes these Baroque techniques and adapts them to fit the character of Brazilian music.

Guitar Techniques

Villa-Lobos's guitar techniques were first introduced in his *Douze Études* for solo guitar, published in 1929 and written at the request of Andrés Segovia. In this set of etudes, Villa-Lobos set out to employ creative and efficient ways to use the guitar. One example is fingerboard planing: forming one chord shape and shifting that shape up and down the neck of the guitar. He honed these techniques, such as fingerboard

planing, frequent use of open strings as pedals, and string doubling for timbral interest, and carried them through to his *Cinq Préludes*. Instead of exploiting them, as he had in the etudes, he refined them and used them more sparingly to suit the nature of each prelude.

It is not clear which techniques Villa-Lobos invented and which ones he acquired from other guitarists. Being a guitarist himself, he certainly was familiar enough with the instrument to have imagined these ideas on his own, but he spent many years playing with other street musicians, and, as Bryan McCann states, “the erudite modernist composer Heitor Villa-Lobos incorporated the guitar techniques of amateur choro musicians into his compositions.”⁹ Which ones he invented and which ones he acquired is of no consequence here; his real skill was working all of these various elements—influences and techniques—into refined pieces that have become core pieces in the classical guitar repertoire.

Survey of Existing Literature

Many of Villa-Lobos’s works have been analyzed but not many of his guitar pieces. Alan Goldspiel has taken an interesting approach to Villa-Lobos’s music. In his dissertation, “Issues in Contemporary Analysis and the Solo Guitar Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos,” he surveys the various types of analysis, such as Schenkerian analysis, Schoenberg and

⁹ Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 7.

Meyer's motivic analysis, musical semiotics, and Forte's atonal analysis, discusses certain limitations of these systems in relation to the music of Villa-Lobos, and attempts to find the best way to analyze the *Cinq Préludes*. His main solution, simply put, is to use a Schenkerian graph to represent the pitch structure of each piece. In order to make the graph work, however, he must make exceptions to Schenker's conventions of how to interpret notes on levels that are close to the surface of the music, which he admits before presenting the analyses. The deeper levels are very similar to those found in Schenker's analyses of most tonal music, with an underlying prolongation of tonic until a final cadence. These analyses provide a picture of the overall structure of these pieces by displaying a contextual framework into which the surface features fit.¹⁰

Other than Goldspiel's dissertation and a later article further explaining Villa-Lobos's guitar techniques¹¹, only a small handful of articles have been written about various preludes, and none of them explores the stylistic influences on these preludes—why Villa-Lobos wrote what he wrote. Instead, they focus on different aspects of voice-leading in various preludes.¹² In addition to these articles, there is also

¹⁰ Alan Goldspiel, "Issues in Contemporary Analysis and the Solo Guitar Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos" (DMA diss., University of Hartford, 1994).

¹¹ Alan Goldspiel, "A New Look at Musical Structure and the Guitar in the Music of Villa-Lobos," *Soundboard, Guitar Foundation of America* 27, no. 3 (2000).

¹² John Mills, "A Closer Look, No. 5: 'Prelude No. 4,' Heitor Villa-Lobos," *Classical Guitar* 20, (March 2002): 35.

one that discusses rumors surrounding a possible sixth prelude that has been lost over time.¹³

Analytical Approach

Villa-Lobos's music can be a challenge to analyze using traditional means. It bounces between traditional tonality and more modern, twentieth-century techniques. There are two main reasons for this challenge: 1.) Villa-Lobos incorporates a multitude of styles into his music, for which several means of analysis are necessary, and 2.) he focuses on timbre, pedal tones (for harmonic and timbral reasons), strings doublings, and new guitar techniques just as much, and, in some cases, more than he focuses on standard harmonies. In order to show various structural elements in these preludes, I will use a modified Schenkerian approach, since, due to the new guitar techniques, his music does not always follow the common patterns found in most tonal music represented by strict Schenkerian notation. For surface features, Roman numerals, other kinds of chord symbols, and traditional formal analytical techniques will be employed. The combination of these techniques should account for all of the features being discussed.

John William Schaffer, "Voice-Leading: Towards a Better Understanding of Select Passages in Villa-Lobos' 'Preludes for Guitar,'" *Soundboard, Guitar Foundation of America* 7, no. 4 (1980): 155.

Steven Theodore Zwengrowski, "Structural Patterns Found in 'Prelude No. 4' by Heitor Villa-Lobos," *Soundboard, Guitar Foundation of America* 6, no. 3 (1979): 86.

¹³ John William Schaffer, "Villa-Lobos' 'Elusive 6th Prelude,'" *Guitar & Lute* (October 1980), 32.

CHAPTER II

PRÉLUDE NO. 1

When comparing all five preludes, *Prélude No. 1* and *Prélude No. 5* stand out as the most purely Brazilian. The Brazilian features are not mixed with non-traditional impressionistic techniques or the harmonic complexities of Baroque music. Instead, they epitomize certain Brazilian qualities. In *Prélude No. 1*, the melody takes the stage. Everything that is not part of the melody exists to highlight it. This emphasis on melody suggest that the prelude stems from the *modinha* tradition in Brazil.

The Modinha and the Choro

The *modinha* is a type of art song that originated in Lisbon's salons. At first, the *modinha* consisted of a lyrical vocal line, inspired by Italian arias, with simple piano accompaniment. Throughout the nineteenth century, the genre descended from polite Portuguese and Brazilian society to common Brazilian society. As the *choro* (popular) musicians and street musicians took over the song form, the guitar replaced the piano.¹⁴

With this societal shift grew a new type of *modinha*. The original *modinhas* of Portugal were heavily influenced by Italian arias and maintained the refined attitude, eloquent poetry, and sophisticated

¹⁴ Stela M. Brandão et al., *A Guide to the Latin American Art Song Repertoire: An Annotated Catalog of Twentieth-Century Art Songs for Voice and Piano*, ed. Maya Hoover (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 59-60.

harmonic language. Once the street musicians took over the form, it took on a more relaxed, yet still romantic, attitude, plainer lyrics, and simpler harmonies. Because of the transference of the *modinha* from high society to common society, two different types of *modinha* existed: the Italian aria style *modinha* and the sentimental, simple-style *modinha*. Example 2.1 contains two examples of the *modinha*, the first in the Italian aria style and the second in the simple-style.

As the simple style *modinha* became more popular, the strict, standard conventions were loosened as musicians began to adapt it to fit within other popular styles. The *choro*, for example, started to mingle with the *modinha* and assimilate some of its melodic features. The independent *choro*, as we will see in Chapter Three, was an improvisatory style that comprised many different instruments. The structure was very similar to an American jazz band, with individual instruments improvising over an underlying chord progression. The *modinha* and the *choro* both underwent changes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and, as is common with popular Brazilian forms, the terms have been used widely and obscured, but the fundamental difference between these two forms is that the *modinha* is melodically-oriented, and the *choro* is instrumentally-oriented. At times, the genres overlap, but for the most part, the *modinha* maintains a long, drawn-out, lyrical

melody with a simple accompaniment, and the *choro* comprises many simpler parts coming together to form a rhythmically active whole.¹⁵ ¹⁶

Villa-Lobos was very familiar with the *modinha* tradition. It was widespread, and many *choro* musicians played them. Villa-Lobos even played these with Catulo, a well-known *choro* musician.¹⁷

As previously mentioned, as the Italian aria style *modinhas* became more popular and changed into simple-style *modinhas*, they became more casual. This meant that they had simpler harmonies, melodies that were less ornamented, and language that was more modest. By the time Villa-Lobos was playing these, the *modinha* had become basically a folk song. Hence, this prelude does not look exactly like the previous *modinhas*. He was using the general concept of a long, lyrical melody with simple accompaniment and not necessarily adhering to all the strict conventions of the Italian aria style *modinhas*. *Prélude No. 1* fits the category, but Villa-Lobos uses phrases of irregular length, unlike the earlier *modinhas*, which used more regular phrase rhythm.

¹⁵ The *choro* will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III in relation to *Prélude No. 2*.

¹⁶ Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia, *Choro: A Social History of a Brazilian Popular Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2005), 22-7.

¹⁷ Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia, *Choro*, 26.

Example 2.1, Italian aria style *modinha* and simple-style *modinha*

Italian aria style *modinha*, “Vive amor dentro em meu peiro,” by J.R.

Coelho¹⁸

The image displays a musical score for a Soprano and Piano. The score is written in 3/4 time and the key of D major (two sharps). The lyrics are in Portuguese. The first system shows the Soprano line with a triplet of eighth notes on the word 'den-tro' and the Piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line with a slur over the words 'a - is, Vi-ve a mor den tro em meu pei - to, se a-li -' and the Piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line with a slur over 'men - - ta só de a - is sus -' and the Piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

Soprano

Piano

S

Pno.

S

Pno.

Vi-ve a mor den-tro em meu pei - to, se a-li men - ta só de

a - is, Vi-ve a mor den tro em meu pei - to, se a-li -

men - - ta só de a - is sus -

¹⁸ Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia, *Choro*, 25.

Example 2.1, Italian aria style *modinha* and simple-style *modinha*

(continued)

Simple-style *modinha*, “Beijo a mão,” by José Mauricio Nunes Garcia, arranged by Thomas Garcia.¹⁹

Soprano

Piano

S

10.

S

10.

Lyrics: Bei - jo a mão que me con - de - na a ser sem - pre des - gra - ça - do o - be - de - ço ao meu des - tí - no res - - - pei - to po - der do -

¹⁹ Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia, *Choro*, 24.

Prélude No. 1 as a Modinha

Several features of *Prélude No. 1* resemble a *modinha*, the first of which is the emphasis on a long, drawn-out melody. Secondly, the accompaniment is technically restrained and unassuming and only serves to draw even more attention to the contour and mood of the melody, much like the way a guitarist would strum or pluck chords to accompany a soloist in a *modinha*. Thirdly, the melancholy nature of the melody, a result of its pervasive descending contour, imitates a vocal line, creating a *modinha* without words, so to speak.

Melody

In keeping with the *modinha* tradition, which derives from the Italian aria, this prelude uses ABA form, and A section contains the aforementioned melancholy melody. The melody, consisting of three phrases, spans the entire A section, with each phrase becoming gradually longer. A common melodic procedure practiced by Villa-Lobos is to make three attempts to get where he is going. This procedure emphasizes whatever emotion or idea Villa-Lobos is trying to portray. In this case, the melody seems to become more weary and melancholic with each attempt. The first phrase journeys only so far and then stops, then the second phrase begins in the same manner and continues a little farther than the first phrase, and then the third phrase, also using the same beginning material, carries the melody all the way to wherever

Villa-Lobos first attempted to go. In this case, the goal is the temporary resolution felt at an elision that begins the B section, where the B in the lower voice (m. 51) resolves to the E on the downbeat of the B section (m. 52). In other words, the goal of the E minor A section is the start of the E major B section.

Villa-Lobos highlights the melody even more by increasing its length with each statement. The first of the three phrases is about 12 measures long, the second phrase is about 16 measures, and the last phrase spans about 24 measures total, with a bit of repetition. The first phrase, shown in Example 2.2, consists of the melody in its simplest form.

Example 2.2, *Prélude No. 1*, phrase 1, mm. 1-13

He then expands the initial melodic material from the first phrase to form the second phrase (Example 2.3), beginning with an initial widened leap. The leap up to E in m. 16 widens the leap up to D in m. 4, followed by a more chromatic descent. Then, before the descent that is similar to mm. 11 and 12 and right after the melody reaches scale degree

two, he adds a four-measure expansion (mm. 22-26) that sweeps back upward.

Example 2.3, *Prélude No. 1*, phrase 2, mm. 13-29

expansion

Em: i v

The third and longest phrase (Example 2.4) is extended even further in similar ways. The leap in the melody that was widened in the second phrase reaches one step further this time, all the way up to F# (m. 32), and once again descends chromatically. This time, right where the second phrase had the four-measure expansion, the chromatic melodic descent stops on scale degree five, B, reiterating that note while the accompaniment continues to waver back and forth by half step, gradually slowing down into a dramatic pause before what should be the same final descent as in mm. 11 and 12. Here, instead of letting the descent reach its destination, Villa-Lobos breaks the pattern and, as is his style, adds several more attempts (mm. 39-51) to get to the bottom of the phrase, delaying the resolution until the downbeat of the first measure of the B section (m. 52).

Example 2.4, *Prélude No. 1*, phrase 3, mm. 29-52

The musical score shows a single melodic line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is characterized by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Above the staff, measure numbers m.31, m.39, m.43, m.47, m.51, and m.52 are indicated. Above m.31 and m.51, there is a caret (^) and the number 5, indicating a fifth fret ornament. Above m.52, there is a caret (^) and the number 5, indicating a fifth fret ornament. Below the staff, chord symbols are provided: Em: i, i, V, i, i, V, i.

Accompaniment

Villa-Lobos also highlights the melody by creating the perfect accompanimental backdrop. The accompaniment showcases the melody in several ways: it maintains mostly the same figuration throughout so as to go unnoticed and to highlight the contour of the melody, it is fairly harmonically stagnant, changing only when absolutely necessary, and it sometimes overlaps with the melody pitchwise (but on a separate string), creating a seamless relationship between the two.

Throughout both A sections, the rhythm of the accompaniment remains nearly the same. For the most part, it stays out of the way, striking chords in alternation with the melody or during the sustain of the melody. Nearly the only occasion on which it sounds simultaneously with the melody is when the melody is only reiterating a note, very rarely with a new melodic note. Also, this usually happens on weak beats and not usually on downbeats. This arrangement helps keep the melody clear, and it also keeps the harmony from being obscured. Example 2.5 shows a sample of the interaction between the melody and the accompaniment.

Example 2.5, *Prélude No. 1*, mm. 1-5



Not only does the rhythm in the accompaniment stay the same much of the time, the pitches also stay fairly stagnant. By maintaining the same inversion for several measures at a time, the contour of the melody shows through even more so than if the accompaniment were constantly shifting from one inversion to another.

The purpose of this arrangement of the accompaniment is two-fold. As previously mentioned, the stationary accompaniment enables the rise and fall of the melody to come forth in the texture. Also, Villa-Lobos must have constructed it in this manner in order to make it more easily playable on the guitar. In this way, he has made it possible to pluck the notes of the accompaniment either entirely on open strings, with at least a few open strings, or, in some cases, when the whole chord must be fingered, with minimal shifts. As a result, the performer is able to focus the most attention on shaping the melodic phrases instead of on having to shift chords frequently for the accompaniment.

Another way in which he calls attention to the melody is by infrequently changing the harmony, creating a neutral backdrop against which the melody can shine. When the harmony does change, it is

usually a subtle change with smooth voice leading. Take, for example, the first phrase of the melody, Example 2.6. The phrase begins with the melody making its ascent while the accompaniment strikes Em chords throughout, and only towards the very end of the phrase does the harmony change. Even in m. 4, when the melody reaches its highest point and then begins its descent, the accompanying harmony remains the same. Not until m. 8 of the twelve-measure phrase does the harmony change. Here it shifts to the predominant, an Am chord, right before the dominant that ends the phrase (m. 9-12) and sets up the tonic on the downbeat of m. 13 that begins the second phrase.

This 5-1 descent in mm. 11-13, shown as a lower voice in the reduction, is secondary to the main melody and not regarded as a resolution of the first phrase; instead, it links the first and second phrases together. The first phrase ends on the dominant with a melody that is interrupted at scale degree 2 before it can resolve to the tonic. This descent in the lower voice provides some sense of resolution, but the beginning of the second phrase detracts from the feeling that the melody has truly reached scale degree 1.

Example 2.6, *Prélude No. 1*, mm. 1-13

Andantino espressivo

1 2 3 4 5

Em: i

6 7 8 9 10

iv V

11 12 13

i

Reduction of mm. 1-13

m.3 m.8 m.9 m.10 || m.13

5 4 3 2

Em: i v

The accompaniment in the second phrase follows suit and remains on the tonic until m. 8, where it also changes for the first time to an Am chord. This time, however, Villa-Lobos adds a chromatic passing tone, C# (mm. 17-18), hinting at the large number of chromatic passing tones to come, both in the melody and in the accompaniment.

Mood

In addition to the length and drama of the melody and the way the accompaniment remains demure, Villa-Lobos also showcases the *modinha*-like melody with the mood he creates within this piece, which is hinted at in the subtitle. These five preludes were not originally published with their subtitles. Often Villa-Lobos would write music and only later append a descriptive title, leaving uncertainty about why he chose certain titles, whether he thought about these subjects as he was writing the pieces, or whether he perhaps attached the titles later to suit some occasion. *Prélude No. 1*, subtitled “Lyric Melody – Homage to the Brazilian *Sertanejo*,” represents one of these cases. The mood of the melody seems as if it could embody a number of ideas. Its slow and somewhat laborious melody could typify the arduous life in the country, or the melody’s melancholy character could be a representation of loss. Whatever the case, he seems to be loosely using the sentimental and expressive *modinha* as a model.

Some *modinha* melodies are light in character, while others portray deep emotion. This particular prelude exemplifies a *modinha* that is heavy and emotional in character. One contributor to the *modinha*-like quality of this prelude is the contour of the melody. The feeling of descending pervades the entire piece, giving it a melancholy feeling. Most phrases have a swift initial ascent from the scale degree 1 to scale degree 5 but then descend for the remainder of the phrase. This

descending motion, sometimes long and drawn-out, like the first phrase, and sometimes as part of a smaller, quicker swell of emotion, as we will see later in the B section, is present in the melody on several levels and even in the accompaniment in certain places.

Beginning with the melody as it is presented on the surface, we see the material from which the mood of the entire piece comes. The melody sets the tone, and then the accompaniment follows suit in its unobtrusive way. As we see in Example 2.7, the melody makes a quick ascent and reaches its decorative (but not structural) peak in the fourth measure. This decorative peak, indicated by an asterisk in the example below, comes right after the ascent reaches the fifth scale degree, its structural peak. After the quick climb to the highest point, the melody changes direction and begins its slow, unhurried, stepwise descent for the remaining eight measures. Being a twelve-measure melody, this is an early peak.

Example 2.7, *Prélude No. 1*, mm. 1-13

The musical notation shows a twelve-measure melody in G major. The melody begins on G4, ascends to A4, B4, and reaches its decorative peak at E5 in measure 4, which is marked with an asterisk (*). From measure 4, the melody descends stepwise: D5 in measure 5, C5 in measure 6, B4 in measure 7, A4 in measure 8, G4 in measure 9, F#4 in measure 10, E4 in measure 11, D4 in measure 12, and finally G3 in measure 13. The scale degrees 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 are indicated above the notes in measures 3, 8, 9, 10, and 13 respectively. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a double bar line at the end of measure 13.

With each phrase, the descent in the melody starts out from a higher decorative peak (because of the appoggiatura in m. 4 and the corresponding appoggiaturas in the following two phrases, mm. 16 and 32) and grows longer and more chromatic, adding more drama and unrest, making it even more fulfilling to get to the last chord of the piece, which, in the final A section, is an unexpected E major that offers a glimmer of hope after the emotionally arduous journey.

Besides the obvious descent in the melody, other expressions of this almost mournful sighing present themselves in other parts of the piece. The accompaniment contains these sighing gestures at times. For example, at the end of the first A section, mm. 39-51, the melody keeps reiterating a descent to the tonic that is strongest on the third resolution to the tonic, on the downbeat of the B section. (The two previous tonic resolutions seem weaker since they resolve up to a tonic harmonic an octave higher, while the last time the tonic comes, it is the accented, low, sixth-string E that begins the B section.) Each time the melody reaches the E harmonic, the accompaniment spills over in a dramatic descending tonic chord that goes through each inversion as it descends, mm. 43 and 47, taking the momentum forward to the next attempt by the melody to reach a strong tonic, the low E (m. 52) being a more stable and reliable note on the guitar than the previous E harmonics. See Example 2.8.

Example 2.8, *Prélude No. 1*, mm. 40-49

The musical score for Example 2.8, *Prélude No. 1*, mm. 40-49, is presented on three staves. The first staff covers measures 40 to 44, the second staff covers measures 45 to 49, and the third staff covers measures 50 to 53. The music is written in a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo markings are *rit.* (ritardando) at measure 40, *a tempo* at measure 41, and *Più mosso* (faster) at measure 52. There are also markings for *rit.* at measure 51 and *ma* (more) at measure 52. The score includes various articulations such as slurs, accents, and fermatas. A *Φ. 12* marking is present above measures 43, 47, and 48. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final note of measure 53.

A pervasive feature of this prelude that further accommodates the overarching descending theme manifests itself in the way that Villa-Lobos shapes his gestures. Often, a phrase will suddenly sweep upwards quickly, like the ascent to scale degree 5 in the first phrase of the piece (mm. 1-4), and then take more time to descend, like the remainder of the first phrase (mm. 4-12). The swift upward motions carry the melody high enough to set up a significant descent, and they accomplish this quickly so that the emphasis stays on the descent. This idea from the A section carries through the piece and forms the basis for the entire B section, which consists of two-measure gestures with two-beat ascents and four-beat descents. Example 2.9 shows a reduction of the B section, grouping each gesture with a set of slurs.

This section serves to bring the melody back up to scale degree five so that it can once again begin its descent in the final A section. The initial two phrases of the B section, mm. 52-55, toss the melody back up to the scale degree five, or B, and then it works its way down to the tonic by step. The next two phrases, mm. 58-62, overshoot the B, moving all the way up to the tonic and descending down by step to the B. Villa-Lobos plays with this idea throughout the B section and finally ends up on the B by the end of the section, preparing the melody to begin the final A section. In a way, the B section acts like a large-scale upward sweep preparing a descent, just like the smaller ones that comprise the section.

Example 2.9, B section (reduction), mm. 52-77

The musical score for Example 2.9, B section (reduction), mm. 52-77, is presented in three staves. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first staff (measures 52-58) shows a melodic line starting on the tonic (C#) and moving up to the fifth (G#) by measure 54, then descending. A fermata is placed over measure 54. The second staff (measures 60-65) continues the melodic sweep, reaching the tonic (C#) by measure 62 and then descending. A fermata is placed over measure 62. The third staff (measures 66-77) shows the melody descending further, with a fermata over measure 70. The score includes various annotations: 'EM: I' under measure 52, '5' above measure 54, 'V7 I' under measures 64 and 65, and 'iv V' under measures 66 and 70. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5 above notes.

As we have seen in *Prélude No. 1*, Villa-Lobos appropriately starts off his set of five preludes with a tribute to the *modinha*, one of Brazil's favorite types of art song. Just like the *modinha*, the focal point of this prelude is the melody. The melody is long and dramatic, the accompaniment creates the perfect, unobtrusive backdrop, and both the melody and the accompaniment express deep emotion with swiftly sweeping, upward gestures, followed by slow, labored, descending lines.

CHAPTER III

PRÉLUDE NO. 2

As previously mentioned, Villa-Lobos's solo guitar music brings different musical styles together and explores new guitar techniques, weaving these ideas together thoughtfully to set a singular mood for each piece. Taking *Prélude No. 2* as an example, we will see how Villa-Lobos uses simple harmonies in the A section that stem from the *choro* tradition realized by a melody that is reminiscent of Baroque compound melodies, and, in the B section, a guitar technique that facilitates an impressionistic conception of harmony, all in an effort to express the lighthearted and mischievous character of a young person from Rio de Janeiro.

The Choro

The term, *choro*, referring to a style of Brazilian popular music, runs rampant in Brazilian music literature and has many different meanings. The word refers to a genre of music, the ensemble that plays it, or a place where this music is performed. Usually the ensembles that perform this style of music consist of many different types of instruments, including the guitar, other similarly-played stringed instruments, such as the *cavaquinho*, the flute, and various types of percussion. The music is usually very rhythmically active, harmonically

accessible to the general public, and largely improvisatory, since many of the original *choro* musicians could not read music.²⁰

A standard *choro* combines many different elements into one rhythmic framework. The bass line provides the harmonic and rhythmic foundation, the stringed instruments fill in the harmonies, the percussion instruments fill in all of the different parts of each beat, resulting in a continuous stream of sixteenth notes, generally in 2/4 time, one instrument improvises on a common melody, and sometimes another instrument plays a countermelody.

Example 3.1 contains an excerpt from a popular *choro* called, “Flôr Amorosa,” by Joaquim Antonio Callado da Silva, 1848-1880, a Brazilian composer who propelled the *choro* genre and played the flute. All of the parts in this *choro* lock together to occupy each sixteenth note, much like the motoric rhythm we will see in *Prélude No. 2*. The second guitar supplies the bass, the first guitar supplies steady rhythmic and harmonic filler, the *cavaquinho* provides percussive rhythmic interest while repeating the same note, and the flute plays the melody, either as written, elaborated, or improvised.²¹ Interestingly, the first measure of Callado’s *choro* is strikingly similar to the opening of Villa-Lobos’s *Prélude No. 2*. This comparison will be further explained later in the discussion of the compound melody in *Prélude No. 2*.

²⁰ Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia, *Choro*, 3.

²¹ Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia, *Choro*: 3-12.

Example 3.1, “Flôr Amorosa,” by Joaquim Antonio Callado da

Silva²²

Musical score for the first system of "Flôr Amorosa". The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. It features four staves: Flute, Cavaquinho, Guitar 1, and Guitar 2. The Flute part has a melodic line with slurs. The Cavaquinho part has a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. The Guitar 1 part has a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. The Guitar 2 part has a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. Chord markings above the Cavaquinho staff are F, Bb, F7, and Bb.

Musical score for the second system of "Flôr Amorosa". The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. It features four staves: Flute (Fl.), Ukulele (Uk.), Guitar 1 (Gtr. 1), and Guitar 2 (Gtr. 2). The Flute part has a melodic line with slurs. The Ukulele part has a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. The Guitar 1 part has a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. The Guitar 2 part has a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. Chord markings above the Ukulele staff are Cmin, Bb, F, and Bb.

It is certain that Villa-Lobos had extensive knowledge of *choros*. The style ran rampant throughout the streets of Brazil, and he performed

²² Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia, *Choro*, 9.

them when he played in brothels and theatres as a teenager.²³ He does not reference the term, *choro*, in the subtitle of this piece, as he did in other pieces, but, as we will see, this prelude and the *choro*, as a genre, share many similarities.

Prélude No. 2 as a *Choro*: Harmony

Villa-Lobos used very basic harmonies for this piece, in keeping with the *choro* tradition. Later, in the B section, the harmonic language becomes more complicated, but, at the beginning, the chord progressions are very clear. The first phrase, 1-9, consists of four smaller gestures. The first two gestures, mm. 1-4, simply follow a I-V/V-V7-I pattern, the third gesture, mm. 5-6, tonicizes the predominant, A, and then the fourth gesture, mm. 7-9, brings the cadence.

Example 3.2, *Prélude No. 2*, mm. 1-9

1 2 3 4

Andantino rit. a tempo rit. a tempo

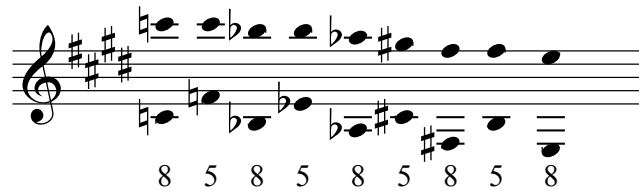
EM: I V/V V7 I V/V V7

²³ Garcia, *The Choro, the Guitar, and Villa-Lobos*, 63.

Reduction of mm. 1-9

The rest of the A section, mm. 9-34, consists of two main phrases in the form of a new type of gesture that is more scalar as opposed to the arpeggiated first gestures and alternates exclusively between V7 and I. The only thing besides this V7-I motion in the second half of the A section is an 8-5 linear intervallic pattern (mm. 23-26) that connects these two phrases, shown below in Example 3.3.

Example 3.3, *Prélude No. 2*, 8-5 linear intervallic pattern, mm. 23-27



Besides referencing a *choro*, using simple harmonies allowed Villa-Lobos to be more creative in his figuration, as we will see next upon examination of the melody. Later, in the B section, when the harmonies become more complex, the figuration becomes simpler. In fact, the complex harmonies are a result of the figuration in the B section.

Compound Melody

Having studied the underlying harmonies, which set a pleasantly carefree and casual tone for the piece, it is now possible to examine the melody in the A section. The compound melody, reduced into one octave in Example 3.2, could be a result of two different influences: Baroque music and the *choro* tradition.

Choros contain melodies that often span well over an octave. Example 3.4 shows a collection of *choro* openings that all extend beyond an octave, some of which occupy two octaves. Villa-Lobos's melody, which spans over an octave, could easily be placed alongside these typical *choro* melodies.

Example 3.4 Sample *choro* openings²⁴

a. Saudade do Cavaquinho



b. Não me toques. . .



c. Saxofone, porque choras?



d. Nenê



e. Escorregando



The compound melody also recalls the compound melodies of the Baroque Period. Certainly, many types of music have compound melodies, but, in this prelude, the melody is reminiscent of a Bach cello suite or some other solo instrumental work by Bach in which one melodic line encompasses multiple voices. With most stringed instruments, each voice must wait to progress until the surface melody comes back around—though, on the guitar it is possible to include more simultaneous voices at once. Because of that, Villa-Lobos is able to

²⁴ Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia, *Choro*, 11.

chromatic descent. This pattern happens again, and then the melodies both leap up by a sixth. After this, they continue in their separate ways. Perhaps this was a common figure in the *choro* tradition.

Example 3.6, Callado vs. Villa-Lobos

Callado



Villa-Lobos



Motoric Rhythm

As do many Baroque pieces and most *choros*, this prelude consists almost entirely of running sixteenth notes, creating a motoric rhythm.²⁵ He maintains the sixteenth note momentum throughout both the A and B sections. This strict rhythmic construction sets *Prélude No. 2* apart from the others, since most of the other pieces have much more relaxed and inconsistent rhythms, and provides more support for the influence of both Baroque music and the *choro* tradition.

²⁵ Villa-Lobos uses this technique again later in *Prélude No. 3* and *Prélude No. 4*, but only in the B sections.

The constant stream of sixteenth notes, resulting from the combination of the various rhythms in the accompaniment, is one of the most recognizable traits of the *choro*.²⁶ Perhaps Villa-Lobos was imitating an ensemble that was playing a *choro*, and he saw fit to have the guitar represent several different types of instruments. A *choro* ensemble would have every part of the beat occupied by one instrument or another, so, in this case, the guitar is taking on all of these parts. The lowest notes on the guitar represent a bass, the inner voices act as the rhythm section and accompanying instruments, and the melody moves about freely in an improvisatory manner.

A great deal of Baroque music, of course, is also known for having motoric rhythm. In many Baroque pieces that contain compound melodies, the motoric rhythm also acts as a vehicle for the different voices that form the compound melody. Instead of the figuration in *Prélude No. 1*, where the accompaniment stayed out of the way of the melody, the melody and accompaniment are interwoven in this prelude, tied together by the motoric rhythm. The underlying melody efficiently moves through the accompanying voices, picking up each line where it previously left off. Just like the compound melody, it is not clear whether Villa-Lobos acquired the idea for a motoric rhythm from Baroque music or the *choro*; however, the rhythm resembles both styles and is a perfect pairing of similar concepts from these styles.

²⁶ Tamara Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas Garcia, *Choro*: 8.

Harmonic Planing and Fingerboard Planing in the B Section

Planing, both as a harmonic device and an efficient guitar-playing technique, plays an important role in the B section. Once again, the concepts are interwoven, and it is difficult to prove which idea came first. Villa-Lobos witnessed harmonic planing in the music of the impressionists during his time in Europe and also in São Paulo, Brazil in 1922 during the Week of Modern Art, a festival in which modernist artists, writers, and composers presented their new ideas. He uses this technique frequently in his solo guitar music, which pairs perfectly with the concept of fingerboard planing, another guitar technique that he uses frequently.

The B section of this prelude is a series of parallel major chords, as we will see later in the analysis. In order to make create these strands of parallel chords, all the performer must do is form the initial chord shape, the F# major chord in this case, and slide it up and down the neck of the guitar stopping where desired. This technique makes for very efficient chord shifts, since the performer does not have to form a new shape for each new chord.

This particular chord shape only occupies the four lowest strings, so that the two upper strings are free to be plucked openly as pedal strings. Surely by design, these two open strings are the B and high E strings, resulting in the presence of tonic and dominant pedals throughout the entire section, with the major chords shifting around

them. The pedals contribute to the sense of tonic but do not affect the function of the major chords moving in accordance with the melodic line of the fifths, since the shifting chords always have the root on the bottom and the fifth on top enforcing their own harmony and leading the line.

Since much of Villa-Lobos's music is a mixture of ideas and techniques, a probable conclusion is that the construction of the B section is a result of both the impressionistic influence and the desire to use a new chording technique on the guitar. They are intertwined in such a way that it is difficult to tell which idea came first. Perhaps the idea of planing inspired him to take advantage of the nature of the guitar, or it was the guitar that made it possible for him to write parallel chords. Either way, the result is a virtuosic and harmonically interesting section that creates his desired contrast to the A section.

Harmony in the B Section

The harmonies in this section are very simple, consisting of successions of major chords. As mentioned before, Villa-Lobos does not employ traditional harmony in the B section, in sharp contrast to the very traditional chord progressions in the more melodic A section. In this section, he creates strings of major chords that follow somewhat of a traditional overall chord progression, but that are obscured because of the major quality of every single chord. The chords in this section consist of two lower voices that are moving in open fifths, with arpeggios

over the fifths. Some notes in these arpeggios are part of the major chords, but some are pedal strings. The lower fifths and arpeggiated chords stay exactly together as the fifths lead from one major chord to the next.

In order to discover the underlying framework of this section, we must first examine the open fifths that lead the section. Then, we must eliminate the neighbor motion upon which the section is based and the passing chords, so that the structural chords can be seen clearly.

Example 3.7 shows the first two phrases from the score (mm. 35-50).

Example 3.8 then shows the open fifths with slurs over the neighbor motion in mm. 35-50, the first two phrases of the section. These two phrases will suffice to show the reduction process.

Example 3.7, *Prélude No. 2*, mm. 35-50

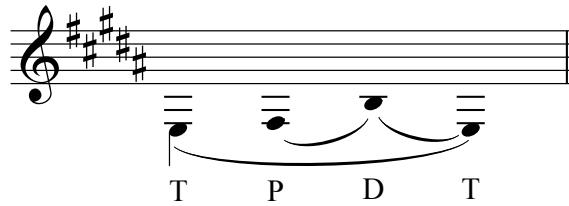
35 36 37 38 39
Più mosso
 F# G F# F# G F# D
 40 41 42 43 44
 C F# G F#

Example 3.8, mm. 35-50 (reduction)

Continuing to reduce the texture in this way results in a string of the structural chords for the entire section, shown in Example 3.9, along with the basic root movement, which turns out to be a standard tonic-predominant-dominant-tonic progression.

Example 3.9, *Prélude No. 2*, mm. 35-83

Basic root movement, mm. 35-83



As is apparent from Example 3.9, every chord in this series is a major chord, and E and B open string pedals pervade the series. These pedals are not included in the analysis of the chords, since they serve to reinforce E as the tonal center while the chords shift around them.

At first glance, this section seems to wander aimlessly. Upon closer examination of the structural chords, a traditional progression emerges from the texture. However, this texture is obscured by two things. First of all, all of the chords are major, which takes away from the usual conception of a functional progression. Secondly, the open string pedals obscure the quality of the individual chords, although, overall, they serve as constant aural reminders of the tonic and dominant, E and B.

The main goal of the section is the Em chord in m. 83, the last chord in the two previous examples. Once the series of major chords reaches this Em chord, a descending string of augmented chords, beginning with an F augmented chord (acting as V/V), immediately follows (Example, 3.10, mm. 85-90) and leads to the B augmented chord

that ends the section and serves as a dominant leading to the return the A section in E major. At this point, during the descent of the augmented chords, the E pedal disappears, and only the B pedal remains and then becomes part of the chord once the B augmented chord is reached.

Example 3.10, *Prélude No. 2*, mm. 85-90



Instead of the focus on melody that is displayed in the A section, the B section centers around the open fifths. Because of the strict planing and the open string pedals does not leave room for an overarching melody above the fifths. Accents also accentuate the open fifths, lending further proof that they are in fact the focus of this section, instead of a conspicuous upper melody, such as the one that characterized the A section.

At the very end of the B section, after a long, descending string of augmented chords with an E pedal, the arpeggios finally land on a B+ chord in m. 88 that is functioning as a dominant leading to the E major chord that begins the final A section.

Villa-Lobos's blending of styles and creative use of the guitar are clearly displayed in this particular prelude. The influences and

techniques are paired perfectly. He uses a compound melodic structure to carry out simple harmonies reminiscent of the *choro*, uses the guitar as a miniature representation of a *choro* ensemble, and pairs impressionistic harmonic planing with guitaristic fingerboard planing. All of these influences and techniques come together to express the personality of a blithe, brash youth from Rio.

CHAPTER IV

PRÉLUDE NO. 3

Like the previous prelude, *Prélude No. 3* clearly exemplifies Villa-Lobos's desire to marry different styles and adapt them to pair with sensible guitar techniques. In this piece, he uses techniques from the Impressionists in the A section and Bach in the B section. Specifically, the A section features planing, used in a different way than it is used in the other preludes, and the B section features sequencing and another compound melody that is much clearer than the one in *Prélude No. 2*. As a result of these particular influences, this prelude has much more of a European aesthetic than the other preludes, which still sound Brazilian despite the outside influences.

Beginning on the large scale, this prelude, which is in AB form, consists of two sharply contrasting sections. Villa-Lobos's habit, as seen in the other preludes, is to create vastly differing formal sections, but he usually comes back to his original idea. In this case, he begins with an A section that is somewhat harmonically vague and largely gestural and follows up with a harmonically clear B section that consists of the same descending figure throughout, never returning to the wandering feeling of the A section.

Rhythmic Contrast Between the A and B Sections

The two sections differ mainly in rhythm and harmony. The A section is much more rhythmically free and diverse, with frequent meter changes that create an unpredictable, improvisatory feeling.²⁷ Each of the first four phrases begins with a sweeping sixteenth note gesture that builds up to a full chord. Example 4.1 shows one of these gestures, found in mm. 3-4.

Example 4.1, *Prélude No. 3*, mm. 3-4



Brazilian rhythms are also very free, but the rhythmic gestures in this section is more like the rhythms Villa-Lobos would have seen in the Impressionistic music he encountered during his travels. The rhythmic motion seems to be going nowhere in particular, just simply drifting from one chord to the next. Once the B section starts in m. 23, it sets in place a momentum that carries the piece to its final cadence. Only then does it have a clear sense of purpose and direction.

²⁷ Alan Goldspiel, "Issues in Contemporary Analysis and the Solo Guitar Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos," 40.

The B section, mm. 23-36, where the piece starts to gain momentum, features a rhythmic technique that Villa-Lobos probably learned from the music of Bach, his prime inspiration. This section consists almost entirely of sixteenth notes, creating a motoric rhythm similar to the rhythms found in the music of Bach. Almost every division of the beat is accounted for throughout the whole B section.

Harmonic Contrast Between the A and B Sections

The formal sections in this prelude are indeed rhythmically very different, but they are even more noticeably different when it comes to harmony. Interestingly, the same influences manifest themselves in the harmony exactly where they manifested themselves in the rhythm. Once again, we will begin with the French-inspired A section.

Even though this prelude was written as an homage to Bach, the A section has a very strong French tone because Villa-Lobos uses planing, a harmonic technique he learned from Debussy and the other impressionists in order to achieve a very calm, dreamy, seemingly meandering section. At times, upon listening, and probably by design, it seems as if the chords may not be journeying towards a particular goal, but, by the end of the section, as we will see later, upon closer examination, the melody has clearly ascended to the fifth scale degree to prepare for the descent to the tonic that takes place over the course of the B section. The fact that the A section is, in fact, heading towards the

fifth scale degree reveals that the section has direction after all and is not simply wandering from one chord to the next.

To go along with the varying, nonchalant rhythmic motion of the A section, the harmony also seemingly wanders around with no goal. The harmonic atmosphere is one of uncertainty and aimlessness. The title claims that the prelude is in A minor, and indeed, by the transition from the A to the B section (mm. 20-23), the key is made clear. However, the A section is embellished with chromaticism, which obscures a pure sense of A minor. The next series of examples will lead us through the gestural A section.

The opening gesture, shown in Example 4.2, is a sweep of fourths and fifths, some of Villa-Lobos's favorite materials. The bass moves upward by fourths, and the upper voice stacks on top of each bass note in fifths, after having resolved from their appoggiaturas. This pattern continues through the first half of m. 1, and then the pattern changes slightly to form a G7 chord, which acts as a dominant resolving to what we would expect to be a CM chord; however, Villa-Lobos often adds sevenths to chords that would not otherwise have them, so here he uses a CM7, a III7 in Am.

Example 4.2, *Prélude No. 3*, mm. 1-2

Fifths
Am: G7 Cmaj7
 V7/III III7

He then uses the CM7 as material for the next gesture, which occurs in mm. 3-5, as shown in Example 4.3. This CM7 arpeggio leads to an F7 with an added B, which leads to the next E7 (m. 5), the first clear dominant in A minor.

Example 4.3, *Prélude No. 3*, mm. 3-5

Cmaj7 F7(add4) E7
Am: III7 bVI7/4 V7

Continuing the pattern of sweeping gestures, the next one, Example 4.4 (mm. 6-7), is similar to the first gesture, with a slight alteration. The bass repeats the leaping fourths that began the piece, while the upper voice is raised either a whole or half step from the original pattern, leading to an F# major chord.

Example 4.4, *Prélude No. 3*, mm. 6-7

The musical notation shows a treble clef staff with a sequence of chords: Am: (Sixths), V/V/ii (G), and V/ii (F#). The chords are connected by a long slur, and the notes are labeled with 'Fifths' and 'Sixths'.

Once again, the next gesture, beginning in m. 9, is an arpeggiation of the previous chord of resolution. The F# arpeggio sweeps upward and sets in motion a longer phrase that floats around, making its way indirectly from a C# half-diminished seventh chord to an A half-diminished seventh chord by way of more fingerboard planing, similar to the B section of *Prélude No. 2*, and another pedal open string, the low A. This series of half-diminished seventh chords is then sequenced down a whole step from the first occurrence, with a slight change of contour. See Example 4.5.

Example 4.5, *Prélude No. 3*, mm. 9-12, series of half-diminished seventh chords with open A pedal (fifth string)

First half-diminished seventh chord gesture, mm. 9-10

The musical notation shows a treble clef staff with a sequence of half-diminished seventh chords: A7, A#ø7, Gø7, F#ø7, G#ø7, and Aø7. The chords are connected by a long slur, and the notes are labeled with 'A7', 'A#ø7', 'Gø7', 'F#ø7', 'G#ø7', and 'Aø7'.

Similar gesture, sequenced down a step, mm. 11-12

B \flat 7 G \sharp 7 E \sharp 7 D \sharp 7 E \sharp 7 F \sharp 7

Am: ii vi \flat 7

For comparison, Example 4.6 shows an example of planing in Debussy's prelude, *La Cathédrale Engloutie*. This piece, published in 1910, well before Villa-Lobos's preludes were written, contains a great deal of planing. The first and third measures contain ascending parallel chords that are based on quartal and quintal harmony. Villa-Lobos does not use these particular harmonies—his are half-diminished seventh chords—but, like Debussy, he maintains the same chord quality throughout, with no regard to expected chord qualities in functional progressions.

Example 4.6, Claude Debussy, *La Cathédrale Engloutie*, mm. 1-3

Profondément calme (Dans une brume doucement sonore)

pp

In *Prélude No. 3*, the melodic figure in the next 3 measures, 13-15, prolongs an E half-diminished seventh chord and begins the build-up to the strong half cadence (mm. 20-22) that ends the A section and sets up the B section. The end of the A section is an uphill climb leading to scale degree five in the melody. Once the melody has peaked at scale degree five, it begins its stepwise descent to the tonic that occurs over the span of the B section.

Many chromatic chords cloud the path of the A section, but it reaches several key harmonic points on its way to the B section. Example 4.7 shows a reduction of the A section (mm. 1-22) containing the structural chords, all of which are labeled with chord symbols. The most important functional harmonic points are also labeled with Roman numerals in order to show their function in the larger harmonic scheme. In this section, the harmonic motion leads to a prolonged dominant seventh chord with scale degree five in the top voice, which sets up the 5-1 descent that takes place over the course of the B section.

Example 4.7, *Prélude No. 3*, A section (reduction), structural chords, mm. 1-22

The musical notation shows a treble clef staff with chord symbols and Roman numerals below it. The chord symbols are: C7 (m. 2), F7(add4) (m. 4), E7 (m. 5), F# (m. 7), A7 (m. 9), A^ø7 (m. 10), B^ø7 (m. 11), F#^ø7 (m. 12), E^ø7 (m. 14), Em⁹ (m. 17), and E7 (m. 20). The Roman numerals are: Am: (m. 1), V/ii (m. 7), ii^ø7 (m. 11), and V7 (m. 20). The measure numbers 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, and 20 are written above the staff. A scale degree five (^5) is indicated above the final E7 chord.

All of this harmonic uncertainty in the A section is reminiscent of Impressionism. The chords seem to wander, by means of planing, a common Impressionistic technique; however, a broader look shows that they do, in fact, have a goal, which is the prolonged dominant seventh chord leading into the B section.

Guitar Techniques Used in *Prélude No. 3*

Planing, as we have seen, is an Impressionistic technique that works particularly well on the guitar. The performer forms a chord shape and simply slides that entire shape up or down the neck of the guitar, retaining the original chord quality. The A section is full of planing. As seen in Example 4.5, mm. 9-12 contain a series of half-diminished seventh chords in which the performer retains the same chord shape throughout and slides it around the neck of the guitar while occasionally re-striking the A pedal.

Pedals are another technique Villa-Lobos likes to use for grounding sections harmonically when the chords above become increasingly chromatic, and also because it works so nicely with the layout of the guitar.²⁸ Usually these pedals are open strings, for ease of playing. Looking once again at both Example 4.5 and Example 4.7, we are able to see how Villa-Lobos maintains a tonal center by sustaining the A pedal throughout the shifting half-diminished seventh chords, while also

²⁸ Alan Goldspiel, "Issues in Contemporary Analysis and the Solo Guitar Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos," 41.

creating a sense of wandering, in order to give a sense of tonic where there is non-functional harmony. In this case, the harmony on the deeper level is functional, but the surface chords in the A section do not always follow traditional progressions, mostly because of the planing that occurs.

Bach and the B Section

Upon the arrival of the B section, the piece settles firmly into A minor. Even though the smaller sections of the piece are chromatic at times, the piece as a whole maintains the traditional relationship between the tonic and the dominant. The tonic is obscured during parts of the A section, but, by the end of that section, the piece moves towards a standard tonal framework, when the somewhat meandering A section finally leads to a significant half cadence (mm. 20-22). This cadence serves many purposes. It is the turning point. The rhythmically loose gestures make way for the motoric rhythm that consumes the B section, the melody reaches its apex, scale degree five, after climbing upward in the B section and starts its stepwise descent, and the key finally becomes completely clear because of the prolonged dominant chord.

After this grand half cadence, the melody begins a stepwise descent from scale degree five to scale degree one through a series of sequences carried out by a compound melody. Each phrase in this series of sequences is based on the first phrase but descends by step

with each new phrase. Within each phrase, the line also descends, creating a cascading effect throughout the entire sequence, both within each phrase and in the sequence as a whole. The melody reaches scale degree two, with an alto voice that continues down to the leading tone, but is then interrupted. In a quick, sweeping gesture (mm. 28-29), the melody is carried back up to scale degree five again for another attempt. This time, after following the same path as before, the melody finally reaches the tonic. This is the first clear tonic in the whole piece, which creates an even stronger sense of rest from all the wandering of the A section and the cascading of the B section. Example 4.8 shows the sequencing in the B section as a whole and is followed shortly after by a reduction of the compound melody (Example 4.9).

Example 4.8, *Prélude No. 3*, B section, mm. 23-36

32 33 34

35 36

rit. p

This above sequencing is carried out by a compound melody. The upper voice sustains the deeper melodic line while the lower voice trickles down from it and reaching a sixth with the main melodic note. In this way, the two voices in the sequences descend in sixths. Example 4.9 shows a reduction of the two parts of the B section, mm. 23-28 and mm. 29-36. The first attempt, as previously mentioned, does not complete the descent, and the second attempt reaches tonic.

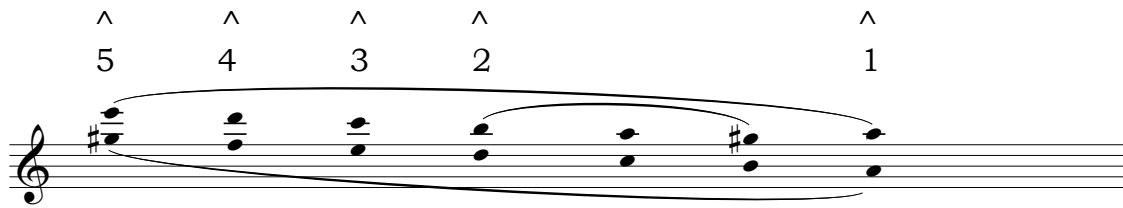
Example 4.9, *Prélude No. 3*, B section (reduction), mm. 23-36

First attempt – interruption, mm. 23-28

^ ^ ^ ^

5 4 3 2 ||

Second attempt – resolution, mm. 29-36



This compound melody, which is reminiscent of the music of Bach, represents one way in which Villa-Lobos paid homage to Bach in this prelude. In Example 4.10, in the top staff of a keyboard excerpt from a Bach prelude, we see Bach using this exact technique (also, motoric rhythm). In the first and third measures, contained within the right hand part, we see two distinct voices. The upper voice maintains a pedal (B, in m. 51, and A, in m. 53) while the lower voice descends from it by step. Villa-Lobos keeps the descending line going throughout each measure, whereas Bach's descending lines are a bit shorter, but the concept remains the same.

Example 4.10 Bach, *Präeludium und Fuge*, BWV 998, fugue, mm. 51-53



Villa-Lobos created two sections in this prelude that are contrasting yet flow together in the larger harmonic scheme. Wandering

harmonies and planing from the Impressionists, and sequences, motoric rhythm, and compound melody from Bach all blend together giving the piece a relaxed, European feel, his attempt to pay homage to Bach, in contrast to the commonly accessible and energetic Brazilian feel of some of the other preludes, such as *Prélude No. 2* and *Prélude No. 5*. These styles are carried out by some of Villa-Lobos's favorite guitar techniques, fingerboard planing and open string pedals.

CHAPTER V

PRÉLUDE NO. 4

In *Prélude No. 4*, Villa-Lobos portrays his impression of the Brazilian Indians. Similar to *Prélude No. 1*, the melody is the focal point of this prelude. However, unlike the long, lyrical melody in *Prélude No. 1*, this melody is short and simple, as are many native Brazilian melodies,²⁹ and it provides the material on which the B section is based.

The Influence of the Brazilian Indians

In the 1920s, mostly due to the ethnomusicological work of Mário de Andrade, folklore became a topic of interest to the Brazilian Modernists,³⁰ the artists and musicians living in Brazil in the early 1900s who were looking for new ways to create their art, often conflicting with the preferences of the general public. The Modernists wanted to incorporate native Brazilian materials into their work, so they began researching the art and music of the indigenous Brazilian tribes. However, as it turned out, the Modernists rarely used actual source material, but rather, new material that was written to capture the essence of the source material. Andrade noted this trend, saying, “the

²⁹ Lisa M. Peppercorn, *Villa-Lobos, the Music: An Analysis of His Style* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1991), 55.

³⁰ Simon Wright, *Villa-Lobos* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 37.

American Indian element in Brazilian popular music has been psychologically assimilated and has almost no practical significance.”³¹

Villa-Lobos decided to “search for his own musical identity as a Brazilian,”³² and he left for his first research trip in 1905. On this trip, he spent a year travelling around Espírito Santo, Bahia, and Pernambuco. Vasco Mariz said that Villa-Lobos “heard and collected music of the *cantadores* (poet-musicians, performers of *cantoria*, traditional vocal genres of improvised, often narrative poetry used in singing contests), the *aboios* (cattle-herding songs) of herdsmen, music of the *autos* (folk plays) and dramatic dances, and of the *desafios* (duel songs).”³³

In 1906, he left for another trip of less than two years to the southern states of Brazil. He then travelled to Manaus, other parts of northern Brazil, and the Amazon region in 1911 and 1912. Villa-Lobos said this in regards to his travels:

As far as I tried to fashion my culture, guided by my own instinct and apprenticeship, I found out that I could only reach a conclusion of conscious knowledge by researching, by studying works that, at first sight, had nothing to do with music. Thus, my

³¹ Luiz Heitor Corrêa de Azevedo, “Portuguese Elements in Brazilian Music,” *Bulletin of the American Musicological Society*, no. 7 (1943), 13.

³² Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 5.

³³ Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 5.

first book was the map of Brazil, the Brazil that I trudged, city by city, state by state, forest by forest, searching the soul of a land. Then the character of the people of this land. Then the natural wonders of this land.³⁴

Much speculation exists as to the specific details of Villa-Lobos's encounters with Brazil's folk material. No known catalogue of his findings exists. However, with this amount of time spent in these various regions of Brazil, he surely encountered a great deal of folk music that left enough of an impression on him to incorporate his interpretation of this music into his own compositional style. The material is not source material, but it is his impression of the source material.³⁵ He set out to incorporate outside influences into his own style, so he was not always concerned with directly quoting folk tunes.

Prélude No. 4, for instance, does not use actual native Brazilian melodies, but with the subtitle, "Homage to the Brazilian Indians," we see that he was making an attempt at imitating certain features of the native Brazilians' music. The main, and perhaps only, native Brazilian influence manifests itself in the nature of the melody. As previously

³⁴ Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 7.

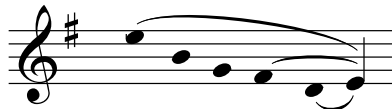
³⁵ Béhague, "Indianism in Latin American Art Music Compositions of the 1920s to 1940s: Case Studies from Mexico, Peru, and Brazil," *Latin American Music Review* 27, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2006): 35.

mentioned, this melody, like many native Brazilian melodies, is short, simple, and restrained, both in rhythm and range.

Native Brazilian-Inspired Melody

Villa-Lobos uses the native Brazilian-inspired melody as the basis for the entire piece. The entrances of the melody are short and simple. The first entrance of the melody, shown in Example 5.1, consists of a descending tonic arpeggio with a double neighbor that settles on the final tonic note. This tonic arpeggio is the material on which the rest of the piece is based.

Example 5.1, *Prélude No. 4*, opening tonic arpeggio, mm. 1-2



Em: i

This prelude centers around the melody. Later, we will see how the B section is based on the opening melodic material, but looking first at the A section, we see that Villa-Lobos highlights the melody by presenting it in isolation and by specifying which string should be used for each melodic note, both to maintain his desired tone quality and to

keep the accompaniment notes from damping the sustained melodic notes.

Every time a melodic fragment is presented in the A section, no other voices are present. The melody and the accompanying chords take turns sounding so that the accompaniment does not distract from the melody. Further emphasizing the nature of the melody, the accompaniment faintly echoes the rhythm of the last few melodic notes. The isolated melody and the rhythmic echo in the accompaniment are immediately established in the first two measures of the piece, shown in Example 5.2. M. 1 contains the opening melody, and m. 2 contains the rhythmic echo.

Example 5.2, *Prélude No. 4*, mm. 1-2

opening melody rhythmic echo

Lento

The image shows a musical score for two measures. The first measure, labeled 'opening melody', is in treble clef, 3/4 time, and contains a descending tonic arpeggio (C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3) marked with a forte 'f' dynamic and the instruction 'cantabile'. The notes are numbered 1 through 5. The second measure, labeled 'rhythmic echo', contains a series of chords in the right hand and a rhythmic pattern in the left hand, marked with a pianissimo 'pp' dynamic. The tempo is indicated as 'Lento'.

The melody begins with a descending tonic arpeggio (mm. 1-2), shown in Example 5.3. The arpeggio is then repeated, with a slight rhythmic variation on two of the notes (mm. 3-4). Next, the melody

moves to a prolonged predominant that starts out as a ii chord (mm. 5-6), sinks into a neopolitan (mm. 7-8), and then moves to the V-I cadence (mm. 9-10). This melody does not follow traditional, deeper melodic descent, but it does outline the tonic-predominant-dominant-tonic chord progression.

Example 5.3, *Prélude No. 4*, A section, mm. 1-10

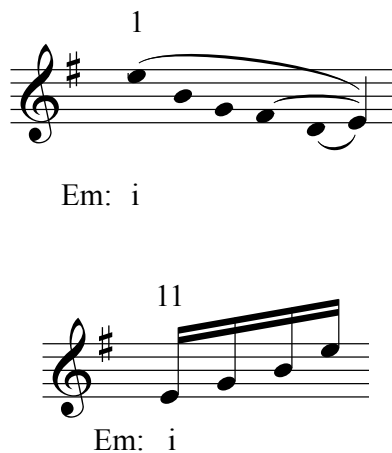
Opening Melodic Material as the Basis for the B Section

Opinions differ as to whether material in this B section comes from the melody or whether it is completely unrelated. Gerard Béhague notes that the Brazilian guitarist, Turibio Santos believes that the B section does not relate to the A section whatsoever, and that it is just an arpeggio that is “anything but Indian-like.”³⁶ Others, like Steven Zvengrowski, believe that the material derives from the A section. In his article, “Structural Patterns Found in ‘Prelude No. 4’ by Heitor Villa-Lobos,” he argues that “the arpeggiated pattern is derived from the

³⁶ Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 142.

structural pitches of the cantabile melody, but inverted.”³⁷ Indeed, the opening tonic arpeggio matches the main figural idea—the four-note arpeggio—of the B section. Example 5.4 compares the opening arpeggio of the A section to the first arpeggio of the B section. As Zwengrowski observed, the sixteenth note arpeggio in the B section is an inversion of the original arpeggio in the first two measures of the piece.

Example 5.4, *Prélude No. 4*, opening melodic arpeggio, m 1,
and first arpeggio of B section, m. 11



Similar to *Prélude No. 2*, the B section in *Prélude No. 4* also employs fingerboard planing, using the aforementioned arpeggio as the chord shape, although, this time the B section is a bit more complex. Once again, pedals play an important role. In fact, the pedals here are the exact same ones as he used in *Prélude No. 2*, since both pieces have

³⁷ Steven Theodore Zwengrowski, “Structural Patterns Found in ‘Prelude No. 4’ by Heitor Villa-Lobos.” *Soundboard, Guitar Foundation of America* 6, no. 3 (1979), 87.

E as tonic. However, in *Prélude No. 4*, the pedals are not quite as pervasive as in *Prélude No. 2*. Because the arpeggio section in *Prélude No. 4* only consists of four notes per arpeggio, only one pedal open string is used at a time, but these are always either the tonic, E, or the dominant, B. The arpeggio in *Prélude No. 2* was much more complex and spanned the entire set of strings, the lower four strings forming the shifting chord shape and the upper two acting as open string pedals. Here, the arpeggiation is simpler, but the chord shape changes slightly throughout.

The B section also outlines the opening tonic arpeggio on a deeper level, shown by the stemmed notes in Example 5.5. The series of arpeggios in the B section ascends and descends in two main gestures, with the notes of the tonic arpeggio as structural points, a graph of the first note of each arpeggio, forming the main melodic line in the B section. The line prolongs tonic for most of the section (mm. 11-23), running back and forth between a two-octave span of the tonic, with a shift to the predominant (m. 23) and a final 5-1 descent (mm. 24-25) to the tonic (m. 25). Then, in m. 26, the harmony shifts back to the dominant in order to prepare for the return of the A section.

Example 5.5, *Prélude No. 4*, B section (reduction), mm. 11-26

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
Em
Em: I

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
Am B Em
iv V I V

In this way, Villa-Lobos bases the entire piece on the native Brazilian-inspired melody. In the A section, he presents the short, simple melody, plainly and in isolation—except for chords that echo faintly after each entrance of the melody. In the B section, he inverts the opening arpeggio and builds the B section on the shape of the arpeggio, both on the surface and on the deeper level.

CHAPTER VI

PRÉLUDE NO. 5

Prélude No. 5, subtitled, “Homage to social life. To the young teenagers who frequent Rio’s concerts and theatres,”³⁸ is the most purely Brazilian prelude of the set in regards to outside stylistic influences and progressive guitar techniques. While the other preludes include influences from Bach, the impressionists, and native Brazilians, this prelude stays mostly within a popular Brazilian framework and does not employ fingerboard planing and open string pedals, as we have seen in the preceding preludes. Three main elements characterize this prelude: traditional, popular harmonies, long, wistful melodies with large, sighing leaps in the A section, and a dancelike quality with a bit of rhythmic play, especially in the C section.

To pay homage to social life in Rio, Villa-Lobos composed a waltz. However, as we have seen in the other preludes—*Prélude No. 1*, the *modinha*, for example—Villa-Lobos does not always adhere strictly to the styles and genres from which he draws inspiration. He usually tweaks styles by relaxing the rules, so that he can tailor them to suit his own style. In this case, his waltz is not entirely traditional. It is in 6/4 time and contains long, uneven phrases in the A section, which we will see later in the discussion of the melodies in this prelude.

³⁸ Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 141.

Harmony

Since Villa-Lobos sought to represent everyday life in Brazil, he chose to use simple harmonies. Whereas some of the other preludes contained moments of non-functional harmony, the chords in this prelude can be explained using Roman Numerals and traditional voice-leading properties. Villa-Lobos's goal here was to create a setting that was conducive to light-hearted enjoyment, not one in which the audience's ears would be challenged. Since he was not trying to invent techniques or expose people to new harmonies, he could easily have played this waltz for the general public to enjoy, whereas some of the other preludes, such as *Prélude No. 3* and *Prélude No. 4* would be better suited for a recital than a lively social gathering.

Formally, this piece consists of four parts, with the first and last being identical, and the two middle parts being very different from each other and the outer A sections, thus resulting in ABCA form. The A sections are in D major, the B section is in B minor, and the C section feels somewhat transitional but ends up in A major, setting up the return of the A section in D major.

Example 6.1 shows the A section with harmonies labeled. The harmonic rhythm is fairly regular, with two chords per measure, except when nearing a cadence. In such cases, the harmonic rhythm slows down to one chord per measure.

Example 6.1, *Prélude No. 5*, A section, mm. 1-16

D: I V7 vi iiø7 V7 I vi6

5 IV ii V7 I V

8 I V7 vi iii viio7/V V viio7/vi vi

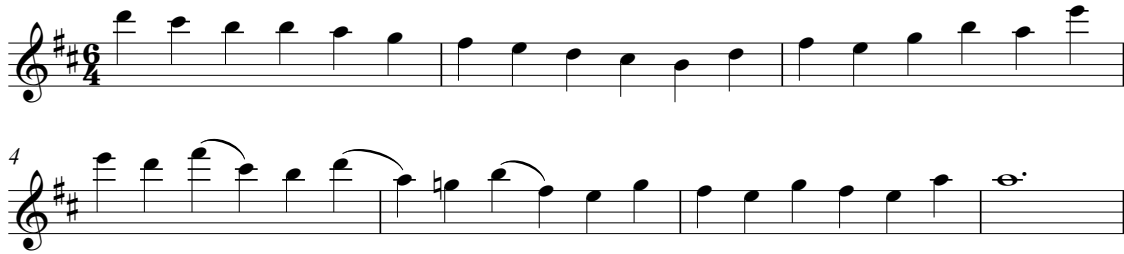
12 IV ii V7 I V7 I vi

Melody in the A Section

The shape of the melody reflects the character of the piece. In this case, the character is one of sentimentality, not with the melancholic mood that *Prélude No. 1* rendered, but rather more of a nostalgic attitude towards life. He portrays this attitude not only by using harmonies that are familiar to most listeners, but also, long, descending lines that run on for measures with occasional passages of leaps (mm. 3-5) that sigh wistfully back down to the main contour of the melodic line. Example 6.2 shows the first phrase of the melody, mm. 1-7, as written. Villa-Lobos even slurred some of the large descending leaps (mm. 4-5), most

likely advising the performer to add a slight, expressive glissando on the descent from the top note.

Example 6.2, *Prélude No. 5*, mm 1-7



This section consists of two phrases that are unequal in length, with the first phrase spanning seven measures and the second phrase, nine. These two phrases, shown in Example 6.3, contain a descending 8-line that is interrupted in the first phrase and then completed by the second phrase. Instead of simply tracing the line again in the second phrase, Villa-Lobos takes the descending motive that happens in the first measure (and again in an inner voice in m. 7) and transfers it to the bass line, so that the descent actually takes place in the bass (mm. 14-15) while the upper line slowly finishes the 3-2-1 portion of the descent (mm. 14-16).

Example 6.3, *Prélude No. 5*, A Section (reduction), mm. 1-16

The musical score for Example 6.3, *Prélude No. 5*, A Section (reduction), mm. 1-16, is presented in two staves. The top staff shows the melody with fingerings (8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2) and accents (^) above notes. The bottom staff shows the harmonic accompaniment with chords (I, V7, I, V7, I, V) and fingerings (8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1). Measure numbers m.1 through m.16 are indicated above the melody. The key signature is D major (one sharp).

The finishing touch on the A section is the shift from the tonic chord, D major, to a B minor chord (m. 16). The sustained B minor chord gives a heavyhearted ending to the A section, but also, in retrospect, sets up the B minor B section.

Melody in the B Section

The melody in the B section has a much more sorrowful tone than the sentimentally pleasant melody in the A section. The melody becomes a string of repeated fragments, each one forming Villa-Lobos's usual gestural shape that ascends quickly and descends slowly by step. The first pairs of two fragments are usually the same and then the following

ones break into even smaller segments and are changed slightly when the harmony moves away from the tonic.

The entire section is based on these fragments, which all have the same rhythm and basically the same contour, although it sometimes changes slightly from one fragment to the next. Example 6.4 shows two different fragments from m. 17, the beginning of the B section.

Example 6.4, *Prélude No. 5*, B section fragments

Fragment 1



Fragment 2



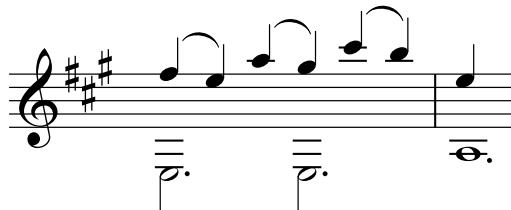
These fragments are the two motivic shapes on which all of the fragments in the section are based. Each repetition of the different types of fragments is very basic and changes only slightly from the original statement, but the harmonic backdrop changes, taking each phrase to a new place. As shown in the 6.5, the descending melodic 5-line occurs three times. The first time, it completes its descent. The second time, it ventures into the relative major, D. Continuing with Villa-Lobos's trend

beat with an appoggiatura. In the A section, they are joined together to form longer melodies. In the B section, as we saw earlier, they are more independent and substitute two repeated eighth notes for the first quarter note of each pattern or fragment.

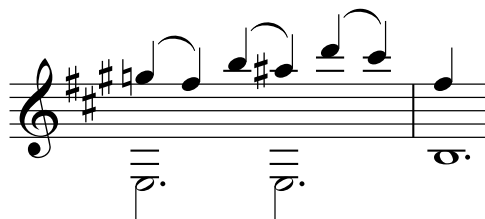
Once the C section comes around, they start confusing the ear. All this time, they clearly kept the feeling of the piece in three. Then, in the C section, the melody seems as if it could also be grouped in twos, according to the appoggiatura pattern, creating hemiola with the bass, which maintains the feeling of three with dotted quarter notes. In Example 6.6, mm. 33-36, the pairs of two are grouped with slurs.

Example 6.6, *Prélude No. 5*, mm. 33-36

m. 33-34

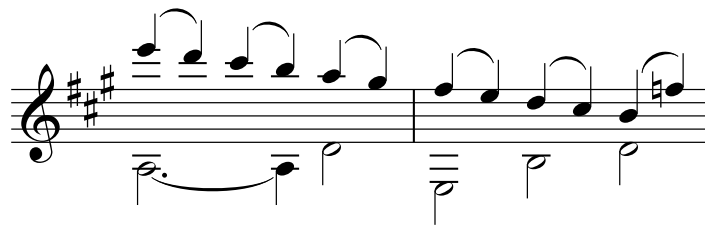


m. 35-36



Some performers feel this passage in two, some in three. Both ways are logical since Villa-Lobos, himself, groups the notes into pairs of two a few measures later, mm. 38-39, as shown in Example 6.7. The bass line in mm. 38-39 emphasize that the melody is definitely in 2 this time. Nevertheless, the C section is characterized by the shifting back and forth between three and two and the harmonic motion towards the A major cadence at the end of the section that prepares the way for the last A section in D major.

Example 6.7, *Prélude No. 5*, mm. 38-39



This rhythmic play gives the C section extra interest, but the section's main function is transitioning from the B section back to the A section. Example 6.8 contains a reduction of the C section, showing that harmony leads up to an A major chord at the end—with scale degree 2 of D major in the melody, in the spirit of another interruption—the dominant of the D major A section that returns in the next measure. The passage is analyzed in A major, but the scale degrees are labeled in D major, according to the larger picture.

Example 6.8, *Prélude No. 5*, C section (reduction), mm. 33-41

m.34 m.36 m.39 m.40 m.41
 ^ ^ ^ ^
 2 3 2

A: V7 IV7/ii ii I IV V7 I V7/V V I

Since the piece is subtitled, “Homage to Social Life,” it makes sense that the piece should possess a dancelike quality. Villa-Lobos was perhaps inspired by the valsa-choro, just one of the popular types of choros in Brazil. He further emphasized the Brazilian quality of this waltz by using popular harmonic and melodic techniques.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, these five preludes draw from Brazilian popular music, native Brazilian music, and the music of Bach and the Impressionists. Villa-Lobos uses innovative guitar techniques to adapt these various styles to the guitar. He does not use the genres and styles exactly according to their usual practices. Instead, he takes certain elements from each style.

Prélude No. 1 resembles a *modinha* with its long, lyrical melody and simple accompaniment. *Prélude No. 2* mimics a *choro*, with its parts combining to form a busy, running sixteenth-note rhythm, its improvisatory melody and the other parts that act like members of a *choro* ensemble, and a fast arpeggio B section that uses fingerboard planing, a technique he perhaps picked up from a *choro* musician or from playing this type of music himself. *Prélude No. 3* uses Impressionistic planing in the A section and pays homage to Bach in the B section with sequences, a compound melody, and motoric rhythm. In *Prélude No. 4*, Villa-Lobos takes a short, simple, native Brazilian-inspired melody and builds a whole piece based on the melody's opening arpeggio. *Prélude No. 5* closes the set of preludes and pays homage to social life with a waltz that features simple, accessible harmonies, a long, nostalgic melody with sighing leaps, and a dancelike atmosphere that, at times, plays with the listener's sense of rhythm.

Instead of detracting from the Brazilian personality of the preludes, the folk music and the influence of Bach and the Impressionists, along with the new guitar techniques, add depth, complexity, and interest to the music, and they showcase the guitar, Brazil's national instrument. Bryan McCann believes the adaptability of Brazilian culture facilitates its fruitful comingling with other influences. In his book, *Hello, Hello Brazil*, he states, "Brazilian popular culture demonstrates its capacity to incorporate and reconfigure the foreign, thereby guaranteeing its own survival."³⁹ Not only do Brazilians accept outside influences, they welcome them, so that their own culture can grow and be enriched.

Interestingly, while Villa-Lobos made great effort to expose himself to other styles of music, he believed that only art music should absorb these styles and that popular music should remain purely Brazilian. He frowned upon Brazilian popular musicians who allowed outside influences to infiltrate their native style, whose music "bore the double taint of the foreign and the commercial, the two characteristics Villa-Lobos abhorred in popular music."⁴⁰ Instead, he believed strongly that the opposite should happen, that art music could and should be enhanced by popular and folk elements in order to keep it fresh and modern.

³⁹ Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil*, 244.

⁴⁰ Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello, Brazil*, 237.

At first, the public rejected some of his modern-sounding music. Many people felt that it was not truly Brazilian since it had been infiltrated by the music of other cultures. As musicologist Simon Wright said, “the public, evidently, was not in the mood for Villa-Lobos’s revolutionary cocktail of the familiar and the bizarre.”⁴¹ But, over time, most Brazilians came to appreciate what Villa-Lobos, with intense nationalism and an imaginative mind, sought to accomplish with his music: a distinct Brazilian sound, which, to him, meant a melting pot of influences with a Brazilian base.

⁴¹ Wright, *Villa-Lobos*, 31.

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