



with thinking.

*In given article is presented analysis of the notion «artistic-figurative memory», are rendered concrete component components, as well as is revealed his(its) relationship with thinking, which serves системоорганізующым factor of the process memory and provides reliability of the performance of the music product by heart.*

*Key words: artistic image, artistic-figurative memory, thinking, play by hear.*

УДК 781.65:785.1(81)

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## IMPROVISATION IN BRAZILIAN CHORO

*The author characterizes Brazilian urban style choro, reveals the specific features of its form and improvisation-based techniques of performance by soloists as well as by choro ensembles.*

*Key words: urban style choro, improvisation, rondo, choro ensemble, composition, instrumentation.*

Problem statement. A Brazilian urban folklore genre, the choro was initially a way of performing the music that was brought to Brazil from Europe, since the 1500's. Dances such as waltzes, polkas, mazurkas and schottisches were played in a different manner, with Brazilian characteristics and with the typical instrumentation of cavaquinho, guitar and flute.

The word *choro* had been used since the second half of the 19th century. Tinhorao comments that in the beginning of the 1920's the word choro did not define a music genre yet, but rather suggested the music played for the dances of simple people, with the instruments based on the harmony played by the cavaquinho and the guitar.

Perderneiras published in 1922 a vocabulary of urban expressions in which the word choro was defined as follows: «Dance, sonata. Concert of flute, cavaquinho and guitar. Dive into choro, to dance»[1].

Basic material. Choro was originally played by amateur musicians whose style of playing «developed distinct melodic, harmonic and rhythmic characteristics, which were later incorporated into the compositional process, resulting in the transformation of the style of playing into a distinct genre». Throughout time, choro developed its own characteristics, including its typical instrumentation.

A typical choro group consists of cavaquinho, six string guitar, seven string guitar (a classical guitar with an extra lower string most commonly tuned to the low C, and sometimes the low B), and the percussiom instrument, which in general is the pandeiro (a drum similar to the tambourine, with skin and shingles) and a small surdo drum, a kind of portable bass drum. In addition to that, there are varied kinds of instruments that may function as soloists, among them the mandolin, the flute, the clarinet and the trombone. Sometimes other instruments



assume that function, such as the accordion and the violao tenor (tenor guitar).

Each instrument of the choro ensemble has a different function or role, even though sporadically they do share and exchange functions. Usually, players improvise their parts inside some stylistic constraints. Some of the most important songwriters in choro are Pixinguinha, Joao Pernambuco, Garoto, Dilermando Reis, Jacob do Bandolim, Chiquinha Gonzaga, Ernesto Nazareth, Sivuca, Severino Araujo, Abel Ferreira, and classical composers Radames Gnattalli, Fracisco Mignone and Heitor Villa Lobos.

Regarding form in choro, most of the genre originated from European dances, such as waltzes, polkas, mazurkas, Gavottes, the Portuguese Moda and schottisches. A typical choro song has a Rondo form, generally AA BBA CCA. Each section contains an individual tune, albeit there are relationships between their motives. Form can vary, to AA BB A, or AA BB. There are also through composed choros, whose form is an extended melody with chord changes. The most commonly used is AA BBA CCA. In many of Pixinguinha's compositions, if the A is on a major key, B is on the relative minor, and C on the subdominant key. (C Major, A minor and F Major, for instance). If the piece is predominantly on a minor key, A is on that key, B is on the relative major key and C is on the parallel major key. (A minor, C Major and A Major, for instance).

Contemporary composers of Brazilian instrumental music have written choro music with altered forms. Among them, Hermeto Pascoal, Tom Jobim, Helio Delmiro, Cesar Camargo Mariano and Paulo Moura.

Choro players are expected to know enough of that genre's vocabulary, and musical harmony in order to play it idiomatically. The soloists play the melody «with feel», adding ornaments and arpeggios, creating variations, playing ahead or behind the beat, and providing a loose feel to the melody, in contrast with the rhythmic instruments. Not only the soloists have to play idiomatically, but the accompanists also must be aware of their roles, which vary from one instrument to another. The accompanying instruments almost always perform in an improvisational manner, interacting with the other accompanists and with the soloist.

Nevertheless, there are some expected conventions, rhythmic or harmonic or both, that have become part of the composition throughout time, as mandatory parts of the piece. In a choro gathering (roda de choro), the participants are expected to know the ornaments, the repertoire, the grooves, the baixarias (bass lines played by the guitars) and the chord changes for the accompaniment, the melodies, and the affections expressed by each song. In general, no written music is brought to the playing session, and all the members play their parts by memory, always allowing interaction to happen, producing various kinds of improvisational situations.

Before getting into some of the details of improvisation in choro, it seems to me that some of the genre's players became, through time, the best examples

performance-practice of their own instrument in choro music. The most important mandolin players were Jacob do Bandolim (Jacob Bittencourt), Luperce Miranda, Deo Rian, Joel Nascimento, and, nowadays, Hamilton de Holanda. Altamiro Carrilho and Carlos Poiaras represent the choro flute players. Abel Ferreira and Paulo Moura represent the choro clarinet players. Sivuca is the most important of the accordion players. Dino dos Sete Cordas (Herondino da Silva), Ventura Ramirez and Raphael Rabello are the most important seven string guitar players.

As choro soloists are expected to play the melody adding ornaments and arpeggios, creating variations, playing ahead or behind the beat, providing a loose feel to the melody, they need to know enough «vocabulary» in order to play and improvise this music idiomatically. The vocabulary is acquired non-verbally, through intense listening and imitating great players, for years. Many believe the learning process occurs in three stages: imitation, assimilation and innovation.

There are many choro musicians and groups that have gone through the first two stages of their learning process, and they have contributed for the continuation of the choro tradition and its perpetuation. However, some chores transcended the first two stages into innovation, adding new elements to the aesthetic of the genre, either with their playing or with composing, sometimes with both. Jacob do Bandolim is a quintessential example of musicians who contributed both with his playing and with his composing. Pixinguinha did the same, but his composing surpassed his playing.

I believe it is safe to affirm that he is the greatest of all choro composers and songwriters. Most of his compositions are important part of choro «canon», and many of them are textbook master pieces that are not only pleasant to listen to but also lessons on how to write a choro piece. Some of Pixinguinha's compositions could be considered «frozen improvisations», due to their freedom in nature. Others are etude-like compositions, employing pervasive use of scalar passages, arpeggios and signature «licks». The technical difficulty of some Pixinguinha songs is comparable to Bebop improvisations; from time to time however, you can find pieces that are highly lyrical, allowing a lot of room for the interpret's creativity. Some of these are «Lamentos», «Ingenuo», «Oscarina», «Carinhoso», «Rosa», «Naquele Tempo», «Choro Triste» and «Vou Vivendo».

Improvisation in traditional choro is similar to the one in early Jazz, in which the players improvised their parts, and the soloists improvised around the main melody. After listening to countless chores and talking to a number of them, I came to the realization that there is a bulk of knowledge of the ornamental vocabulary that is passed on from generation to generation in a non verbal fashion. A few times, I met players who believe that their skill cannot be taught, since one is supposed to be born with it. When I addressed this subject talking to chores, I received in most cases a subjective answer. They used words such as



«feel», «groove», «born with it» and so on. Only the transcription and observation of the common performance-practices could provide a more objective and may be, trustworthy, insight into those.

Asked about the possibility to improvise over the tune *Ingenuo*, Jacob Bittencourt (Jacob do Bandolim) made the following statement, and I paraphrase: «-Well, I improvise when I interpret a tune, to improve its delivery and the emotion of what the composer composed, also I am not completely committed to what the composer made, because I am not obliged by it. I can play the way it pleases me the best, like a painter who paints nature according to his/her own interpretation. Therefore, what drives my improvisation is not the desire to improvise and be original, but it is to find in the tune's phrases a wealth that provides, enables me to interpret the tune. Generally the tune is so well composed, so subtle, so fancy in its details, that it gives me many, countless possibilities, as for instance, in the tune 'Lamentos» (by Pixinguinha); how many arrangements of that tune have you heard? The wealth of the tune is what allows so many different interpretations». In contemporary choro, however, some musicians use similar improvisational concepts of later jazz styles such as bebop; in that case, the improvisation is based on the harmonic progressions or, in other words, the «chord changes». As mentioned before, the most common melody instruments in choro are the flute, the cavaquinho, the mandolin, the clarinet and the trombone.

Improvisation on the seven string guitar consists of a combination of chordal and bass playing. The improvisational bass passages, called «baixarias», have the role of linking chords by the use of bass runs, with occasional chords added. Arpeggios, scalar passages and chromatic lines form those bass runs (chromatic lines generally delay or anticipate chord resolutions or simply add tension). The seven-string guitar player is expected to know enough harmony and choro vocabulary in order to play «baixarias» idiomatically.

There are also bass lines that can be used in different combinations, and also bass lines that are typical of specific songs, that could be borrowed into a different song with a similar chord progression (this borrowing procedure is also typical in bebop, and it is sometimes called «quotes» in that context).

Seven string guitar players use a thumb pick, and most of the runs are played with it. *Tinhora* said once: «-all structured in a concerto form, with the improvised part represented by the melodic passages played on the lower sounds of the guitar, conferred to this modulatory exercise the name of *Baixaria*»[1].

The six string guitar is sometimes called «centro» (center), because it plays the harmonies in the middle range, with occasional bass runs. Jacob do Bandolim called the «*violao centro*» (center guitar) by the word «*gemedeira*» (moaning guitar). Its runs are played along with the seven string guitar, generally in intervals of thirds or sixths. When the six string guitar is used in a duo situation, it assumes



the role of seven string guitar, playing more baixaria passages, and at the same time keeping its own role of providing the chord progressions.

Another Brazilian genre, Bossa Nova, finds its guitarists playing essentially «violao centro» style. Lush harmonies, and a somewhat understated rhythmic approach on the right hand. The great Brazilian singer Leni Andrade told me in 1996, to pay attention to the guitar playing of Durval Ferreira, the author of great Bossa Nova tunes, including «Batida Diferente», composed along with harmonica player Mauricio Einhorn. Batida Diferente was recorded by Cannonball Adderley, with the Sergio Mendes ensemble, in the 1960's. A number of guitarists that play violao centro, grew up listening to choro music and samba, among them the great guitarist and songwriter Paulinho da Viola, who contributed to choro repertory with several compositions, the best known being «Choro Negro» and «Sarau para Radames».

The cavaquinho belongs to the guitar family as one of its soprano members. The instrument, like the Hawaiian ukelele, derived from the Portuguese cavaco. It measures about 24 inches in length and about 4 inches in depth. It is tuned to the open G chord:

- 1st string: D
- 2nd string: B
- 3rd string: G
- 4th string: D

Most commonly, the cavaquinho is strummed with a pick. It provides the chordal and rhythmic aspects of the music. It appears on carnival parades, choro groups, small samba ensembles, etc. The cavaquinho has a predominance of the accompaniment function, although we find cavaquinho soloists such as Waldir Azevedo, from time to time.

When the cavaquinho is used as a rhythm and harmony instrument, it is commonly referred to as «cavaquinho centro» (center cavaquinho). The expression means that the cavaquinho, in that context, is in the center of the ensemble, along with the six string guitar, providing the rhythm and the harmony. Many of the rhythmic figures played of the cavaquinho have helped to delineate rhythmic figures for the guitar. Those were either transferred to the guitar or implied in a transformed new version. One interesting aspect of cavaquinho tradition is that its players develop particular grooves for specific songs. I heard a cavaquinho player say, before demonstrating on his cavaquinho: «-this is what I play on 'Doce de Coco' (by Jacob do Bandolim), or «Araponga», or «Gaúcho», «Aguenta seu Fulgencio», «Bole Bole», etc. Specific choro compositions demand sometimes specific grooves.

The Pandeiro's function is to keep the beat and the groove, establishing the rhythmic style, add rhythmic interest and hold the ensemble together while the other instruments play their own roles. The «pandeirista» is expected to know certain rhythms such as samba, waltz, baião, frevo, partido alto, etc. In some cases, the



pandeiristas should know certain rhythmic punctuations, particular to some songs.

The surdo drum also helps to keep the beat, especially the second beat of each 2/4 measure, where its lower tone is played. On beat 1, the player plays the surdo with a mallet on the right hand and touches the instrument's skin with his/her left hand, producing thus a muffled sound. On beat 2, the player plays the surdo with a mallet on the right hand with the skin open, allowing thus the sound to last, emphasizing therefore the second beat.

Conclusion. Choro music has lasted the test of time, as revivals are happening and young Brazilian musicians are carrying the tradition on. Improvisation has become more and more present and relevant in this genre, as it has been absorbed by other types of ensembles and varied instrumentation. Choro has caught the attention of important improvisers of other genres, in different countries. Even alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, one of the Bebop creators, played and improvised over the chord changes of a Zequinha de Abreu composition called «Tico Tico no Fuba», in the late 1940's. With the emergence of musicians such as Hermeto Pascoal, Cesar Camargo Mariano, Sivuca, and younger ones such as Alessandro Pennezi, Hamilton de Holanda, the «4X0» electric choro group, Yamandu Costa, Badi Assad, and many others, choro music continues its metamorphosis, catching the attention and commitment of composers, instrumentalists and singers beyond the frontiers of its mother nation, Brazil. Choro is becoming more and more popular all over the world due to its representation in the global web [2; 3; 4; 5]. In the age of information and communication technologies just one click can initiate a journey into the world of fantastic live music.

#### SOURCES

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#### РЕЗЮМЕ

**Маркос С.Кавальканте.** Імпровізація в бразильському шоро.

*У статті охарактеризовано бразильський урбаністичний стиль шоро, розкрито особливості музичної форми та імпровізаційної технології виконання творів як солістами, так і музичними колективами.*

**Ключові слова:** урбаністичний стиль шоро, імпровізація, рондо, музичний колектив, композиція, інструментовка.

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УДК 784(477)

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## **РИСИ СТИЛЮ МОДЕРН У КАМЕРНО-ВОКАЛЬНІЙ ТВОРЧОСТІ НЕСТОРА НИЖАНКІВСЬКОГО**

*У статті досліджено камерно-вокальна творчість українського композитора Нестора Нижанківського (1893–1940), що нечисленна за своїм об'ємом, але надзвичайно симптоматична в руслі модерних ідей. Вишуканий естетизм авторських поетичних уподобань спричинив звернення композитора до текстів його сучасників Олександра Олеса, Богдана Лепкого, Меланії Семаки, Уляни Кравченко. Мотиви ностальгії, сну, патетика, драматичність притаманні яскраво-суб'єктивному, максимально емоційному стилю авторського висловлювання.*

**Ключові слова:** стиль модерн, солоспів, поліфонізація, ритмічна орнаментальність, психологізм, патетика, драматизм.

**Постановка проблеми.** Стиль модерн<sup>1</sup> – одне з яскравих художніх явищ початку ХХ століття – був надзвичайно поширений в українській культурі, він формувався в архітектурних ансамблях, на живописних полотнах, у графічному оформленні численних журналів, у рекламі. Вплив цього стилю позначився досить яскраво та оригінально і на музиці цього періоду – творчість Н. Нижанківського, Б. Яновського, деякі твори В. Барвінського, В. Косенка, М. Лисенка, Л. Ревуцького, Я. Степовою та інших відчутно «забарвлена» стильовими рисами сецесії. Виразовий арсенал музики «в стилі модерн» вирізняється колоритністю гармонії, багатим «декором» фактури за рахунок її активної поліфонізації, плинністю, безперервністю форми поряд з тенденцією до мініатюри, до «мозаїчного» типу формотворення, любов'ю до мотивів-символів. Музичний «сюжет», тематика, образність часто не виходять за межі любовної лірики, але «спектр» її втілень надзвичайно широкий і сміливий – від елегійної споглядальності до любовного екстазу.

**Аналіз актуальних досліджень.** Більш ніж сторічна дистанція надає

<sup>1</sup>Модерн — один з варіантів назви того стилю, який в різних країнах називався по-різному: *ArtNouveau, JugendStill, Sezessionstill, StilLiberty, Модерн*, і місцезнаходження якого в історії мистецтв охоплює період між 80-ми роками ХІХ ст. і 20-ми роками ХХ століття, а в хронології стилів – «десь між імпресіонізмом та експресіонізмом» (Д. Сараб'янов).