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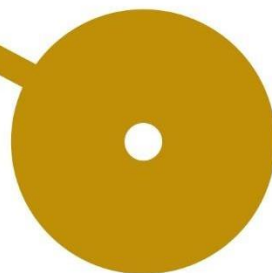
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MESTRADO EM MÚSICA –  
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# The Sarabande in Leo Brouwer's Work for the Classical Guitar

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10/2021





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I dedicate this work to my family and friends for their tireless support.

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## Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo discutir a obra de Leo Brouwer para guitarra clássica, focando-se, mais especificamente, nas suas sarabandas. A fim de proporcionar um amplo contexto histórico e teórico para o género da sarabanda, começo por introduzir ideias e conceitos retirados da "teoria dos tópicos". De acordo com o estado da arte, Leo Brouwer tem três fases cronologicamente sucessivas de composição que revelam dados biográficos também. As três fases são: os anos pré-revolucionários (fase nacionalista), a vanguarda e a "Nova Simplicidade". As principais características de cada fase estão a ser identificadas através de exemplos sarabande, tais como: Suite nº1. de 1955, Tarantos, Variações sobre o tema de Django Reinhardt e Sonata no.1. de 1990. O último capítulo centra-se inteiramente numa única peça: La Gran Sarabanda. Apresento um estudo de caso mais detalhado desta peça, que é um sarabande mais complicado escrito sob a forma de um conjunto de variações. Para concluir, o estilo musical de Leo Brouwer revela o seu ecletismo através do uso de diferentes sarabandes, consequentemente o seu conhecimento sobre cada tradição sarabande é perceptível. Como se verificou pela análise de La Gran Sarabanda, ele usa a tradição para expressar contraste, revelando assim um interessante espectro estilístico. Além disso, a importância do contexto social na música ganha a base em cada referência.

### **Palavras-chave:**

Leo Brouwer, Teoria do Tópico, Sarabanda, Zarabanda, Música Latino-Americana, Guitarra clássica

## Abstract

This study aims to discuss the work of Leo Brouwer for the classical guitar, focusing more specifically on his sarabande compositions. In order to provide a broad historical and theoretical context for the sarabande genre, I start by introducing ideas and concepts drawn from “topic theory”. I then discuss the different traditions of the sarabande genre, not only the European ones - French and Spanish – but also its Latin-American background (which is particularly relevant to address Leo Brouwer’s compositions). According to the state of art, Leo Brouwer has three chronologically successive compositional phases that reveal biographical data as well. The three phases are: the Pre-revolutionary years (Nationalistic phase), the Avant-garde and the “New Simplicity”. The main characteristics of each phase are being identified through sarabande examples, such as: *Suite no.1.* from 1955, *Tarantos*, *Variations on the theme of Django Reinhardt* and *Sonata no.1.* from 1990. The last chapter focuses entirely on one single piece: *La Gran Sarabanda*. I present a more detailed case study of this piece, which is a more complicated sarabande written in the form of a set of variations. To conclude, Leo Brouwer’s musical style reveals its eclecticism through the use of different sarabandes, consequently his knowledge about each sarabande tradition is noticeable. As it turned out from the analysis of *La Gran Sarabanda* he uses the tradition to express contrast, thereby revealing an interesting stylistic spectrum. Moreover, the importance of social context in music gains underpinning in each reference.

### **Keywords:**

Leo Brouwer, Topic Theory, Sarabande, Zarabanda, Latin-American music, Classical guitar

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## 1. Introduction

Leo Brouwer's classical guitar repertoire has always been undiscovered for me. However, since I've been playing the guitar, I knew that sooner or later I would get familiar with it. I could never imagine that these pieces are going to impact my career remarkably. Leo Brouwer's oeuvre became important for the classical guitar world as it represents a unique approach within the literature. From this work, I chose one specific genre that drew my particular attention: the sarabande. While playing some of Brouwer's sarabandes, like for instance the sarabande of *Tarantos* or the sarabande included in his Guitar Sonata no. 1, many unanswered questions appeared due to the recognition of the differences between each piece. These questions concerned components like style, type and form. After realizing just how often Brouwer has composed sarabandes, a need for understanding emerged. I recognised that his sarabandes cannot be categorized into the "standards" of the sarabande form of which I was at that time aware.

The first step of my research work was to compare the sarabande compositions to one another. Later, I came to the conclusion that there might actually be different types of sarabandes. Another interesting perspective while looking for answers was that I was aware that Brouwer likes to include nationalistic elements in his compositions. Because of that, while knowing that the sarabande belonged to a European music tradition, I started getting suspicious that maybe there were also some Latin-American elements in Brouwer's sarabandes as well.

In order to get more information, I did a written interview with Maestro Brouwer. The answers he provided strengthened my suspicion about the possible Latin-American origins of the sarabande genre; from that point, my perspective changed so that I decided to expand these thoughts in a more profound way.

The structure of my dissertation consists of three main chapters. The first one serves as a base for the following two chapters, in that it provides a historical and theoretical context through a consideration of Leonard Ratner's topic theory, as well as of the different traditions of the sarabande. The second chapter is focused on Leo Brouwer, briefly presenting some biographical information and showing sarabande examples from the different phases of his compositional work. The third chapter provides a more detailed analysis about one specific work, *La gran Sarabanda*.

## 2. The traditions of the sarabande

The sarabande presents a complicated history, involving, as it does, a number of different – and at times conflicting – cultural traditions. This raises the important question of how these traditions manifest themselves in the work of Leo Brouwer for solo classical guitar.

While the term “sarabande” is commonly associated with a slow, ceremonial dance, it turns out that this meaning can only be strictly applied to the 18th century French sarabande. There are, however, other traditions – such as the Latin American and the Spanish – that might be even more important to consider in order to understand Brouwer's employment of this dance genre. As it is going to be discussed below, in these traditions the guitar had a crucial connection with the sarabande, which is a possible reason for Brouwer to include this genre so frequently in his work.

In order to address these questions, it is essential to briefly present some of the different traditions of the sarabande and the distinctive characteristics of each one of them. Before that, however, with the aim of providing a more general theoretical underpinning to the whole argument, I will present the concept of “musical topic” as discussed within the field of the so-called “topic theory.”

### 2.1 The musical topic and topic theory

Topic theory provides a way of approaching the common use of sarabandes in Leo Brouwer's work, helping us to understand why such compositions are named “sarabandes” in the first place. While there are many key publications in the field of topic theory,<sup>1</sup> I will focus, for the most part, in only two of them: Leonard G. Ratner's (1980) seminal book *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, which first presented the concept of “musical topic,” laying down the bases for the academic field of topic theory to emerge; and *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (2014), a collective work about topic theory, edited by Danuta Mirka, which provides a wide insight into the major perspectives that have emerged in connection with topic theory since its inception in musicological studies with Ratner's contribution.

Ratner's book covers the issue of expression in the music of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It does so by taking into account the function of music as a language, this way discussing matters related to musical rhetoric and the role of music in society. The notion of the musical topic is

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<sup>1</sup>These include Agawu (1991), Hatten (2004) and Monelle (2006).

particularly central in this regard, as it allows Ratner to state his fundamental point that the meaning of music is not limited to its structural, formal properties, but rather that the cultural and social circumstances that lie beyond (or behind) the musical notes are also relevant. With regard to 18<sup>th</sup> century music, Ratner shows how music was present in all different levels of society, while performing different functions (or roles) in each one of them:

From its contacts with worship, poetry, drama, entertainment, dance, ceremony, the military, the hunt, and the life of the lower classes, music in the early 18th century developed a thesaurus of characteristic figures, which formed a rich legacy for classic composers. Some of these figures were associated with various feelings and affections; others had a picturesque flavour. They are designated here as topics—subjects for musical discourse. (Ratner, 1980, p. 9)

This is, indeed, Ratner's definition of the music topic, as a “[subject] for musical discourse.” He identifies a number of different topics, including, for instance, the hunting topic or the military topic. The following quote provides a brief description of the latter two topics, showing how they were able, in a specific social environment, to convey a specific social or cultural meaning through the use of a distinctive sonority and instrumentation:

Military and hunt music was familiar throughout the 18th century. Noble houses had their own court guards, parading to the fanfare of trumpets accompanied by the tattoo of drums; ... the hunt was a favourite diversion of the nobility; horn signals echoed and re-echoed throughout the countryside. (Ratner, 1980, p. 18)

This way, Ratner points out that music was connected to everyday life according to certain conventions. This allowed it to function as a sort of “discourse,” a concept that perfectly shows that, while being “non-verbal,” (instrumental) music still had communicational and expressive value.

Ratner then divides topics into two subcategories: types and styles. While the former term refers to complete, “fully worked-out pieces” constituted by a single, overall topic, the latter, defined as “figures and progressions within a piece” (Ratner, 1980, p. 9), refers to something more punctual, as a piece may change quickly from one style to the other. Note, however, that according to Ratner “the distinction between types and styles is flexible; minuets and marches represent complete types of composition, but they also furnish styles for other

pieces” (Ratner, 1980, p. 9). That is to say, due to their own musical characteristics (a figure or motif in a particular rhythmic pattern), minuets and marches can be used out of their typical context as stylistic elements in genres that are not necessarily dance-centred.

Actually, instead of referring to “types,” some authors prefer to talk about “genres.” This is the case of Danuta Mirka, who, referring to Ratner’s text, states that “the inventory of types and the fact that they ‘appear as fully worked-out pieces’ implies that they are equivalent to genres” (Mirka, 2014, p. 1). Most of the types listed by Ratner consist of the musical implementation of dances like the sarabande, the bourrée, the gavotte and the minuet. According to Ratner, dances occupy a central place in 18<sup>th</sup> century music: “dance topics saturate the concert and theater music of the classic style; there is hardly a major work in this era that does not borrow heavily from the dance” (Ratner, 1980, p. 18).

As noted by Ratner, dances were incorporated into music in three different ways, which he describes as the social, theatrical, and speculative aspects. In social dances, “the music conforms to choreography,” while in theatrical dances the music “conform[s] to the patterns of social dances or become[s] freer and more extended.” By “becoming freer and more extended,” Ratner implies that in this category the dance music could be adapted to the specific requirements of different theatre settings. The third category – the speculative treatment of dance material – refers to “the use of dance rhythms as subjects for discourse in sonatas, symphonies, and concertos, as well as in church and theater music,” a case in which “the typical dance rhythms are employed, but the length of sections does not conform to choreographic patterns of symmetry” (Ratner, 1980, pp. 17-18).

The third category reveals that dances could be detached from choreography or other types of social act. Instead of being purely functional (as is the “social dance” category), in the “speculative” manner the musical component became more autonomous, as the dances were adapted to more purely musical considerations. Nevertheless, the dance topic did not lose its social or cultural connotations in the process: the presence of such a cultural meaning is, in fact, a crucial component of the very notion of musical topic. Thus, when Ratner characterizes the social connotations of the minuet as being “associated with the elegant world of court and salon,” adding that “[i]t was described as noble, charming, lively, expressing moderate cheerfulness by virtue of its rather quick triple time, (Ratner, 1980, pp. 9-10) the description is still operative in a speculative treatment of this dance (either as a type or style).

As mentioned above, styles are opposed to types (or genres) in that a piece can present many different styles and change quickly from one to another. Ratner lists a number of different styles, including, among others, the singing style, the brilliant style, the bourrée style, the

siciliano style, and so on. To illustrate the actual function of styles across an entire work, Ratner presents a stylistic analysis of a Symphony of Mozart, describing it with the following words:

Mozart was the greatest master at mixing and coordinating topics, often in the shortest space and with startling contrast. The allegro of the first movement of his Prague Symphony, K. 504, 1786, is a panorama of topics, old and new, in which a change of subject occurs every few measures. (Ratner, 1980, p. 27)

For instance, he identifies the “singing style” in mm. 37-40 (Example 1) with its expressive melodic lines in the three-lower staves of the string section (violin II, viola and violoncello parts) and the “fanfare” style in mm. 43-44 (Example 2), with its distinctive rhythmic pattern in the bassoon and the horn parts.

**Example 1** - W. A. Mozart, Symphony No. 38, K. 504, I, mm. 37-40: the singing style (three lower staves)

**Example 2** - W. A. Mozart, Symphony No. 38, K. 504, I, mm. 43-44: the fanfare style

In another part of the book, Ratner presents different ways of categorizing styles according to different criteria like national traditions, social associations and individual

composers. He thus mentions the Italian, French, and German national schools, categories widely discussed in 18th-century musical criticism; the high and the low styles, a distinction that was a central point of discussion and controversy, as well as one of the chief contrasts in classic music; and the “individual styles represented by the characteristic mature works of the three classic masters, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven” (Ratner, 1980, p. 333). Out of these three categories, I would underline the second: dances in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were separated according to their social reputation, presenting expressive traits that were associated to either the high, the middle, or the low style:

The protocol and formality of 18th-century life were reflected in dances: the minuet, sarabande, and gavotte were of the high style, elegant and courtly; the bourrée and gigue, pleasant and often lively, represented the middle style, while contredanses and Landler were of the low style, rustic and buoyant. (Ratner, 1980, p. 9)

The previous quote describes how dance topics were associated with different social spheres, therefore conveying a certain message. To connect this idea with Brouwer's oeuvre, the question emerges of whether Brouwer associates the sarabande with notions of a social hierarchy.

## 2.2 The sarabande topic according to Ratner

Dances, by virtue of their rhythm and pace, represented feeling. Their trim and compact forms served as models for composition. ... Dance rhythms virtually saturate classic music; therefore, one of the principal points of attention for the student, listener, and performer is the recognition of specific dance patterns that can provide important clues to the expressive quality of a composition. (Ratner, 1980, p. 9)

In the latter quote, Ratner states some general ideas about dance topics, pointing out that they contained a recognisable audible form which allowed them to serve as “models for composition.” As a specific dance type, the sarabande had, then, its own specific features. Ratner defines the sarabande by stating that its “essential feature was the emphasis on the second beat of its triple measure. With its slow tempo, this halt gave the sarabande a deliberate, serious character which represented the high style” (Ratner, 1980, pp. 11-12).

To illustrate Ratner's definition, I present an excerpt (Example 3) from a sarabande composed by Robert de Visée (c. 1655 – 1732/1733). This passage shows the characteristic



### 2.3. The Latin-American origins of the sarabande

When I started my research work, I made a short electronic interview with Leo Brouwer, who stated the following about the origins of sarabande:

1. (about the Saraband) According to the most scholars, this musical form has a Latin-American origin (Mexico, Cuba?). Its motivic cells give origin to many forms of ternary dances (in 3 beats). It is considered that the Saraband originated in the “new” Ibero-American world in the 16th century, with a strong Afro-Latin influence. For the same reasons, Cuba's role in the first decades of the 16th century is decisive, for it was the first land populated by European culture during the last years of the 15th century and the [beginning of the] 16th century.<sup>2</sup> (Brouwer, The sarabande of Leo Brouwer, 2020)

Although Brouwer highlights that Cuba played a crucial role in the evolution of the sarabande in the 16th-century, while researching the origins of this dance I found a number of references that mention in this regard Mexico rather than Cuba. For instance, the American musicologist J. Peter Burkholder identifies a wide range of sources that support the idea of a Mexican origin for the sarabande (or “zarabanda”). In his 2009 article, “Music of the Americas and Historical Narratives,” he clearly argues that, according to the existing sources, the sarabande was most likely imported to Europe from the New World, specifically from Mexico:

By the end of the sixteenth century, the New World was already exporting music back to the old country. As mentioned earlier, the sarabande apparently originated in Latin America, and almost certainly the chaconne did as well. Both cases are instructive for the way they show a popular, unwritten tradition from Latin America being taken up in Spain, brought into the written tradition, and transformed as it moved across borders to Italy and France. The preponderance of evidence suggests that the sarabande originated as a dance-song among the Spanish colonists in Central America. (Burkholder, 2009, p. 411)

In the following quote, Burkholder reveals the main existing sources that testify to the sarabande's origination in the New World. He mentions Diego Duran, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish

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<sup>2</sup> In Spanish in the original: “1-(Sobre La Sarabanda) Esta forma musical tiene – según mayoría de teorías – origen Latinoamericano (Mexico, Cuba? ...). Sus células motivicas dan origen a muchas formas de danza teruaria (en 3 tiempos ritmicos). Se calificó como nicida en La nuevo Ibero américa en el sigles XVI.e con fuerte incidencia afrolatina. Por las mismas razones, el papel de Cuba en las primeras decadas del siglo XVI es decisivo al ser la primera tierra poblada por la cultura europea en el siglo XVI, y el último lustro del siglo XV” (translation to English by José Parra).

missionary who associated the sarabande with a native "Aztec Indian" dance, characterizing it as "brisky" (implying a fast-moving, active dance) and "saucy" (an adjective which suggests a morally disrespectful trait):

The first several sources to mention the zarabanda are from there: a poem from Panama City dated 1539; the text of a çarauanda by Spanish-born poet Pedro de Trejo sung and danced in 1569 in Patzcuaro in New Spain (in the present-day state of Michoacan in Mexico); and a description by New World missionary Diego Duran in his 1579 *Historia de las Indias de Nueva Espana*, who compares a "brisk and saucy" dance of the Aztec Indians to "that sarabande which our own people dance" (*esta zarabanda que nuestros naturales usan*), referring to people born in Mexico of Spanish descent (Burkholder, 2009, pp. 411-412).

These sources, however, cannot totally ensure the Central American origins of the sarabande. Due to the lack of existing pieces of evidence, the origin of the sarabande is still debated by musicologists, as admitted by Burkholder himself: "It is, of course, possible that the zarabanda originated in Spain and was brought to Central America, but in that case, one would expect to find references from Spanish sources earlier than these American ones" (Burkholder, 2009, p. 412).

As he proceeds, further references are revealed to support the Central American background:

A Central American origin is also supported by other evidence: the sudden flurry of references to the zarabanda in Spanish sources beginning in the mid-1580s, including Cervantes's reference around 1600 to the zarabanda as "new at that time in Spain" (*neuvo entonces en Espana*), as if it had been brought from somewhere else (Burkholder, 2009, p. 412).

The lack of notated pieces makes it difficult to describe the musical characteristics of the Latin-American saraband in detail. However, the following quote provides useful information:

When it came over the Atlantic to Spain in the late sixteenth century, the zarabanda was a type of song sung for dancing, accompanied by the guitar, usually with castanets and perhaps with other percussion. The texts had verses and a refrain and were generally so

obscene that the zarabanda was banned in Spain in 1583, so far the first datable reference to it in the Old World (Burkholder, 2009, p. 412).

From the previous quote, I would highlight the important role of the guitar, which was apparently part of the performing tradition of the sarabande. Another important trait referred to in the quote above concerns the formal structure of the sarabande, revealing that it contained “verses and a refrain.” Finally, on a more cultural or expressive level, the sarabande texts are described as “obscene.” One might argue that these traits together define a 16<sup>th</sup> century Latin-American sarabande topic. It is noteworthy that these traits are quite different compared to the 18<sup>th</sup> century French sarabande topic – not only the more purely musical traits, but also the expressive or cultural ones.

While several pieces of evidence point to the same direction about the origins of the sarabande, it is also important to realize that Burkholder's perspective leaves open the possibility of new musicological discoveries, as the available notated evidence is still scarce. He also states his point of view, which provides a more sensible perspective while approaching the tradition of music. As it turned out already, the following perspective applies to the sarabande genre as well, for the reason that it existed on both sides of the Atlantic. Therefore, I consider the following thought important:

Because of this five-century-long shared history, it is incumbent upon us to treat music in the Americas as fully part of the Western tradition when we teach or write about that tradition. It is part of a long shared story, and it deserves a place in our historical narratives about Western music (Burkholder, 2009, p. 419).

In spite of the remaining doubts about the Latin American origins of the sarabande, there are many sources that prove that the Spanish form of the sarabande in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was closely related to the Latin-American sarabande. This connection is crucial in terms of understanding the processes at stake in Brouwer's use of the sarabande.

## 2.4. The Spanish origins of the Sarabande

Everyone, of course, agrees that the sarabande was introduced into other parts of Europe from Spain. (Stevenson, 1952, p. 29)

Robert Stevenson begins his article about “[t]he first dated mention of the sarabande” with the previous quote, which immediately eases the doubts about the origins of the sarabande within Europe. The term “zarabanda” was the Spanish equivalent for “sarabande” in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Stevenson, 1952, p. 29). As noted by Burkholder (2009), the zarabanda “was apparently the most popular dance in Spain for a generation, spreading from there into Italy and France, and later to England and Germany” (Burkholder, 2009, p. 412). As it spread across Europe, both its musical structure and the appreciation of its social status changed, as described by Frank Koonce in his book *The baroque guitar in Spain and in the New World*.

Koonce (2006) defines the zarabanda as a “disreputable song/dance with racy lyrics and erotic movements, associated with the lower classes during the sixteenth century” (Koonce, 2006, p. 28). The same idea is underlined by the musicologist Richard Hudson, who states the following:

In any event it (the zarabanda) enjoyed a tremendous popularity in Spain, in company with a host of other bailes (a type of dance that was relatively wild and unrefined and included such movements as the tossing of the hair, swaying of the hips, passionate expression in the eyes). (Hudson, 1970, p. 129)

These references are particularly interesting as the description of the sarabande they provide is clearly opposed to the one provided by Ratner, according to whom the sarabande belongs to the high-class cultural sphere. They also furnish the reader an almost visual description of the environment in which the Spanish sarabande was part of everyday life.

Not only its social connotations, but also its traits as a musical topic were retained from the Latin American ancestor. As Hudson notes about the zarabanda, “all of these [zarabandas] were sung dances in Spain; they all had refrains and were accompanied by the Spanish guitar” (Hudson, 1970, p. 129). From this quote, it is clear that the refrain as a structural element was part of the tradition of the zarabanda, a tradition which also involved the participation of the voice and the guitar.

According to Hudson, the zarabanda had the following compulsory traits: “[i]t consists of a single phrase of music, always in a triple meter, always in the major mode, and always with

the same harmonic scheme: I-IV-I-V” (Hudson, 1970, p. 131). In Example 5, I present a standard Spanish sarabande, identified by Hudson as a “single phrase [that] represents the zarabanda in its original and purest state” (p. 131).



**Example 5** - Illustration of the harmonic progression of the “zarabanda” (taken from Hudson, 1970, p. 131)

The next illustration (Example 6) is from a zarabanda written circa 1675 by the Spanish baroque guitarist Gaspar Sanz (it is part of the second book of his guitar method). This piece demonstrates the zarabanda traits, although with a few changes. As stated by Hudson, “once established (...) the original zarabanda phrase is then expanded and modified in various ways” (Hudson, 1970, p. 131). The D major key and the first two measures follow the typical harmonic scheme (I-IV-I-V). However, there is no sign of different verses and refrains. In my view, this piece perhaps meant to demonstrate some of the characteristic figures of the zarabanda in a brief instrumental version. Hudson observes that the “rhythm seems to change so much from composer to composer that no special feature becomes established as an identifying mark” (Hudson, 1970, p. 131). Similarly, Sanz’s zarabanda shows a rhythmic pattern that covers a changing meter from 6/8 to 3/4. Beyond this changing meter, nevertheless, the ternary distribution always reveals itself.

**Zarabanda**

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a piece titled 'Zarabanda' by Gaspar Sanz. The key signature is D major (two sharps). The first two staves are in 6/8 time, and the third staff is in 3/4 time. The notation includes various rhythmic figures, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The piece ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

**Example 6** - Gaspar Sanz, “Sarabande,” (Koonce, 2006, p. 34)

In brief, the Spanish sarabande had its own established topical characteristics during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, but it changed its appearance in the following stage of its evolution: “[l]ater during the seventeenth century, the Zarabanda was transformed into a slower, more dignified dance and was adopted by all the social classes” (*Koonce, 2006, p. 29*). As it turns out from the previous reference, the sarabande changed its features as it became transformed by a French influence. This process will be discussed in the following subchapter.

## 2.5. The “Frenchification” of the sarabande

The beginning of the period in which the sarabande was transformed into a more high-class dance can be dated to the time when the zarabanda was banned in Spain due to its obscene gestures. As stated by Burkholder,

[T]he zarabanda was banned in Spain in 1583. ... Naturally, the ban did not hurt the dance's appeal. It was apparently the most popular dance in Spain for a generation, spreading from there into Italy and France, and later to England and Germany. Of course, the zarabanda changed a great deal as it spread. (*Burkholder, 2009, p. 412*)

The transition period can thus be dated around the late 16<sup>th</sup> and the early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the zarabanda was spreading to other countries within Europe:

This was the way the dance of the zarabanda evolved in Spain and Italy during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The form was sometimes called the Spanish zarabanda to distinguish it from a related but quite different type that developed in France. The first examples of the zarabanda francese were published by Praetorius in 1612. (*Hudson, 1970, p. 133*)

The need to have different terms for the Spanish and French zarabanda came naturally, due to the important modifications the genre had been subjected to when arriving to France. The following reference shows how the imported Spanish sarabande lost its lascivious gesture and vigorous character in France:

Thus by the 1660s, the Spanish sarabande, a recent immigrant, had to some extent already adapted to the manners of the French court. It was abandoning the assertive phrasing of its native land for the more tender verse structure of its adopted country. In so doing, it abandoned none of its expressiveness. (*Ranum, 1986, p. 24*).

Not only the sarabande's general character had changed, but also some specifically musical traits of it were being modified. Burkholder mentions changes in terms of the harmonic structure and instrumentation:

Early notated examples from guitar tablatures published in Italy show a constantly repeating I-IV-I-V harmonic basis, with various rhythms. From this it gradually evolved in several directions, culminating in three major types: a rapid sung dance with an ostinato framework, common in Spain and Italy; a less rapid instrumental form that became the principal type in Italy, known today as the sarabanda; and the even slower and more dignified French sarabande. In the latter two cases, the zarabanda lost its text, its association with a particular harmonic progression, and its reputation as lascivious. The best known of the three is the purely instrumental slow French sarabande, which became among the most common dances of the baroque period and among the most immediately recognizable to modern listeners. (Burkholder, 2009, p. 412)

To provide a better understanding, the following example presents the harmonic scheme of a "sarabanda francesa" from 1629:

The image shows two staves of musical notation in bass clef, 3/4 time, and C major. The first staff contains the first section of the piece, consisting of four measures with chords I, IV, I, and V. The second staff contains the second section, consisting of five measures with chords I, X, V, IV, and V. The final measure of the second section is a cadence chord I.

**Example 7** - The modern realization (sketch) of the chord progression of Foscarini's zarabanda francesa from, (Hudson, 1970, p. 134)

As noted by Hudson, "[w]hat all French zarabandas have in common is a highly sectional approach to form, which for each piece can result in a different structure" (Hudson, 1970, p. 134). This was one of the main differences between the French and the Spanish versions of the topic, as the latter was based on a verse-refrain, rather than on a sectional, form. According to Hudson and as it is clearly visible in Example 7, the French sarabande relied on a sectional construction, as the repetition separates the music into a shorter first section and a longer second section. It is also interesting how other French genres affected the development of the sarabande:

[T]he zarabanda francese builds its form through sectional positioning of phrases. This results in two- or three-part forms with each part repeated, or in parallel periods where the first phrases are similar or identical. This sort of sectional construction of music was from the time of the *trouvères* a typically French trait. Furthermore, it was during this period of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century that the French sectional approach, through the Renaissance *chanson* and the subsequent Italian instrumental *canzona*, was heavily influencing almost all the forms of Baroque music. (Hudson, 1970, p. 133)

Accordingly, the standard French-style sarabande is characterized by a two-part reprise or binary form, where each of the two parts were to be repeated, usually with more ornamentation. This form could be realized with just 8 bars in each of the two sections, or part B could be longer (often it would include 16 bars). As noted by Robert Gauldin, this formal pattern was characteristic not only of the sarabande, but of dance movements of the period in general:

Short works cast in a *two-reprise* (or binary) form are common in this period. They appear in a great variety of media: keyboard, solo string, chamber, and even orchestral. The term "two-reprise" refers to *two sections* of music set off with *repeat signs*." ... "Typical of this form are the shorter stylized dance movements of suites, usually the minuet or perhaps a slower sarabande. (Gauldin, 2013 [1988], p. 85)

The Spanish guitarist and composer Santiago de Murcia (1673-1739) played a crucial role in the transition period. His work manifests the overlapping characteristics of the Spanish sarabande as it was affected by the French influence. In his compositions, the evolution of the sarabande/zarabanda is thus clearly traceable. The French influence is clearly expressed, for instance, in the slow tempo indication of one of his sarabandes (reproduced in Example 8, for the entire piece see Attachment 1.), as well as in its sectional construction (and two-reprise form). These changes are commented by Koonce:

The zarabanda (saraband), originally a spirited and lascivious dance in Spain and Mexico, gradually was transformed after its appearance in France into the slow and dignified form that is most familiar today. This new version was re-introduced into Spain, along with other French fashions, although the earlier version continued to exist there as well throughout the eighteenth century. Murcia adds the modifier *despacio* (slow) to distinguish it as being in the latter French style. (Koonce, 2006, p. 104)



**Example 8** - Santiago de Murcia, “Zarabanda Despacio” (Koonce, 2006, p. 108.)

## 2.6. Conclusion to the chapter

The sarabande has a broad historical and geographical background, concerning an intercultural context that spreads from Latin America to Europe. Throughout this chapter, I have provided an overall view of some of the topics of the sarabande across history, this way delineating a framework to analyse Leo Brouwer's own sarabandes. Furthermore, as a “topical” conclusion, following the lead of Ratner, perhaps it can be presumed, that as they show different characteristics, there are separate sarabande topics (sub-topics) within the sarabande genre like: The Latin-American sarabande topic, the “Zarabanda” topic and the French sarabande topic (Sarabanda despacio) involving their typical and stylistic characteristics.

## 3. Leo Brouwer's sarabandes

### 3.1. Biography and main influences

Leo Brouwer (Juan Leovigildo Mezquida Brouwer) was born in Havana on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1939. His primary surname derived from his paternal grandfather, a French-Dutch immigrant in Cuba. He received his first guitar lessons from his father, a biologist and an amateur guitarist “who loved the guitar very much, playing Granados, Tárrega and Villa-Lobos by ear. [Dumond, 1988 (Caldeira, 2011, p. 13)]<sup>3</sup>

The previous quote demonstrates the early connection Leo Brouwer developed with the guitar. Composing for the classical guitar requires special knowledge, which tends to be best acquired through an individual experience of the composer with the instrument. This is the reason why many great compositions for the guitar by Turina, Torroba or Ponce – composers who did not possess such experiences – require a revision from the guitarist in order to make their materials more practicable. As Brouwer was connected to the instrument from an early age, he was very well equipped to master the particularities of guitar writing in his composing for the instrument.

Together with his teacher, the Cuban guitarist Isaac Nicola, Brouwer studied from age 13 the traditional repertoire of the classical guitar, including works ranging from the Renaissance to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was particularly affected by Renaissance music, an influence that can easily be heard in music that he composed much later, for instance in his 6<sup>th</sup> Guitar Sonata (2018), where in the second movement he alludes to Luys de Milán, the famous Renaissance composer. Regarding how he came to learn about Renaissance music while studying with Nicola, Brouwer noted the following:

I understood right away that was my world. From Luis de Milán's Pavane, my mindset changed. I fell in love with that sound universe. It meant method, discipline, quality and rigor. [Sílio, 2009, quoted in (Caldeira, 2011, p. 13)]<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Original text in Portuguese (my translation): “Leo Brouwer nasceu em Havana, a 1 de Março de 1939. O primeiro apelido vem do seu avô paterno, um franco-holandês imigrado em Cuba. Recebeu do pai, biólogo e guitarrista amador ‘que amava muito a guitarra, tocando de ouvido Granados, Tárrega, Villa-Lobos,’ as primeiras lições de guitarra.”

<sup>4</sup> Original text in Portuguese (my translation): “[C]ompreendi de imediato que esse era o meu mundo. Desde a segunda Pavana de Luis de Milán que a minha mentalidade mudou. Era o universo sonoro que me apaixonava. Significava método, disciplina, qualidade e rigor.”

### 3.2. Relevant perspectives regarding Leo Brouwer's music

Before presenting examples of Brouwer's use of the sarabande, it is important to mention two perspectives that will frame the discussion: one of them theoretical, the other one stylistic and historical.

The theoretical perspective concerns Ratner's notion of a "speculative treatment of dance material," as introduced in the previous chapter. As quoted there, in the "speculative treatment of dance topics, the typical dance rhythms are employed, but the length of sections do not conform to choreographic patterns of symmetry" (Ratner, 1980, p. 18). This perspective is crucial for understanding Brouwer's compositions, since, although they contain dance-like elements, probably these works were not composed to fulfil the criteria of practical dancing. It follows that the autonomous treatment allows the music to work in such a way as to focus the attention on the audience more on purely musical aspects.

The historical aspect which cannot be avoided while analyzing Leo Brouwer's music is the fact that his works display features characteristic of musical modernism – though one can immediately ask *which* modernism, since there are many strands of it. As Jonathan Cross expresses it in his book, "Stravinsky's modernism, then, is just one strand among many which constitute the conceptual map of modernity" (Cross, 2005, p. 7). From this reference, it turns out that the main strands of modernism are connected to two significant 20<sup>th</sup> century composers: Schoenberg and Stravinsky, representing two different directions that were actually opposed to each other. Stravinsky's style, for one, is defined by "its fragmentation, its discontinuity, its primitivism, its eclecticism, its pluralism, its oppositions - finding novel ways of balancing these powerfully contradictory elements without their losing their essential identity, their sense of difference" (Cross, 2005, pp. 7-8). Brouwer's music is definitely closer to Stravinsky's than to Schoenberg's more assumedly atonal modernism. This is implicitly noted by Caldeira, who states that "Brouwer was influenced by ... the music of composers like Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók" (Caldeira, 2011, p. 28) – not Schoenberg.

An important aspect of Stravinsky's music, as noted by Cross, was that that its assumed relationship to the past:

It is his relationship to the past - whether to his 'Russian traditional to the gamut of Western musical history, or to serialism - which has proved one of the most controversial and, arguably, one of the most influential aspects of Stravinsky's modernism. (Cross, 2005, p. 13)

Brouwer's compositions are also connected to the musical past, as implied by the very fact that he composes sarabandes. In this sense, I would claim that Brouwer's sarabandes can be related with a sense of "retrospectivism," a term discussed by Richard Taruskin apropos the connection of composers like Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Satie to the music of the past. As Taruskin mentions, "... retrospectivism was the result of a Wagner-inspired attempt to circumvent Wagner and everything that had led up to him." (Taruskin, 1993, old.: 290) Retrospectivism is, indeed, one aspect in which Brouwer reveals affinities with Stravinsky, who also dealt extensively – especially in his so-called Neo-Classical period – with the major genres of the Baroque and Classical Western musical tradition.

### 3.3. Brouwer's trajectory as a composer

Brouwer's trajectory as a composer is generally characterised in three separated phases, as confirmed by the composer himself: the pre-revolutionary years (before 1959), the avant-garde period (1960s and 1970s), and the "new simplicity" period (1980s-to present) (Caldeira, 2011, p. 28). This chronological delimitation does not rule out a possible overlap between the different phases.

Brouwer composed sarabandes in all such three periods, as shown by the following list, which, without aiming for completeness, indicates a number of pieces that are examples of Brouwer's use of the sarabande topic:

- ◆ Suite No. 1, "Antigua," 3rd movement: "Sarabande" (1955)
- ◆ *Tarantos* "Sarabande" (as a "falseta") (1974)
- ◆ Simple studies, N° 15, "Sarabande" (1983)
- ◆ Variations on a Theme of Django Reinhardt, 2<sup>nd</sup> variation: "Sarabande" (1984)
- ◆ Sonata No. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> movement (only a fragment) (1990)
- ◆ Sonata No. 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement (as a motive) (2013)
- ◆ Sonata No. 6, 1<sup>st</sup> movement (as an 8-measure period) (2018)
- ◆ *La Gran Sarabanda* (as a set of variations on a Sarabande theme) (2018)

In the following sections, I will present the main traits of Brouwer's style in each of the three phases, accompanied with examples of compositions based on the sarabande topic.

### 3.4. First phase: The pre-revolutionary years (Nationalistic phase)

In the years before the Cuban 1959 revolution, Brouwer composed for the classical guitar according to a general “nationalist aesthetics.” In this phase, the most significant compositions were the *Simple Studies (Estudios Sencillos)*, where elements of Cuban popular music can be easily found. Brouwer was influenced by that “nationalistic sentiment,” expressed, for instance, in Afro-Cuban rhythmic patterns, but also by the music of composers like Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók (Caldeira, 2011, p. 28). As Century mentions below, other Western European compositional techniques were present in his work as well. In my perspective, the borders between Cuban popular music and European classical music are clearly visible in Brouwer's work, but somehow, he manages to amalgamate these two styles in many of his compositions:

Brouwer's earliest compositional efforts as a teenager exhibit a strong flavour of his own native Cuban-folk heritage. At the same time, with such works as the Suite no. 2 and Fuga No. 1, a concern for formal unity and traditional musical craftsmanship is evident. Brouwer demonstrates clever contrapuntal skill in the Fuga No. 1, investing both the subject and countersubject with a syncopated Latin rhythm. (Century, 1987, p. 153)

#### 3.4.1. The sarabande of Suite no.1

One aspect in which Brouwer reconciles the Cuban and European influences is in his use of the sarabande, which is both a topic of European baroque music and a traditional Latin-American dance.

Example 9 provides an excerpt from an early sarabande composition (probably Brouwer's earliest), forming part of his Suite no.1 (1955) for guitar. In 1981, the score was considered to have “been lost or destroyed” (Suzuki, 1981, p. 48). However, the score was eventually found, and it was published later on, in 2005.



**Example 9** - Leo Brouwer, Suite no.1 for guitar, "Sarabande," mm. 1-2



**Example 10** - Leo Brouwer, Suite no.1 for guitar, "Sarabande," mm. 13-14

The sarabande of Suite no. 1. was written in a modal language, which often tends towards the mixolydian, as it is clear in the ending phrase of the piece, illustrated in Example 10. Together with the predominantly conjunct, almost vocal contrapuntal writing, the modal pitch language suggests some degree of retrospectivism, in particular the influence of Renaissance music. This reference is confirmed by the additional title Brouwer provided to his Suite: "Antigua."

The very fact that this sarabande is part of a Suite is another retrospective element, this one pointing more towards Baroque, rather than Renaissance music. The form of Suite no.1 (1955) consists of the following movements: Prelude, Fuge, Sarabande, Gigue. The position of the sarabande is usual within the form. Interestingly, however, it is not composed in the typical triple meter but in a more asymmetrical and more extended 5/4. Despite this fact, the piece still conveys the sarabande type as a "fully worked out piece" (to quote Ratner), as the dotted rhythm in the third beat of each bar (see Ex. 9) still creates an agogic accent in the middle of the 5/4 bar which is comparable to the characteristic accent in the second bar of a 3/4 bar in the

traditional sarabande. In line with the sarabande topic, too, the tempo is slow and the overall character dignified. As for the structure, it shows a form without any sectional division, strongly suggesting either the Latin American or the Spanish origins (and moving it away from a strict adherence to the French sarabande topic).

Finally, I have no record of any other saraband from this phase of Brouwer's work, but following the example of Suite no.1, the score of which has for some time missing, perhaps there will be other still unpublished compositions including a sarabande.

### 3.5. Second phase – The avant-garde

During the 1960s and 70s, Brouwer was influenced by the compositional avant-garde aesthetics prevalent in Europe at that time. However, he still retains the popular Cuban elements, even while experimenting with dissonant, atonal sonorities and improvisation practices related to techniques of indeterminism characteristic of avant-garde 1960s music (such as the use of open forms and random, or aleatory techniques). Brouwer reflected critically on this phase afterwards:

... at that time there was no balance, but rather an overload in the density of the dissonant element which presented as an element of vibration, as a concept, and that was the big mistake that was made, a wide range of abstraction that reached almost unimaginable limits. [Alvarez, 1989, pp. 135-147; quoted in (Caldeira, 2011, p. 28)]<sup>5</sup>

Caldeira's notion of a continuity in Brouwer's trajectory, even as he entered his "avant-garde" period, might support my idea, proposed above, about the importance of "retrospectivism" in Brouwer's work: even his adherence to some techniques of the European avant-garde was not a complete change of aesthetics. Accordingly, the sarabande topic (with its neoclassical associations) continues to be present in his work and the nationalistic aspect is retained, even if many modifications had been made. For instance, he incorporated many dissonant sonorities, as well as extended, non-conventional, guitar playing techniques (such as playing in the upper scale of the strings above the fingerboard). This can be seen in works like *Canticum* (1968), *La Espiral Eterna* (1971), or *Tarantos* (1974).

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<sup>5</sup> In Portuguese in the original (my translation): "(...) nessa época não existiu equilíbrio, existiu uma sobrecarga na densidade do elemento dissonância como elemento de vibração, como conceito, e foi esse o grande erro a que se chegou, uma ampla margem de abstracção que chegou quase a limites inimagináveis."

### 3.5.1. The sarabande of *Tarantos*

The sarabande included in *Tarantos* (of which an excerpt is reproduced in Example 11) is unique in the corpus of Brouwer's sarabandes, in terms of its structural construction and expression. It features a texture with fiery and fast arpeggios and accents that invoke the flamenco topic, which is also indicated by the very title of the piece as a whole, as "Tarantos" designates a traditional flamenco movement. Brouwer inserts the sarabande as a fragment into a surrounding musical context that is meant to describe the impression of flamenco, therefore employing it, in Ratner's terms, as a style rather than a type.

Structurally, the piece consists of a series of short fragments, designated either as "Enunciados" (announcements/statements, indicated with roman numbers within the piece) or "Falsetas" (indicated with letters), the sarabande movement being one of such "falsetas."<sup>6</sup> The piece as a whole is an open form, in that, according to Brouwer's indication in the score, the performers may choose the order in which the fragments are performed, as long as they follow two restrictions: that the two different kinds of material (enunciados and falsetas) always follow each other in alternation, and that the piece ends with a specific "enunciado," as indicated in the score.

**Example 11** - Leo Brouwer, Sarabanda de "Tarantos"

<sup>6</sup> A "falseta" is defined as a "solo music passage or interlude. The *falseta* should always include 'pregunta' (question) and 'respuesta' (response) and 'desarrollo' (development)." (Graf-Martinez, 2002, p. 96)

*Tarantos* sarabande displays a number of general traits that identify it as an instance of the sarabande topic: the triple meter, the ostinato containing the characteristic dotted pattern and emphasis on the second beat, and the slow tempo. Regarding the latter, even though there is no tempo/time indication, the pace of the performance is constrained by the short value rhythmic figures, through which Brouwer sets the limit so that the performer is not able to exceed a certain slow tempo. Among those musical elements, the ostinato is crucial in giving this excerpt the specific flavour of a Spanish sarabande. As noted by Hudson (1970), “whereas the Spanish zarabanda achieves its large-scale structure by its ostinato or quasi-ostinato repetition of a short scheme, the zarabanda francese builds its from through sectional positioning of phrases” (Hudson, 1970, p. 133). Therefore, this sarabande fulfils the criteria of a Spanish sarabande type, but with a modern rhetoric expression.

### 3.6. Third phase: the “New Simplicity”

From the 1980s onwards, Brouwer realises that he is not able to continue composing strictly in the avant-garde direction. The “New Simplicity” phase springs from his need for a more consonant sounding universe, a need for tonality. Whereas he could not continue the tendency of composing in a manner “related to brain and mathematics” (Caldeira, 2011, p. 28), at the same time he does not abandon his previous musical experiments: “Leo Brouwer travels freely between the border of the scholarly and the popular, the tradition and the experimentation, the nationalistic and the avant-garde” (p. 28). As Caldeira succinctly puts it, Brouwer “rejects the idea of returning to roots since the roots are constantly present in his work” (p. 28).<sup>7</sup> This phase is the richest one in terms of sarabande composition. Whereas in the previous two phases there were supposedly only one example in each, the tendency to write sarabandes has undoubtedly increased during this phase.

As noted by Paul Century already in 1987, the post-avant-garde compositions of Brouwer show a change in style and sonority. His new style concerns “neo-romanticism” even if Brouwer “dislikes the label ‘neo-romanticism’ to describe his present style; he prefers instead hyper-romanticism....”. It is important to stress that, in opposition to the avant-garde period,

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<sup>7</sup> In Portuguese in the original (my translation): “Refuta a ideia de retornar às raízes pelo facto de as raízes estarem constantemente presentes na sua obra.”

there is now a “return to tonality,” breaking the pattern of his experimental, more dissonant phase (Century, 1987, p. 159).

### 3.6.1. Variations on a theme of Django Reinhardt

The first sarabande that I will discuss is part of *Variations on a theme of Django Reinhardt* (1984) (Example 12). The title of the composition alludes to Django Reinhardt, one of the most important jazz-guitarists during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a significant representative of “gypsy-jazz.” Brouwer adopted the melody of *Nuages* (supposedly from 1940), a jazz standard composed by Reinhardt. That theme was adapted by Brouwer to a baroque suite form; therefore, while all variations are based on *Nuages*, each one of them is based on a different baroque dance movement. The order of the movements within the set of variations is the following: Prelude, Theme, Bourrée, Sarabande, Gigue, Improvisation, Interlude and Toccata.

**Example 12** - Leo Brouwer, *Variations on a theme of Django Reinhardt*, “Sarabanda”

As in *Tarantos*, I would highlight again the importance of the ostinato (in this case a repeated pattern of six eighth notes), which provides a link to the tradition of the Spanish sarabande. The melody, representing the main theme of the piece, stands in a contrapuntal

relationship to the ostinato. Its characteristic rhythmic figure (half-note, quarter-note) shows more similarities with the Spanish than with the French tradition. The melody constantly emphasizes the first beat within the ternary measure, and Brouwer inserts dotted quarters that create an alternated rhythmic pattern in the piece (bars 14, 15). That is clearly an implication for the rhythmic world of the latter mentioned sarabande topic from the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The major tonality was one of the characteristic traits of the spanish sarabande. Although at the beginning the melodic framework is phrygian (in G), later on the ending of the piece shows F major tonality. Furthermore, the form applies the sectional proportion, which reveals a French influence. In fact, if the introductory two bars are overlooked, the sarabande presents a two-part reprise form (an extended part B of 16 bars, compared to the 4 bars of part A). In an overall view, I would say that in this case Brouwer mostly uses the French sarabande topic, but still with a strong Spanish element in the use of the ostinato.

### 3.6.2. The “Sarabande of Scriabin”

The second composition I will consider is the second movement from Brouwer's Guitar Sonata No. 1 (1990): The “Sarabande of Scriabin” (Example 13). All three movements of this sonata (one of the most important compositions in Brouwer's entire work) present a retrospective approach through the incorporation of dance topics such as the fandango, the bolero and the sarabande.

- II -

**"Sarabanda de Scriabin"**

**Example 13** - Leo Brouwer, Guitar Sonata No. 1 (1990), “Sarabanda de Scriabin”

The characteristic ostinato is crucial in this case again, as it points in the direction of the Spanish tradition. Most importantly, the ostinato separates the first theme (mm. 1-12) from the second theme (mm. 13 – 20). As, a general trait, I would stress the typical rhythmic pattern within the triple meter, with the dotted quarter values often emphasizing the second beat, which points towards the French sarabande tradition.

Within the structure, there are clearly distinguishable thematic areas that lend a unique character to this sarabande. According to the research outlined in the previous chapter, the major tonality and the usage of the ostinato reveals the Spanish sarabande type.

### 3.7. Conclusion to the chapter

Brouwer's use of the sarabande topic shows a wide scale that constantly conveys a retrospective aesthetics. As it is apparent, Brouwer has been influenced by different styles and musical eras, like for instance flamenco style and the Renaissance era, even including jazz. He transforms the main aspects of these influences into his own musical language while composing each sarabande.

## 4. Analysis of *La Gran Sarabanda*

### 4.1. Introduction and the *La folia*

In this chapter, I would like to provide a detailed analysis of *La Gran Sarabanda*, a guitar work composed by Leo Brouwer in response to a commission by the Guitar Foundation of America, for the 2018 International Concert Artist Competition. The discussion will be informed by different aspects presented over the course of this dissertation, with a particular emphasis on Ratner's view of the sarabande as a topic.

The piece is written in the key of D minor, which is a reason for Brouwer to have tuned the 6<sup>th</sup> string in D (a common guitar scordatura). The piece is characteristic of Brouwer's latest phase – the “New Simplicity”. This can be seen, for instance, in a general adherence to tonality (particularly so in the theme and in the two variations that follow it), as well as in the free mixture of different styles throughout the composition (such as the French overture style).

After a slow introduction in a 4/4 meter, we hear a more sarabande-like “theme” (as labelled in the score) in ternary meter. This theme is based on the “Folia,” a particular harmonic pattern of a dance in ternary meter and minor tonality, supposedly derived from either the late 15<sup>th</sup> or the early 16<sup>th</sup> century (as explained in more detail below). The question, then, emerges: why does Brouwer title this piece as a sarabande, if the theme reveals the melody of the “folia?” For the sake of a better understanding, I will start by introducing the main characteristics and the basic historical background of “La Folia.”

### 4.2. The “Zarabanda Franchese” and the “La folia”

In Richard Hudson's article, “The ‘Zarabanda’ and ‘Zarabanda Francese’ in Italian Guitar Music of the Early 17th Century,” the reader can get an overall insight into the evolution of the sarabande and its relation to the folia musical theme (not only in Italy, as the title of the article might suggest). As it turns out, “La folia” and the sarabande have always been related to each other. The fact that Brouwer conflates the two elements within one single piece indicates that he was to some extent aware of this historical background.

According to Hudson, during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century “the *zarabanda* occurs at first as a single musical phrase with a particular harmonic progression.” However, that harmonic progression was not directly related to *La folia*. Later on, the harmonic scheme “expands into a two-phrase plan. Finally, this same progression of chords persists and is joined by a second

scheme as the zarabanda evolves into the more elaborately structured zarabanda francese” (Hudson, 1970, p. 125).

As discussed in the first chapter, the Spanish sarabande was always in a major tonality, an aspect which changed during the "Frenchification" period (borrowed term from (Ranum, 1986, p. 33), so that later sarabandes were composed in the minor tonality. These French sarabandes in a minor tonality often used the pattern of the folia (I-V-I-VII-III-VII-[VI]-V-I) (Example 14), even if sometimes adapted its phrasing (pp. 138-140).

**THE ZARABANDA FRANCESE IN THE MINOR MODE**

Classical *folia*

i V i VII III VII i iv V i

**Example 14** - Illustration of the harmonic progression of the Classical folia in a minor-mode Zarabanda Francese (Hudson, 1970, p. 149)

Hudson remarks that “[t]he specific minor scheme most favoured by the zarabanda francese seems to be that of the folia” (Hudson, 1970, p. 138). Therefore, the folia scheme most of the time served as a base to the “sarabanda francesa.” While deriving its harmonic framework “from the 16th century or earlier” (p. 126), “La folia” evolved to a later version, which is mainly situated in France and England around 1675-1750. Its structure consisted of two 8-bar sections, in a slow tempo and dignified character. Second beats within the ternary form were typically emphasized, especially in the odd-numbered bars. Frequently it employed a D-minor tonality, articulated through a common “chord progression (I-V-I-VII-III-VII-I-V-I) labeled by Hudson as the *folia formula...*” (Ingwerson, 1996, p. 15). It is this more recent type that Brouwer follows, as can be seen by comparing Example 15, which illustrates the “Folia” pattern, and Example 16, reproducing the 8 bars of Brouwer’s theme.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for guitar. The first system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff contains a sequence of notes with fingerings: 'i', 'V', 'i', 'VII', 'III', 'VII'. The bass staff contains a sequence of notes with fingerings: 'i', 'V', 'i', 'VII', 'III', 'VII'. The second system also consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff contains a sequence of notes with fingerings: 'i', 'V', 'i', 'V', 'i'. The bass staff contains a sequence of notes with fingerings: 'i', 'V', 'i'. The notation includes a first ending bracket over the first two measures of the second system.

**Example 15** - The later Folia pattern in the late 17th–early 18th centuries (Ingwerson, 1996, p. 19)

The image shows the musical notation for the 'Theme' of Leo Brouwer's 'La Gran Sarabanda'. The title is 'Theme Maestoso' with a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 63$ . The notation is in 3/4 time and features various performance instructions and markings. The first system includes a forte (*f*) dynamic, a *marcatissimo* marking, and a *l.v.* (left hand) marking. The second system includes a *l.v.* marking. The third system includes a *l.v.* marking and a *l.v.* marking. The fourth system includes a *l.v.* marking and a *l.v.* marking. The notation includes various ornaments, such as mordents and grace notes, and dynamic markings like *p* and *f*. The piece concludes with a first ending bracket and a *l.v.* marking.

**Example 16** - Leo Brouwer, La Gran Sarabanda, “Theme,” mm. 1-8

### 4.3. La gran sarabanda: analysis

*La Gran Sarabanda* is structured as follows:

- ◆ Lento
- ◆ Theme
- ◆ Variation I.
- ◆ Variation II.
- ◆ Glosas de Merchi
- ◆ Sarabanda Trunca
- ◆ Double (tpo rubato)
- ◆ Variation III.
- ◆ Variation IV.
- ◆ (Variation I. for the second time – da capo)

The structure includes a "da capo" element, meaning that after the end of the fourth variation we return to the first variation, which ends the piece. While analysing the composition, I will separate the movements into two groups: the first five movements as a first group, and the remaining four movements as a second group. The reason for that division is structural: while in the first part a binary form is applied to each of the movements, in the second part a single-part form is employed.

#### 4.3.1. The first group of the movements

As I mentioned before, the first group includes the first five movements of the piece:

- ◆ Lento
- ◆ Theme
- ◆ Var. I.
- ◆ Var. II.
- ◆ Glosas de Merchi

While analysing the piece, I have recognised that the Lento (see Example 17), the Theme (Example 16) and the second variation (Example 18) contain a similar pace and character, which is related to the French overture style, a topic which Ratner describes as follows:

The French overture, a distinctive style of ceremonial music, uses a slow and heavy march tempo with dotted rhythmic figures. In the courts and theaters of France under Louis XIV it accompanied the entrance of the royal spectators and the performers, Later it was adopted throughout Europe as the opening piece for many theatrical performers, for instrumental suites, and for some symphonies, when the occasion called for a serious, elevated tone. To emphasize its air of punctilious ceremony, dotted notes were performed longer than the notation indicated, short notes as briefly as possible. (Ratner, 1980, p. 21)



**Example 17** - Leo Brouwer, La Gran Sarabanda, “Lento”



**Example 18** - Leo Brouwer, La Gran Sarabanda, “Variation II,” mm. 36-37

The latter characteristic (dotted notes performed as longer than notated) is suggested by Brouwer's use of double-dotted, rather than just dotted, eighth-notes; the “marcatissimo” indication reinforces the agogic accent. The French characteristics are also implied by the binary form (had been already discussed in the second chapter) in the structure.

The remaining two sections (the second variation and “Glosas de Merchi”) follow the harmonic scheme and the structural form of the “zarabanda francesa” with its binary form. (mm. 36- 52 and 53-82)

In the following, I provide a more detailed summary of each of the first five movements:

Lento – A brief prelude in the French overture style. In the first four bars, the harmonic progression, as suggested by the bass motion, is already conformant to the well-known folia structure (even though the harmony is more modal, or at times more chromatic, than it will be the case in the theme proper).

Theme – The upbeat, which is a typical characteristic of sarabande, perfectly expresses the actual beginning of the piece with its descending movement towards the tonic D note (see example 16. This movement is written in a two-part reprise form, where actually only the first part is repeated (unlike the more common Baroque two-part reprise form, where both sections are repeated). See Attachments 2 and 3 (mm 7-17)

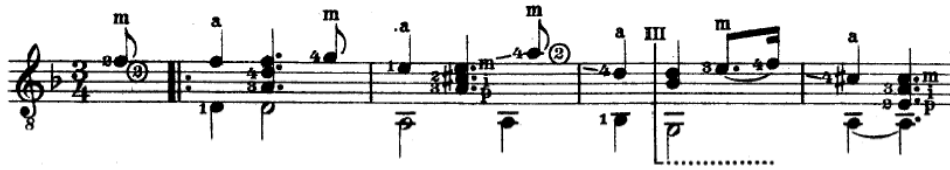
Interestingly, Brouwer wrote out almost all the ornamentations, so that, unlike usually happened in the Baroque, performers do not have to realize themselves the ornamentation. In spite of that, the movement completely evokes a Baroque-sounding universe with its Baroque-style harmony. The same double-dotted eighth figures are valid for this movement, just as in the previous introductory prelude.

First variation – The character indication is presto. This movement occupies an important role in the perspective of the piece as a whole, since it forms the last movement of the entire piece, due to the use of the “da capo” technique. It shows similarities with the theme both in terms of the harmonic progression and formal structure.

Second variation – The character indication of this movement is “maestoso” (majestic), which was also a well-spread character and expression for sarabandes. In my perspective, this slow movement in triple meter alludes to the lute, with its wide, broken chords.

In a personal communication, Artur Caldeira noted that the melody and the harmonic progression of this variation almost completely evoke the sarabande of Robert de Visée from his D-minor Suite. Indeed, the two pieces overlap to a great extent, with respect to the number of bars, the key and the melody. This is probably an intentional reference to the French era and to an important figure the guitar in that time (and place).

### SARABANDE



**Example 19** - Robert de Visée, Dance Suite in D minor, “Sarabande,” mm. 1-5



**Example 20** - Leo Brouwer, La gran Sarabanda, “Variation II,” mm. 1-7

Glosas de merchi - According to the Grove Music Online Dictionary, “Glosa” means the following:

- (1) A term often used by 16th-century Spanish musicians, in imitation of the glossing technique highly fashionable among poets, to designate variations similar to diferencias [...]. Sets of variations called glosas were published by Mudarra (1546), Enríquez de Valderrábano (1547) and Venegas de Henestrosa (1557). [...]
- (2) The term was also used to mean musical ornamentation, as for example in Diego Ortiz’s Trattado de glosas (1553). (Grove Music Online Dictionary, 2021)

The previous source perfectly describes the idea of Brouwer, which is present within this movement by the returning variation after each similar “refrain”. This structure resembles the Rondo form of the Classical era. Interesting however, that Brouwer includes this type of movement to this piece, as it had its tradition within the genre of variations. Furthermore, I would highlight the Renaissance and the Spanish composers as they were related to the guitar. The tempo indication borrows a stormy character to the movement.

#### 4.3.2. The second group of the movements

The movements that belong to the second group are the following:

- ◆ Sarabanda trunca
- ◆ Double (Tpo rubato)
- ◆ Var. III.
- ◆ Var. IV.
- ◆ (Da capo)

Throughout these four last movements, Brouwer uses uncommon tools regarding both the tradition of the sarabande and that of “La folia.” Specifically, he uses a 5/4 meter in the “Sarabanda trunca” and quintuplets in the “Double.” The structure of the movements changes too in a certain way, as it was already mentioned before.

These movements most likely show similarities with the Latin-American tradition. The structure leaves the binary form behind, therefore abandoning the sectional separation typical of the French type of the sarabande. The double-dotted rhythmic pattern disappears as well, and the asymmetrical 5/8 meter lends a more dance-like character to the movements. These traits reach their peak during the “Sarabanda trunca” a dance-like character is firmly established.

Sarabanda Trunca - This movement shows the single “La folia” structure as it was composed in a single section form, solely using the theme of the “La folia”. I would stress the 5/8 meter as Brouwer had already used that meter once before in the sarabande movement of his Suite no. 1. (1955). Not just in terms of harmonic progression but in terms of rhythm, too, Brouwer perfectly clarifies the borders of each key. The tempo of this movement is quite fast; being still a sarabande, its Latin-American tradition is implied.

Double – The double is related to the “Sarabanda Trunca” due to the da-capo form and due to the fact, that during the Baroque era, it was common to compose a dance movement followed up by a double; as an instance I would mention the BWV 997 Suite of Johann Sebastian Bach. The same as the former movement, it is written in ternary meter but for every quarter-note a quintuplet is used, somehow evoking, on a smaller scale level, the previous 5/8 meter. Sextuplets are also included, but the character of the movement relies more on the quintuplets.

Third variation - The character indication is ‘agitato,’ supporting a vigorous tempo, in line with the Latin-American tradition of the sarabande. Not only the character indication, but its rhythm-orientated atmosphere also emphasizes a “New World” atmosphere.

Fourth variation – This variation begins with the theme itself in octaves. Brouwer employs a written-out accelerando by turning the beginning 6/8 meter into 5/8 meter, thereby fastening the course of the notes.

Throughout the last movement, while employing the folia theme, Brouwer fastens the tempo by composing in different meters: firstly, he presents the “La folia” theme in 6/8; afterwards, he shows the same pattern in 5/8. With such a change, he manages to create an instability that perfectly rhymes for the course of the whole movement, as he inserts more form the latter mentioned compositional solution. This last musical phrase leads the piece to the coda.

#### 4.4. Conclusion of the chapter

One of the most interesting aspects of *La Gran Sarabanda* is how Brouwer establishes a process that begins with the French dignified elegance and concludes in a furious dance-like character more evocative of the Latin-American tradition of the sarabande. Another interesting aspect is that although the French tradition happened later in time (from a historical perspective), it forms the first half of Brouwer's piece. That creates an opposition with the second half of the piece which is more akin to the Latin-American traditions. While creating a characteristic opposition, at the same time it represents a travelling backwards in historical time.

In social terms, it is interesting how Brouwer links the French type, which is associated with the high-class, with the Latin-American, which is associated with the low-class, thereby creating an opposition. Is he trying to spotlight the common trait of the French and the Latin-American traditions? Or would it be just a historical context or compositional idea? To be sure, it surely triggers questions in my mind.

## 5. Conclusion

The most interesting factor in my perspective is how Brouwer recycles the antique musical forms in modern contexts. In these contexts, the sarabandes are being presented in various appearances, like for instance, relying on different traditional traits. Moreover, as it turned out, in the work of Leo Brouwer, these pieces frequently appear in various musical settings, like for example in the case of *Tarantos*, or *Sonata no.1*. The different musical context requires a specific contextual adjustment in each case, which has an impact on the musical world of each sarabande movement: with regard to both its type and style. I find it crucial to note, that the tradition of the sarabande had been connected the guitar.

In spite of the obvious differences between the three major phases of Brouwer's work, there are also some common traits, such as his typical use of little motivic cells and the nationalistic component characterised by a strong Afro-Cuban rhythmic element. I tried to explore each phase to see how Leo Brouwer's compositional style can be categorised. Is it neoclassical, is it avant-garde, is it Romantic? It is hard to categorize it, however in one of his interview's he describes his own style as the following:

**“Constance Mckenna:** When these universal forms became apparent to you, how did that influence your composing?

**Leo Brouwer:** Speaking frankly, I used the European structures and models of structures, like form, as a reference. The content that comes into these forms was built out of the essential cells and units of our folkloric roots. This gave birth to many pieces: *Parábola*, *Canticum*, *Espiral Eterna*, the *First Concerto*. If you analyze my guitar music, you will see differences in style and think I am absolutely eclectic; there is an enormous difference between *Elogio de la Danza* and my next guitar piece, *Canticum*.” (Brouwer, *An Interview with Leo Brouwer*, 1988)

I would stress out the phrase “I am absolutely eclectic. As it turned out, most particularly in the analytical discussion of *La gran Sarabanda*, Brouwer pays close attention to the historical and cultural content and context of his musical materials.

As a final idea, I would like to quote Burkholder, who points out the importance of the musical history of other continents apart from Europe. I am surely convinced, that in the

perspective of Leo Brouwer's music, and in a general perspective of music, such thought cannot be ignored today.

... from the sarabande, chaconne, and habanera through spirituals, jazz, blues, rock, indeterminacy, minimalism, and rap, ideas and trends from the New World have been taken up by Europeans, who have made them part of their own musical life. Because of this five-century-long shared history, it is incumbent upon us to treat music in the Americas as fully part of the Western tradition when we teach or write about that tradition. It is part of a long-shared story, and it deserves a place in our historical narratives about Western music. (Burkholder, 2009, p. 419)

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## 7. Attachments

### Attachment No.1 - Santiago de Murcia, "Zarabanda Despacio,"

**Zarabanda Despacio**

5

10

14

19

24

28

Attachment No.2 – Leo Brouwer, *La Gran Sarabanda*, “Theme”

The image displays a musical score for the "Theme" of Leo Brouwer's *La Gran Sarabanda*. The score is written for a single melodic line on a guitar, using a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked "Maestoso" with a metronome marking of 63. The piece begins with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and includes the instruction "marcato". The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, and 15 clearly indicated. The notation includes various rhythmic values, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several trills and triplets marked with "3". A "C2" marking appears above the staff in measures 1, 3, and 5. A "Q2" marking is present above the staff in measures 7, 9, and 12. The score concludes with a "rit." (ritardando) marking and a final dynamic of *p* (piano), followed by the instruction "attacca". A large, stylized graphic of a guitar is partially visible on the left side of the page, overlapping the first few measures of the score.

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Brouwer's Work for the  
Classical Guitar  
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