

# A comparative study: Editions and manuscripts of the Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra by Villa-Lobos

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This research involved a comparative study among three edited versions of Max Eschig and two manuscripts of the *Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra* by Heitor Villa-Lobos in this article. This was accomplished through a simultaneous comparison among the versions. As a result of this study, a series of divergences emerged and are pointed out. Such study allows us a new look before the piece, increasing its execution possibilities and aiding the interpreters positioning in the performance

*Keywords:* Villa-Lobos; comparative study; manuscripts; editions

Heitor Villa-Lobos is considered the greatest Brazilian composer in history, and as Ginastera affirmed, “we can say without hesitating, Villa-Lobos is one of the geniuses of America” (Ginastera 1969). His pieces were always creative and innovative, with “brasíldade” and universalism equated in a magisterial way.

A great contribution to the guitar literature is present in his work. This contribution is demonstrated not only by the art and beauty of his compositions, but also by the development of the writing for the instrument, together with the exploration and amplification of the technical and sound possibilities of the latter.

His compositions for guitar have frequently been visited and they are part of the repertoire and discography of the most renowned interpreters, besides being an indispensable part in the academic formations of Brazilian universities and most of the universities and conservatories in the world.

Many books, theses, dissertations, and essays have H. Villa-Lobos and/or his compositions as a theme. However, very little has been written regarding his *Concert for Guitar and Small Orchestra*. In the few works that can be found with comments concerning the piece in question, the unanimity of

opinions regarding the importance of this concert is noticeable, being considered the synthesis of Villa-Lobos's guitar writing (Dudeque 1994).

Moreover, reiterating the importance of the piece, Turíbio Santos (1975) states this piece presents a new technical equation. The composer dared and the result was the creation of new procedures.

Eduardo Meirinhos (1997) wrote: "We believe the Concert for Guitar and Small Orchestra, from Heitor Villa-Lobos, to be a synthesis of the technical and musical procedures with regard to the guitar-specific writing."

In spite of the few writings regarding the concert, such recognition has been given through frequent executions and recordings.

The last piece for guitar written by Heitor Villa-Lobos was the *Concert for Guitar and Small Orchestra* composed in 1951, with three movements, and initially entitled *Concertante Fantasy*. In 1955 it was edited by Max Eschig and, due to Andrés Segóvia's insistent requests for a concert and not a fantasy, Villa-Lobos added a cadenza to the end of the second movement and renamed it *Concert for Guitar and Small Orchestra*. Under Villa-Lobos's direction, the concert was premiered in 1956 by Segóvia—to whom it had been dedicated—together with the Houston Symphony Orchestra.

It was composed during a phase in which Villa-Lobos was greatly accepted by critics and the public. Villa-Lobos, at that time, had already traveled to several parts of the world, having acted in areas of music such as research, education, conducting, and composition, and his pieces had been frequently visited by the best orchestras.

The study of this concert, as well as the study of his compositions for solo guitar, is accomplished mainly through Max Eschig's editions. However, contact with the manuscripts and an eventual comparative approach are extremely important, for they unfold new possibilities for the interpreter regarding their execution.

Concerning the accomplishment of a comparative study of this composition for solo guitar, an access to editions of comparative character is vitally important because they serve as guides and enable a positioning of the interpreter toward the piece. Some of these works include: *Manuscript and Printed Sources of the 12 Studies from Heitor Villa-Lobos* (Meirinhos 1997); *The 12 Studies for Guitar from Heitor Villa-Lobos: Revision of the Autograph Manuscripts and Comparative Analysis of Three Interpretations* (Salinas 1993); *Primary Sources and Editions of Brazilian Popular Suit, Chorus No. 1, and Five Preludes, by Heitor Villa-Lobos: Comparative Survey of Differences* (Meirinhos 2002).

The above mentioned works attest to the importance of comparative studies; Eduardo Merinhos (1997) emphasized that musicians should bear in

mind “the frequent incompatibility of the manuscripts with the edition.” Heeding this, such pieces could be analyzed and countless differences pointed out “to establish a new attitude of the interpreter toward the execution” (Meirinhos 1997).

In that sense and in what concerns our object of study, this research has discovered a lack of literature employing a comparative approach with regards to the *Concert for Guitar and Small Orchestra* by Villa Lobos. In order to remedy this, a comparative study was made which aimed to fill this gap, so far existent, concerning the *Concert for Guitar and Small Orchestra* by Villa-Lobos, and in doing so point out new solutions for its execution.

MAIN CONTRIBUTION

Comparative Study

A comparative study was made using all the three editions by Max Eschig and two manuscripts of the *Concert for Guitar and Small Orchestra* by Heitor Villa-Lobos. From this, focusing on only the guitar parts, a series of divergences were found:

Table 1. Differences found between the manuscripts and the editions by Max Eschig.

Compass/Note	Manuscript		Eschig editions		
	Full score	Reduction	Full score	Reduction	Guitar solo
25/3 <sup>rd</sup> semiquaver	B 4	B 4	Bb 4	Bb 4	Bb 4
30/3 <sup>rd</sup> semiquaver	Gb 2	Gb 2	Gb 2	G 2	G 2
41/1 <sup>st</sup> crotchet	G 3	G 3	G 3	A 3	G 3
43/1 <sup>st</sup> crotchet	F 3	F 3	F 3	E 3	F 3
49/crotchet (in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> time)	G 2	E 2	G 2	E 2	E 2
76/7 <sup>th</sup> quaver	B 3	B 3	B 3	B 3	G 3
87/crotchet (in the 4 <sup>th</sup> time)	C 3	C 3	C 3	Suppressed note	C 3
88/2 <sup>nd</sup> quaver (in the 4 <sup>th</sup> time)	E 4	E 4	D 4	E 4	E 4
104/2 <sup>nd</sup> quaver (in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> time)	C# 4	C# 4	C# 4	C# 4	C 4
105/1 <sup>st</sup> quaver (in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> time)	F# 4	F# 4	F# 4	F 4	F 4

Table 1 (cont.)

Compass/Note	Manuscript		Eschig editions		
	Full score	Reduction	Full score	Reduction	Guitar solo
116/1 <sup>st</sup> minim (in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> duplets)	G 3	G 3	G 3	A 3	G 3
154/punctuated crotchet, linked to the 1 <sup>st</sup> quaver	F 3	F 3	F 3	F 3	F# 3
154/ last quaver	F 3	F 3	F 3	F 3	F# 3
199/4 <sup>th</sup> semiquaver	C# 3	C 3	C# 3	C 3	C 3
199/11 <sup>th</sup> semiquaver	C# 4	C 4	C# 4	C 4	C 4
200/semiquaver (in the 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> time)	Ab 3	Ab 3	F 3	Ab 3	Ab 3
200/semiquaver (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , & 3 <sup>rd</sup> time)	F 4	F 4	F# 4	F 4	F 4
201/3 <sup>rd</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , & 9 <sup>th</sup> semiquaver	Db 4	Db 4	Db 4	D 4	Db 4
202/3 <sup>rd</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , & 9 <sup>th</sup> semiquaver	Ab 3	Ab 3	Ab 3	A 3	Ab 3
217/last semiquaver	no indication	harmonic indication	no indication	no indication	harmonic indication
233/10 <sup>th</sup> semiquaver	C 5	C# 5	C 5	C# 5	C# 5
251/last semiquaver	E 2	E 2	E 2	E 2	G 2
310/last quaver	F# 4	F 4	F# 4	F 4	F 4
312/2 <sup>nd</sup> minim	G# 2	G 2	G# 2	G# 2	G# 2
340/punctuated minim and subsequent minim	B 3	B 3	B 3	C 4	B 3
346/3 <sup>rd</sup> group of crotchets	Suppressed note	D 4	Suppressed note	D 4	D 4
354/6 <sup>th</sup> quaver and subsequent quaver	C 5	C# 5	C 5	C# 5	C# 5
357/8 <sup>th</sup> note	A 3	A 3	A 3	F 3	A 3
Cadence/8 <sup>th</sup> minim from the Andante	G 4	/	/	/	Bb 4

## IMPLICATIONS

This comparative study enables us to prove the existence of countless differences among the versions. Differences in 25 compasses were found, and in some of them even three notes diverged. Taking into account that in each difference there are two notes, a total of 79 possibilities were found. The first movement of the concert is the one that presents the largest number of

differences, and Max Eschig's version (guitar solo) is one of the most divergent in comparison to the others; though, in the second movement there is a smaller incidence of differences, while in the third a larger incompatibility between the manuscripts was verified. The occurrence of divergences did not only happen when the manuscripts and the edited versions were compared, but also between the manuscripts themselves and among the edited versions. Such indications offer a great variety of choices for the interpreter toward the execution, therefore enabling a new perspective of the piece.

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