

‘Painting a Western musical score with Chinese ink’: Exploring Chinese cultural concepts and sonorities to develop a cross-cultural performance

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Abstract: This paper is an outcome of my ongoing Ph.D. project in which I intend to create a performance in which the scenic dimension is explored to suggest a pre-reflective, embodied and interactive layer of awareness of Macao’s mystical atmosphere to the audience. The performance will comprise the piano solo works of Áureo Castro, a Portuguese composer who lived in the 20th century in Macao and was an enthusiast for Chinese music. His “Chinese style” piano works merge Western composition techniques with melodies and rhythms inspired by Chinese folk music, thus revealing traces of Sino-Western interculturality. This paper addresses the second piano sonata of Áureo Castro and describes how performative choices are explored having as reference Chinese culture concepts and Chinese instrumental sonorities and gestures. These choices are most likely influenced by the performer’s experiences during 20 years living in Macao. Concepts such as non-sound, virtues, Chinese metaphors and musical gestures were experimented in order to create a compelling musical narrative. Moreover, piano playing and affordances of the instrument were explored not only emulating and integrating the gestures and sonorities of traditional Chinese instrumentalists but also experimenting accordingly with musical parameters such as agogic, meter and phrasing to create sonorities that resemble or were inspired by Chinese music.

From my perspective as a performer, a conventional interpretation (i.e. one that follows traditional Western performance practices) would fail to be representative of Castro’s intentions as a composer who aimed to express feelings concerning the exotic atmosphere of Macao, but would also neglect to explore essential affordances of this music. As revealed by Castro about one of his compositions – “Macao Scenes” – the composer seeks to express the music as a “painting with ink that breathes Chinese atmosphere”.

I hope this paper contributes for a better understanding of how exploring performative practices can enrich approaches and perspectives to cross-cultural music works and to contribute to the development of intercultural artistic research in the domain of music performance, where intercultural exchanges and hybridization are, on one hand, increasing and continuously reassessing cultural identities and, on other hand, have the potential to inspire future artistic works.

Keywords: Áureo Castro, cross-cultural performance, intercultural artistic research, Macao, musical narrative

A Portuguese composer in the Far East

Áureo Castro's piano works, composed in the second half of the 20th century, cover a variety of compositional styles, from renaissance polyphony to 20th century neo-classicism and a set of “Chinese style” piano works, which are inspired by Chinese folk music, written in pentatonic modalism and revealing impressions of his adopted hometown Macao (Lynn & Marques, 2017). Works, such as *Cenas de Macau*, *Nostalgia* and *Danças Siu Mui Mui*, composed after 1967, are known as “Chinese style” works. In these works, the composer was inspired by Macao’s scenes, costumes, and sonorities and combined Chinese pentatonic melodies and rhythms with Western composition techniques, which can be considered a remarkable example of Sino-Western musical interculturality. According to Dai, “*Cenas de Macau*” reflects a landscape of Macao full of Chinese feelings, as a unique environment of cultural fusion between East and West (Dai, 2017).

Born in the Island of Azores (Portugal) in 1917, Áureo Castro joined the St Joseph Seminary in Macao at fourteen years old to become a missionary, and there he received his first basic musical education. In 1951, he joined the Conservatory of Music in Lisbon where he completed higher education in composition under the guidance of the pedagogue Croner de Vasconcelos. After his return to Macao in the late 1950s, Áureo Castro was the founder of

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Grupo Coral Polifónico (Polyphonic Choir) in 1959, the S. Pio X Music Academy in 1962 (Macao's first music school) and the Macao Chamber Orchestra (predecessor of the Macao Orchestra) in 1983. In 1990, he received the Medal of Cultural Merit from the Macao Government, three years before his death. Still, according to Lynn and Marques, "the full extent of his talent as a composer was not properly discovered until after his death" (Lynn & Marques, 2017, p.25).

According to Dai (2017) and conductor Barreto (*in Baguet*, 1999), Áureo Castro was one of the most prominent composers of musical culture in Macao, not just of music for the choir but also of music for piano solo. His life experiences and great interest for Chinese culture, since a young age, had profound influences on his musical activity as a composer, choir conductor, school director and music pedagogue (Baguet, 1999).

At this point, it is convenient to clarify the concepts of multiculturalism, interculturalism and their relations with the society of Macao and with the musical works of Áureo Castro.

Macao as a secular multicultural place

Historically, Macao belongs to the multicultural societies where different communities and cultures coexist, with their own identities. Multiculturalism is a social phenomenon found in all or almost all societies in the world. However, this territory, situated in southern China's Pearl River Delta, has since the 16th century been a place of encounter and dialogue between Western and Eastern cultures, particularly for the purposes of commercial intermediation (Barreto, 2017; Ngai, 1999).

Macao is a unique place in China, where you can experience different historical Buddhist and Taoist temples, Cantonese Opera theatres, Catholic churches, and where different cultural and religious events coexist. Different rituals are celebrated by the Chinese communities, such as the Chinese lunar calendar (Chinese New Year, Drunken Dragon, Spring and Mid-Autumn festivals, etc.) and also, by the Catholic communities, such as Our Lady of Fátima procession, Our Lord procession, and Camões Garden day celebration as an homage of the glorious Portuguese poet (Chauderlot, 2012; Antunes, 2012).

This secular "multicultural" society does not mean that Macao can be considered in a global perspective as an "intercultural" society. Essentially, Macao has always been a cosmopolitan place with great ethnic diversity, where Portuguese communities and their descendants preserving their traditions and cultural values have been coexistent for centuries with Chinese and other Asian communities. This gives rise to a hybrid community, the Macanese community, which represents a genuine intercultural aspect of the city (Gaspar, 2019).

Multiculturalism versus Interculturalism

In the phenomenon called "multiculturalism", in a given society and time, several cultures coexist with their own structure and identity, however the process of "hybridization" between cultures is not manifested by the absence of a significant and recurring interaction (Matos & Lages, 2011; Oliveira e Costa & Lacerda, 2007).

In turn, "interculturalism" can be seen as a less common social phenomenon that emerges in a multicultural society and is consolidated through dialogue, cooperation and interaction between two or more cultures that coexist in a given society and time, without the overlap of

a culture in relation to others (Matos & Lages, 2011; Oliveira e Costa & Lacerda, 2007).

This concept of interculturality is in line with UNESCO's definition:

"Interculturality refers to the existence and equitable interaction of different cultures, as well as the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect" (UNESCO, 2005, p.14).

Traces of musical interculturality in Áureo Castro's piano works

According to Kimberlin & Euba (1995), intercultural music could be identified by integration of musical elements from two or more cultures in a musical work by composers that usually (but not necessarily) belong to one of the cultures (Kimberlin & Euba, 1995). Áureo Castro's works are an example of Sino-Western musical interculturality and were created in the second half of the 20th century, combining Western musical influences, which the composer had assimilated when studying at the Lisbon Music Conservatory, with Chinese influences, which he explored when living in Macao.

According to Cecilia I-lan Long, pianist and academic teacher born in Macao, "Áureo Castro's compositions reflect a unique fusion of new trends of early 20th century contemporary music in Europe and characteristics of traditional Chinese music" (*in* Lynn & Marques, 2015, p.202). This appreciation for the "Chinese style" music is remarkable if we take into account Áureo Castro's missionary vocation and the cultural separation between the Chinese (dominant culture in Macao Society) and Portuguese communities. In fact, Áureo Castro claimed that:

I don't think it's that difficult, so long as we can gain some insight into the Chinese way of life, the psychology, and emotions of the Chinese people, listen to a few of their songs ... But it's important to leave aside the traditional European musical concepts, especially harmony, relating to subdominants, dominants and tonics. There is a wide range of concepts, but I should make it clear that not all Chinese music has been based on the pentatonic scale from the beginning of Chinese culture and civilization. (Lynn & Marques, 2015, p. 197)

In sum, Áureo Castro's living experiences and affective connection to Macao, a secular city with their communities, cultural differences and diversities, motivated the composer to amalgamate diverse Chinese cultural influences. These musical elements coexist harmoniously with the musical elements of Western composition technique and the imaginary landscapes and sounds of his adopted home city Macao.

The problematic

The academic literature on Áureo Castro's piano works is predominantly musicological, centered on the reproduction and analysis of the score. Its performances have followed a Western canonical perspective approach. However, a significant part of the work reveals a symbiosis of the Sino-Western musical culture, which a score-based interpretation does not fully reveal. All the richness of this interculturality is ignored by most widespread performances. Hence, the primary goal of my research regards the performative recreation of Áureo Castro's piano compositions as an artistic expression of a unique intercultural approach between China and the West.

To enhance the musical interculturality in Áureo Castro's piano works, I explore performative choices based on Chinese cultural concepts and sonorities of Chinese instrumental playing. In fact, in interviews and poetic descriptions of his piano works, this composer seeks to express the music as a painting "with ink that breathes Chinese atmosphere" (Castro, 2000, p. IX).

This paper reports an effort to create a performance that somehow expresses the mystic atmosphere of Macao based both on Castro's works together with the idiosyncratic and idiomatic traits that I was able to absorb and embody during the 20 years I lived in Macao. The present paper focuses on how I have tried to make Castro's second sonata "come alive" and describes the process from a brief historical-musicological contextualization, then through a creative process consisting of the four interchangeable phases—Contextualization, Emotional Exploration of the context, Coactivation and Becoming—(Correia, 2014) where my life experiences in Macao and my taste for Chinese music played a large role in creating a consistent musical narrative for my interpretation of the sonata during performance.

I will also consider Héroux's (2018) perspective that there are two aspects of mental representation: formal image and artistic image. This was evident in the particular case of this sonata. Most of the time, for me, the artistic image is usually side by side with the formal image as according to Neuhaus and is grasped as early as possible in order to attain and embody the necessary technical mastery to reveal the musical content (Neuhaus, 1993). In the case of this sonata, the artistic image (how the music should sound) came after I had a clear formal image (pitches, rhythm, tonality, fingerings, etc.). After the phase of contextualization (analysis of the score and first impressions of the sonata), the creative practice was essential not only to explore the emotional content of the sonata (exploring the sonorities, dynamics and gestures) but also for the coactivation and becoming phases (embodiment of the musical narrative, memorization and communication of the musical narrative).

In addition, I intend to consider the concept of "artistic appropriation" as explained by Héroux (2018), where a performer uses extramusical elements, fictional narrative, metaphors and analogies and living experiences to create and communicate a musical narrative.

Towards the phases of "becoming" (Correia, 2014) and "artistic appropriation" (Héroux, 2018) I sought different performative practices that can enrich and give a more meaningful musical content to Castro's second sonata. To achieve a convincing musical narrative, my practice consisted of three components: 1) Application of Chinese cultural concepts such as "The 24 virtues of *guqin*" and non-sound; 2) Emulation of sonorities and gestures of Chinese instrumental playing; and 3) Expressing Chinese imagery and poetic narratives.

An essential contextualization and introduction to the Sonata

The second sonata was composed during the period when Áureo Castro was studying composition at Music Conservatory in Lisbon. This work was composed in 1957, one year before his graduation, under the guidance of the well-known pedagogue Croner de Vasconcelos. Accordingly, this phase is quite exploratory, as Castro is trying to find his own style. The sonata is described by Lynn as being "almost a fantasy, with interesting rhythmic combinations with a more innovative harmonic language, daring harmonies and delicate nuances" (Lynn *in* Castro, 2000). Also, Tam Man Man described the same sonata in the

following manner:

The Sonata no. 2 was completed in 1957, a single movement written in sonata form. In comparison with his other works of the same period, the style of this Sonata is totally different: it is bolder and more innovative in harmony, rhythm, dynamic contrasts and use of the piano's upper register. The outcome is a work of more profound artistic expression and full of personal touches, making it one of Fr Áureo's most significant compositions. The first theme develops from a motif with richly varying rhythm; one's curiosity is immediately aroused by the sense of uncertainty created by the chromatic harmonies. A transitional phrase made up of thirds leads to the gentle and exquisite second theme. The melody ascends ever higher with myriad rhythmic changes, creating a sparkling soundscape that resembles birdsong or pealing bells. Rhythmic variations abound in the development section. The main themes return with richer harmonies, and a series of sonorous chords in the low register ushers in a coda of upward sweeping arpeggios. The music ends with an energy and brilliance that is like fireworks exploding in the dark. (Man Man *in* Lynn & Marques, 2015, p.98)

In the next section I will describe the creative practice that belongs to the phases of emotionally exploring context and coactivation (Correia, 2014).

Emotional Exploration of the Context of the Sonata

To create my musical narrative of the second piano sonata, my practice consisted of three components: 1) Application of Chinese cultural concepts such as "The 24 virtues of *guqin*" and non-sound; 2) Emulation of sonorities and gestures of Chinese instrumental playing; and 3) Expressing Chinese imagery and poetic narratives. These components are not linear or separated but interconnected, interchangeable and can occur at the same time (see figure 2).

1) Application of the Chinese cultural concepts

In order to explore some of the Chinese traditional music elements of the second piano sonata, it will be useful first to describe some musical concepts of Chinese traditional culture. As Myers points out, various aspects of Chinese life and culture "are not as compartmentalized as in the West" (Myers, 1992, p.85). Generally, we could refer to Chinese traditional music as Chinese music from the ancient period up to 1840 – the modern period. In the traditional Chinese music period, the *guqin* is known as one of the most famous Chinese musical Instruments. *Guqin* as a musical Instrument and as an art form was officially declared as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage by UNESCO in 2003 (Tien, 2015).

Guqin aesthetics is a significant dimension of Chinese musical aesthetics. According to Tien (2015) the "24 virtues of *guqin*" are described as concepts which refer to sound effects and imagery. These concepts consist of very poetic descriptions and highly metaphorized references to the visual, physical, and kinetics (technique, fingering, posture, articulation etc.). These elements are indications about imagery or artistic image that the performer should embody at a certain time during a performance contributing to an aesthetically elegant performance (Tien, 2015).

As referred by Tien (2015), the "24 virtues of *Guqin*" described by Master Xu (see figure 1) are most appealing to the imagination of the performer:

With a deeply imaginative mind, the *guqin* player according to Master Xu is then mentally ready to venture "beyond the confine of a musical work" and to visualise those things, themes and other aesthetic motifs that may exist in distant or faraway places (...) Master

Xu clearly felt that distant or faraway things/themes are more captivating and fascinating, and present themselves as particularly worthwhile aesthetic pursuits in guqin playing. According to Master Xu, it is desirable if the guqin player's imagination allows him/her to 'go where s/he desires, which is really a state of extreme mystery and abstruseness'. (Tien, 2015, p. 205)

When I apply these concepts, I do not intend to capture all the aspects of the virtues, as they are ideally conceived for *guqin*. I intend to make my practice a creative process, going beyond the score by using the concept of virtues while shaping my musical narrative by exploring gestures, expressive features (agogic, articulation and dynamics) and the character / mood of the piece (or section of the piece) in order to convey the imagery (3rd component) I created for the sonata. Figure 11 below (m. 20-23) is a striking illustration of the versatility of the virtues, in this case *Tian* and *Ya*. The virtue *Tian* refers to the synesthesia between the delicate melody with the fragrance of the flowers, while the virtue *Ya* intends to mimic with the right hand the gracefulness of the birds' movements.

He 和	Harmonious	Su 速	Quick, swiftly
Jing 靜	Tranquil, Quiet	Jie 潔	Clear, Refined technique
Qin 清	Pure like water,	Run 潤	Warm, Soft
Yuan 遠	Distant, Far, Profound	Yuan 圓	Immaculate, Perfect form
Gu 古	Nostalgic, Ancient, Traditional	Jian 堅	Firm, Solid, Strong
Dan 澹/淡	Peaceful, Simple, Calm	Hong 宏	Impressive, Magnanimous
Tian 恬	Serene, Calm, Sweet, Sweet Fragrance	Xi 細	Fine, Detailed, Subtle
Yi 逸	Lazy, Fun, "Take things easy"	Liu 溜	Slippery, Gliding
Ya 雅	Graceful, Refined, Exotic, Elegant	Jian 健	Energetic, Alive
Li 麗	Beauty	Qing 輕	Soft, Soft, Piano
Liang 亮	Brilliant, Transparent, Clear, Vibrant	Zhong 重	Forte, Heavy, Burden
Cai 采	Luminous, Silky	Chi 遲	Slow, Late, Unsure, Delayed

Figure 1- Summary of "The 24 virtues of *guqin*" (Tien, 2015)

Regarding the concept of non-sound, Tien (2015) pointed out that the absence of sound does not mean absence of movement. A striking example described by Tien (2015) is the "Wild Geese Descending on the Sandbank"², where one can observe and appreciate musical gestures that produce very inaudible sounds (2015, p.39). According to Tien (2015) these moments of non-sound are an invitation for the performer and listener to perceive the sounds of nature or surrounding sounds or even imagining the sounds and capturing the mood and feelings by using other senses. In other words, it is a way of listening that is more spiritual. Inspired by this concept, I worked on creating a very subjective perspective of the concept of non-sound and describing it with my own words:

² "Wild Geese Descending on the Sandbank" is a famous painting and an ancient *guqin* piece. According to Tien, the painting and the *guqin* piece depict vividly the "vast openness in Nature" (Tien, 2015, p.37). <https://youtu.be/vDnCM8NI6AU>

*Imagine yourself inside home and the bird “visits you”.
The window is between you and the melodious bird.
The bird is chirping and fluttering the wings. Perhaps another bird is responding.
You contemplate this scene and imagine the sounds of the leaves and flowers rustling, the
wind caressing the feathers, and the branches swinging with the wind and the bird’s hopping.
You can feel the happiness and the freedom.
You can hear the bird not with your ears but with your heart...*

The concept of non-sound is useful for me as Áureo Castro introduces in the sonata a vast variety of pauses, breath marks and fermatas, raising a myriad of interpretative and performative challenges. In some cases, the conventional interpretation of breath marks and fermatas sounds stiff and seems not to contribute that much to the musical narrative. In this aspect, the non-sound has been a resourceful creative tool for the performance of this sonata.

During the non-sound moments, there are several performative options that are related to the poetic content, such as, 1) emulation of *guqin* / *guzheng* sliding sonorities that create a very ethereal atmosphere, 2) emulation of the gestures of *guzheng* instrumental playing or gestures that resemble the birds’ movements and 3) the use of performative gestures indicating expectation, imagining sounds, and so on, that have to be lived with great intensity as someone expecting an almost inaudible echo or the bird’s calls.

Unlike in Western music tradition where the rests are measured moments of silence, non-sound, for me as a performer, is a moment of inner transformation. In other words, the transformation within that silence relies on the context and on one’s own personal musical narrative, that is, the “*hic et nunc*” performative concept.

2) Emulation of sonorities and gestures of Chinese instrumental playing

The second component is related to the exploration of performative gestures and sonorities that resemble Chinese instrumental playing. The performative gestures are important because they facilitate the performer’s emotional involvement with the instrument and embodiment of the musical work and, also, they convey to the audience their musical narrative (Pierce, 2007; Correia, 2014).

This exploration of gestures was strongly based on my lived experiences and my fondness for Chinese musical performances. The emulation is more of an impression and inspiration than actual mimicry of the gestures of Chinese instrumental playing. Nevertheless, I also resorted to observation of several Chinese music performances either “live” or “recorded”.

As for the emulation of sonorities, early on I noticed that the sonata had a compositional feature with striking similarities to the playing techniques of the *guzheng* in its arpeggios. Since my Ph.D. research also explores different performative practices that may enhance the cross-cultural aspect of Áureo Castro works, I decided to explore the affordances of the legato pedal and slow release of the notes played, seeking to emulate the feeling and sonorities of the sliding technique in *guqin* or *guzheng* performance.

3) Expressing Chinese imagery and poetic

In agreement with Tam Man Man (*in* Lynn & Marques, 2015) and Lynn (2000), the sonata seems to be improvisatory featuring moments of extreme chromaticism with rich melodic and rhythmic nuances with a single dynamic indication at the end. Despite the composition being Western in term of style, some passages of the sonata recall my memories of the sonorities of Chinese instrumental playing. My construction of the musical narrative was challenging, and I resorted to extramusical elements such as metaphors, analogies, sensations and imagery.

In a later phase, in order to memorize and deeply embody a convincing musical narrative, I created my poetic description of this sonata (described below). Each of these musical motifs was worked repeatedly to make a convincing musical narrative vividly expressing my poetic content. To achieve this, I also created a choreography (see figure 3) of mixed imaginary socio-cultural-aesthetic elements:

A group of Chinese people “walking” with birdcages in Camões Garden. Some of them hang the birdcages in Banyan tree branches. The Trees have old faces and long beards. Soon these shy, fragile and nervous birds begin to chirp in response to others.

I step on the “Calçada Portuguesa” (Portuguese Pavement Art) with Chinese and Portuguese motifs. I walk away and watch many groups of people from afar. Some are talking, some are gambling, some are playing Chinese chess and my attention focuses on the groups dancing or playing/singing traditional music.

Still walking, I can have a glimpse of the strange form of the Camões Grotto. I think about the legend surrounding the place. A story of love and loss. A prayer for the Portuguese Navigators who perished and the memory of the “Golden” era. Then I know why I can hear the fluttering wings of the caged birds and why I know how they feel...

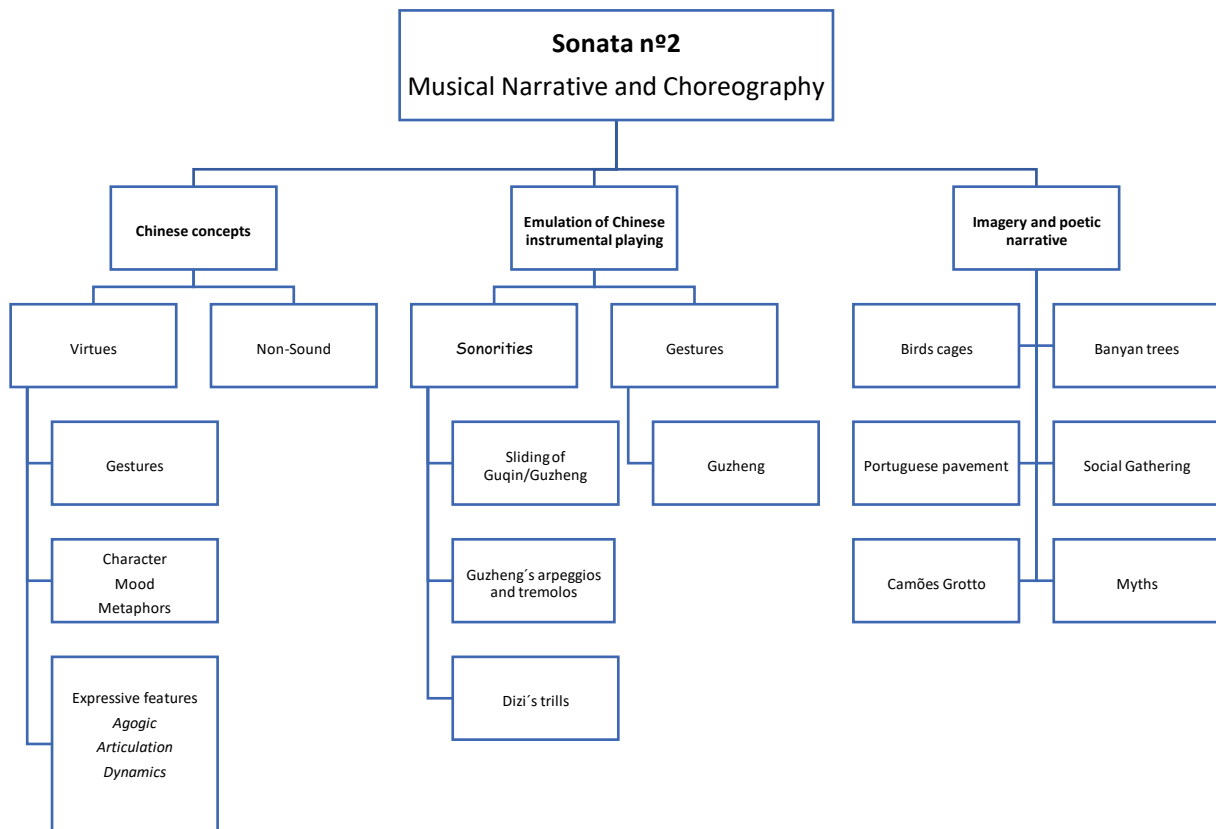


Figure 2- Áureo Castro's Second Piano Sonata- musical narrative and choreography

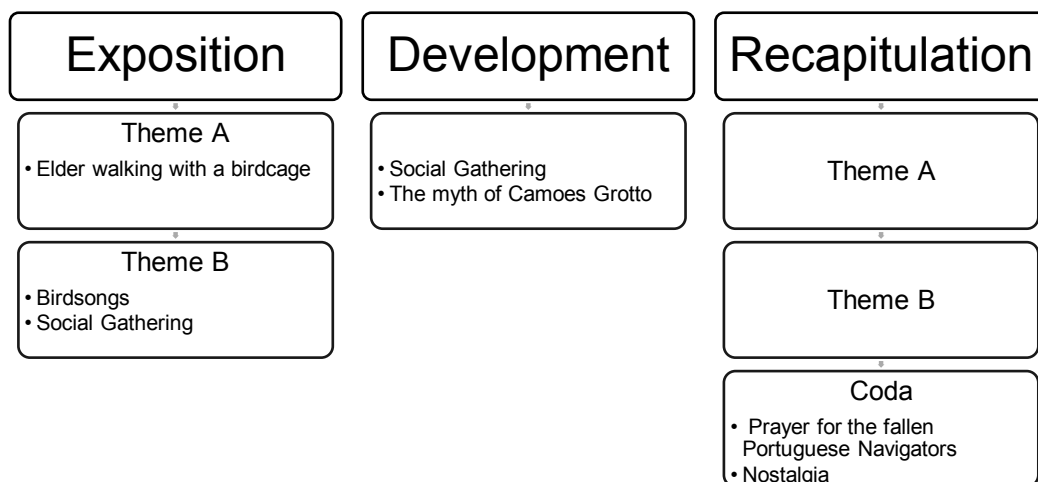


Figure 1- Poetic narrative of Áureo Castro's Second Sonata.

Exposition of the Sonata

The first inherent challenges in this sonata are complex rhythms, irregular tuplets, and the technical demands of the arpeggios followed by melodic motives with a rich counterpoint. The arpeggios are all different which is challenging in terms of interpretation, distribution of the hands, rhythmic accuracy, and, last but not least, memorization.

The exposition of Theme A consists of musical phrases that are divided into two parts, consisting of small rhythmic figures in the first part and a more melodic and contrapuntal in the second part. These descendent arpeggios, that appear throughout the sonata, are the soul of this sonata and rich in surprising rhythmic and melodic nuances. This was the very first thing that was the object of my creative practice as these fleeting arpeggios immediately recalled to me the sonorities of the *guzheng* (see figures 4, 5, and 6). In fact, the imagery of the sonorities of *guzheng* and the elegant gestures of *guzheng* playing had a key role in exploring different gestures for the descending arpeggios and deciding on fingerings and distribution of hands for each of these arpeggios.



Figure 2- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.1 and m.5 (Exposition-Theme A).



Figure 3- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.33 and m.34 (Development)



Figure 4- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.58 and m.62 (Recapitulation- Theme A)

In the phase of exploring the emotional content of the sonata, the creative practice was required to explore different sonorities, dynamics and also for memorization. During the emotional exploration related to my poetic narrative, I resorted to the imagery of

the caged birds for the first part of the phrase and the imagery of a contemplative pace of a Chinese elder for the second part of the phrase.

I relied on subjective emulation of the *guzheng*'s arpeggios gestures and later on virtues to become emotionally involved with each of these varied musical motifs. The initial task of practicing the rhythmic accuracy with a metronome is important to reach the evenness and clarity, but in a later phase, it was more important to bring out the singularity of each one of them. In this phase of interpretation, I explored these motifs based on the virtues of *guqin* to bring out the vividness of these motifs (different characters and moods) and also explored the sonorities and performative gestures of Chinese instrumental playing. These performative gestures are extremely important as they contribute to the vivacity of the musical narrative, by imagining, and re-imagining the images created for these musical motifs. So, for the first part of the phrase, I chose the virtue *Liang*³ (as it reflects the bird's excitement and its vibrant colors) and in the second part, I chose the virtue *Dan*⁴ to reflect the elder's contemplative and serene pace (see figure 7).

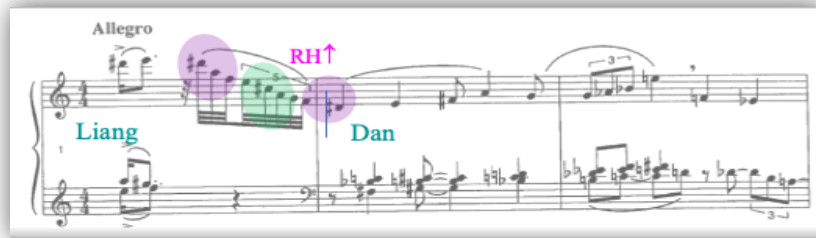


Figure 5- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.1-3

Applying the virtues *Liang* and *Dan* and emulation of *guzheng* gestures. (RH↑ as crossing Right hand above)

In bar 3, using the breath mark moment, the emulation of the sliding tones is done with a blurring legato pedal with a late pedal change. The next melodic phrase slowly loses energy until bar 5 where I apply again the sliding tones emulation followed by a fermata where I introduce a moment of non-sound. This moment requires a longer suspension, where I relive the serene atmosphere of the garden, making the reintroduction of the next phrase much more surprising and vibrant (*Liang*) (See figure 8).



Figure 6- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.3 and m.5-6

³ This virtue describes a sound that is bright, clear and audible. Compared to the sound of a piece of metal being struck and associated with the imagery of clear water or a bright room (Tien, 2015).

⁴ This virtue is the most representative of *guqin* performance. It reflects a composed, calm, reflexive and placid atmosphere (Tien, 2015).

Applying the emulation of sliding tones of *guzheng* and non-sound concept.

After a hesitant bridge, where I apply the virtue *Chi*⁵, the theme B begins a journey towards the piano's upper register, reminding me of strolling at Camões Garden with exotic *banyan* trees and the stairs decorated with Portuguese pavement art. The virtues applied here are both related to the atmosphere of leisure (virtue *Yi*⁶) and the exotic atmosphere of a Chinese Garden with Portuguese pavement surrounded by a constant melodious chirping of the gracious caged birds (virtue *Ya*⁷) (see figures 9 and 10). Camões Garden is a place of gathering, where Chinese people, besides walking with birdcages, perform *Tai Chi* early in the morning, play Chinese chess and perform informal music and dances.



Figure 7- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.10-12 (Exposition's theme B)



Figure 8- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.15-18.

In bar 20 begins a lyrical melody that reminds me the fragrance of the garden flowers (virtue *Tian*⁸) followed by the sensation of warm breeze in bar 22 where I apply the emulation of *guzheng* sliding by blurring the pedal (see figure 11).

⁵ A concept that has multiple meanings and seeks an atmosphere that is calm and peaceful. The gestures should not be hasty to convey the imagination travelling into distance (Tien, 2015).

⁶ This virtue is related to the performer's skill to play slow music with ease and deliver all its subtleties or play in a fast tempo but not hastily, producing a leisurely atmosphere (Tien, 2015).

⁷ According to Tien (2015), *Ya* refers to the opposite of vulgar, noisy, coarse and heavy music. This virtue reflects music that is exquisite, graceful, elegant and refined.

⁸ This concept is often related to synesthesia related to the fragrance of orchids or sweet tastes (Tien, 2015).

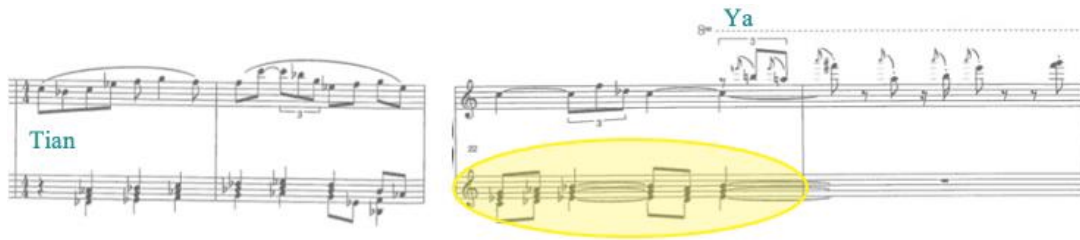


Figure 9- Second Sonata, Áureo Castro, m.20-23

The section between bar 22 to 27 always reminds me of the sonorities of a *Dizi* performing trills and the birds chirping. The graceful acciaccaturas and lively trills represent, for me, the chirping of the birds as well their dancing moves in the cages hung on *banyan*'s branches (virtues *Ya* and *Su*⁹). At the same time a poignant melody, played by the left hand, expresses the imagery of birds' graceful movements and melodious songs (virtue *Ya*). Emotionally, I communicate the contradictory feelings of admiration for the birds' graceful movements and songs and sorrow for their lack of freedom (see figure 12). Here the same virtue -*Ya*- is applied for both melodic motifs, but while in the right hand, the melodic motifs represent the caged birds' graceful moves, the left hand plays a melodic line representing feelings of admiration and sorrow. I also apply the emulation of gestures of *guzheng* playing, using the pauses as the opportunity to mimic the birds' moves inside the cage.



Figure 10- Second Sonata, Áureo Castro, m.22-25

Later, applying the virtue *Su* to resemble the elusive nature of the birds, there is a passage of successive and descendent trills and grace notes until it explodes with a resonant dominant bass chord of E Major (bar 29). These descendent trill passages and the sweeping ascendent arpeggio (bars 28-29) are similar to tremolos, arpeggios and glissandos that are common in *guzheng* (and other Chinese instruments as well) bravura repertoire (see figure 13).

In relation to the *pedal*, it should be used carefully, as one of the few indications from Áureo

⁹ This virtue requires the player to perform quick gestures to create different effects and nuances. The performer is encouraged to seek inspirations from Nature that involve quick motion (Tien, 2015, p.251).

Castro implies the use of a drier sonority (*sec*), although the resonating bass chord should be carried, in my point of view, until the end of the exposition in the form of non-sound. This means the *pedal* should be maintained with half changes or with tremolo pedal (depending on the room's acoustics), ending with glimmer resonance of the bass dominant chord (E major). Meanwhile, the trills and grace notes resemble the *Dizi* and the birdsongs and are performed with a very lively character (*virtue Su*).

At the end of the exposition, the non-sound is applied as I wait for the resonance of the dominant chord to fade away while I am imagining vividly the expectation for the bird's response (see figure 14).

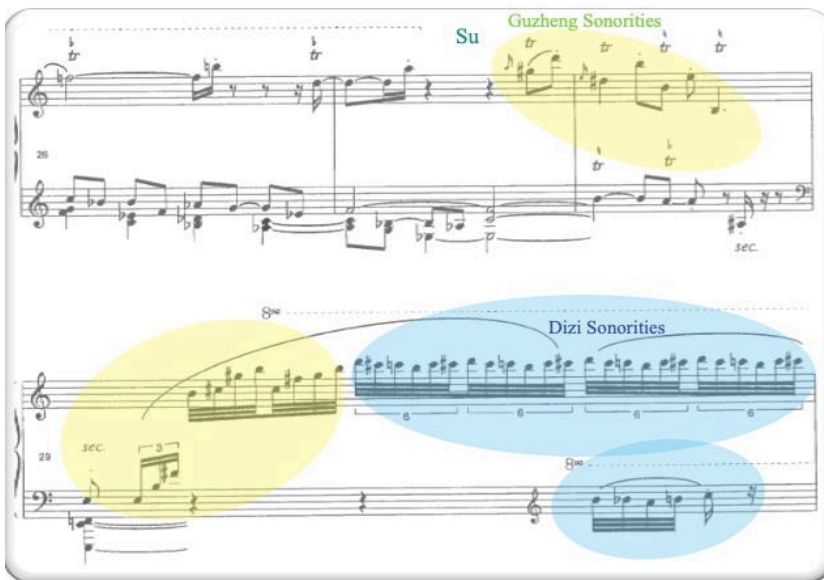


Figure 11- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.26-30.

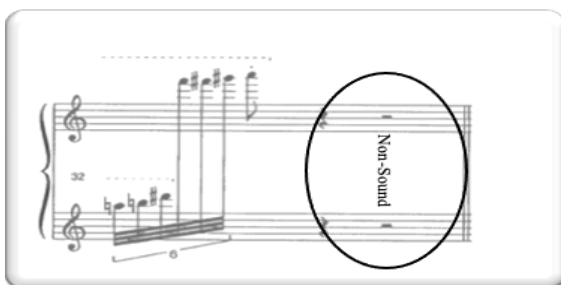


Figure 12- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.32 (End of Exposition)

Development of the Sonata

In the development section, the composer explores the same musical material of the first part of theme A with a more timid and hesitant character, followed by successive descendent arpeggios. This section of descendent arpeggios continued with the same choreography of hands distribution of the first bar with arpeggios done with both hands and ending with right hand crossing above (see figure 15).



Figure 13- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.36-39 (choreography of hands distribution)

Between bars 39 to 50, I intend to express the poetic content related to the Camoes Grotto and the myth surrounding this place. This myth, associated with the poet's banishment from the reign of Portugal, the birth of epic poem "*Os Lusíadas*" and a story of love and loss with a *Patane* native, is relatively well known among the Macanese, Portuguese, and some Chinese communities. To express this myth, the virtue *Gu*¹⁰ seems to fit better in this ancient and nostalgic atmosphere, and the interpretation of this section is overall a conventional one (see figure 16).



Figure 14- *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro, m.40-42

After bar 50, the composer re-introduces and explores the material from the B section. In this part, there are some challenges related to breath marks and it is important to perform a gradual change from the nostalgic character of virtue *Gu* to a more swiftly one ending with a *ritardando* and emulation of the sliding of the *gugin*. The breath marks and pauses are important because they are essential in giving vitality to the descending thirds towards the end of the development section. This time the descending thirds (notice that theme B consists of ascending thirds) are associated with going downstairs (decorated with Portuguese Pavement) while watching groups of Chinese people doing different activities (see figure 17).

¹⁰ *Gu* is related to tradition and an ancient and conventional atmosphere. The playing should be elegant, magnanimous, and gentle and an homage to the millennial art of *gugin* performance (Tien, 2015).



Figure 15- Second Sonata, Áureo Castro, m.55-58.

Recapitulation of the Sonata

At the recapitulation (starting from bar 58) the arpeggios of theme A are slightly different and more complex. This time the choreography of hands distribution is somewhat livelier (see figure 18).

Also, the breath markers and fermatas contribute even more to the unexpected character of this sonata. In a mere six bars, there are 2 fermatas and 2 breath marks, so they are emotionally important. In the first case, just like in the exposition, I applied the emulation of the *guqin* sliding. In the second case, contrary to the exposition where there is only a breath mark, there is also a fermata. I also apply the sliding emulation with a certain emotional expectation and uncertainty. In the third case, the composer removes the fermata (in the exposition there is a fermata) so I do not apply the non-sound and perform a sudden attack of the second phrase.



Figure 16- Second Sonata, Áureo Castro, m.57-61(Recapitulation)

Finally, the Coda is quite interesting for several reasons. This section comprises all the musical materials presented throughout the sonata and it is also the first time there is an indication of dynamics (*forte*), so the virtues selected were *Hong*¹¹ and *Zhong*¹² in homage for the Portuguese Navigators who perished. Then the longing for the motherland can be felt in the last two bars, which I apply the virtue *Yuan*¹³, and I use the final non-sound moment to listen from afar the hopeless caged birds (see figure 19).



Figure 17- Second Sonata, Áureo Castro, m.84-89. (Coda)

Discussion and final reflections

The second sonata is singular. It is rich in surprises that each live performance is different, not only because performance is a unique event but also the vividness of the communication of the musical narrative. Lynn and Marques (2015) suggested that the sonata is a “fascinating and pleasant challenge”. It’s interpretation is constructed through personal choices (Lynn & Marques, 2015, p.87). Indeed, the sonata is rich in performative choices. Applying the concepts of non-sound and the virtues as well as creating a poetic narrative, for me, has reinforced my emotional involvement. It was also an opportunity to 1) demonstrate my identity as a performer and 2) embody new forms of interaction with the piano and cross-cultural musical works. Schechner (2015) states: “To perform is to explore, to play, to experiment with new relationships” and “to become someone else and yourself at the same

¹¹ It is related to an atmosphere that evokes grandeur and magnanimity. *Guqin* is referred to as a ceremonial instrument and its performance is mostly for self-cultivation and self-expression (Tien, 2015).

¹² According to Tien (2015) when sounds are playing with feeling one plays with the quality of *zhong*. The performance gestures usually produce heavy sounds to convey a “mood or emotion that the *guqin* player is intent on expressing” (Tien, 2015, p.247)

¹³ This word is “semantically polysemous” and in this case refers to “something, someone or somewhere being far away or distant”. Master Xu suggests the use of “imagination to visualize things, themes and other aesthetics motifs that may exist in distant or faraway places”. Finally, it is even desirable for performers “to venture beyond the confine of a musical work” and to “go where s/he desires, which is really a state of extreme mystery and abstruseness” (Tien, 2015, p.204-205).

time” (Schechner, 2015, p.9). Likewise, this paper seeks to address new ways to share knowledge about ‘how to’ convey an interpretation to the listener from the performer’s point of view (Cook & Everist, 1999).

The use of the Chinese concepts allowed me, as a performer, to experiment new and unexpected pathways of creating a musical narrative that evokes the interculturality traces of Macao. These traces are imprinted in both composer’s and performer’s lives. I hope this paper (as part of Artistic Research), will broaden horizons, create new challenges for performers, as Chiantore (2017) would call ‘jump the fence’ to a territory that seeks new knowledge by creating and challenging apparently consolidated realities. Music, according to Cook, “affords an apparently unlimited variety of interpretative options” and performers should be “more adventurous” (Cook, 2014, p.3). Assis (2018) also claimed that performance is a “space of problematisation” and that the research of creative processes leading to performance is a field that can create new knowledge and practices (Assis, 2018, p.19-20). According to Correia and Dalagna (2020), the embodied meaning is intimately linked to “our emotional memories” (Correia & Dalagna, 2020, p.19). Concerning this sonata, I resorted to my memories and living experiences in Macao that contributed to the “material thinking” and creative process towards the final performance of the sonata.

Finally, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of how different performative practices can enrich approaches and perspectives to cross-cultural music works. Additionally, I hope to contribute to the development of Intercultural Artistic Research, where intercultural exchanges and hybridization are, on one hand, increasing and continuously reassessing cultural identities and, on other hand, have the potential to inspire new music interpretations and/or future artistic works.



Video Example 1: *Second Sonata*, Áureo Castro.

<https://youtu.be/FBiU9oWEo1A>

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