

Luiz Costa: In Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Death

ABSTRACT

This text is dedicated to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the composer, pianist and teacher Luiz Costa (S. Pedro do Monte de Fralães, 1879 – Porto, 1960). The preface begins by clarifying the meaning of commemoration as a ritual. The text is divided into two parts. The first, anthropologic in nature, undertakes the problems involved in the construction of the identity of Luiz Costa as a person and as an artist within the more general question of this construction emerging from the anthropological themes of birth, suffering, love and death. The second, musicological part demonstrates that events and circumstances in the life of an artist can leave their marks on his works. Some characteristic compositions of Luiz Costa are analysed with the intention to gain information about the mind and character of the man and the artist that he was.

Keywords: Luiz Costa; anthropology; time; gift; compositions; artistic identity

PREFACE

What does it mean to commemorate someone's death? It means to commemorate an event: their death as a birth or, equally so, their rebirth (re+birth). Death is an inevitable fact and, in this sense, absolutely foreseeable. Inasmuch as it is so predetermined by the laws of nature, beside its date, which is unpredictable, it contains little that is surprising, unexpected or transcendent. It is, in its logical explanation, made up of the shadows and silences of its own funeral. But its rebirth, no. It is something for which there is no guarantee, at the outset, for what will happen, as it does not entirely depend upon the one who is to die. It is truly a happening and is, as such, made of light and of sound. It emerges, slowly or suddenly, but always unpredictably, from the chain of predictable facts. A power is born which allows it to burst forth. What power

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can this be which transforms one's death into the event of its own rebirth? It certainly does not come from the linear, predictable organisation of physical time. It is rather the extraordinary power of an eternal, circular time. Of a time which revealed itself in multiple instances of life which is now closing and, as a result, being reborn. It is an authentic human holy manifestation with divine talents. As if, in these moments, this eternal time showered itself with gifts in the form of blessings. Visually, these appear to humans – and for this reason, one part is destined to be exchanged, thus avoiding war or ending conflict between them, making their co-existence (co + existence) a possibility. From the secret, mysterious aspect, being divine, these gifts are holy – and as such nobody should touch them so that they can be kept and, thus, transmitted in their pure form to future generations. It is this holy nature of the gifts which seals the gap between personal and communal memory and makes commemoration (co + memory) necessary as a form of social group ritual.

On 7th January 1960, Mestre Luiz Costa, composer, pianist and teacher, died in his “Casa da Paz”, nº 53, in Porto. Today, fifty years on, the need to commemorate his life and work is reborn.

PART I – The Themes of Birth and Death in the Construction of the Identity of an Artist

1 | Introduction : the Anthropology of Art

The point of view of this text is that of the anthropology of art or, more precisely, the anthropology of music. What is the objective? To clarify the symbolic meaning of a composer's work, in light of the contexts through which his life is shaped and the *performance* of the respective interpreters.

This viewpoint is not a peaceful one, in so far as that the artist himself tends to reject it. In truth, the latter perceives the anthropologist as one who undervalues or even scorns his exceptional gift, his “genius”

(greater or lesser), while “explaining it” in a simplified and prosaic manner, from the context of the production and fruition of the work. However, the epistemological reality is something else.

If it is true that anthropology possesses the analytical, digital, diachronic and syntactical language of science, it is also more and more evident that it is also gifted with the synthetic, analogical, synchronic and metaphorical language of art. The former, dominant in anthropological history, tends to create an “objective” view of the artist as a social actor taken as a “distant” and different other. The latter, as innovator, seeks to create a comprehension (com + prehension) of the human being – which the artist is also – as someone “close”.

In summary: anthropology is not only a social and cultural science, but is, of itself, art [1].

2 | Time, Music and the Temporality of its Contexts

The theoretical problem arising is that of the process through which one may construct the identity of a musician, as a human being and as an artist. As a human being, it is constructed using the four great anthropological themes present in the members of any culture and in any historical time: birth, suffering, love and death. As a musician, the identity is constructed – together with the interpreters of his works and the listeners – thanks to the specific artistic gifts which are present in the instant of each moment of creation of his works.

What distinguishes this analogic “double” – human / musical being – from others, is that of the intimacy of the resonant language as emotional language of the human being (and of its communities) with the musical language of the composer and their interpreters. It is, thus, musical time, simultaneously mathematical and sensitive, to which we are now drawn into listening [2]. I mean by this that it is not only the composer, the interpreter and the listener as social actors that are in play in the construction and decipherment of the musical sense of a musical piece of work. It is also them as human beings, more instinctively, with their own language – temporal, intrinsic to themselves as beings: the language of sounds.

Thus, would not Heidegger, say, on the subject of musical time, that, this is also a how (Wie), a change that happens in the being there (Dasein) of each of the actors, all of them *beings-in-the world* (In-der-Welt-sein) and, in this sense, *beings-with-one-another* (Mit-einander-sein)? [3]

We face three forms of “time lived” [4], as they pass by the composer, the interpreter(s) and the listener(s) [5]. Furthermore, beyond this mathematical time lived through the consciousness of the sub-

jects, is there not a “cosmic time” [6], independent of this same consciousness?

And will it not be between these two times – the “lived” and the “cosmic” – that is generated the tension which enables “the music to open into the mysterious” [7] and that in it “we hear the unspeakable relating to us and the world”? [8]

It is not in this tension that music exists as a projection of timelessness and duration “where music exists as a *being-in-the-world, being-with-other* and *being-in-the-face-of-mystery*”? [9] Does it not offer us “a (mysterious) order between us and time” [10], time “which destroys us and invents us”? [11]

The hypothesis formulated here is that the power of the artist in the creative process and in the construction of his identity together with the interpreters and the listeners, resides in eternal time (outside of “cosmic” and “lived” time) that, thanks to his creative gifts and to the work of composition and interpretation, is present in the instance of every moment within the creation of his musical work. [12]

By which processes can the construction of the identity of a composer from Porto and the Baixo-Minho, as is the case of Luiz Costa in the first half of the twentieth century, be verified? This is the concrete set of problems of this text.

Critics and musicologists seem to converge on one point: the “bucolic”, “nostalgic” or “melancholic” nature of much of the pure music and programme of Luiz Costa, discussing the love of the composer for nature as the source of inspiration for his work. This is their point of arrival.

As an anthropologist, this is, for me, the departure point for a more general question: how does the music of Luiz Costa acquire direction for its interpreters and listeners? Only through his love for the nature of his native land?

3 | The Theme of Birth in the Construction of the Identity of Luiz Costa

A family memory tells us that, one autumn morning, the boy Luiz was being driven by his father António Ferreira da Costa, Jr., while being held in the arms of his arms of his mother Adozinda Amélia from the house of Quinta da Porta in the Baixo-Minho (where on 25 September 1879 he was born), to the parochial church of St Peter do Monte de Fralães to be baptized ‘Luiz António Ferreira da Costa’. [13] The ox cart which carried them passed over neighbouring lanes, winding over the hillsides. It was here that he would return all through the rest of his life. In Germany he continued his studies at the expense of his uncle Miguel Joaquim Gomes Pinto, [14] who had a house in the neighbouring district of Viatodos. And, whether in his native land, or in Germany, he would take long walks through nature. He grew both as an

artist and as a human being during his many strolls thought both the German forests and the Minho countryside.

The figure of the composer walking in and with the countryside, condenses into a triple visual and sound image: that of the “iconic and sonorous countryside”, whose shapes and sounds are generated by multiple movements of objects both inanimate (slow) and animate (rapid, including human beings); that of the artist himself, repeatedly crossing this seasonal scene, [15] observing it and listening to it; and that of his music, whose shapes and melodies eventually express the order of play, between the composer and time, that this “iconic and sonorous countryside” has inspired in him. In other words: the composer transposes, in his own way, into musical expression the resonance [16] that the countryside reverberates within him.

A former musical student, [17] one day wrote the following testimony: “(Luiz Costa) nurtured in us a deep respect for nature. He advised his students to go for long walks in the woods and fields, listening to the wind in the cornfields, the singing of the birds, the murmur of streams and all the sounds of the countryside, which, as they cross over mountains and valleys, feed the artistic imagination.”

What kind of countryside was this, the Baixo Minho (Lower Minho), from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century? It was a land of water, cornfields and vines. [18] It was sung about by poets such as António Correia de Oliveira, [19] it was described by writers such as Antero de Figueiredo [20] who left us, when speaking of the Minho at about the time of 1918, “inner” portraits such as this: “The Minho, small and gentle (---) is soft with the green of the cornfields, the beanfields, the vegetable gardens, the damp meadows soaked in slithers of water, smooth and shiny, like silver platters (...) On the small farms can be seen, among the grapevines, the whiteness of modest homesteads, with threshing-floors in the sun, beside stacks of corn, wheat and barley, with their tops of thatched crosses, which, with the granite on top of the baskets and doors of the roofs with the two waterways, protect the Christian household – people and cattle.” [21] Miguel Torga spoke, by way of contrast, at the end of the XX century as the *Tras-os-Montes* man he was, of this “Green bower, where alone is born and where grows the modest praying mantis incapable of conceiving of the forms of rebellion (...) and of the reality of a small dancing neighbour, limited physically and psychologically by the garden walls. I would like to show him to the country free of distrust, rumour and meanness. I would like him uncommonly grand in body and soul.” [22] I am reminded of Ferreira de Castro who told me – the person who, with

my family, used to go to Caldas das Taipas in the summers of the fifties and sixties (how he felt the Minho countryside to be “humble” (sic)) – which, said by the author of *Selva* gives us one more comparative means of expression.

One thing stands out from this countryside, thus diversely described: its place in time is not only geological, biological, historical, economic and social, but also religious. Incorporated within are not only ordinary shapes (homes, threshing-floors, etc) and sounds (bleating, birdsong, singing, etc.), but also sacred shapes (churches) and sounds (church bells, etc.), values and symbols (crosses, etc.) The resonance of this countryside in the composer, is intimately impregnated with biblical metaphors of water, bread, vines and wine, which inform his religious education.

4 | The Theme of Death in the Construction of the Identity of Luiz Costa

In 1934 his only male offspring, Luíz, took his vows in the *Companhia de Jesus*. Totally dedicated, after a certain point in time, to the cause of the sanctification of the Beato João de Brito, he contracted exantematous typhoid in the Alentejo, dying, in 1939, in the *Brotéria*, in Lisbon.

From the *Cartas de um Religioso* [23] published by the family in 1940, there are three examples which serve as keys to the understanding of the resonance of this “double death” in the work of Luiz Costa. In the first, written from Porto in 1932, “*Despedida*”, Luiz Moreira de Sá e Costa writes:

I have just had dinner – the last with my own before leaving all this...

On the outside – they were all most heroic.

On the inside – we cried a great deal.

The cross weighs heavy; nobody can imagine how heavy it is – those who stay and who goes...

But it is the Lord who puts it there, we follow the path.

And in the end it is this cross which will surely give Happiness to whomsoever goes and stays.

I write in haste, but with all my heart. I am thinking of you all.

In the second, addressed to his parents, “*Aos Pais*”, in the same year, but from the *Mosteiro* (Monastery) de *Alpendurada*, he writes:

Everything I imagined to be good about the religious life, I have found here, becoming greater than I could ever have imagined!

The horizons are full of purity, expanding indefinitely before us. We have the sensation of a new clarity and it is not clear where this is leading. (...)

The power of prayer is awesome, before which all the armies of the Earth are nothing (...). Therefore, I ask them that, remembering this, if they shed tears, they shall be ones of contentment and remembrance.

The third, entitled "Entrevista com a Rainha Senhora D. Amélia", from 1937 and also written to his parents, "Aos Pais" from the Jesuits residence in Paris, tells of the reception that he was given, at his request, in the Château Bellevue in Le Chesnay, near Versailles. In a form of preamble, he says:

On my journey, thinking of the extraordinary good that She (the Queen) has done in Portugal (...), in her great work in aiding tuberculosis, in her protection of artists, in her personal visits to the slums, during the calumny, on the assassination of her Husband, of her Son, on the fall of the throne, in exile, on the sudden death of the last remaining Son.

And at the right moment, he tells his parents:

(The Queen) wanted to tell me of her vocation, if she was happy; then it was my turn to speak of my justice: I was in my element as apostolate: I spoke with enthusiasm. When I said: I was right! (...). She, then (...) said vaguely and longingly: "That's it! You were right! How happy I am and how good it feels to hear it! And then: "but your Parents! Your Parents!" I told her then that I was the only son. She raised her hands to her head and said: "Ah! My God! The only one! That really hurts! At that, I told her of my parents' generosity, of their accompanying me at my Novitiate, of how much the separation hurt them, but they never tried to stop me; and She repeated: how beautiful, how beautiful!

What most strikes one when he is remembered is, nevertheless, that he is present by his absence in all the biographical notes of his father, Luiz Costa.

PART II - What Works can tell about their Creator

1 | Introduction: Sources about the Life and Personality of Luiz Costa

The informations given in booklets of CDs containing works of Luiz Costa, or those about his life and work, seem to have been taken from one or two sources only. All these texts tell us about his studies with Bernardo Valentim Moreira de Sá in Porto, and with Ansorge, Busoni, Vianna da Motta, and Stavenhagen in Berlin and Munich. They mention his playing as a soloist as well as together with famous artists in Portugal, Spain and England, and his invitations of many artists, even more famous, to play in the

concerts of the Orpheon Portuense during the time of his post as director of this institution. There is praise of the great service Luiz Costa has rendered his country as a piano teacher, being Professor at the Oporto Conservatoire which his father-in-law, Bernardo V. Moreira de Sá, had founded in 1917, and which he presided in 1933/34 as its director. Finally, there are mentioned the compositions of Luiz Costa. But only in a few cases, some distinguishing observations concerning the works have been made: in 1999 by Sérgio Azevedo, [24] in 2000 by Bruno Caseirão, in his text written for a CD of the pianist Bruno Belthoise, [25] and in 2009 by João-Heitor Rigaud [26] and by Bruno Belthoise. [27]

2 | What we know about the Life and Nature of Luiz Costa

There is nothing to blame about the biographic sketches in CD booklets and articles. We do not have any monograph written about Luiz Costa, most of his works are unpublished and, consequently, only a few of them have been recorded.

The main sources giving information about the life and nature of this important artist of Northern Portugal are the articles of his former pupil Luís d'Albuquerque Couto dos Santos, [28] published in 1950, and that of his friend the doctor Hernâni Bastos Monteiro, [29] published in 1960. In an essay from 1994, containing suggestions how to familiarize middle school students with the composer Luiz Costa, José Manuel Freitas [30] has enriched those informations by an impressive amount of source material. Most interesting is the essay of Couto dos Santos, who not only describes the musical situation in Porto at the time to underline the significance of Luiz Costa as an artist, teacher, composer and cultural manager, but also tries to draw a picture of his character. He mentions his patience, competence and efficiency as a teacher, his selflessness, modesty and honesty, his calm serenity, profound seriousness and radiant kindness. We understand that the pianist, with all the qualifications necessary for making an international career, sacrificed this chance in favour of his country and his family. In 1926 he also turned down an invitation to teach at the College of Music of Cincinnati. But - so we may interject as critical readers - how do we know that it was indeed a sacrifice which Luiz Costa offered his music-loving compatriots, when he decided to set up a home, a family and a piano class? Was it really selfless to stay at home, to continue the work his father-in-law had begun and to compose more than a hundred pieces of music? The life of Luiz Costa as an internationally well-known artist would have included exhausting travels through the world, having to stay far from home for weeks or months. He would have had to be

tough and sometimes insensitive against hostile critics or malevolent audiences. Possibly he had thought of all this. Or perhaps, on the contrary, he had felt clearly that his mission was to set up a piano school and to develop further the idea of creating a national style in musical composition, as Bruno Caseirão [31] assures us that this was one of the principal concerns the composer attended to.

Having to admit that we know little about the man Luiz Costa, what information about his works do we have?

3 | What we know about the Compositions of Luiz Costa

On the occasion of the festivity on May 8th, 1950, when Luiz Costa received the Goldmedal of Artistic Merit by the City of Porto, the young critic Fernanda Cidrais wrote in a published commentary: 'Art without great surprises, rather reflecting a contemplative soul, absorbed in the calmness of a lake of clear and still waters, sometimes slightly ruffled by a breeze which arises to give its customary periods of rest more solemnity. Of this kind are the compositions of Luís Costa.' [32] Even if we take into account that Fernanda Cidrais at that time had only just begun to write notes on music and that she probably did not know more compositions by Luiz Costa than had been performed at the event, those words can nevertheless be taken for what they were intended to be: a rough summarizing view on the (at that time not quite complete) works of the composer.

As late as 1995, Maria Teresa Macedo, having studied piano first with Luiz Costa and later with his daughter Helena Sá e Costa, has written in the booklet of a CD with music of Luiz Costa: 'His musical dialect is smooth and without too sharp turns. The intimate lyricism and serene poetry that flows from his compositions are not immune to dash, splendour and drama on many occasions.' [33] In addition to these words, the booklet includes a short description concerning the sequence of subjects in every single movement of the works recorded on the CD. In general, all the short texts in the CD booklets and the prefaces to editions of musical scores use the same vocabulary to characterize Luiz Costa's music:

- 'an extensive, bucolic, nostalgic lyricism, very near the most profound roots of lusitanism'; [34]

- 'some influence of French impressionist school'; [35]

- 'the ambience of the north of Portugal ... [influenced] the titles and sonorities'; 'rural atmospheres [...] are present in many pieces in an intimate way and described with profound lyricism and nostalgic flavour'; 'as a sound painter of the environments of his land, Luiz Costa was also a patriot'; [36]

- 'sound patterns from country life'. [37]

- 'Though clearly influenced by the French impressionist school, many passages in Luiz Costa's music are deeply imbued with nature, particularly the Minho region [...], giving his music a distinctive identity with highly individual characteristics'. [38]

We must admit that we do not learn much from such information about the exact individual character of Luiz Costa's music. But since neither do we know much about the ideas and ambitions of the composer himself, we nevertheless have to resort provisionally to his works to find out something about the way he thought and felt. (The artist's estate, which includes his personal documents, is still waiting to be analysed and - possibly - edited.) I am convinced that his works do not only reflect the frequently mentioned scenery of the region of Minho, where he was born, but also the character and mind of the composer.

4 | Some outstanding Works

The life of Luiz Costa seems to have passed, to a great extent, in a fortunate way; alternating between industrious work and the pleasant hours and days spent with his family. The daughters, Helena and Madalena, well-known musicians like their parents, confirm this in their respective memoirs. [39] In the rough sketch of the course of his life that we are able to draw only few sad events stand out: the death of his father António Ferreira da Costa (1912), that of his father-in-law Bernardo Valentim Moreira de Sá (1924), of his mother Adosinda Amélia Gomes Pinto da Costa (1926) and, the most terrible blow for the whole family, the death of his son Luís (1939).

At least two of those incidents [40] seem to have found their reverberation in the musical works of Luiz Costa: in 1925 he composed *Canção Triste*, for piano, and probably in 1939 or 1940 the third movement, 'Adagio', of the Sonata op. 11 for Violoncello and Piano. These compositions stand out in the list of works - being two of the few pieces with unambiguously sad contents.

There are a lot of pieces sounding melancholy or nostalgic, like 'Pelos Montes fora', 'Solidão dos Campos', 'Cantares ao longe...', and many more; but only *Canção Triste* is bearing already in its title a clearly sad connotation. The little piano piece of only 22 bars was published in *O Commercio do Porto Ilustrado* of the year 1925, the Christmas edition of *O Commercio do Porto*. These special issues of the newspaper, that existed until 2005, generally contained a short, simple piece of music. Neither this requirement nor the seasonal/religious aspect (Christmas) would have prompted a composer to write a 'canção triste'. So it seems quite probable that Luiz Costa composed it in memory of his father-in-law. The Adagio of the Sonata op. 11, so I was told by

Madalena Sá e Costa, was created shortly after the totally unexpected death of her beloved brother Luís, in 1939 or 1940, whereas the rest of the Sonata is dated 1938. I do not know if any other work of Luiz Costa took one or two years to be completed. As far as I can ascertain on the basis of the composer's estate, there has not been a further case, but not all of the existing manuscripts are dated and – obviously – some of the manuscripts have disappeared. Why had the work on the Sonata been interrupted for such a relatively long time? Perhaps the publication of the correspondence and of other documents of the composer will enable us later to find an answer to this question. In July 1939 his only son Luís died of typhoid which he had caught on a trip to Alentejo, giving there lectures on the life of João de Brito. That was the second and, of course, incomparably greater grief the family felt for their son and brother respectively, the first one having been his joining the Jesuit Order at the age of twenty-two.

Compared with the remaining three movements of the Sonata op. 11 on the one hand and with the Adagio of the Trio with Piano op. 15 (composed in the thirties as well) as an example on the other hand, the altered 'tone' in the Adagio of the Sonata is obvious. First of all, it is a highly expressive tone that cannot be found in the earlier works of Luiz Costa. Whereas in the Sonata for Violoncello and Piano it is perceptible only in the third movement, the Sonata for Piano in F sharp minor (composed in 1940) is affected by a clearly lugubrious tone in all its parts, even in the 'Scherzo'. The Quintet with Piano op. 12 (composed in the first half of the forties) has again an 'Adagio' as its third movement that obviously is a funeral march: it is written in C minor (a key that in the 19th century was traditionally used for pathetic or tragic ideas), with a middle section in A flat minor (like the 'Marcia funebre' in Beethoven's Sonata op. 26), and its thematic rhythm is nearly identical with that of the 'Marche funèbre' in the Sonata op. 35 by Frédéric Chopin.

It seems that in the following works Luiz Costa found his way back to a certain serenity, even in the slow movements, which naturally most likely may tempt the composer to express his grief and sorrow. Since it is equally tempting for anyone listening to a piece of music to hear what he or she wants to hear, I will attempt a description of the compositional means which transmit the grief, the desperation and final resignation expressed in the Adagio of the Sonata op. 11.

The piano has to play, nearly without interruption throughout the whole movement, chords in the rhythm of slow quavers, changing harmonies at crotchet intervals, that is, with every beat (the time being 3/4). The first two quaver chords are in G ma-

ior, but with the third already, when the cello enters, harmony changes to G minor.

The cello begins with a D lying below the piano chord, so that its harmonic basis loses ground. The melody developing from the D tone, at first seeming to hesitate to go on, is perhaps one the most ingenious ideas that Luiz Costa has committed to paper. First it ascends in the ambitus of a minor seventh, falls down again, then ascends a second time in the same ambitus, but starting from C, a whole tone lower than before. The third ascent, this time supported by the bass notes of the piano, leads into the most characteristic motif of the whole movement, consisting of the intervals second – fourth – second – second:



Figure 1. Luiz Costa, Sonata para Violoncelo e Piano op. 11, Adagio, bars 13-16, part of violoncello (manuscript, property of Madalena Sá e Costa, Porto).

With the B flat in bar 13, the highest note of the previously described second ascent of the melody is repeated, and the C in bar 15 is the repetition of the highest note of the first melodic ascent. In this way the melody of the beginning, that seemed wandering aimlessly about, is getting its sense in retrospect. The melodic construction can be put on a level with a Beethovenian idea. In the form of three variants, two of which can be seen in the music example, the characteristic motif appears six times in the cello and twice in the piano part.

After this first melodic and rhythmical culmination, the following musical occurrences are coming more closely one after the other: a variant of the cited motif is followed by one of the rare chromatic passages; a few bars later the cello climbs up to a two-line D; with another chromatic motif, reinforced by the piano, the transition to a concealed recapitulation of the main subject begins. It must be emphasized that it is very rare in the works of Luiz Costa to not have a clear recapitulation of the first part or main theme. In the Adagio of Opus 11, the music is sliding nearly unnoticed into the recapitulation of bars 8 to 15, with bar 14 in a varied form.

Quite different from the melody composed in a Beethovenian way, the treatment of the piano part and the harmonics show a clear connection with French music. Partly, the harmonies are recalling Debussy, as is the case in a lot of Luiz Costa's compositions. What is surprising in the Adagio, is the harmonic similarity of some parts of it with certain works composed at about the same time by Olivier Messiaen, which can be explained by his use of chords, where the fifth is a bass note to let the

harmony 'hang', and the parallel shifting of seventh chords to heighten the expressive tension.

A very specific similarity is to be found in the setting of the slow movement from Luiz Costa's Sonata and the likewise slow movement 'Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus' from Messiaen's Quatuor pour la fin du Temps. It is the fifth movement, out of eight, written for violoncello and piano. Like in Luiz Costa's Adagio, the cello has to play an expressive melody and is accompanied by repetitive chords; in this case, in the rhythm of very slow semiquavers from the piano. The frequency of change of harmony varies between that which remains unchanged throughout a whole bar (that may contain up to 17 semiquavers) and that which changes with every semiquaver at the point of highest tension. What is so amazing about the parallels between the two pieces is the fact that two composers who very probably did not know each other and each other's (latest) compositions, [41] have found a similar and absolutely unusual way of musical expression in a situation of great distress at about the same time. (Messiaen had composed his work during the winter of 1941/42, being a prisoner of war in a Silesian camp.) While Messiaen gives the interpreters and listeners a hint of the contents of his composition by its poetic title, the slow movement in Luiz Costa's Sonata is simply entitled 'Adagio'. Messiaen explains in the foreword to his work: 'Jésus est ici considéré en tant que Verbe. Une grande phrase, infiniment lente, du violoncelle, magnifie avec amour et révérence l'éternité de ce Verbe puissant et doux, 'dont les années ne s'épuiseront point'. Majestueusement, la mélodie s'étale, en une sorte de lointain tendre et souverain.' [42] What Messiaen mentions here explicitly, one can hear as well in the Adagio by Luiz Costa: The composer relieves the music of Time and raises it to Eternity. The slow pace, the uniform rhythmical foundation, frequent changes of time, a melody that does not have a conclusive development nor does it demand a conclusion at the composition's end – these are the means used by both composers to have the listener lose consciousness of time and to open the music into Eternity.

As I have mentioned, compositions of such a profound emotional meaningfulness are rare in Luiz Costa's works. Being of a patient, peaceful, modest, serious, serene character, the death of his son had gravely upset his equilibrium and, on the other hand, enabled him to venture into musical regions where the listener 'leaves behind all the feelings which are determinable by concepts in order to devote himself to the unsayable'. [43] Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, the Romantic author of these lines, has also stressed the necessity of suffering great pain to be elevated into these regions: 'only through this pain [of endless longing], which, while consuming

but not destroying love, hope, and joy, tries to burst our breasts with a full-voiced general cry from all the passions, do we live on and are captivated beholders of the spirits.' [44] Apart from the experienced profundity which rises the Adagio of the Cello Sonata above all previous works of Luiz Costa, it seems to be also one of his most personal compositions.

5 | The Cycles of characteristic Piano Pieces

Listening to the early characteristic piano pieces, the preludes and studies, the songs for solo voice or choir, or the early works of chamber music, one has the impression of receiving vivid pictures, being told stories or simply enjoying well devised musical constructions. The funereal incident of 1939, however, seems to have got the composer to bring his sentiments to bear even in the cycles of little piano pieces which describe the landscape and the country life of the region of Minho, the place where he was born and where he returned to every summer. They are entitled Poemas do Monte op. 3, Telas Campesinas op. 6 and Cenários op. 13 – three cycles consisting of four pieces each.

Opus 3 was composed during the first half of the twenties. The four compositions, [45] three of which are written in major keys, can be described as being of a serene, partially dreamy, but not even melancholic character.

Considering the numbers of Poemas do Monte op. 3, the listener will reckon with pieces of a similar character in the cycle Telas Campesinas op. 6. The first number of it ('Solidão dos Campos', in A major, composed in 1924) conveys indeed the same atmosphere. The following, though, 'Luar nos Açudes', is not a dreamy moonlight idyll, as one might have expected, but rather has something of a dance of nightly demons in it. The third number, 'Cantares ao longe...' does not remind one of the famous singing by the grape harvesters in Minho; what we hear, sounds rather sad and forlorn. In the last piece, 'Roda o Vento nas Searas', there must be imagined a quite strong wind whirling across the fields. What much contributes to the lugubrious and autumn-like atmosphere of the three last numbers of Opus 6 is the fact that all of them are written in minor keys. They are dated 1941 and 1945 respectively.

The last cycle of characteristic piano pieces, Cenários op. 13, likewise composed in the forties, consists of three numbers [46] written in minor keys and only one, the last number, written in a major key. In this cycle, all the pieces in minor keys have to be played in a slow tempo ('lentamente' or 'lento'). Their character can be described as oppressive, ponderous, melancholic. They are followed by the piece in B major ('Cachoeiras da Serra'), with the tempo indication 'vivo', which is of a surprisingly merry and

lively character. It is indeed a bit shocking for its unexpected high spirits. It does not, however, convey the serenity of the early compositions.

CONCLUSION

Commemorating the anniversary of the death of a person does mean, above all, remembering his or her life and the deeds accomplished during this life. By this social ritual the person is reborn, as has been said in the Preface. To commemorate a composer, it appears to be an appropriate way to speak about his works and let the works speak about their creator. Music critics and writers who have been writing hitherto about the music of Luiz Costa, agree in the point that its character is bucolic, nostalgic or melancholic, explaining this fact with the composer's love for the nature of the region where he was born, which he used as a source of inspiration. Speaking of birth and birthplace, with its visual and acoustic surroundings, is one of the four main topics in the biography of anyone. But we would not answer our purpose of commemorating an artist also as a human being, if we cut out the remaining three biographical topics – the suffering, the love and the death.

As has been demonstrated by the analyses of some of Luiz Costa's compositions, these topics have left their marks in the works as well. There has been noticed a clear change of 'tone' in the music composed after the death of his son. So the 'bucolic, nostalgic lyricism' is only part of the musical identity of Luiz Costa, and, although the decisive cause for the other part was a dreadful one, this has been much to his artistic advantage. If the early characteristic piano pieces and songs are imbued with his love of nature, particularly that of his birthplace, the region of Minho, the works composed since 1939 are enriched by the experiences of suffering and death. These biographical topics are not only a background against which we might look at the actually important characteristics of the artist, but they are essential parts of the artistic identity of Luiz Costa.

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[2] The pages of Carl Dahlhaus are clairvoyant referring to the musical perception of a piece of work. The experience of this system can be verified according to two axial dimensions: the experience of a shape or structure (atemporal) and the experience of a process or duration (temporal). According to him, "the centre of gravity can dislocate itself from the structural towards the processual and vice-versa", in that "dislocations of accent belong to the criteria through which musical styles are distinguished, as

Heidegger says, in its temporality" (Carl Dahlhaus, *O que é a Música?* Ed. Texto & Grafia (2001) 2009, pp. 131-135).

[3] 'Das Dasein als dieses In-der-Welt-sein ist in eins damit Mit-einander-sein, mit Anderen sein: mit Anderen dieselbe Welt dahaben, einander begegnen, miteinander sein in der Weise des Für-einander-seins.' (M. Heidegger, *Der Begriff der Zeit / O Conceito de Tempo*. Ed. by Max Niemeyer Verlag / Edições Fim de Século: Tübingen / Lisboa (1989) 1995 / 2003, p. 36.)

[4] Jean Ladrière, "Approche Philosophique du Concept de Temps – Le Temps Cosmique et le Temps Vécu", *Temps et Devenir* (Ed. Presses Universitaires de Louvain-la-Neuve: Louvain-la-Neuve, 1984, pp. 293-329).

[5] Undoubtedly we can perceive this according to the individual dimension ("psychological time" and "biographical time") and in a sociological and historical dimension ("family time", "social time" and "historical time"). But it is more important to understand, a little like Franco Ferrarotti that "social" and "historical" time is interiorized, destructured and restructured in the "psychological" and "biographical" time of each subject (Franco Ferrarotti, *Histoire et Histoires de Vie. La méthode biographique dans les Sciences Sociales*. (Ed. Librairie des Meridiens: Paris (1983) 1990, p. 50). A question arises: how this change from first to second is processed? By means of two axes, would be my reply, as suggested by Victor Turner (Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ed. Penguin Books: Hammondsworth, 1969, p. 193): the vertical, "structure" (musical harmony as an analogy) and the horizontal, "community" (musical melody also as an analogy). And why these two axes? Because they are structural elements in all cultures and in all languages (Edmund Leach., *ob. cit.*, p. 124).

[6] Jean Ladrière, *ob. cit.*

[7] Fernando Gil, "Exemplos Musicais", *A 4 Mãos. Schumann, Eichendorff e Outras Notas* (Ed. Imprensa Nacional - Casa da Moeda, 2005, p. 22).

[8] Lourenço, E., "Da Música", *Trabalhos de Antropologia e Etnologia*, 46, pp. 191-193.

[9] Enrique Emery, *Temps et Musique* (Ed. L'Age d'Homme, 1998, p. 6).

[10] *idem*, p. 643.

[11] Lourenço, E., ob. cit., p. 192.

[12] Is it not here that the subjective consciousness of time rests, which, according to Carl Dahlhaus, “migrates, so as to speak, from actual instant to actual instant” through the duration of the composition (Carl Dahaus, ob. cit., p. 135)?

[13] Always the best ways – it’s good to remember –, on the pilgrimage to Senhora da Saúde, on the fifteenth of August of every year.

[14] Known in the city of Porto by its “rasgos de caridade e filantropia” (Francisco Ribeiro da Silva, *O Hospital da Irmandade da Lapa*. Ed. Venerável Irmandade de Nossa Senhora da Lapa: Porto, 2005, p. 18).

[15] Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment. Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (Ed. Routledge: London, 2000, pp.198 – 201).

[16] Ingold defines the concept of “resonance as the rhythmic harmonisation of mutual attention” (ob. cit., p.199).

[17] Prof. Maria Teresa de Macedo, currently acessora da Escola das Artes do Centro Regional do Porto da Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

[18] Joaquim Leite de Vasconcelos, *Etnografia Portuguesa* (Ed. Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, Lisboa, vol. III, pp. 54-56); Alberto Sampaio, *Estudos Históricos e Económicos “As vilas de Portugal”*, *Revista de Ciências Naturais e Sociais*, vol III, Porto:1895; Orlando Ribeiro, *Portugal. O Mediterrâneo e o Atlântico* (Ed. Editora Sá da Costa: Lisboa, (1947) 1986, pp. 11-114); François Guichard, *Geographie du Portugal*. (Ed. Masson: Paris, 1990, p. 92); the sociologist Karin Wall characterized well the change in the two districts of the Baixo Minho (Gondifelos e Lemenhe), in the middle of the twentieth century (Wall, Karin, *Famílias no Camp*, Ed. Publicações Dom Quixote (col. Portugal de Perto): Lisboa, (1985) 1998, p. 13), near those quoted above.

[19] *Roda do Moinho*, op. 4 (1915), *O Sobreiro*, op. 4 (1915) e *Os Salgueiros*, op. 7 (anos 30), works by the composer for song and piano, with words by this poet who was a friend, were edited by Fermata Editora (Porto) in 2001.

[20] Antero de Figueiredo, as well as Carlos Ramos (uncle), Joaquim Costa, director of the Biblioteca Municipal do Porto, João Barreira and his wife, from Lisbon, or even Maria Elisa de Sousa Pedroso, also from Lisbon, were evening visitors of the family.

[21] Antero de Figueiredo, *Jornadas em Portugal*, ob. cit., p.13.

[22] Miguel Torga, *Portugal* (Ed. Publicações Dom Quixote: Lisboa, (1950) 2007, p.13).

[23] Luiz Moreira de Sá e Costa, *Cartas de um Religioso* (Ed. Família: Porto, 1940, pp. 11, 12, 13, 167-169).

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[31] Cp. the text by Bruno Caseirão for the CD *Le piano portugais* (see note 25).

[32] Quoted from Hernâni Monteiro, *Luís Costa*. (Transl. by C.B.)

[33] Luiz Costa. *Música de Câmara*. Text by Maria Teresa Macedo (CD Numérica, NUM 1036, 1995).

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[40] Very probably, all of them have left their mark in the compositions, as an artist in some way assimilates the events of his life in his works; but part of the manuscripts are not dated, so that only in a few cases there can be stated correlations between certain works and events.

[41] Until May 1951, the only composition by Messiaen that was performed in the concerts of the 'Orpheon Portuense' (by the French pianist Henriette Roget) was the last of his *Préludes*, composed in 1928/29, 'Un reflet dans le vent'. Luiz Costa himself wrote the following words about the composer: 'Organista e compositor de carácter místico e tendências muito modernas. Compôs além de 8 *Prelúdios* dedicados a Henriette Roget, obras para órgão: [...]' (Sexto Suplemento aos Anais do Orpheon Portuense, Porto 1952, p. 151.)

[42] Olivier Messiaen, *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps* (Durand & C.ie: Paris, 1942), p. II.

[43] 'eine Welt, [...] in der er alle durch Begriffe bestimmbaren Gefühle zurücklässt, um sich dem Unaussprechlichen hinzugeben.' (E.T.A. Hoffmann, Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, in: *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, July 1810, column 631.)

[44] 'nur in diesem Schmerz [der unendlichen Sehnsucht], der Liebe, Hoffnung, Freude in sich verzehrend, aber nicht zerstörend, unsere Brust mit einem vollstimmigen Zusammenklänge aller Leidenschaften zersprengen will, leben wir fort und sind entzückte Geisterseher!' (E.T.A. Hoffmann, op. cit., column 633.)

[45] 'Pelos Montes fora', 'Murmúrios das Fontes', 'Ecos dos Vales' and 'Campanários'.

[46] 'Serranias brônzeas', 'Sobre as Cumeadas reina a Paz' and 'Nuvens no Vale'.

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