



Clotilde Rosa

piano works

Anne Kaasa
Francisco Monteiro

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| 1. <i>Variantes II</i> * | 20:49 |
| 2. <i>Waving</i> * | 02:35 |
| 3. <i>Model for John (My Messiaen memories)</i> ** | 07:32 |
| Sonata per Pianoforte** | |
| 4. <i>I. Moderato,</i> | 04:31 |
| 5. <i>II. Lento espressivo,</i> | 03:09 |
| 6. <i>III. Molto presto,</i> | 01:55 |
| 7. <i>Étude (Hommage à Jorge Peixinho)</i> ** | 06:32 |
| 8. <i>Agitato</i> ** | 05:36 |
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| 10. <i>Impromptu</i> ** | 02:48 |
| Five Studies (Introduction to Contemporary Music) * | |
| 11. <i>I. Miniature</i> | 02:12 |
| 12. <i>II. D. Perimplin</i> | 03:54 |
| 13. <i>III. Portuguese Melody</i> | 02:53 |
| 14. <i>IV. Make me free...the moving instant....</i> | 03:00 |
| 15. <i>V. Goodnight. I will go with the birds.</i> | 03:29 |

TOTAL TIME: 73:52

* Francisco Monteiro

** Anne Kaasa

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Clotilde Rosa (1930)

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Clotilde Rosa is one of the more interesting creative minds presently at work in Portugal, yet her work is known to only a few. Three facts account for this situation: her late emergence as a composer; her unorthodox approach to music and the dearth of performance opportunities for many of her scores. As regards the latter, this CD will fortunately allow most of her piano music to be heard and appreciated, but on the two former points I will now expand.

Rosa was born on 11 May 1930 into a family of musicians and studied at the National Conservatoire in Lisbon between 1942 and 1949. She specialized as a harpist, and harpist she was for most of her professional life. Between 1961 and 1965, after separating from her first husband, pianist/arranger/conductor Jorge Machado, she attended classes in Amsterdam and Paris, playing afterwards as a member of the Symphony Orchestra of Oporto and, from 1965 to 1991, the National Radio Orchestra in Lisbon. From 1987 to 2000, when she retired, Rosa taught (mainly harp) at the National Conservatory. Her connection with contemporary music began in the 1960s, fuelled by artistic curiosity and her closeness to pianist and composer Jorge Peixinho, ten years her junior. She attended several of the famous Darmstadt Summer courses, started playing avant-garde

works, and in 1970 founded, with Peixinho and others, the Lisbon Contemporary Music Group (GMCL), the most important Portuguese ensemble for new music during the following decades. She eventually married another member of GMCL, flautist Carlos Franco. In this context she experimented with collective improvisation and composition, but it was not until 1976 that she started to write as an individual composer; her productive rhythm, initially slow, more than doubled after 1985 to reach more than one hundred works at present, mostly for chamber instrumental ensemble, but including also an opera, orchestral scores, songs for accompanied solo voice and, last but not least, solo piano.

Piano pieces encompass most of Rosa's creative career, from 1979 to 2009, and are thus a good illustration of both the consistency of her personality and the changes in her style. The earliest work included here, *Variantes II* (1982; first performed only in 2008) is one of the more daring and also the longest (it takes around twenty minutes to play). It is rooted in, and apparently close to, the musical language of the central-European avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s, for it uses novel notational resources, is based on atonal clusters of notes (while echoing Stockhausen's experiments on static harmonic resonance), and gives the performer some liberty regarding the choice of sections, their length and juxtaposition. Yet there is a melodic theme taken from a previous work by Rosa, *Variantes I*; the main operative concepts, *ostinati* and *ritornelli*, recall traditional musical forms; and the episodes are combined with a rhapsodic spontaneity that runs counter to the serial determinism then ubiquitous in Portugal. The *ostinato* slowly affirms itself, lets itself die away, returns again while digressions appear around the musical flow, ever more insistent until they occupy the foreground and expel the *ritornelli*, which are admitted back filtered, fragmented, then, towards the end, on their own. Rosa's approach, being predominantly intuitive, brings together several strands of musical memory and produces a strong, arched, extended melancholic statement punctuated by shreds of recollection and emotional explosions.

Ten years would pass before the next work, *Waving* (1992), came to light. Comparatively compact, it is technically as demanding and up-to-date, and produces as strong an aesthetic impression. Again, the austere atonal material belies an original, intuitive approach, where little seems planned ahead but

events fit coherently together. A single note, C, serves as the tonal centre. The remaining 11 notes of the scale feed a luxuriant, freely composed ornamentation.

The next work to be written, *Bagatelle* (1995), comprises only two pages and was commissioned and published as a didactic piece. While presenting Rosa's characteristic harmonic sonority, derived from stock serial material, its predetermined brevity does not always allow the dramatic gestures included to find their proper pace. The companion didactic work in this record, *Impromptu* (2004), is symptomatic of the intervening stylistic change: the form is clear-cut; there is a strong sense of direction; a number of motifs are presented, then varied; a recapitulation is hinted at. Spontaneity, melancholy and momentum are still to be found, but refracted through a recognizable structure. In fact, *Model for John* (2000) can already be regarded as transitional. An essay on the juxtaposition of textures and their transformations, it uses fewer experimental techniques but delights in the manipulation of motivic and intervallic relations, signalling its debt to earlier, more ambiguous forms of atonalism. It is based on a single motif: E flat - B flat - D, freely varied and expanded. While melancholy lives on, entrusted to descending gestures derived from this from the very beginning, what the composer seems to care most about here is unrelenting, contrasting energy.

Then, as if to satisfy her thirst for creative self-control, Rosa wrote an exemplary *Sonata for pianoforte* (2002) in three movements, conforming to traditional expectations regarding notational resources, formal structure and tempi. The first movement, *Moderato*, in *Sonata-Form* (recapitulation transposed to the fifth below) oscillates between playful or tense, nervous gestures, with or without immediate repetition, and calm, melancholic, diminished chords. The second, slow and expressive, in ABA form, varies a 4-note descending motif and expands the harmonic material in a contemplative, lyrical vein; to the interrogative ending the final movement responds, an energetic, brilliant *Rondo*: its concision and assertiveness provide just the right kind of closure.

After this very personal, even if outwardly conservative work, Rosa wrote an *Étude* (2003) as an homage to her mentor Jorge Peixinho (1940-1995), which in many respects is its exact opposite. The discourse, initially concentrated on the extreme low register, is apparently shattered, broken up, even pointil-

list, giving preference to the opposition of registers, the surprising effect, the occasional resonance: it is almost a portrait of Peixinho on stage as an uncompromising improviser on his favourite instrument, the piano. A higher level of coherence is however achieved through strict harmonic control and the periodic return of selected gestures.

Impromptu was composed the following year. This sounds rather as if Rosa herself were improvising at home: hitting at some expressive fragments and then, just for fun, building up a short, transparent whole with them. Three ideas, established by immediate, simple or varied repetition, are freely associated at the beginning, then confirmed in reverse order, then combined with a fourth, etc, giving way little by little to short digressions, followed by recapitulation and a dreamy coda.

In 2007, Rosa's piano catalogue was augmented with two major, albeit very different works: *Agitato* and *Five Studies* (Introduction to Contemporary Music). The highly dramatic *Agitato* takes over the traditional keyboard vocabulary of scale fragments and trills, only to put it to original use, adopting a pan-chromatic mould full of ambiguity. Starting from a hectic idea suddenly halted, it seeks to represent excess by insistence, replication, and densification of dynamic, directional meshes, with diminished chords used as calm, contrasting pivots. A powerful romantic pathos emerges from the combination of formal freedom, rhythmic tension and harmonic irresolution.

Five Studies, a work of synthesis, was meant to introduce pianists to selected 20th-century piano techniques, each separate study using one particular technique or notational device and recalling, or paying homage to, an artist whom Clotilde Rosa deemed important in her life. The first study, dedicated to the composer Jorge Peixinho and meant to acquaint the performer with clusters, uses one of Rosa's preferred personal series, ignoring bars and creating a typical sonority through gentle, introspective gestures full of melancholy. The second, written under the aegis of the poet-musician Federico Garcia-Lorca and metrically devised, confirms this lyrical vein but, requiring the pressing of strings inside the piano, combines and explores different, contrasting elements: an assertive initial chord, an Andalusian-inspired ornament detached from it, a new motive, a cluster, a scale fragment (transposed E mode), and so on... The third, inspired by the composer Fernando Lopes-Graça (1906-1994), sometimes hailed as the Portuguese Bartók, introduces

an imaginary popular melody interspersed in dream-like harmonics played inside the piano, whose sonority then influences the whole atmosphere. The fourth, inspired by composer Constança Capdeville (1937-1992), who loved both the severity and lightness of sacred music, uses special pedal techniques, fragments of the *Kyrie Cunctipotens genitor* and thin threads of arabesque, which multiply, take flight, come to land again, reappear, unfold and finally explode together. The fifth and last, recalling a poem by Eugénio de Andrade, "Poema à mãe", and conceived as a study in tempo transitions, is permeated by diminished chords and augmented fourths, together with atonal gestures, creating a soft, dreamy, romantic aura.

The only piano works by Clotilde Rosa not included in this CD are the experimental, multi-media *Jogo projectado II* (1979), which requires a complex scenic setting; *Olhando o mar* (2004), a short, accessible piece in Aeolian mode written for her grandson Bernardo; the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (2003) and the *Piece for Two Pianos* (2009), both awaiting their première.

Seen in the larger context of her production, the solo piano works are both representative and particular. Representative, for they echo the coherence and variety of Rosa's larger artistic choices: reliance on stock serial material, diminished chords, pan-chromaticism, use of contemporary techniques and sonorities, openness to traditional compositional memory, primacy of intuitive musical judgment over plain abstract planning, deeply emotional statements balanced between forcefulness and melancholy. The piano works are also particular, in that Rosa chose to restrict her options concerning polyphonic complexity (one of her typical traits in chamber and orchestral music) in favour of idiomatic writing of a rich, varied nature, which will no doubt challenge performers for years to come as much as it will satisfy their listeners.

Manuel Pedro Ferreira

Francisco Monteiro

He is graduated by the Musik Universität Wien – Austria (piano concert class by Noel Flores), the University of Coimbra – Portugal (Master Degree in Musicology) and the University of Sheffield (Ph.D. – Contemporary Music).

He also studied analysis and composition with Cândido Lima, Álvaro Salazar (Porto) and Gottfried Scholtz (Vienna – Austria), conducting with Jean-Claude Hartemann and music piano interpretation with Marie-Françoise Bucquet (Paris).

Awarded in national piano competitions, he played solo in Portugal, France, Austria, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Spain, U.S.A. and in the U.K.. Francisco Monteiro recorded several CD's, namely "Exposed on the cliffs of the heart" (piano solo music from Terry Winter Owens) and Lov (Portuguese and American music for flute, cello and piano).

Together with his career as a performer he maintains a regular activity as a composer and a researcher. He's now coordinating a research project dedicated to the critical edition of Jorge Peixinho's Chamber pieces, supported by state funds.

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Anne Kaasa

The Norwegian pianist Anne Kaasa, living in Lisbon, has been described by the French musical magazine *Le Monde de la Musique* as “ a pianist that stands out in the crowded world of soloists by the depth of her interpretations, the fluidity of her playing, as well as the precision and the delicacy of her touch”. Her activity as a soloist has brought her to play at prestigious venues like Wigmore Hall (London), the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Belém Cultural Center (Lisbon), the Auditorio Nacional (Madrid), the Scheremetev Palace (St. Petersburg) and the Gamle Logen (Oslo) among others. She has performed concertos with many orchestras, including the Gulbenkian, Madrid Community, Portuguese Symphony, Porto National and Baden-Baden Philharmonic in collaboration with conductors like Laurent Petitgirard, José Ramón Encinar, Yu Feng, Marc Tardue e Cesário Costa.

With a repertory that extends from Bach to contemporary music Anne Kaasa has collaborated with a large number of composeres, among them Clotilde Rosa, Philippe Fénelon, António Pinho Vargas, Kjell Mørk Karlsen and Sérgio Azevedo. The French composer Philippe Fénelon dedicated to her his Second Piano Concerto.

Anne Kaasa has recorded for national radios and televisions in France, Spain, Eslovenia, Italy, Norway, Portugal and Moldavia. Her CD recordings of works by Grieg, Debussy and Ravel for the labels EMI Classics, Grave (Paris) and Saphir (Paris), have been received with great enthusiasm by the musical press.

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