

Performance and Autoethnography in Historical Ethnomusicology: Differentiating the *Viola* and the *Violão*

Performance e autoetnografia em etnomusicologia histórica: diferenciando a viola e o violão

Renato Moreira Varoni de Castro

Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom.

rcaastro01@qub.ac.uk

Abstract: This article proposes the combination of performance and autoethnography as alternative methods to make use of musical scores concerning the *viola* (five-course guitar) and the *violão* (six-course guitar) in historical ethnomusicology. The author performs and records the same set of songs on the *viola* and the *violão*, and based on the multidimensionality of the interaction performer/instrument, writes an autoethnography differentiating his experiences in playing at both chordophones. This approach strives for overcoming the duality body/mind in academic musical research and comprises the embodied knowledge that arises from experience as a complementary epistemology to the corpus of knowledge about these instruments. Moreover, it is added the professional viewpoint of the virtuoso *viola* player Ivan Vilela who, interviewed by the author, gives his impressions about the differences in ergonomics and playing technics between those chordophones.

Keywords: *viola* and *violão*; embodied musical knowledge; autoethnography; historical ethnomusicology; Ivan Vilela.

Resumo: Este artigo propõe a combinação de performance e autoetnografia como métodos alternativos para utilizar partituras musicais referentes à viola (de cinco ordens de cordas duplas) e ao violão (de seis ordens de cordas simples) em etnomusicologia histórica. O autor executa e grava sonoramente o mesmo conjunto de canções na viola e no violão e, baseado-se na multidimensionalidade da interação instrumentista/instrumento, escreve uma autoetnografia diferenciando suas experiências em tocar ambos cordofones. Tal abordagem esforça-se para superar a dualidade corpo/mente em investigação musical acadêmica, valorizando o conhecimento vivenciado no corpo como epistemologia complementar ao conjunto de conhecimentos históricos sobre os referidos instrumentos musicais. Ademais, inclui-se o ponto de vista profissional do virtuoso violeiro Ivan Vilela que, entrevistado pelo autor, aponta diferenças ergonômicas e técnicas entre esses cordofones.

Palavras-chave: viola e violão; conhecimento musical vivenciado no corpo; autoetnografia; etnomusicologia histórica; Ivan Vilela.

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1 - Introduction

In this article,¹ I approach historical musical sources concerning the *viola* (five-course guitar: Figure 1)² and the *violão* (six-course guitar: Figure 2)³ through musical performance. Instead of structurally or formally analyzing the musical scores for the instruments, I opted for playing songs inscribed in sheet music, sound recording them, and then writing an autoethnography of my experience of playing the same set of songs on the *viola* and the *violão*. I establish a comparison between these instruments by becoming aware of the sounds, techniques, embodied sensations and any impressions that arise from the performances. I proceed by performing a repertoire which is common to both instruments in turn, and paying attention to the ways in which the experience of performance differs. My objective is not to elicit an historically informed performance using period instruments in the tradition of historical musicology or 'early music' performance. Rather, assuming a multi-dimensional interaction of the performer with the musical instruments, I investigate my own experience of playing,

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² The term *viola* in Portuguese language has been used to designate a myriad of organologically different chordophones. However, in Brazil, *viola* refers, mostly, to an eight shaped, five-coursed, double metallic strings plucked chordophone from the lute family. There is also the *viola* from the violin family, but this is not the object of study of this article.

³ *Violão* means literally big *viola* in Portuguese language. It is a six-stringed single coursed plucked chordophone from the lute family. The same instrument that is known in French by *guitare*; in German by *gitarre*; Italian by *chitarra*; and Spanish by *guitarra* (TURNBULL and SPARKS, 2014). The six-string guitar was not simply named *guitarra* in Portugal for two reasons: Firstly, there had been a very popular eight-shaped plucked chordophone called *viola* in existence from at least the sixteenth century. Secondly, in Portugal there was already an instrument called guitar or 'Portuguese guitar' (*guitarra portuguesa*) that was a pear-shaped, flat back, plucked chordophone. It is important to highlight that the six-course guitar in Portugal is distinguished by region, being referred to as *violão* in the north, and *viola* in the south of the country where the *violas* disappeared (OLIVEIRA, 2000).

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listening and sensitively interacting with the *viola* and the *violão* in performance to grasp how they differ from one another.



Figure 1: *Viola* (five-course guitar). Source, Modinha: Raízes da Música do Povo, 1985.



Figure 2: *Violão, Guitarra* or *Guitar* (six-course guitar). Antonio de Torres Jurado 1859 - Seville. Museu de la música de Barcelona. Source: MIMO - musical instrument museums online.

In addition, I interview Ivan VILELA, one of the most acclaimed *violeiros* (*viola* players) in Brazil, and focus upon his impressions of the differences between playing the *viola* and the *violão*. Both VILELA and I had first learned to play the *violão* and later the *viola*. VILELA became a renowned professor, composer, arranger and virtuoso of the instrument. While my interest in learning the *viola* was methodological, it was a tool to become acquainted with the instrument and make sense of the extent to which it differs from the *violão*. Being informed by the subjectivity of both music-making practices enabled me to add a practical embodied perspective to the corpus of knowledge about these instruments in Brazil.

Learning how to play an instrument is not a new methodology in ethnomusicology. It has been discussed and applied by many authors such as HOOD (1960), BLACKING (1973), BERLINER (1993), BAILY (2001, 2008) and others. In their works they emphasize the importance of the performance as a means of improving their knowledge about music, culture and society. In this article, however, I intend to show that playing an instrument can be part of predominantly archival musical research: it is a way of ‘experiencing’ the archive or the document collected and gaining insights during the process. In this approach, reflections upon playing and musical experiences will be combined in an autoethnographic process, as I consider the intersections between text, musicality and embodiment.

In the first part of this article, I discuss performance as a tool for gaining knowledge of a musical culture. From the analysis of performance in fieldwork, I derive the interaction of human/instrument and the ‘ergonomics’ of music, as suggested by BAILY (2001, 2008) as a performative route towards historical awareness of the *viola* and the *violão*. This perspective draws attention to the embodied knowledge provided by musical experience, which adds layers of comprehension to the musical phenomena, overcoming the traditional dichotomy of body and mind in a musical analysis (FINNEGAN, 2012). In the second section, I examine the ways in which autoethnography has been conceptualized, focusing on the work of Carolyn ELLIS (2004, 2011). Autoethnography for ELLIS assumes the scholarly text as a literary form and opens the possibility for the researcher to investigate and valorize his or her own

experience in the world in relation to broader social and cultural issues, by producing a form of text that is simultaneously personal and social. In the third segment, I discuss the criteria adopted to perform the songs found in manuscripts from the past. Afterwards I provide an autoethnographic narrative of my experience of playing both instruments and finally, I contemplate VILELA's multidimensional perceptions about the differences between the *viola* and the *violão* giving a balanced assessment of my experience of playing in relation to VILELA's perspectives of the differences between the *viola* and the *violão*.

2 - Performance as methodology

HOOD (1960) defended the importance of learning to perform with a musical instrument as a scholarly tool for gaining knowledge of a musical culture. He argued that the student should face the process which he called "the challenge of bi-musicality." For HOOD, a scholar trained in a particular musical tradition is conditioned by long practice within those musical conventions, in ways which may create barriers for the understanding of other traditions. In addition, whilst Easterners have become proficient in Western traditions, such as European Classical music, many Westerners interested in other musical cultures act more as passive observers of a different musical culture rather than actually becoming proficient in that musical tradition. Yet HOOD contended that the degree of familiarity of a researcher with a musical tradition is related to his or her dedication to the practice of that musical culture. "If his desire is to comprehend a particular...musical expression so that his observations and analysis as a musicologist do not prove to be embarrassing, he will have to persist in practical studies until his basic musicianship is secure" (HOOD, 1960, p.58). Nonetheless, HOOD recognized that the term bi-musicality as well as "tri-musicality" or "quadri-musicality," was possibly not the most appropriate to describe what in fact would be only an enlarged "Musicality."

Informed by HOOD's assertion of performing, or learning to play a musical instrument, as a valid ethnomusicological methodology during the 1960's and wanting to use

performance as a research technique in his study of Afghan music during the 1970's, John BAILY wrote a letter to BLACKING asking whether that idea was still valid at that time (1972). BLACKING replied: "Far from being out-of-date, learning to perform and play music is a basic field technique in ethnomusicology. We are still trying to establish it as a necessary methodological tool, because several field studies are being carried out without it even today" (BLACKING, 1972, cited in BAILY, 2001: 88). However, BLACKING (1973) contended that performance cannot be an end in itself, rather it should be a method of understanding musical concepts and potentially, the relations between music and society. He argued that in order to discover the musical principles of a genre "only a limited amount of time can be spent on performance, enough to get the feel of the music and the problems involved in playing it" (BLACKING, 1973b: 215, cited in BAILY, 2008: 120).

Following BLACKING's guidance, and having learnt to play some Afghan chordophones, BAILY (2001) contends that the researcher should have a clear conception of why performance is a valid method for musical study, and the ways that it contributes to the interpretation of musical cultures. He explains that striving to learn the Afghan *dutâr* and the *rubâb* gave him many insights in Afghan music. He realized how characteristics of the repertoire for each instrument were modified by their respective morphology. "The technical problems that arise by learning to perform may also be very revealing about the 'ergonomics' of the music, showing how it fits the human sensor-motor system and the instrument's morphology" (BAILY, 2001, p.94). In this matter, BAILY (2008, p.123) adds that the ways in which the human/musical instrument interface interact allow many possibilities of sound making for, "A musical instrument is a type of transducer, converting patterns of body movement into patterns of sound." He adds that the learning process allowed him to understand how people learnt to play the instruments in that culture and gave him a position in the society that he could not have accessed before becoming a performer. Furthermore, learning to play the chordophones transformed him in to a 'live archive' for that musical culture (BAILY, 2001).

In a more recent publication, BAILY (2008) foresees a more performative ethnomusicology in the future, or an ethnomusicology that gives more importance to technically competent instrumental proficiency in a certain musical culture, and which would, to some extent, converge with musicological interests in performance. BAILY argues that alongside writing, multimedia, or documented recordings; a high performance proficiency can be a way of deepening musical knowledge and the communication of musical understanding in ethnomusicology. He proposes an alternative name for HOOD's bi-musicality, suggesting the term "Intermusability" instead, where "inter" stands for "more than one," while "musability" refers to the contraction of the term "musical" and "ability" (BAILY, 2008, p.132).

My own approach does not assert that highly skilled musical proficiency is necessary for the historical interpretation of musical scores, but I do contend that any interaction with the instrument, independent of the proficiency level, can 'open' the perception of the researcher to the possibilities of a certain instrument and perhaps to the musical culture of which it is a part. I argue that performance is a valid method even when one does not have access to early musical instruments but note that there are particular constraints to these methods. I recognize that interaction with instruments is constrained by the impossibility of knowing the 'actual' technique used to play them and that the imprecision or incompleteness of the scores may also not allow a detailed interpretation of the music. Nevertheless, the procedures of performing and comparing differences between the *viola* and the *violão* can be informative for revealing aspects 'hidden' in performance. Through the awareness of multidimensional sensations and feelings, this approach accords with the ideas of musical experience as a form of knowledge. As FINNEGAN (2012, p.362) says: "We do not have to accept the old body-mind polarities to recognize that sound resonates in the body, and that the experience of music includes its corporeal engagements", adding that the musical experience in the body is often "multimodal" and that "these complex multimodalities deserve a central rather than a marginal place in our experience-ful analyses of music." This approach is useful in ethnomusicologically or musicologically-oriented research, since not playing the instruments being studied cannot be more informative than playing them.

Whilst, on the one hand, an awareness of the interaction of human/instrument in performance can be revealing, on the other hand, the ways in which the analysis and interpretations are rendered, that is, the ways the text is constructed, can also influence the knowledge produced. When 'authentic' musical reconstruction is not possible either due to a lack of music examples to follow or because of the fragility or rarity of instruments which can no longer be played, it is understandable that sonic representation may be absent. However, I wish to provide a corrective to this problem and show how sonic engagement can be achieved from the encounter of two approaches: performance experience and autoethnographic analysis.

3 - Autoethnography

Ethnomusicologists have recognized the importance of performance or learning how to play a musical instrument as a privileged method for grasping many aspects of a musical culture. This practice, though, allows not one, but many possibilities of what and how to observe, analyze, interpret and represent. In other words, as important as the focus of the performance is, it is how the ethnographer's experience is rendered and mediated that is key.

Carolyn ELLIS (2004, p.xix) defines autoethnography as: "research, writing, story, and method that connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political". It can be understood as a kind of ethnography which seeks to grasp cultural phenomena by focusing upon the experience of the narrator. It assumes that if the investigator is part of culture and society, his story will relate to broader issues in that society being reflected in his/her "multiple layers of consciousness" (ELLIS and BOCHNER, 2000, p.739). Autoethnography can be considered a process, as well as a product of investigation that in spite of using any available evidence in the conduct of research, radically assumes the voice of the writer into the academic text embracing the author's subjectivity and accepting completely the literary form of scholarly writing (ELLIS, 2004). Autoethnography demands awareness of one's own "physical

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feelings, thoughts and emotions.” It could be defined as a “systematic sociological introspection” and “emotional recall” (ELLIS, 2004, p.xvii) to understand the experience one has undergone.

Sheila TRAHAR (2009) contends that autoethnography, as explained by ELLIS and BOCHNER (2000), is convergent with the principles of ‘narrative inquiry’ for admitting that the story of the narrator is inherent to the research. Giving a general explanation of how autoethnographers work, ELLIS (2004) says:

[Autoethnographers] look through an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experiences; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and moves through, refracts, and resists cultural interpretations. As they zoom backwards and forwards, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and the cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition (ELLIS, 2004, p.37,38).

In this action of outer and inner contextualized inspection, autoethnography contests the dualism between body and mind that is widespread in conventional academic texts. The awareness of the body or the embodied knowledge of the ethnographer plays an important role in autoethnography, and it is especially interesting in research concerned with music-making due to the obvious use of the body to make music (BARTLEET and ELLIS, 2009).

Another concern of autoethnographic and musical enquiry is the difficulty of expressing or communicating lived events, for in both areas the “experiences are always dynamic, relational, embodied and highly subjective,” and it is particularly troubling when music rather than words, acts as the main media of transmission. For ELLIS, autoethnography with its roots in systematical ethnographic methods “reaches for feeling, evocation and embodiment in its narrative presentation...though it can pave the way” for a music enquiry concerned with the same elements. “Autoethnography frees musicians from the necessity of writing dry descriptions and reports of musical experiences. Rather, this approach encourages them to convey the meanings of vibrant musical experiences evocatively” (BARTLEET and ELLIS, 2009, p.9).

4 - Selecting the songs

Considering the lack of musical scores for the *viola* and the *violão* in the first half of nineteenth century Brazil, if I wanted to play music written for the instruments, the possibilities comprised five Portuguese historical sources with music for the *viola* or other plucked chordophones. Three of them, the 'Coimbra codex', the 'Gulbenkian codex', and the 'Conde de Redondo codex', were estimated to have been written in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century (BUDASZ, 2001). Although they could have been useful, I did not choose them for they were issued in a period when the six-course guitar or the *violão* had not yet been fully developed and therefore were not the best collections for comparing performances on these instruments.⁴

A 'fourth' option was the manuscript MS1596 named '*Modinhas do Brasil*,' found by Gerard BÉHAGUE in the 1960s in the Library of Ajuda in Portugal. This manuscript is undated but is believed to have been published in 1793.⁵ Its content, of thirty Brazilian *modinhas*⁶, for continuo and two sopranos, has a strong Brazilian character in the melody and lyrics.⁷ There is no indication, however, of the instrument that should be used for accompaniment. For BÉHAGUE, the pieces are to be accompanied by the *viola*, which he refers to as the guitar. BÉHAGUE justifies his interpretation in the way the music is written in "broken-chord figures [and] occasional figured bass" what for him would be a kind of accompaniment more suitable to the *viola* (BÉHAGUE, 1968, p.59). In a different interpretation of the same manuscript, Edilson de LIMA (2001) argues that, depending on the song selected, the manuscript suggests a different instrument

⁴ The six-course single-stringed guitar was consolidated as the 'classical guitar' or, 'guitar', only, in the first half of the nineteenth century in Europe. The instrument grew in size and reached its classical form in the second half of the nineteenth century with new techniques of construction employed by the Spanish Luthier Antonio de Torres Jurado (1817 - 1892) (HENRIQUE, 2002; TURNBULL and SPARKS, 2014).

⁵ See BÉHAGUE (1968).

⁶ *Modinha* is a derivation (diminutive) of the word "mote" or motif, a general term to denominate song. The *modinha* crossed centuries keeping its lyric and sentimental character and accompanied song (in Portugal and Brazil), but had not defined form. Alongside the *lundu* it can be considered some of the first musical expressions of a Brazilian society and sometimes the 'sentimental' *modinha* and the 'sensual' *lundu* had not clear stylistic difference. (OLIVEIRA, 2001).

⁷ More analysis, concerning the Brazilian character of the songs in the manuscript MS1596, can be found in BÉHAGUE (1968) and SANDRONI (2001).

to give harmonic support for the *modinhas*. He identifies the possible use of the *viola*, *violão*, and keyboard accompaniments. Despite having no indication of the composer, the lyrics of at least two *modinhas* in the manuscript, numbers '6' and '16', are believed to have been written by the mulatto Carioca priest, poet, composer and performer Domingos Caldas Barbosa (1740-1800) (TINHORÃO, 2004).

The last choice of a musical score arguably written for *viola* accompaniment, was a codex called '*Música escolhida da Viola de Lereno*' dating from 1799. This Portuguese manuscript has forty-one *modinhas* and *romances* arranged for the *viola*, *violão* and other chordophones (MORAIS, 2003). The name Lereno, or Lereno Selinuntino, was the nickname of the Carioca priest Caldas Barbosa (previously mentioned), who achieved success in Portugal, and who by 1780 had become famous in the court of D. Maria I for his performances of the so-called Brazilian *modinhas* and *lundus*⁸ with *viola* accompaniment (TINHORÃO, 2004). In addition to the codexes mentioned above, another musical source for the *viola* is the *viola* tutor, *A Nova Arte de Viola* (The New Art of the Viola), from 1789. The book has musical examples proposed by the author as exercises in the instruction of how to play the *viola*. The music in the book comprises three minuets and one *modinha*, for students to practice.

After preliminary reading and performance of the songs from the codices, *Modinhas do Brasil*, the *Muzica Escolhida da Viola de Lereno*, and the book *A nova Arte de Viola*, my decision about which songs, and the number of songs to play' and record was not straightforward. I could not find any specific criteria as to how I might choose from the seventy-five songs available in those manuscripts. As I preferred some tunes more than others, I decided that my criteria would be to write about the songs I most enjoyed playing. If I could perform and record the whole repertoire available for the *viola* in the codexes and books, this would seem to be the most comprehensive methodological strategy, but I soon realized that it would take a long time to become fluent in this large

⁸ *Lundus* or *lundu* is one of the three primary dance genres developed (alongside the *fofa* and the *fado*) by withes and mestizo Brazilians under the influence of the rhythm and choreography of African and Creole *batuques*. From the *lundu* dance was developed the *lundu-canção* (*lundu* song) accompanied at the *viola* (TINHORÃO, 2008).

repertoire, resulting ultimately in a different work, one devoted exclusively to the performance of that music. The uncertainty remained for a while, and I wondered, if I would be better able to compare the two practices from the perspective of a professional performer. This was not to be straightforward, however. My background as a performer was in playing the *violão*, electric guitar, percussion, and singing Brazilian popular music. Therefore, learning how to play the *viola* reasonably well was enough a challenging methodological tool for taking advantage of the data available.

Since my main objective was to experience the differences between playing the *viola* and the *violão*, there was no justification for spending a great amount of time learning to play as many songs as possible, at least not within the scope of this study. It was not just the number of songs performed that would determine differences between both instruments, but my awareness of the experience of playing them. During the process of learning the repertoire, I played many songs with differing degrees of proficiency but recorded only five of them, making a total of ten tracks, five on the *viola* and the same five on the *violão*. This limited number of songs was due to the challenging experience of recording that changed my relationship with the instrument and the music I was playing. To perform informally, or even formally as a methodological tool and then to write about the consequent impressions, has a different weight and meaning when compared with a performance that will be sound-recorded. In other words, thinking that I was going to give a rendition that would become a permanent record made every 'imprecision' or 'inaccuracy' of the sound a major concern. I wanted the rendition to be 'right,' 'clean' and without the slightest 'mistake.' But it was difficult to decide what the musical criteria would be to achieve the best or right rendition.

I sought to record the performances because having access to the songs allows the interested ones to perceive nuances that I might hear differently or the reader may be inspired to try to play the same songs and compare their versions with my renditions.⁹ Finally, the decision to record the songs on the *viola* and *violão* was a methodological

⁹ The songs will be available for those who contact this author.

one which demonstrates that my study of the differences of these instruments was grounded in actual performances.

All songs selected from the codexes were copied, revised, and transcribed into modern musical notation by contemporary authors. Scholars such as BUDASZ (2001), LIMA (2001), and MORAIS (2003), have devoted entire books to the reconstruction and re-editing of that music, making their works a helpful reference for the modern player of that repertoire.¹⁰ The original manuscripts, as well as those published in facsimile, generate many ambiguities regarding the position of the notes on the score, and the rhythmic figures.¹¹ Using the modern editions to perform the songs, I first tried to play the accompaniment as it was written, but sometimes the harmony part did not clearly show the rhythmic pattern, instead the scores either displayed the bass of the chord in each tempo of the measure, or only one long bass note for the whole measure. This notation did not mean that one should play exactly the way it was written, rather, it was a convention to indicate the chord and/or the inversion of the chord (LIMA, 2001).¹²

Another aspect of the music is that it was written mostly to be sung by two sopranos in parallel, even though being a salon genre many people sang it in chorus when they were performing in social events (TINHORÃO, 2004). I could only sing the first voice of the melody and I realized that there was no point in playing exactly what was written since I assumed that the musical score was only a possible inscription from a musical practice that was mostly based in oral practice. I also generated an accompaniment for the *viola* and the *violão* that sometimes differed and sometimes coincided on the two instruments (as explained below). My intention was neither to create an entirely new harmony and harmonic rhythm, nor to make them more complex or 'sophisticated' by

¹⁰ In these authors' publications the process of reconstruction of the musical manuscripts is discussed in detail.

¹¹ My inspection of the manuscripts, *Muizica Escolhida da Viola de Lereno* (1799) and the *Conde de Redondo Codex* in the Portuguese National Library in Lisbon (2010), attest to their vagueness.

¹² Ter ELLINGSON discusses the use of written notation to represent the sound of music. The author argues that "the search for an understanding of notations requires a consideration of the musical practices to which they refer and to the concepts and intentions of their users..." (ELLINGSON, 1992, p.156). For more discussions on the role of musical scores in different musical cultures see NETTL (1983, 2005).

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adding chords and notes to the harmony indicated. Rather, I used the written harmonic progression as a general guideline for the songs' cadences, and based on this frame, and always respecting the inversion of the chords indicated, created a rhythmic harmonic accompaniment that I felt was appropriate for the songs.

One of the interesting aspects of those *modinhas*, as they were inscribed in the codices, is the short length of the melody and lyrics. For some musicologists such as MORAIS (2003), the reasons for this are that the songs had a strong improvisatory character and short strophes could serve as themes to be expanded in the performance depending upon the inspiration of the singer and repeated many times during the sessions, facilitating improvisation and encouraging participation. From the book *Muzica Escolhida da Viola de Lereno* (MORAIS, 2003) I have chosen the musical scores of four songs: *Basta, Pensamento, Basta* (Figure 3); *Quando no Campo Vivia* (Figure 4); *Amor, Eu Venho Pedir-te* (Figure 5) and *A Deos Nynfas Bellas* (Figure 6). From As

Modinhas do Brasil (LIMA, 2001) I have chosen the song *Cupido Tirano* (Figure 7).

Basta, Pensamento, basta

(Modinha a duo)

Adagio

Bas - ta, Pen - sa - men - to, bas - ta. Dei - xa me en - fim des - can - sar:

Bas - ta, Pen - sa - men - to, bas - ta. Dei - xa me en - fim des - can - sar:

5 (Estribilho)

Um bem que - rer meu não po - de. He - um tor - men - to lem - brar. Bas - ta, sim, bas - ta, Meu pen - sa -

Um bem que - rer meu não po - de. He - um tor - men - to lem - brar. Bas - ta, sim, bas - ta, Meu pen - sa -

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men - to: bas - ta sim, bas - ta, meu pen - sa - men - to: Tu és a - go - ra O meu tor -

men - to: bas - ta sim, bas - ta, meu pen - sa - men - to: Tu és a - go - ra O meu tor -

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men - to: Tu és a - go - ra O meu tor - men - to, tor - men - to, tor - men - to.

men - to: Tu és a - go - ra O meu tor - men - to, tor - men - to, tor - men - to.

Figure 3: My replication from MORAIS (2003, p.150)

Quando no campo vivia (Romance a duo)

Musical score for the song "Quando no campo vivia" (Romance a duo). The score is written for three staves: two vocal staves (treble clef) and one bass staff (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The lyrics are: "Quan - do no cam-po vi - vi - a Ti - nha paz meu co - ra - ção, A - go - ra vi - vo na Cor - te tris - te sem con - so - la - ção." The score includes a measure rest of 5 measures at the beginning of the second system.

Figure 4: My replication from MORAIS (2003, p.130).

Amor, eu venho pedir-te (Modinha a duo)

Musical score for the song "Amor, eu venho pedir-te" (Modinha a duo). The score is written for three staves: two vocal staves (treble clef) and one bass staff (bass clef). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are: "A - mor, a - mor, eu ve - nho pe - dir - te Hum fa - vor por pi - e - da - de. Dá - me dos teus ma - les to - dos, Mas nun - ca me dê - s sau - da - de, dá - me to - dos os teus da - de. Dá - me dos teus ma - les to - dos, Mas nun - ca me dê - s sau - da - de, dá - me to - dos os teus ma - les mas nun - ca me dê - s sau - da - de, nun - ca, nun - ca, sau - da - de, nun - ca, nun - ca sau - da - de. ma - les mas nun - ca me dê - s sau - da - de, nun - ca, nun - ca, sau - da - de, nun - ca, nun - ca sau - da - de." The score includes measure rests of 6 and 12 measures at the beginning of the second and third systems, respectively.

Figure 5: My replication from MORAIS (2003, p.112).

A Deos, Nynfas bellas (Modinha a solo)

The musical score for 'A Deos, Nynfas bellas' is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-7) features a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'A - Deos, Nyn fas bel - las, Gen - til So - cie - da - de, O mal da Sau - da - de, Co -'. The second system (measures 8-14) is marked '(Estribilho)' and includes the lyrics: 'me - ço_a_cho rar. Aí! que_o meu pe - zar As - sim não se_ex - pli - ca; Vai mal o_ que_'. The third system (measures 15-21) continues with the lyrics: 'vai, Bem fi - ca quem fi - ca bem, bem fi - ca bem, bem fi - ca.' The bass line consists of simple harmonic accompaniment.

Figure 6: My replication from MORAIS (2003, p.128).

Cupido tirano

The musical score for 'Cupido tirano' is for a three-part setting. It begins with the tempo marking 'Anônimo'. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) shows Soprano, Mezzo, and Viola parts. The lyrics are: 'Cu - pi - do tí - ra - no mos - tra_o teu po - der...'. The second system (measures 5-8) continues with the lyrics: 'Ti - ra - me_es - ta se - ta eu me sin_to mor - rer...'. The third system (measures 9-12) concludes with the lyrics: 'eu mor - ro, eu me sin_to mor rer...'. The Soprano and Mezzo parts have lyrics, while the Viola part provides a rhythmic accompaniment.

Figure 7: My replication from LIMA (2001, p.189).

5 - Differentiating experiences in playing the *viola* and the *violão*

In playing technique the *viola* differs greatly from the *violão* as its shape is generally smaller and shallower. My own chordophones are very different instruments but they have the general qualities of typical instruments in their respective organological families,¹³ as follows: I have a five-course double string: '*Viola Caipira Professional*' from the brand Rozini, manufactured in Brazil in 2010. On the manufacturer's website there are twenty-five different sizes and shapes of *violas* displayed. All of them, however, have the same number of strings (ten), the same quantity of courses (five), and the same quality of the strings (wire or steel strings). The *violão* I used to perform and record was an Yamaha model NCX900R electro-acoustic instrument, with six nylon strings, made in China in 2011.

The tuning of these instruments is very dissimilar. This contrast alone creates many differences in the experience of playing, for the formation of chords on the neck of the *violão* is different to that on the *viola*. The *violão* has a more standardized tuning system, from which I based my tuning, from the first to the sixth string (e / b / g / D / A / E). The *viola* is normally played in a great variety of tunings. BUDASZ (2001) lists two tunings for the *viola* in Brazil and one in Portugal that he relates to older tunings for the five-course guitar found in Europe.¹⁴ VILELA (2010) notes that there are at least twenty different ways of tuning the *viola* in Brazil. Many varieties are based on Portuguese tunings whilst others developed within Brazil. In the same vein, CORRÊA (2000) identifies a multitude of tunings for the *viola* in Brazil. The most popular *viola* tuning in rural areas in Brazil is arguably the *cebolão* in D or in E. The term *cebolão*, literally, 'big onion' alludes to the professional activity (agricultural workers) of many

¹³ Despite their historical variability, the *viola* and the *violão* maintain the general characteristics from their roots. See Oliveira (2000), VILELA (2011) and CASTRO (2007; 2014) for more organological analysis of the *violas* and *violões* in Brazil and in Portugal.

¹⁴ See BUDASZ (2001, p.14).

viola players in rural areas of the country. The *cebolão* tuning in D that I used on the *viola* for my recording is from the first to the fifth course: (dd aa F##f# Dd Aa). After trying many tunings, I decided to use this arrangement, for if I tuned the *viola* based on the classical *violão* tuning, as suggested by RIBEIRO (1789),¹⁵ which at first seemed an easier performance option since chord formation would be the same on both instruments, it made the strings unbearably tight, giving the impression that at any moment they could snap, and the instrument did not sound as good as when retuned to *cebolão* D.

As a *violão* and electric guitar player, I believed that a smaller instrument in some sense would not challenge my performance capacities. Of course, I knew that the *viola* has been played by highly-skilled players performing technically difficult repertoires. Ivan Vilela, Roberto Corrêa, Almir Sater, Renato Andrade, Tavinho Moura, or Pereira da Viola's compositions and renditions are notable examples.¹⁶ Nevertheless, I believed that playing a repertoire of *modinhas*, would not be difficult, since it would be only a matter of adapting from the *violão* to the *viola*. I was greatly mistaken, and the delusion concerning the simplicity of the *viola* ended when I finally decided to play an entire set of songs and sing at the same time accompanying myself on the instrument. What was a relatively simple task when I was playing the *violão* revealed a new reality involving another universe of musical possibilities.

Some musicologists tend to trace an evolutionary line from the most basic forms of musical instruments to the most advanced, as if older instruments were underdeveloped modern ones. The *viola*, when mentioned, is normally seen as a 'primitive' chordophone in an evolutionary history of the classical guitar (*violão*).¹⁷ I contend that this kind of perspective is unaware of, or fails to include in its historical construction, the performers' perspectives regarding these instruments. An apparently

¹⁵ In his *viola* tutor, Manuel da Paixão Ribeiro suggested the tuning (ee / bd / Gg / Dd / Aa) for the *viola*, what is similar to the classical guitar tuning.

¹⁶ These are acclaimed contemporary *viola* players and composers in Brazil.

¹⁷ One can find evolutionary approaches to the history of the guitar in the works of: TYLER and SPARKS (2002); GRUNFELD (1969); EVANS and EVANS (1977) and, TURNBULL (1974).

‘simple’ task can reveal a great deal about the differences of the instruments and allow complementary interpretations of the historical traces available.

The *viola* feels more responsive than the *violão*. Which means that when one strikes the strings of the *viola* it seems that the sound produced reaches the ears quicker if compared with the *violão*. For instance, without pressing any note on the scale, the slightest stroke on the strings or any impact on the body of the instrument (deliberately or accidentally) make the strings promptly vibrate in a full chord sound, providing the instrument is tuned in *cebolão* (D or E), or any other tuning system that is set to sound a chord with the open strings. In contrast, when I strike the body of the *violão* or its strings unintentionally, the sound is not as responsive. Another stark contrast is the effect caused by the way that the third, fourth, and fifth, double-string courses are tuned and placed on the *viola*. They are tuned to the same pitch but with an octave interval between the strings in the same course. Yet the treble strings are placed above the bass strings in the pairs of the mentioned courses.¹⁸ The sound produced by this arrangement subverts my disposition as a *violão* player; for when I hit the fifth or fourth course of the *viola* expecting to listen to a bass note, as would be the case while playing the *violão*, the treble string placed alongside the bass gives a different character to the sound of the instrument. I perceive the sound as if it is simultaneously melodic and harmonic. This creates an ambiguous sonority as if the *viola* ‘sings’ even in the accompaniment. On the *violão*, the temperament of the strings makes it clear that the bass notes will be on the three upper courses while the ‘singing’ melodic line will be on the lower three. Whilst it is technically possible to sound a melody in any range of pitches, the bass notes on the *violão* are primarily used for defining harmony on the instrument.

As I grew up in urban centers in Brazil, I understood that the *viola* always referenced music belonging to the domains of the rural and the folk. I have been unable to avoid this inference when hearing the sound of the instrument or playing it, until this research. It sounds metallic, as it should, as a result of the material quality of the strings,

¹⁸ The third, fourth and fifth courses of the *viola* are usually a treble string paired with a bass string.

but it is different from a *violão* set with steel strings; and diverges significantly from the six-course double steel strings *violão* sound. Everything feels different. The fingers of both hands have less room to move on the body of the *viola*. The shorter neck and the narrower scale alongside the set of ten strings requires greater accuracy from the left hand requiring me to arch that hand more and place the fingers close to a ninety degree angle to the neck. On the right hand, I had a similar problem caused by the narrowness of the scale and the proximity of the strings. I had to find the right angle of action to strike the strings keeping in mind that there were two strings to be plucked with each strike. My bodily contact with the material bodies of the *viola* and of the *violão* also gave a different sense of relationship while playing or just holding them. The *viola* is skinny and feels portable and neat, while the *violão* feels robust and impractical by comparison. I have known the many ways in which the *violão* fits on my body for a long period of time, but as for the *viola*, I am still going through a process of finding the best postures to play the instrument. It has clearly been a process of adaptation, the more I play, the more familiar it becomes. But this requires time. Nonetheless, the *viola* and the *violão* are both suitable for the accompaniment of the songs selected.

6 - A professional view of the *viola*: Ivan Vilela

Ivan VILELA teaches *viola* in the BMUS of the instrument in the University of São Paulo (USP), composes and arranges for this chordophone and is a highly sought after performer. However, I consider his understanding of the *viola*, not just because he is one of the most accomplished *viola* players and researchers of the instrument in Brazil, but also because he was an accomplished *violão* player before becoming a virtuoso of the *viola*. As he was highly skilled on both instruments, his dual expertise facilitated a complementary analysis of the technical variations in performance between them. In a television program, I had come across on the Internet, dedicated to his career, VILELA noted that the *viola* was an extension of his arms and that it was his voice.¹⁹ The

¹⁹ TV Câmara website.

corporeal metaphor indicated the sensorial awareness I sought to explore more fully from a professional player's relationship with his instruments.

In seeking to understand similarities and differences between the *viola* and the *violão* VILELA explained that the only similarities the two instruments shared are the fact that they are plucked chordophones with a neck. In talking to his fellow teachers and professors in Brazil, he had reached the conclusion that there is no instrument that can cause more injury to one's hands than the *violão*. In contrast, the *viola* has smaller dimensions and lighter strings, as he noted, "you do not see *viola* performers with tendinitis in their hands."²⁰

He had studied the *violão* with great teachers at college in Brazil and had developed a synovial cyst that had prevented him of playing the instrument for a time. When he returned to practice, he had to reeducate his muscular conditioning to avoid further injury. He told me he was lucky, for his teacher at that time, Everton Gloeden, had studied *violão* in England with the renowned guitar player Julian Bream.²¹ According to VILELA, influenced by Bream's ideas, Gloeden emphasized a deep corporeal awareness of the performer with the instrument as a primal condition for playing the *violão*. Applying this idea, VILELA spent about one and a half years only practicing the basics to relearn how to play the *violão* with a major awareness of the relationship of his body with the instrument. Yet, during this time, he started learning how to play the *viola* by himself, an instrument which, he observed, today still does not have any systematic method of study. By reprogramming historical body coordination in music making, together with an awareness of his interaction with the instrument, he generated rapprochement with the *violão* and started developing his own techniques for playing the *viola*. VILELA came to understand how body consciousness makes a great difference to playing a musical instrument, for the *viola* and the *violão* demanded two different approaches. Those distinctions had become even clearer for him recently,

²⁰ The quotes or interpretations of VILELA's ideas, expressed in this article, are my translations from Portuguese of my interview with VILELA on 24 October 2013.

²¹ English guitarist and lutenist.

when he started playing the *violão* again to record his old compositions for the instrument:

I spent this weekend in Minas Gerais, playing the *violão*, and I arrived here [São Paulo] with a terrible pain in my neck, which I noticed was due to the size of the instrument. I started playing *violão* thinking of how I would have played it as if I were playing the *viola*. Then I stopped and asked myself, but how should I play the *violão*? I took the *violão*, then, thinking about the mechanics of the instrument, of my body with it, and the pain stopped (VILELA, 2013, interview).

Adapting his playing technique from the *violão* to the *viola*, and then from the *viola* to the *violão*, taught VILELA how different the styles were and the body mechanics required for both instruments. He added that the *violão* has a harmonic structure based on tunings in fourths that are played in blocs (chords), but this is not done frequently on the *viola* as its tuning is in thirds. Rather one plays note by note as if you “unraveled” these chords. It is a tuning that refers to the renaissance and baroque counterpoint. The musical aspects to which VILELA drew attention, and the different corporeal awareness required to play the *viola* and the *violão*, were significant in shedding light on the differences between these instruments. As I wanted to grasp more comparatively embodied and imagined aspects between the chordophones, I was concerned to know how VILELA reflected upon their differences. He explained that he felt that:

The *viola* and the *violão* are both great ‘interpreters,’²² equally great, but the *violão* is a gentlemen in frock coats²³ who has an entire procedure that must be followed. And the *viola* is not. The *viola* is more shameless as it is more simplistic, it is more popular culture, really. The *violão* requires a more formal approach to my feelings, perhaps because there are defined methodologies and a more consolidated school which is not the case with the *viola*. It is freer in this sense. In my imagination, then, the *viola* is wilder and freer (VILELA, 2013, interview).

The terms used by VILELA to describe his feelings and imagination of the *violão* such as: “a gentleman in frock coats,” “formal procedure,” “defined methodologies” and “consolidated school” were clearly different from the expressions he used to describe

²² VILELA meant that both instruments are equally suitable for playing many musical styles.

²³ It is a man's double-breasted, long-skirted coat, now worn chiefly on formal occasions. (Oxford English dictionary 2011).

the *viola*: “more shameless,” “more simplistic,” “more popular and provocative.” His ideas suggest two different social status for these chordophones, reflecting and projecting their symbolic potential for social and cultural meaning making in Brazil. VILELA’s observations, are mostly grounded in his own experience as a student, performer and teacher, yet they reveal how these chordophones differ in acoustics, ergonomics, musicality and as symbols of diverse social and cultural realities in Brazil.

7 - Conclusion

The methods used in this article to examine the differences between the *viola* and the *violão* have provided insights into issues of learning to perform, assessing sounds and becoming aware of the multi-sensorial interaction with the instruments. These are all elements of knowledge about these chordophones that one could not have accessed by any other means. I realized that the *viola* required a very different playing technique to that of the *violão*, and that the differences in technique were related to their general morphology, the tuning, the quality of strings and their scoring arrangements. Further as I have noted, the *viola* is more responsive than the *violão* and yet is a more compact and portable instrument. This knowledge hidden in performance practice was a revelation.

My experience and VILELA’s professional performance knowledge show that both the *viola* and the *violão* are not only dissimilar but require attention to their specific modes of performance. The *viola* and the *violão* incite the imagination in different directions. My own learning process of how to play the *viola* and the repertoire recorded showed me how the *viola* sounded better for the accompaniment of the Brazilian songs selected. Even being used to the *violão*, while playing a song at the *viola* and immediately following performing the same song on the *violão* revealed a significant impoverishment of my musical experience. At the *violão* the accompaniment decreased in sound and its dimensions felt less practical to perform.

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Nota sobre o autor

Renato Castro concluiu doutorado pleno (PhD) em Etnomusicologia na Queen's University Belfast (QUB, 2014) com bolsa integral da CAPES, obteve o mestrado em Musicologia Histórica pela Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ, 2007) e o Bacharelado em Música Popular Brasileira pela Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO, 2004). Tem experiência na área de música popular brasileira como músico, professor e pesquisador. Interessa-se tanto pela pesquisa etnográfica das músicas de tradição oral e aural no Brasil, assim como pelo estudo histórico-cultural da música popular brasileira. Atualmente é professor de música na Universidade Federal do Maranhão.