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PORTUGUESE MUSIC FOR CELLO AND ORCHESTRA

Costa • Lopes-Graça
Freitas Branco • Braga Santos

Bruno Borralhinho, Cello
Orquestra Gulbenkian
Pedro Neves

Portuguese Music for Cello and Orchestra

Luiz Costa (1879-1960): *Poema*

(completed and orchestrated by Pedro Faria Gomes)

Although his name and music are less well-known than those of the other three composers represented on this album, Luiz Costa was a prominent figure in Portuguese music in the first half of the twentieth century, particularly in Porto, the city in which he was born and spent most of his life. His first teacher was his future father-in-law Bernardo Moreira de Sá (1853-1924), founder of the Orpheon Portuense concert society (1881) and the Moreira de Sá Quartet – whose members included cellist Guilhermina Suggia – and first director of the Porto Conservatory. Costa himself went on to study in Berlin, with José Viana da Mota and Ferruccio Busoni, among others. Having returned to Porto, he established a busy and varied career as a pianist, composer and teacher – he succeeded Moreira de Sá as director of both the Orpheon Portuense and the Conservatory. He left a catalogue of around 180 works, in various genres, but showing a preference for his own instrument. Regrettably, his music is still under-appreciated and only a small selection of his scores have been either published or recorded. The original version of *Poema*, for cello and piano, was written in the 1950s: Costa began working on an orchestral adaptation in 1956, but this was never completed. The version heard here was completed and orchestrated in 2008 by Pedro Faria Gomes (b. 1979) in response to a request from cellist Madalena Sá e Costa, the composer's daughter. Based on the original manuscript and Costa's own notes about his planned orchestration, *Poema* is cast in a single sonata-form movement with an extended coda. Its numerous changes of atmosphere and character, and impressionistic, at times luxuriant, harmonies, give the work a sense of scale and reveal the composer's talent for both harmonic and melodic invention. In the final section, and in keeping with the spirit of the piece, Faria Gomes has introduced a cadenza for the soloist.

Fernando Lopes-Graça (1906-94): *Concerto da Camera col Violoncello Obbligato*, Op. 167

Born in Tomar, Fernando Lopes-Graça was one of the foremost figures in twentieth-century Portuguese music, excelling as a composer, pianist, teacher, essayist, critic and choral director. An outspoken opponent of the Salazar régime, he was arrested and imprisoned more than once, and saw his career suffer at times because of his political activities. Lopes-Graça studied with Tomás Borba, Luís de Freitas Branco and José Viana da Mota, among others, later working with Charles Koechlin in Paris, where he lived from 1937 to 1939. It was in Paris that he began to take an interest in traditional and folk music, an area he continued to explore and incorporate into his own works following his return to Portugal, although always in a very personal manner and in a way far removed from the dictatorship's nationalist promotion of folk arts. Lopes-Graça's *Concerto da Camera col Violoncello Obbligato* (Chamber Concerto for Obbligato Cello) was written between 1965 and 1966, in response to a commission from Mstislav Rostropovich, who gave the work's première on 6th October 1967, in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, with the Moscow Philharmonic under the baton of Kirill Kondrashin (a performance recorded for posterity). This is without doubt one of the composer's finest works, and one of the most representative of his mature years. Its sombre, dissonant and somewhat austere tone, which it shares incidentally with another of his masterpieces, the *Canto de Amor e Morte* (Song of Love and Death, for piano and string quartet), can be heard from the enigmatic opening theme, which goes on to shape the entire musical discourse. Intensely chromatic, sometimes obsessive, sometimes claustrophobic, this theme is, in all likelihood, a reflection of the social and political context of the day.

Luís de Freitas Branco (1890-1955): *Cena Lírica*

Luís de Freitas Branco was born into an aristocratic family in Lisbon, and went on to play a key rôle in the Portuguese music scene in the first half of the last century. His teachers included Tomás Borba, Désiré Pâque and, in Berlin, Engelbert Humperdinck, and he had a successful career not only as a composer but as a teacher, critic and musicologist, publishing a huge quantity of work. His talent for composition became evident when he was still very young, barely a teenager, and over the course of his life Freitas Branco produced a extensive body of work in a wide range of styles and genres and shows him to have been a composer of enormous creative energy – he was in the vanguard, for example, when it came to introducing Modernism into Portuguese music. *Cena Lírica* (Lyrical Scene) received its première in Lisbon on 9th April 1916, when it was performed by soloist Maria Júlia Fontes Pereira de Melo, accompanied by the Orquestra Sinfónica Portuguesa and Pedro Blanch. This is the composer's first work for solo instrument and orchestra, predating by just a few months his *Violin Concerto*, a work of overt Classical inspiration in which Franckian influences can be heard. *Cena Lírica*, therefore, was written before the composer consciously adopted a Neo-classical style in the 1920s (the key works of this period being his four symphonies). Years later, in the 40s, Freitas Branco revised *Cena Lírica*, notably making a series of alterations to the original orchestral writing. The work opens with a cor anglais solo, which is then imitated by the cello. After this, the music takes on a more urgent feel, with the cello in its upper register accompanied by agitated strings – after an initial peak in intensity, these roles are reversed. There follows a wonderfully lyrical declamation from the soloist, highlighting the tonal qualities of the cello, before another peak heralds the final appearance of the opening theme.

Joly Braga Santos (1924-88): *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*, Op. 66

An eminent pupil and close friend of Luís de Freitas Branco, Lisbon-born Joly Braga Santos led parallel careers as a composer, conductor, critic and teacher. He is best known for his orchestral works – in particular, for his symphonies, which are unquestionably the most significant works in the genre by any Portuguese composer of the last century. His *Cello Concerto* arose from a commission from the Gulbenkian Foundation and was completed in March 1987, making it one of his last works. Structured in three movements (*Moderato*, *Allegro* and *Andante*, in other words slow–fast–slow, the opposite of conventional concerto form) which are played without a break, it is sometimes described as a work for orchestra, or a symphonic poem, with solo cello. And indeed, at various times in the first movement, the orchestra seems to take over and subjugate the soloist, who seems only permitted to make the occasional comment, as if there in a purely observational capacity. The work begins with an enigmatic oboe solo, which is taken up first by the flute and then the clarinet. A long and complex melodic line, with echoes of both Stravinsky and Debussy, shapes the *Moderato*'s soundscape – chromatic, dark in tone and intensely expressive. While this movement is haunted by an air of lament, or meditative mystery, more overtly vigorous sections appear in the central *Allegro*. Here the cello takes on a more prominent, virtuosic rôle, as if the soloist were now keen to outdo the orchestra, which counters with violent chords. The mysterious opening lament then resurfaces at the start of the *Andante*, in the woodwind. The atmosphere remains sombre and angular, despite more luminous harmonies here and there, as the music sinks towards the lower register and, gradually, fades into silence. The *Cello Concerto* was premiered on 9th May 1988 by Célia Vital, with the Orquestra Gulbenkian conducted by Michel Swierczewski.

Francisco Sassetti

English translation by Susannah Howe

Música portuguesa para violoncelo e orquestra

Luiz Costa (1879-1960): Poema

(versão completada e orquestrada por Pedro Faria Gomes)

Embora menos conhecido que os outros três compositores aqui representados, muito devido à ainda escassa divulgação da sua obra, Luiz Costa foi, todavia, uma personalidade de relevo do panorama musical português da primeira metade do século XX, nomeadamente no que toca ao desenvolvimento da vida musical da cidade do Porto, cidade onde nasceu e onde viveu a maior parte da vida. Tendo tido como primeiro mestre o seu futuro sogro Bernardo Moreira de Sá (1853-1924), fundador da sociedade de concertos Orpheon Portuense (1881), do Quarteto Moreira de Sá – do qual foi membro a violoncelista Guilhermina Suggia – e primeiro director do Conservatório do Porto, Luiz Costa estudou depois em Berlim, onde foi discípulo de José Viana da Mota e de Ferruccio Busoni, entre outros. Após regressar ao Porto, desenvolveu uma carreira muito activa, quer como pianista e compositor, quer como docente, tendo sucedido a Moreira de Sá na direcção do Orpheon Portuense e, também, do conservatório. Como compositor, embora tenha privilegiado o seu instrumento, foi prolífico em vários géneros, tendo deixado um espólio de cerca de 180 obras. Infelizmente, este é ainda pouco conhecido e divulgado (quer através de partituras editadas, quer através de gravações). A versão original de *Poema*, escrita para violoncelo e piano, data da década de 1950. Em 1956, o compositor começou a adaptar a obra para violoncelo e orquestra, mas deixou o projecto inacabado. A versão aqui apresentada foi completada e orquestrada por Pedro Faria Gomes (n. 1979) em 2008 a partir do manuscrito original, em resposta a um convite da violoncelista Madalena Sá e Costa, filha de Luiz Costa. A adaptação partiu das algumas indicações relativas à orquestração que o compositor incluiu no manuscrito. *Poema* tem um único andamento que é estruturado em forma sonata com uma coda alargada. As inúmeras variações de ambiente e carácter, e as harmonias vagamente impressionistas, por vezes luxuriantes, conferem grande dimensão à peça e são reveladoras da

inventividade do compositor, tanto a nível harmónico como melódico. Na secção final, seguindo o espírito da peça, Faria Gomes introduziu uma *cadenza* para o solista.

Fernando Lopes-Graça (1906-94): Concerto da Camera col Violoncello Obbligato, op. 167

Natural de Tomar, Fernando Lopes-Graça foi uma figura cimeira da música portuguesa do século XX, destacando-se como compositor, pianista, pedagogo, ensaísta, crítico e dirigente coral. Foi igualmente um activo opositor ao regime salazarista, postura essa que o levou a ser detido e que prejudicou a sua carreira em diversas ocasiões. Lopes-Graça foi aluno do padre Tomás Borba, de Luís de Freitas Branco, e de José Viana da Mota, entre outros, tendo mais tarde estudado também com Charles Koechlin em Paris, onde viveu entre 1937 e 1939. Foi aí que começou a interessar-se de forma assumida pela música tradicional e pelo folclore que, após os seu regresso a Portugal, explorou e integrou nas suas próprias obras, embora sempre de forma muito pessoal e oposta ao “folclorismo” promovido pelo regime. O *Concerto da Camera col Violoncello Obbligato* foi escrito entre 1965 e 1966 a pedido de Msitslav Rostropovich. Foi o próprio violoncelista russo que estreou a obra, no dia 6 de Outubro de 1967, na Grande Sala do Conservatório de Moscovo, com a Orquestra Filarmónica de Moscovo sob a direcção de Kirill Kondrashin (estreia essa que ficou gravada para a posteridade). É, indubitavelmente, uma das mais notáveis obras de Lopes-Graça e uma das mais representativas da sua maturidade artística. O tom sombrio, dissonante e algo austero, que aliás partilha com outra das suas mais admiráveis criações, o *Canto de Amor e Morte* (para piano e quarteto de cordas), é perceptível desde o enigmático tema inicial, tema esse que irá moldar todo o discurso musical. Este é intensamente cromático, por vezes obsessivo, por outras claustrofóbico, muito provavelmente reflexo do contexto social e político da época.

Luís de Freitas Branco (1890-1955): Cena Lírica

Figura determinante do meio musical português durante a primeira metade do século XX, Luís de Freitas Branco (1890-1955) nasceu em Lisboa no seio de uma família aristocrática. Discípulo, entre outros, de Tomás Borba, de Désiré Pâque e de Engelbert Humperdinck, com quem estudou em Berlim, destacou-se não só como compositor, mas também como pedagogo, crítico, musicólogo e divulgador, com grande quantidade de obra publicada. O talento como compositor manifestou-se precocemente, ainda no início da adolescência, e ao longo da vida Freitas Branco produziu uma obra prolífica, múltipla – no que toca aos estilos e géneros abordados – e de enorme efervescência criativa, tendo sido o principal e mais destacado introdutor das correntes modernistas na música portuguesa. *Cena Lírica* foi estreada em Lisboa, a 9 de Abril de 1916, pela violoncelista Maria Júlia Fontes Pereira de Melo, acompanhada pela Orquestra Sinfónica Portuguesa sob a direcção de Pedro Blanch. Trata-se da primeira obra de Freitas Branco escrita para instrumento solista e orquestra, e precede, por escassos meses, o seu Concerto para Violino e Orquestra, de inspiração explicitamente clássica e no qual é perceptível a influência de César Franck. *Cena Lírica* foi, assim, escrita antes do compositor adoptar uma tendência assumidamente neo-clássica, o que sucedeu a partir da década de 1920, e cujas obras fundamentais são as quatro sinfonias. Alguns anos mais tarde, já na década de 1940, Freitas Branco reviu a partitura de *Cena Lírica*, fazendo, nomeadamente, algumas alterações à orquestração original. A peça abre com um solo de corne inglês, logo imitado pelo violoncelo. O ambiente torna-se, depois, mais premente, com o violoncelo no registo agudo acompanhado por um movimento nervoso das cordas, papéis que se irão inverter após um primeiro clima de intensidade. Segue-se uma declamação de enorme lirismo do solista, secção em que sobressai a qualidade tímbrica do instrumento, antes de um novo clima que precede a derradeira aparição do tema inicial.

Joly Braga Santos (1924-88): Concerto para Violoncelo e Orquestra, op. 66

Discípulo ilustre e muito próximo de Luís de Freitas Branco, Joly Braga Santos desenvolveu carreira como compositor, maestro, crítico e professor. Natural de Lisboa, onde nasceu em 1924 e viria a morrer em 1988, é sobretudo conhecido pelas suas obras orquestrais, sendo autor daquele que é certamente o mais relevante conjunto de sinfonias de um compositor português no século XX. O Concerto para Violoncelo e Orquestra resulta de uma encomenda da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian e foi terminado em Março de 1987, sendo assim uma das últimas obras do compositor. Dividido em três andamentos (*Moderato*, *Allegro* e *Andante*, ou seja lento-vivo-lento, em oposição ao formato tradicional do concerto clássico) que se sucedem sem interrupção, é por vezes descrito como sendo uma obra orquestral, ou um poema sinfónico, com violoncelo solista. De facto, por diversas vezes no andamento inicial, a massa orquestral parece assumir o discurso e subjugar o solista que, então, se limita a comentar, como se de um observador se tratasse. É com um enigmático solo de oboé, logo retomado pela flauta e, depois, pelo clarinete que a obra começa. Uma linha melódica longa e complexa, que poderia fazer lembrar tanto Stravinsky como Debussy, e que vai moldar a paisagem sonora do primeiro andamento: cromática, de tonalidades sombrias e de intensa expressividade. Se este mantém uma aura de lamento ou meditação misteriosa, o *Allegro* que se segue introduz secções mais explicitamente vigorosas. O violoncelo torna-se aqui mais presente, mais virtuosístico também, como se o solista se quisesse sobrepor à orquestra que contrapõe com acordes violentos. O misterioso lamento inicial volta a surgir logo no início do *Andante*, nas madeiras. O ambiente mantém-se sombrio e anguloso, não obstante uma ou outra harmonia mais luminosa, com o discurso musical a tender para o registo grave e, progressivamente, para o silêncio. A estreia do Concerto para Violoncelo deu-se a 9 de Maio de 1988 pela violoncelista Célia Vital, acompanhada pela Orquestra Gulbenkian sob a direcção de Michel Swierczewski.

Francisco Sassetti

Bruno Borralhinho

Photo: David Rodrigues



Bruno Borralhinho is a member of the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra and Artistic Director of the Ensemble Mediterran. Born in Covilhã, Portugal, he studied with Luis Sá Pessoa in his native city and, later, with Markus Nyikos in Berlin and Truls Mørk in Oslo. He has also worked with Natalia Gutman, Antonio Meneses, Pieter Wispelwey, Anner Bylisma, Martin Ostertag and Marcio Carneiro. Awarded a grant by the Gulbenkian Foundation, he also won first prize at the Júlio Cardona Competition in 1999 and the Prémio Jovens Músicos in 2001. He has appeared as soloist with the Orquestra Gulbenkian, Orquestra do Norte, Orquestra de Câmara Portuguesa, Orquestra

Metropolitana de Lisboa, Orquestra Clássica do Sul e Orquestra Clássica da Madeira, and runs masterclasses in Brazil, Portugal and Spain. In 2009, he released a double album of works for cello and piano by Portuguese composers entitled *Página Esquecida*, which garnered widespread critical acclaim. He has performed in some of the world's most prestigious venues, working with such eminent conductors as Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Franz Welsler-Möst, Kurt Masur, Kent Nagano, Herbert Blomstedt, Christoph Eschenbach and Andris Nelsons.

Orquestra Gulbenkian

Photo: David Rodrigues



The Orquestra Gulbenkian was founded in 1962 and now comprises a core team of sixty-six instrumentalists, whose number is increased as and when programmes require. It is therefore able to tackle a repertoire ranging from Classical works to contemporary music. It is based at Lisbon's Gulbenkian Foundation, where it performs a cycle of concerts every season with some of the world's greatest soloists and conductors. One of Portugal's leading orchestras, the Gulbenkian has also performed to great success at venues around the world, and has made a series of internationally acclaimed recordings. Paul McCreesh has been principal conductor since the start of the 2013-14 season, Susanna Mälkki is the current principal guest conductor, and Pedro Neves and Joana Carneiro are both guest conductors. Previous principal conductors include Claudio Scimone (1979-86), who is now the orchestra's Honorary Conductor, and Lawrence Foster (2002-13), who has since been appointed its Emeritus Conductor.

Pedro Neves

Photo: David Rodrigues



Pedro Neves was born in the Portuguese city of Águeda, and began his musical training there. He studied the cello in Aveiro (with Isabel Boiça), Lisbon (with Paulo Gaio Lima) and Barcelona (with Marçal Cervera). A prize-winner at the Juventude Musical Portuguesa competition and the Prémio Jovens Músicos, he then became a member of the Orquestra Metropolitana de Lisboa. He studied conducting at Lisbon's Academia Nacional Superior de Orquestra with Jean-Marc Burfin, going on to further training with Emilio Pomarico, Alexander Polishchuk, Lawrence Foster and Michael Zilm. Pedro Neves is regularly invited to conduct Portugal's leading symphony orchestras and has been principal conductor of the Orquestra Esproarte and Orquestra do Algarve. He currently teaches at the Academia Nacional Superior de Orquestra and is principal conductor of the Orquestra Clássica de Espinho and guest conductor of the Orquestra Gulbenkian. He is also the founder of the Camerata Alma Mater string ensemble.

This recording was made possible by



This recording brings together for the first time some of Portugal's leading composers in a unique programme dedicated to their works for cello and orchestra. The impressionistic and luxuriant harmonies of Luiz Costa's *Poema* contrast with Fernando Lopes-Graça's sombre and austere *Concerto da Camera*, a commission from Mstislav Rostropovich. Luís de Freitas Branco's *Cena Lírica* is an early, romantically expressive piece, while the *Concerto* by his eminent pupil Joly Braga Santos is a hauntingly poetic symphonic masterpiece.

PORTUGUESE MUSIC FOR CELLO AND ORCHESTRA

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|---|--|--------------|
| 1 | Luiz Costa (1879-1960): Poema (completed and orchestrated by Pedro Faria Gomes (2008))* | 12:48 |
| | Fernando Lopes-Graça (1906-94): Concerto da Camera col Violoncello Obbligato, Op. 167 (1965-66) | 22:32 |
| 2 | I. Allegro moderato | 6:11 |
| 3 | II. Andante | 7:22 |
| 4 | III. Finale | 8:59 |
| 5 | Luís de Freitas Branco (1890-1955): Cena Lírica (1916)* | 6:48 |
| | Joly Braga Santos (1924-88): Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 66 (1987) | 23:02 |
| 6 | I. Moderato – | 6:26 |
| 7 | II. Allegro – | 7:02 |
| 8 | III. Andante | 9:34 |

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Bruno Borralinho, Cello
Orquestra Gulbenkian

Pedro Neves



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A co-production with RTP-Antena 2 (Radiodifusão Portuguesa) and Lourisom
Recorded at the Gulbenkian Auditorium, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal,
from 22nd to 26th June, 2015 • Recording supervisor and engineer: Pierre Lavoix
Producer and editor: Nuno Cruz • Assistant engineer: João Dionísio
Publishers: AVA Editions (tracks 1, 5, 6-8); Editions Henry Lemoine (tracks 2-4)
Booklet notes: Francisco Sasseti • Cover photograph: David Rodrigues