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Roland Dyens'in *O Trio Magico* Eseri: Pedagojik ve Müzikal Bir İnceleme

Roland Dyens's O Trio Magico: A Pedagogical and Musical Analysis

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Roland Dyens'in *O Trio Magico* adlı eserini müzikal ve pedagojik açıdan incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Dyens'in bestecilik anlayışında sıklıkla rastlanan eklektik tarz, bu gitar üçlüsü eseri içerisinde de kendini göstermektedir. Eser, Brezilya müziğinin temel taşlarından biri olan *choro* ile Avrupa vals formunu ustalıkla birleştirerek gitar oda müziği repertuarına özgün bir katkı sunmaktadır. Araştırmanın temel hedefleri arasında, eserin form, ritmik yapı ve melodik öğelerini detaylandırmak; gitaristler için sunduğu teknik ve müzikal gereklilikleri değerlendirmek ve pedagojik açıdan taşıdığı değeri ortaya koymak bulunmaktadır. Çalışma, özellikle gitar eğitimi alanında, oda müziği bağlamında tek sesli melodik ifadeyi geliştirme ve toplu icra tekniklerini öğretme açısından eserin nasıl bir katkı sunduğunu analiz etmektedir.

Çalışma, müzik teorisi ve performans analizi yöntemlerini bir araya getirerek eserin yapısını bütüncül bir bakış açısıyla ele almaktadır. Yapılan inceleme sonucunda, *O Trio Magico*'nun yalnızca teknik bir çalışma olmadığı, aynı zamanda genç gitaristlerin müzikal cümleleme, dinamik kontrol ve toplu icra becerilerini geliştirmelerine yardımcı olan bir eser olduğu görülmüştür. Dyens'in müziğinde sıkça rastlanan ritmik ve armonik katmanlaşma teknikleri, eserin pedagojik yönünü daha da belirginleştirmektedir. Bu çalışma, hem akademik hem de icracı perspektifinden bakıldığında *O Trio Magico*'nun gitar oda müziği repertuarındaki önemini vurgulamakta ve eserin icrasına yönelik öneriler sunarak, gitar eğitiminde daha etkin kullanımına katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Roland Dyens, *O Trio Magico*, gitar oda müziği, choro, pedagojik analiz

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze Roland Dyens's O Trio Magico from both musical and pedagogical perspectives. Dyens's characteristic eclectic style is prominently reflected in this trio composition, seamlessly blending the Brazilian choro tradition with European waltz structures, thus enriching the guitar chamber music repertoire with a distinctive contribution. The primary objectives of this research include a detailed examination of the work's form, rhythmic structure, and melodic elements, as well as an evaluation of its technical and musical requirements for guitarists. Additionally, the study explores the piece's pedagogical significance, particularly in enhancing single-line melodic phrasing and ensemble coordination within guitar education.

Employing an integrated methodology combining music theory and performance analysis, this research presents a comprehensive perspective on the composition. Findings suggest that O Trio Magico is not merely a technical exercise but also a vital pedagogical resource, helping young guitarists refine their phrasing, dynamic control, and collaborative performance skills. Dyens's frequent use of rhythmic and harmonic layering techniques further emphasizes the educational value of the work. This study underscores O Trio Magico's importance in the guitar chamber music repertoire, offering insights into its performance and practical applications in guitar education. By providing interpretative recommendations, this research contributes to a deeper appreciation of Dyens's artistic vision and his impact on contemporary guitar pedagogy.

Keywords: Roland Dyens, O Trio Magico, guitar chamber music, choro, pedagogical analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

O Trio Magico is one of the two guitar trio compositions written by Roland Dyens during his extensive career as a composer. Based on the authors' personal experiences with Dyens and their previous research, it is evident that in the later years of his life, Dyens composed works for solo guitar and various guitar ensembles that served both pedagogical and professional purposes, with both basic and high levels of technical and musical sophistication. One of the most significant examples of this approach is his two-volume pedagogical album, *Les 100 de Roland Dyens*, published just a few years before his passing. This collection is a valuable pedagogical resource in contemporary guitar education, effectively merging technical awareness with musical elements. The final five works in the series are chamber music compositions aimed at young guitarists, including two duets, one trio, *O Trio Magico*, and two quartets.

A defining feature of Dyens's music is his eclectic compositional style. Influenced by his formal composition training, he seamlessly blended classical music forms with elements of jazz, Latin, and popular music—genres that had a profound impact on him. *O Trio Magico* embodies this synthesis, merging Brazilian musical traditions with the aesthetics of French chanson.

Whether composing advanced-level works or pedagogical pieces for beginners, Dyens consistently incorporated the syncopated rhythms, rich textures, and tonal uniqueness of Brazilian music. Musicologist M. Birch highlights Dyens's strong connection to South American music:

> Dyens' passion for South American music led in the early part of his career to his winning two awards which were offered in honour of the Brazilian composer, Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959). These were the Villa-Lobos Special Prize at the International Competition Citta di Alessandria in Italy, and the Grand Prix du Disque de l'Académie Charles-Cros (awarded during the celebration of the centenary of Villa-Lobos in 1987). Dyens won the latter for his CD *Heitor Villa-Lobos/Concerto Pour Guitare et Petit Orchestre*, on which Dyens' original composition *Homage to Villa-Lobos* (1987) appears. Dyens has defined several of his musical influences, one being Heitor Villa-Lobos, arguably Brazil's most important composer to date. Dyens considers him the incarnation of Brazilian music and culture, quoting Villa-Lobos as saying 'The Map of Brazil is the Harmony Treaty from which I took my musical knowledge' (Birch, 2005).

Dyens was known for his versatility and broad artistic vision, collaborating with musicians from diverse backgrounds, including jazz and Brazilian music. In a 1995 interview with *Classical Guitar Magazine*, Dyens described his natural inclination towards multiple genres:

> I feel really flexible. I love every discipline of music. Everything interests me in music. Accompanying a popular singer with my guitar—for the first time—as well as playing a suite by Bach, playing in Sweden for the Arvika Festival, one of the oldest festivals. They were celebrating their jubilee, jazz and classical guitar at the same time. Every night I played with jazz players. The Swedish school of jazz is very good. And I played in the pub every night, with jazz musicians. And in Arvika, the classical teachers told me that it had never happened before, that an invited classical guitarist had played with the jazz musicians. For me, it was normal. I never felt forced to do these things. Jekyll and Hyde! During the day, I'm playing classical—and at night, the jam sessions! OK about it. I feel very good in each situation (Cooper, 1995).

Dyens's *Les 100 de Roland Dyens* album features numerous works infused with Brazilian musical idioms, such as *Babybaiao, A Caminho do Rio, Calypsong, Nova Bossa, Snail Rumba,* and *Morse Code Samba*. Additionally, he explored the *choro* tradition in compositions such as *Si Ça c'est pas un choro!* and *Um Retrato Só* (duets), as well as *O Trio Magico* (trio).

D. Duarte, in his study on multiculturalism in 20th-century music, discusses the Brazilian elements in Dyens's works, describing *O Trio Magico* as follows:

> The subtitle of *O Trio Magico*, *Trio de Janeiro*, serves as a clever wordplay, simultaneously referencing Rio de Janeiro—the birthplace of both *choro* and Pixinguinha—and acting as a playful homage to Pixinguinha, a significant and enduring influence on Dyens's musical trajectory, and to the distinctly Brazilian *choro* idiom of the piece. This connection is particularly poignant given Rio de Janeiro's central role in the development of both the musical style and the composer's life (Duarte, 2016).

As previously mentioned, *choro* was a genre Dyens frequently explored. *O Trio Magico* exemplifies his deep affinity for Brazilian rhythms and melodies, skillfully integrating the lively and intricate characteristics of *Choro* with his unique compositional style. Given that it was included in *Les 100 de Roland Dyens*, the pedagogical nature of this piece is evident in its design and musical elements. Like many of Dyens's pedagogical works, *O Trio Magico* serves as a training ground for young guitarists, emphasizing the execution of single-line melodies on a polyphonic instrument.

In this trio, Dyens assigns distinct roles to each guitar, akin to orchestral instruments, requiring performers to apply techniques and concepts introduced earlier in *Les 100 de Roland Dyens* series. Conventional guitar education often leads young guitarists to construct melodic phrases without considering structural coherence. *O Trio Magico* addresses this issue by emphasizing the careful articulation of single-line melodies, ensuring the guitar "sings." Through intricate interplay and melodic demands, the trio helps musicians develop phrasing awareness and ensemble coordination.

Furthermore, *O Trio Magico* can be performed as a trio and in an expanded format with an ensemble accompanying the trio's soloists. There are directive explanations on the score, designated solo passages remain with the trio, while unison sections integrate the full ensemble into three (Dyens, 2012). Dyens carefully distributes musical responsibilities to the guitars and mixes the responsibilities during the structural development: the first, presents the melodic line, the second, maintains the waltz rhythm in the midrange, and the third reinforces the bass register, forming the harmonic foundation. The formal development of the piece is closely linked to the gradual expansion of orchestration—from a sparse texture to a fuller, denser sonority.

The ensemble must collectively evoke the rhythm of a European waltz and the stylistic nuances of Pixinguinha, the renowned Brazilian composer whom Dyens frequently referenced in his arrangements and homages. Simultaneously, the piece must convey the deep emotional essence of *saudade*, 'a deep emotional state of nostalgic or profound melancholic longing for an absent something or someone that one loves' (Saudade, n.d.), a quintessentially Brazilian sentiment.

1.1 Aim of the Study

This study seeks to offer an in-depth exploration of *O Trio Magico*, a significant trio composition by Roland Dyens. By analyzing its structure, rhythmic framework, and pedagogical attributes, the research aims to highlight how Dyens integrates diverse musical traditions—ranging from *choro* to European waltz—into a coherent artistic and educational work.

1. Analyze the form, melodic characteristics, and rhythmic complexity of the piece, focusing on Dyens's approach to fusing different stylistic elements.
2. To evaluate the educational aspects of the composition, particularly in training guitarists to navigate single-line melodic execution within an ensemble setting.
3. To provide interpretative recommendations for performers, helping them maintain both musical integrity and stylistic authenticity.

Through this exploration, the study aims to deepen the understanding of *O Trio Magico* within Dyens's broader oeuvre, enriching both academic discussions and practical performance insights.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This research holds significance both for academic inquiry and practical musicianship, addressing gaps in existing literature and offering concrete benefits to performers and educators:

1. **Musical and Structural Insights:** A close examination of Dyens's compositional techniques sheds light on his distinct use of rhythm, harmony, and melodic phrasing, allowing for a broader appreciation of his contribution to guitar ensemble music.
2. **Pedagogical Contributions:** Recognizing *O Trio Magico* as an essential educational tool underscores its value in modern guitar instruction. The piece demands technical dexterity, ensemble synchronization, and a nuanced stylistic approach.
3. **Enhancing Performance Practice:** By offering performance strategies and interpretative guidelines, this study supports guitarists in approaching the piece with confidence, ensuring a well-rounded and expressive rendition.

4. **Bridging the Academic Gap:** Although Dyens's solo works have been extensively studied, his chamber music remains relatively underexplored. This research fills that gap by providing a structured analysis of one of his key trio compositions.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper appreciation of *O Trio Magico*, positioning it as both a pedagogical resource and a vital work in the contemporary guitar trio repertoire.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research methods applied in the analysis of *O Trio Magico*. The approach is designed to offer a holistic view of the work's musical structure, technical challenges, and interpretative possibilities.

2.1 Analytical Framework

A multi-faceted analytical model has been employed, incorporating elements of music theory and performance practice. The analysis includes:

- **Structural Analysis:** Identifying key sections, thematic progressions, and formal design.
- **Technical Considerations:** Analyzing the guitar techniques required, including articulation, ornamentation, and textural layering to enhance performance execution.
- **Comparative Contextualization:** Contrasting *O Trio Magico* with other pieces from *Les 100 de Roland Dyens* and Dyens's earlier works to illustrate his stylistic progression and pedagogical intentions.

2.2 Research Sources

The principal sources for this study include:

- **Published Score:** The official edition of *O Trio Magico* (*Les Productions d'OZ*), serving as the main reference for structural and technical insights.
- **Composer's Statements and Interviews:** Any documented insights from Dyens regarding his artistic intentions and stylistic preferences.
- **Related Literature:** Examination of scholarly works on Dyens's compositions, Brazilian *choro*, and chamber music traditions to establish a contextual foundation.

2.3 Study Limitations

- This research relies primarily on the published score and existing recordings, as Dyens's personal annotations on this particular piece are scarce.
- The study acknowledges the interpretative flexibility inherent in *Choro* and Dyens's compositions, recognizing that variations in performance are an essential part of their expressive depth.

By adopting this comprehensive methodological approach, this study aims to provide a well-rounded analysis of *O Trio Magico*, benefiting both scholarly research and practical performance applications.

3. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS
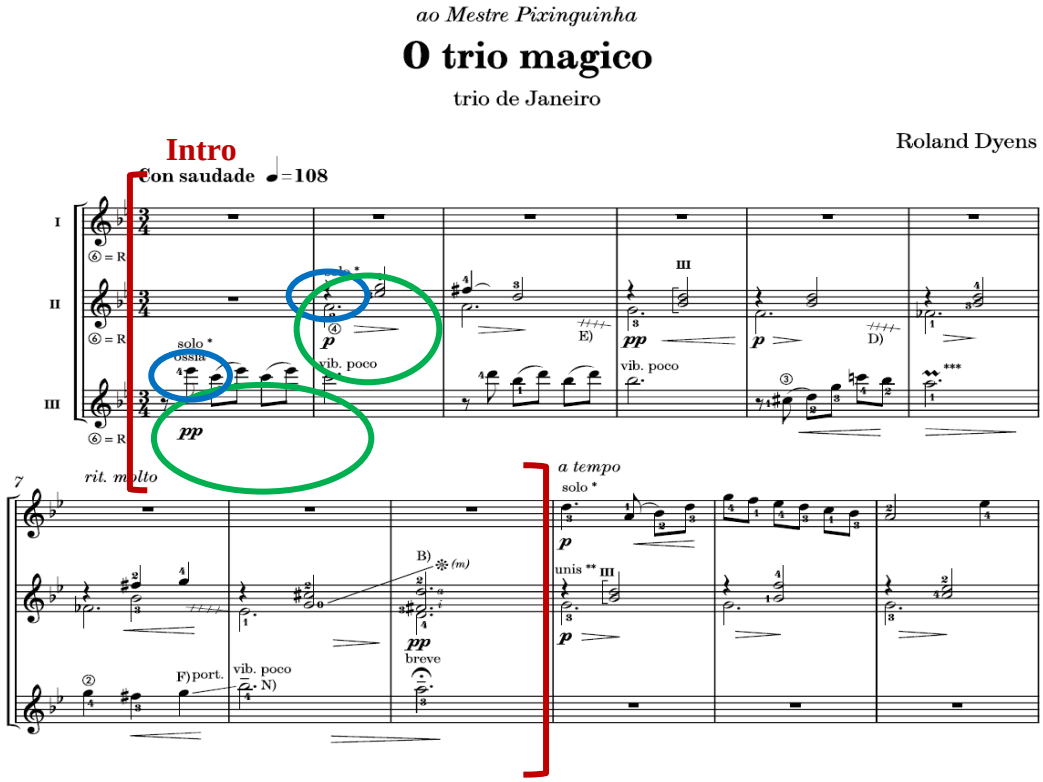
As one of Dyens's rare works for three guitars, O Trio Magico can be performed in two distinct formats: either as a standalone trio or with the trio accompanied by a guitar ensemble. In the latter arrangement, solo passages marked in the score are to be performed exclusively by designated trio members, while sections marked as unison are played collectively by both the trio and the accompanying ensemble. A key performance consideration is that ornaments indicated in the score should be omitted when not played as solos. This dual configuration provides interpretative flexibility while preserving Dyens's compositional vision and intended structural integrity.

Table 1. The structural plan of O Trio Magico

Intro	A	A1	A2	A3	B	B1	A4	A5
1-9	a -10-13	a2 -25-33	a3 -41-45	a5 -57-65	d -73-76	d2 -89-92	a6 -113-116	a8 -128-136
	b -14-17	c -34-40	b1 -46-49	c1 -66-72	d1 -77-80	d3 -93-96	b2 -117-120	c2 -137-144
	a1 -18-24		a4 -50-56		e -81-88	intro - 97-112	a7 -121-127	c3 -145-152
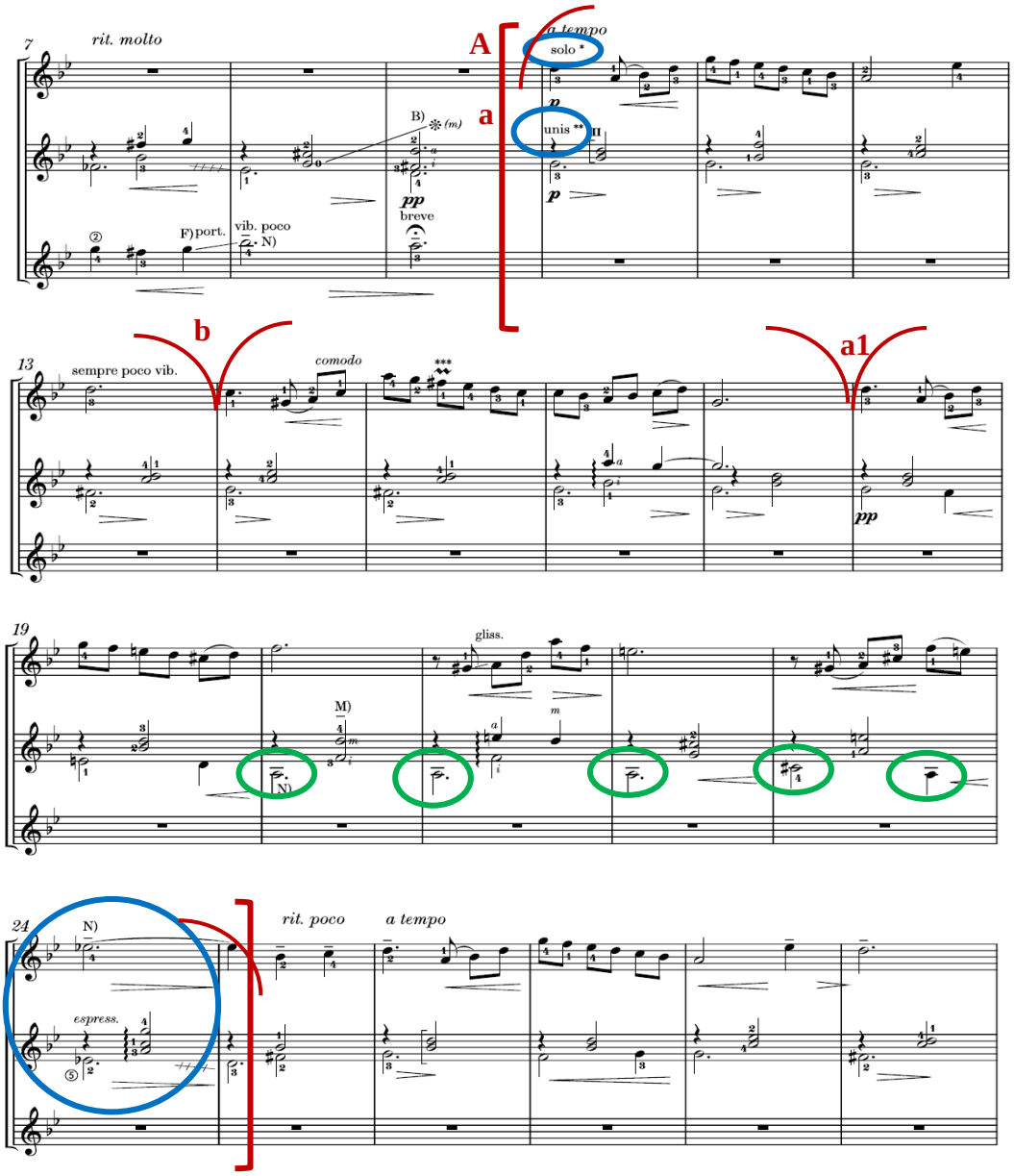
The composition opens with the concept of saudade, a term deeply embedded in Portuguese and Galician culture, representing a profound emotional state that extends beyond mere nostalgia. Saudade conveys a melancholic undertone and a bittersweet awareness of absence or loss, holding significant cultural importance in Lusophone societies. In O Trio Magico, Dyens employs this sentiment as a foundational theme, shaping the emotional landscape of the piece. The introductory melody exemplifies Dyens's signature compositional style, characterized by atmospheric openings reminiscent of French music. This piece, in particular, shares similarities with melodic structures found in the French chanson tradition, showcasing Dyens's ability to seamlessly blend diverse musical influences. Beavers (2006) observes that Dyens frequently employs ostinato patterns to create such atmospheres, allowing melodies to emerge fluidly from the accompaniment. This technique, combined with Dyens's keen sensitivity to timbre – a "painterly" approach learned from his father, as he explains – links his work to the French chansons tradition while simultaneously forging his unique musical voice.

Dyens sets the atmosphere with a faint, melodic motif played by Guitar 3, accompanied by Guitar 2 in a waltz rhythm where the bass part is notably absent. The piece carries the spirit of Saudade, evoking a feeling of being swept away by the wind, emerging from a void. The idea of solo entrances of the guitars in *pianissimo* reinforces this perspective.
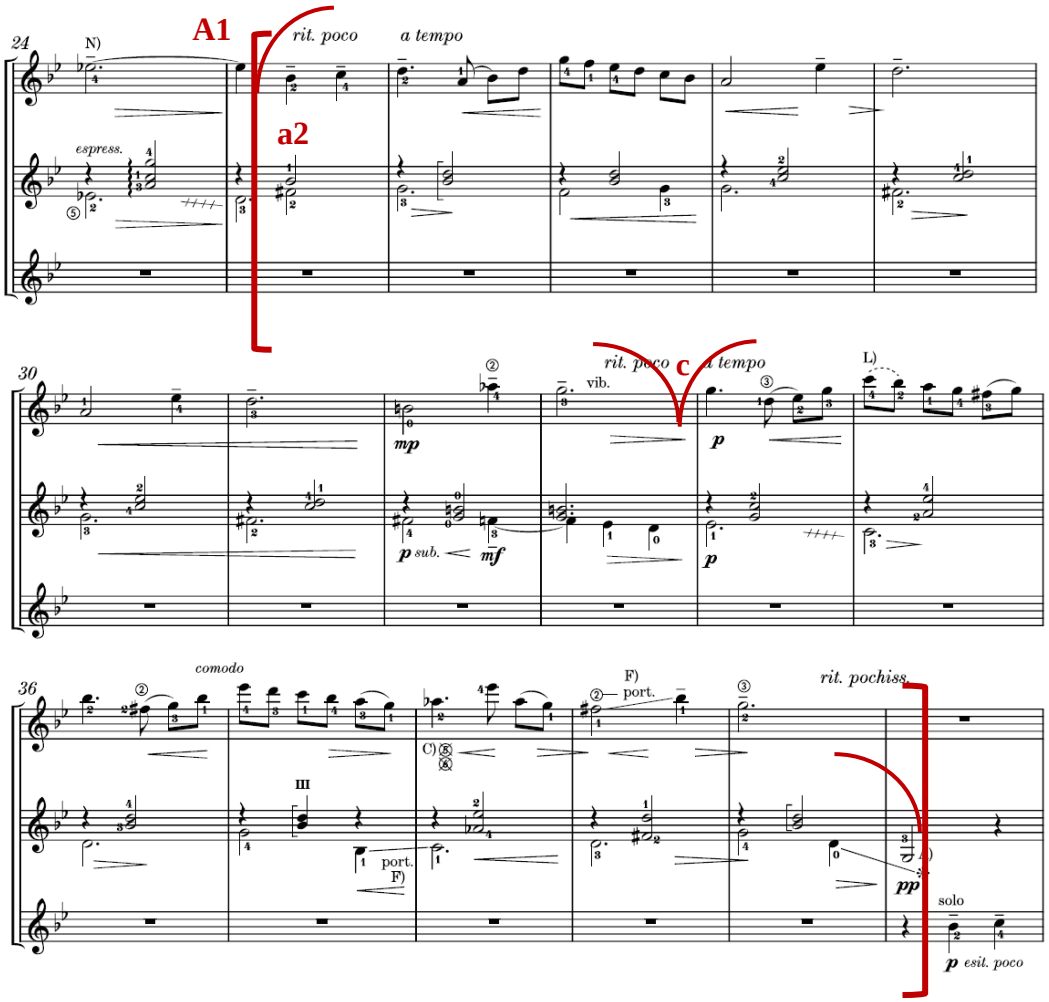


Picture 1. Roland Dyens *O trio magico* measures 1 to 9

The A section starts in measure 10. It introduces the thematic material as a waltz melody, layered over the waltz rhythmic foundation previously seen in the introduction. Guitar 1 is asked to play solo, and Guitar 2 is given as a unison part. Dyens explicitly instructs performers to carefully follow the nuances indicated in the score, as excessive volume or an accelerated tempo would disrupt the intended Pixinguinha style (Dyens, 2012). The thematic material is divided into three subsections—a, b, and a1— 4+4+7 measures, each contributing to the structural development of the piece. a1 subsection is the extended version of a subsection and it expands the orchestral space bu providing accompaniment material in the bass register.
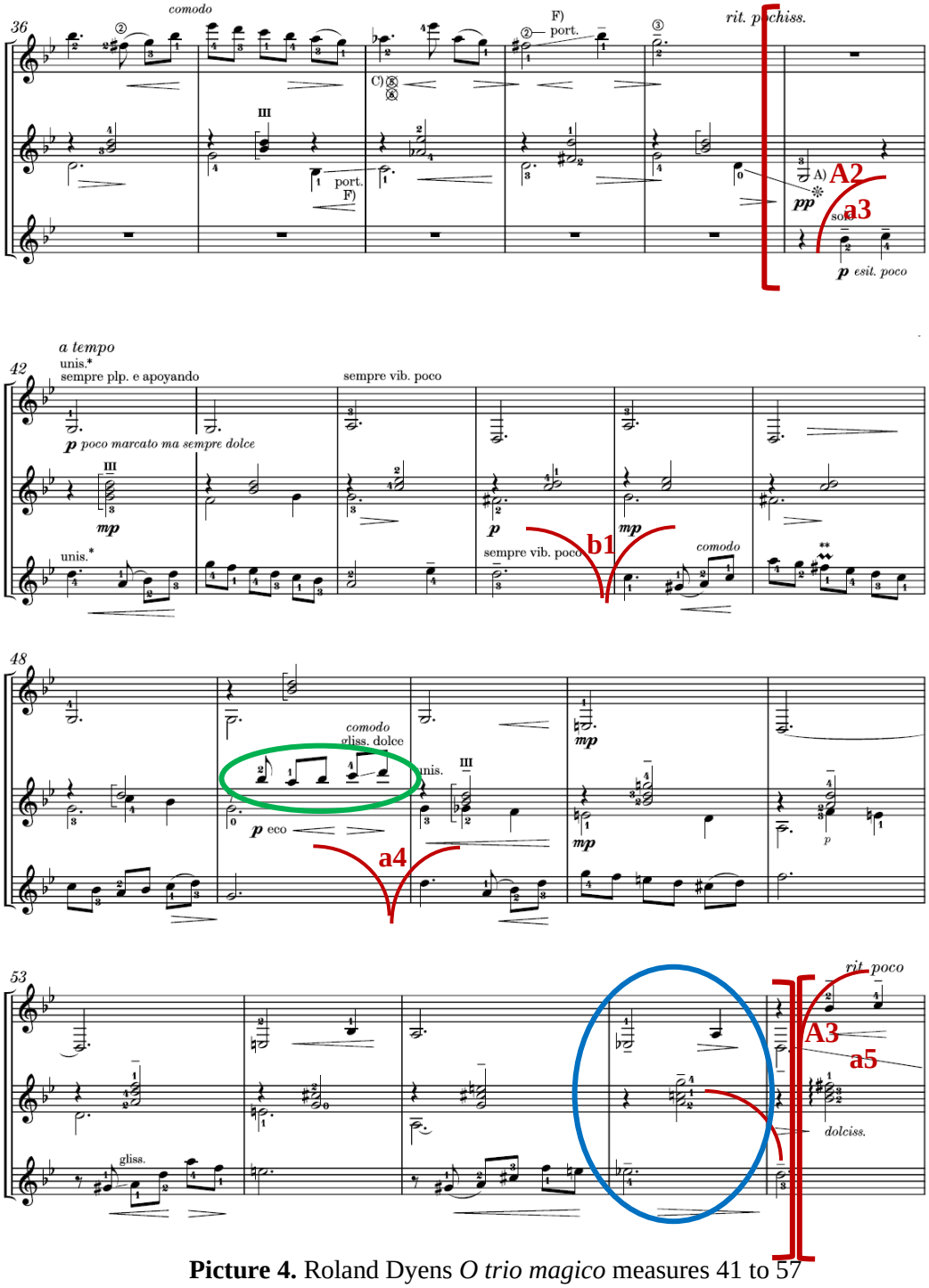


Picture 2. Roland Dyens *O trio magico* measures 10 to 25

Section A1 develops the thematic material introduced in subsection a by expanding melodic line's size to double, and transitioning to subsection c at measure 34. While derived from the same material as Section A, Section A1 features distinct phrase structures, 8+8 meuasures, adding variety to the thematic development.
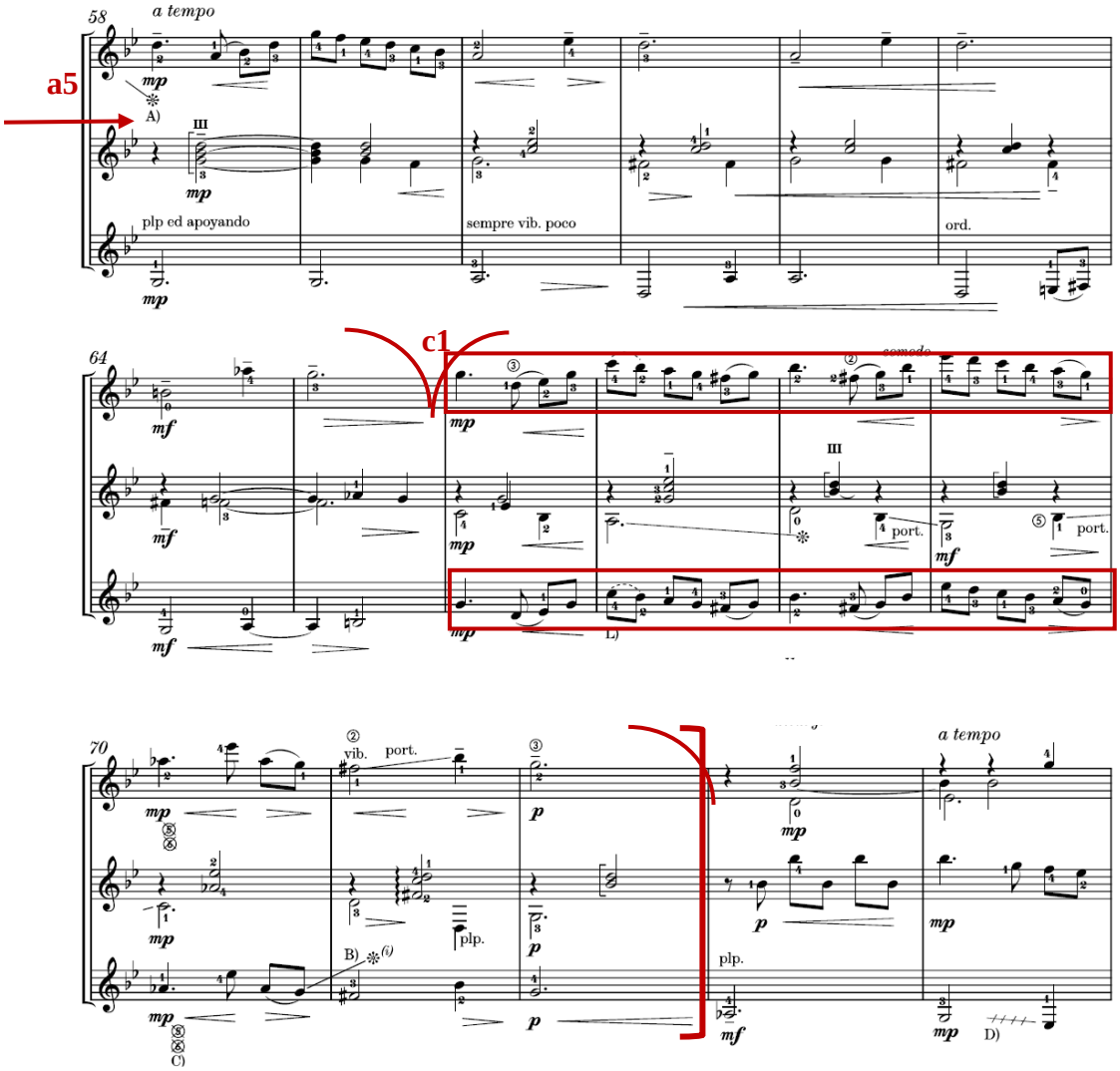


Picture 3. Roland Dyens *O trio magico* measures 25 to 41

Section A2 marks the first instance outside the introduction where the Guitar 3 joins the solo melody, enriching the orchestration. In this section, the Guitar 1 assumes the bass role, while the Guitar 2 maintains the waltz accompaniment. A notable compositional technique emerges at measure 49, where the Guitar 2 introduces a counter-melody to accompany the solo line. This motif is derived from the intro motif as both rhythmically and melodically. Harmonically, Dyens employs the second inversion of the second-degree chord as a pre-dominant at measures 24 and 56, facilitating II-V-I progression (in pictures 2 and 5). This choice, along with the use of the Neapolitan sixth chord in Sections A1 and A3, contributes to the emotional depth of the piece, evoking the complex yearning inherent in saudade.
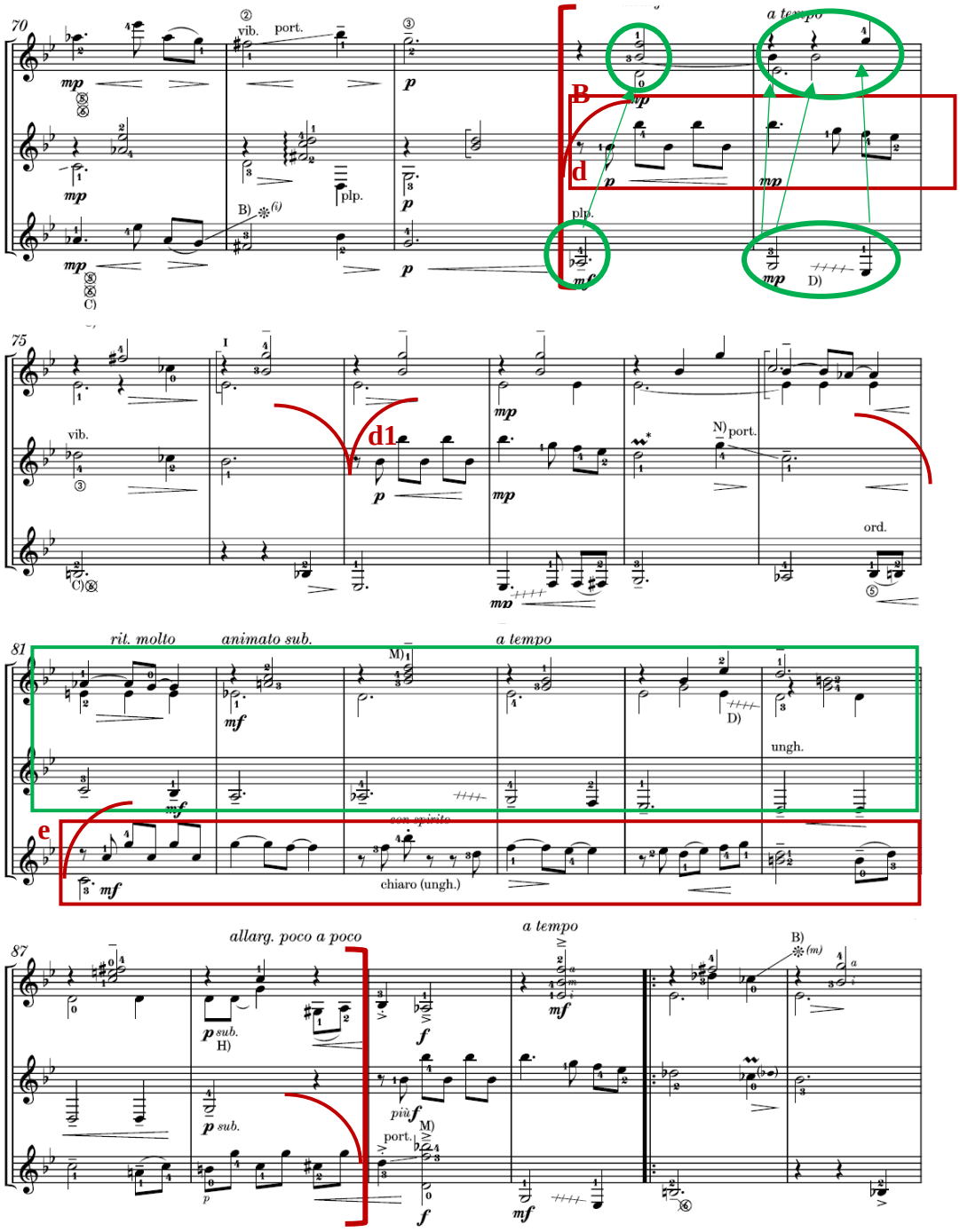


Picture 4. Roland Dyens *O trio magico* measures 41 to 57

Section A3 revisits the thematic material of Section A1 but distinguishes itself through expanded orchestration. In c1 subsection Guitar 1 and Guitar 3 execute the melodic line with octave unisons. While the phrase and melodic structures remain similar, the varied instrumentation creates a fresh interpretation of the material and leads to Section B.
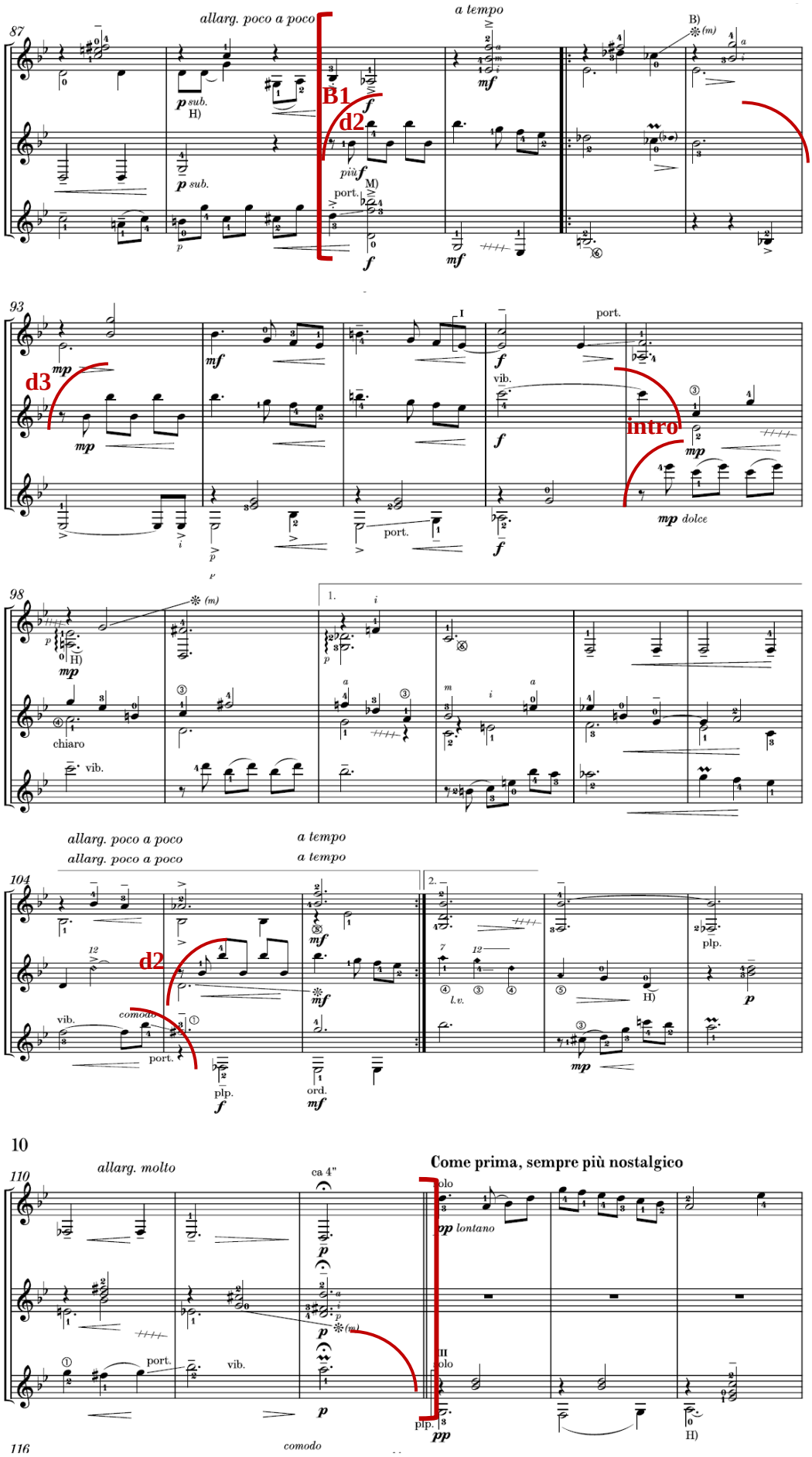


Picture 5. Roland Dyens *O trio magico* measures 57 to 72

In Section B a new material is introduced for the Guitar 2, with melodic content reminiscent of the piece's introduction. The bass line becomes more prominent, providing a stronger harmonic foundation with the nuances. Dyens adopts a balanced approach to melodic and accompaniment distribution, ensuring that all three guitars share an equal role in shaping the musical narrative. In this manner, Guitar 1 and Guitar 3 share the accompaniment material in d and d1 subsections. In e subsection, the roles of the guitars are exchanged between Guitar 2 and Guitar 3.
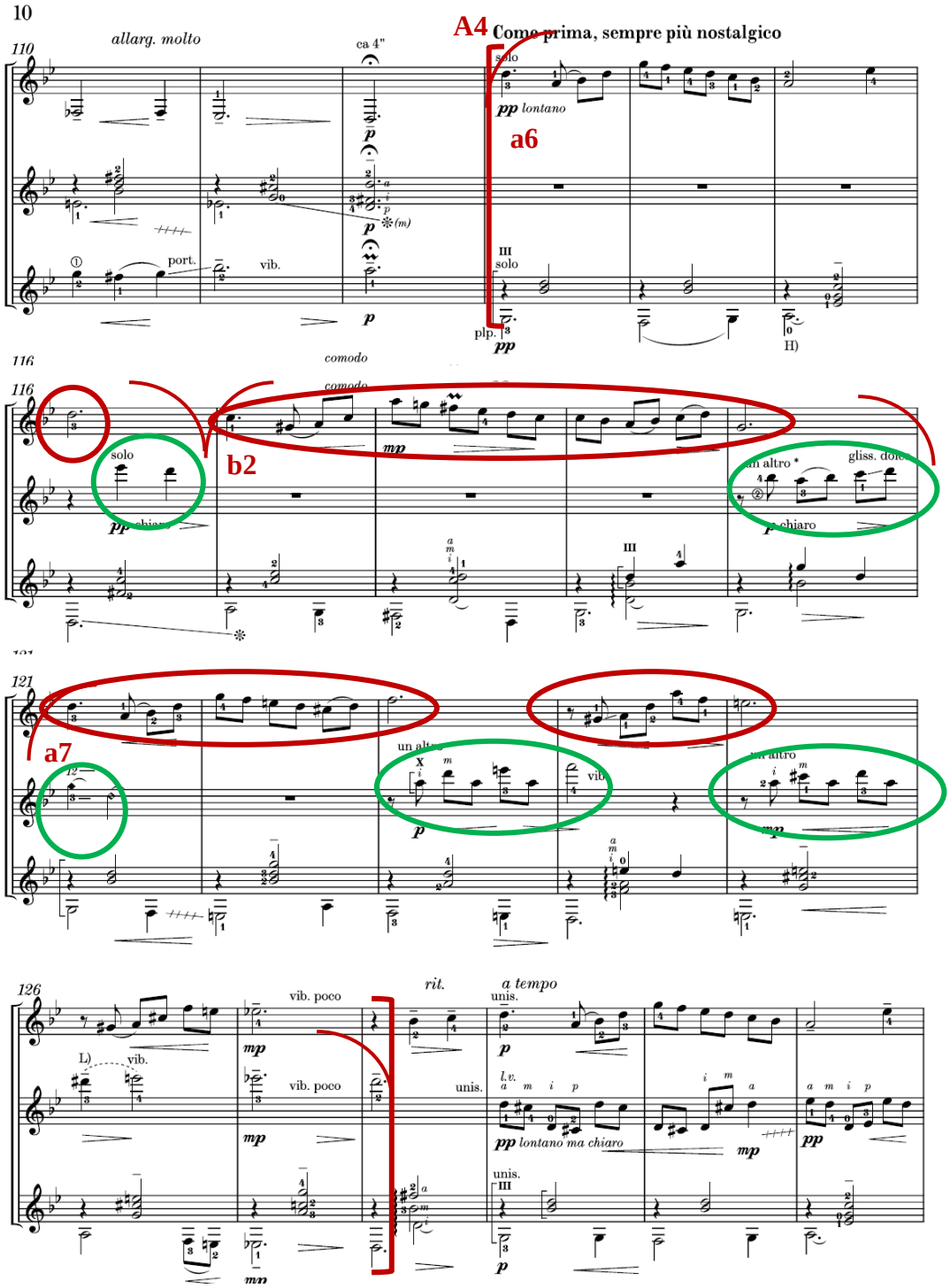


Picture 6. Roland Dyens *O trio magico* measures 73 to 88

The section B1 begins with subsection d2, which recalls the introduction, followed by a near-identical repetition of the introduction with its expanded orchestral pattern at measure 97. Functioning similarly to a refrain in a French *chanson*, this passage reinforces the cyclical nature of the composition. Dyens skillfully blends *chanson* traditions with the expressive intensity of Brazilian *saudade*, creating a compelling fusion of styles. The repletion of this section, the introductory sub-section fades away by slowing down in its second iteration.
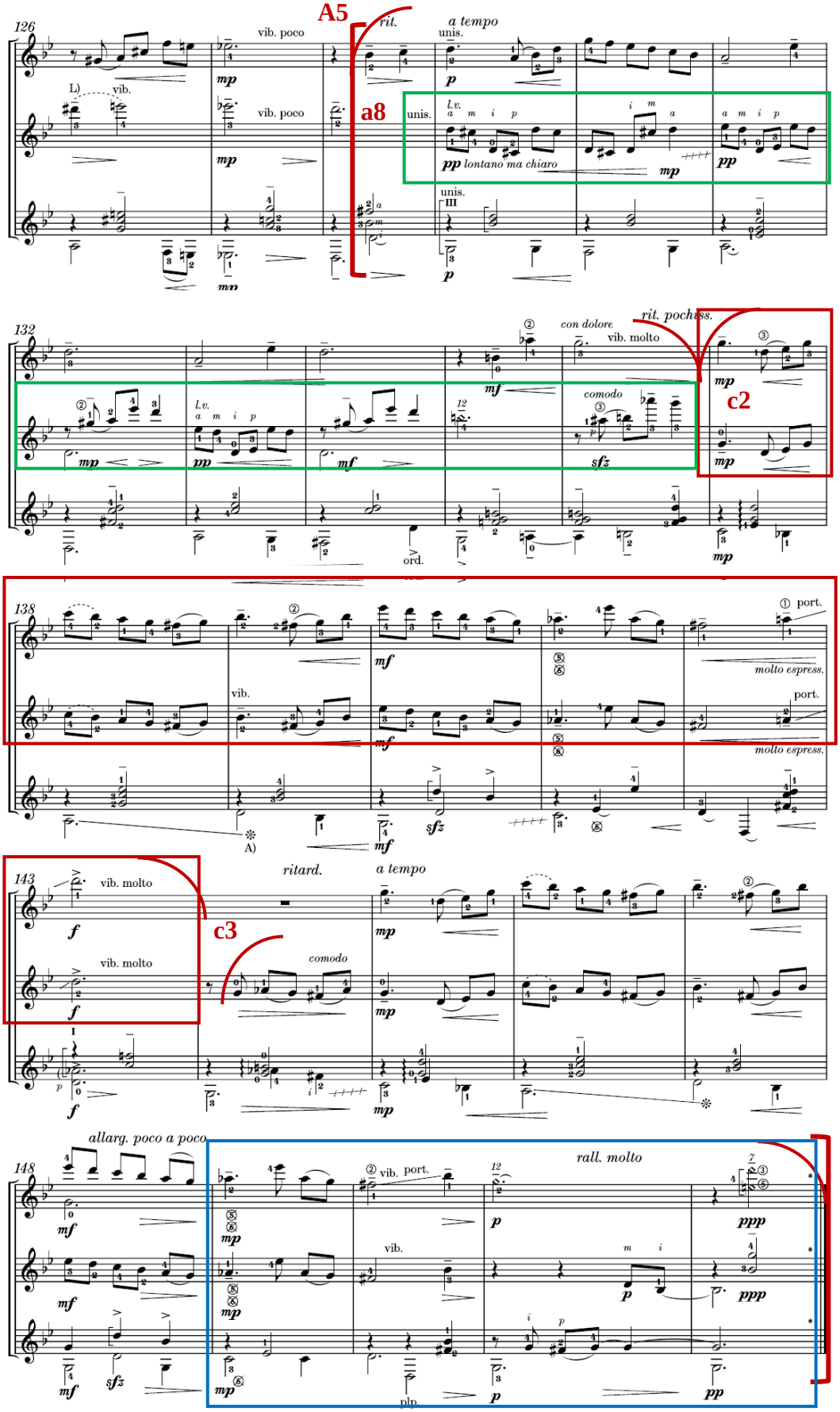


Picture 7. Roland Dyens *O trio magico* measures 89 to 112

With the *come prima* indication, Section A4 signals a return to earlier thematic material. However, the orchestration continues to evolve, as the Guitar 2 introduces counter-melodies complementing the first guitar's melodic line, while the Guitar 3 maintains the bass role. At measure 127, the second inversion of the second-degree chord reappears, heightening harmonic tension.



Picture 8. Roland Dyens *O trio magico* measures 113 to 128

In Section A5, Dyens incorporates a textural effect through repeated notes with octave leaps on D-C# and E-D, enriching the piece's timbral landscape. In the c2 subsection, the melodic line is divided between Guitar 1 and Guitar 2 in octave unisons, with increasing dynamic nuance leading to the final climax at measure 143. The composition concludes with a cadence featuring the Neapolitan sixth chord, reinforcing the harmonic language established in Sections A1 and A3, and bringing the work to a thematically cohesive and emotionally resonant resolution.



Picture 9. Roland Dyens *O trio magico* measures 128 to 152

5. DISCUSSION

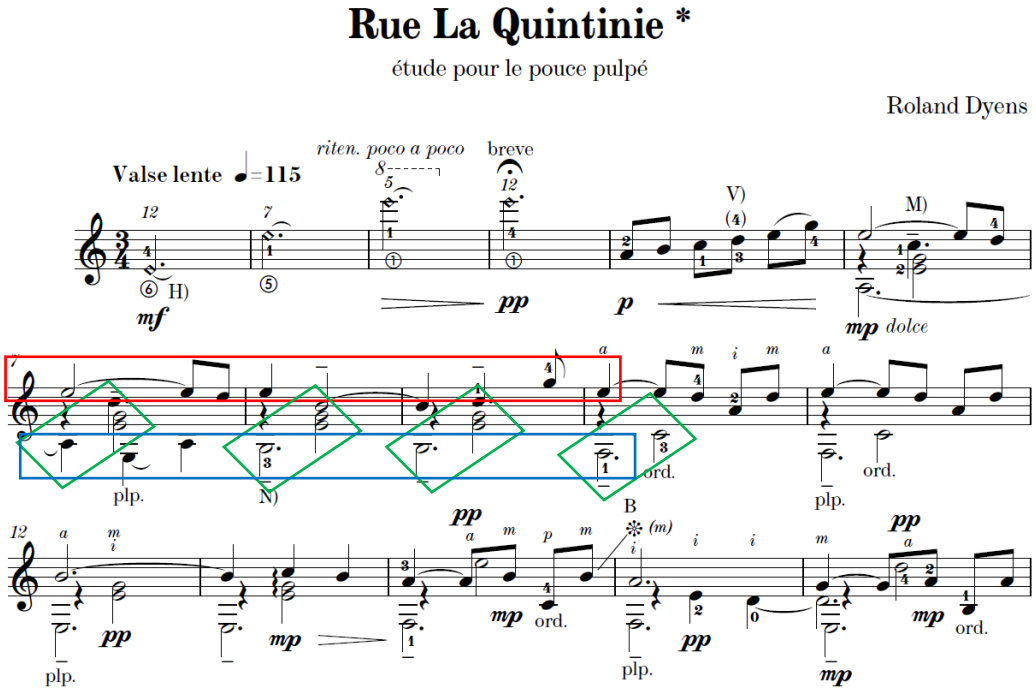
The analysis of Roland Dyens's O Trio Magico highlights his remarkable ability to integrate diverse musical styles into a cohesive and pedagogically valuable composition. The piece exemplifies his compositional approach, blending the rhythmic vitality of Brazilian *choro*, the emotive depth of *saudade*, and the structural clarity of the European *waltz*. Beyond its technical demands, the work challenges guitarists to develop ensemble sensitivity, emphasizing single-line melodic phrasing and intricate interplay between the three guitars.

A defining characteristic of O Trio Magico is Dyens's orchestration, which assigns distinct roles to each guitar while maintaining seamless musical continuity. His use of counterpoint and rhythmic layering fosters an interactive dialogue between the instruments, reinforcing the essence of chamber music as a collaborative process. Dyens's incorporation of choro idioms also introduces an improvisatory quality, requiring performers to balance rhythmic precision with expressive flexibility.

The pedagogical significance of O Trio Magico is equally noteworthy. The trio format provides an ideal platform for guitarists to refine their ensemble coordination while exploring melodic articulation and harmonic textures. Dyens effectively simulates the dynamic qualities of a larger ensemble within a compact trio setting by employing syncopation, harmonic suspensions, and interlocking phrases.

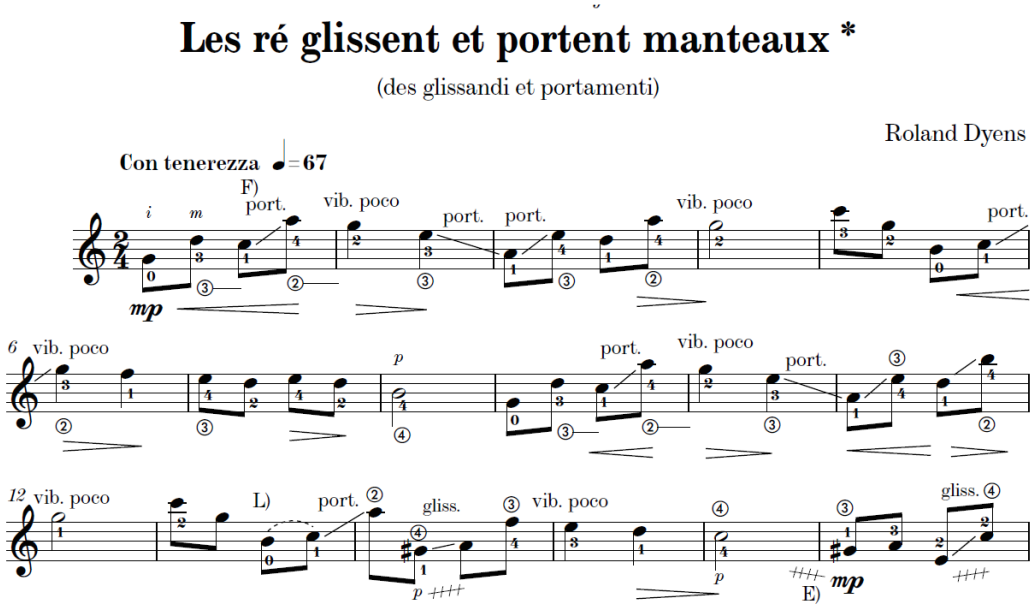
Another essential aspect of O Trio Magico is its harmonic language, which Dyens manipulates to evoke shifting moods throughout the piece. His use of modal inflections, secondary dominants, and Neapolitan chords contributes to harmonic tension, enhancing the work's expressive depth. Furthermore, his signature atmospheric writing, reminiscent of chanson française, underscores his ability to create evocative musical landscapes that transcend stylistic boundaries.

Like Dyens's solo works, particularly those from Les 100 de Roland Dyens, O Trio Magico demands heightened awareness of balance and textural clarity among performers. The interplay between melody and accompaniment requires a nuanced approach, similar to that found in "No. 34 Rue La Quintinie," where three distinct musical elements are interwoven. In O Trio Magico, as in "No. 34 Rue La Quintinie," Dyens employs the poulpe technique in the bass, producing a sonorous amplitude akin to that of a piano's sustain pedal (Dyens, 2012).



Picture 10. Roland Dyens *Rue La Quintinie* measures 1 to 16

A similar approach is evident in *No. 10 Les réglissent et portent manteaux*, where single-line melodies are articulated with exceptional clarity while maintaining melodic unity—an essential skill for advanced guitarists.



Picture 11. Roland Dyens *Les ré glissent et portent manteaux* measures 1 to 16

By examining *O Trio Magico*, this study underscores Dyens's legacy as both a composer and educator. His synthesis of diverse musical influences, coupled with a deep understanding of the guitar's expressive potential, results in a work that is both technically demanding and artistically compelling. This discussion highlights the significance of *O Trio Magico* within the guitar repertoire, advocating for its continued exploration in both performance and pedagogical contexts.

6. CONCLUSION

Roland Dyens's *O Trio Magico* stands as a testament to his innovative approach to guitar composition and pedagogy. By intertwining the rhythmic vitality of *choro*, the melancholic expressiveness of *saudade*, and the structural clarity of European waltz, Dyens creates a piece that is both intellectually engaging and emotionally compelling. The trio format allows for a rich exploration of ensemble playing, melodic phrasing, and harmonic interaction, reinforcing its pedagogical and artistic value.

Beyond its technical demands, *O Trio Magico* highlights Dyens's ability to merge improvisatory elements with structured compositional techniques. His use of rhythmic layering, textural variation, and expressive phrasing invites performers to engage deeply with the music, fostering both technical refinement and interpretative depth. Additionally, Dyens's homage to Pixinguinha within the piece serves as a bridge between classical guitar traditions and Brazilian popular music, showcasing his unique ability to synthesize cultural influences.

This study affirms *O Trio Magico* as a valuable addition to the guitar ensemble repertoire, offering insights into Dyens's compositional style while providing guitarists with an enriching pedagogical experience. The piece challenges performers to cultivate balance, precision, and expressiveness, making it a crucial work for those seeking to refine their ensemble skills. As an enduring part of Dyens's legacy, *O Trio Magico* continues to inspire musicians, bridging historical traditions with contemporary artistic expression.

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