

# Ricardo Tacuchian's compositional periods

Savio Santoro

Tacuchian's output can be divided into three periods or styles, although there is not a precise date that marks the passage from one style to the other. These periods are: nationalist/neoclassical (1960s), avant-garde/experimentalist (1970s), and postmodernist (1980s to the present).

Two characteristic works from his first period are his two *Piano Sonatas*, both composed in 1966.<sup>1</sup> He based these pieces on sonata form principles, but with extreme freedom. They were written in a single movement, aiming to synthesize the three or four movements of the classical sonata. Tacuchian says that "they are neoclassical pieces, but with something Brazilian in them."<sup>2</sup> As revealed by the composer, these pieces also display a strong influence of Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Bartók (we can note his emphasis on the percussive feature of the piano, for example): "When you are young, you are very open to being influenced by someone. I was still making discoveries, I did not have my personality defined yet."<sup>3</sup>

The beginning of the *First Sonata* is very rhythmic and percussive. One observes that from mm. 7-10 a displaced-accent pattern very common in Brazilian nationalist pieces is presented (see Ex. 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Both *Sonatas* are recorded on the CD *Tacuchian: música para piano* (ABM Digital, Avenida Paulista et al., various performers, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> TACUCHIAN, 2005. All translations into English are mine unless otherwise noted. ["Quando você é jovem, você está muito aberto a ser influenciado por alguém. Eu ainda estava fazendo descobertas, eu ainda não tinha minha personalidade definida."]

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

**Ex. 1. First Piano Sonata, mm. 1-10**

Allegro Vivace

*mf*

8va

Following this very rhythmic environment, Tacuchian concludes the first section of the piece with a very melodic and Brazilian *seresta*<sup>4</sup> from m. 95 b. 2-m.110 (see Ex. 2).

**Ex. 2. First Piano Sonata, mm. 95-103**

m. 95 Allegro Moderato

*ff* *pp*

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<sup>4</sup>The closest translation for *seresta* in English is serenade.

The *Second Sonata* also displays a percussive character at the beginning of the piece with a similar displaced-accent pattern in piano's right hand (see Ex. 3).

**Ex. 3. Second Piano Sonata, mm. 1-8**



Although the composer states that “there are no folkloric references”<sup>5</sup> in this work, the composer constructs the fugato central section (m. 219 b. 2-m.308) utilizing a subject with a Brazilian northeastern character in mixolydian mode (see Ex. 4).

**Ex. 4. Subject of the Second Piano Sonata’s fugato section (m. 219 b. 2-m. 226)**



*Imagem Carioca* (Image of Rio de Janeiro), originally for string orchestra, represents another major piece of the first period and to this day is one of his most performed pieces. It was premiered at the first *Festival de Novíssimos*. Tacuchian believes he composed it in 1962-63. When he heard its first performance, he noticed that the piece had symphonic potential, so he then transcribed it for symphony orchestra (1967). He states: “The

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<sup>5</sup> Commentary by Ricardo Tacuchian in the liner booklet of the CD *Tacuchian: música para piano* (original quotation in English).

version that I support is the symphonic one. I do not even have the string version in my catalogue.”<sup>6</sup>

The piece projects a popular character including a symphonic samba, and was naturally influenced by Mário de Andrade’s emphasis on the nationalistic posture of the arts. A very interesting aspect is that the piece uses a large percussion section, with typical Brazilian instruments, such as *afoxê*, *ganzá*, and *reco-reco*. He added instruments of the big samba parades of the Brazilian carnival into his orchestra.<sup>7</sup>

The *Cantata dos Mortos* represents an exception in his nationalist/neoclassical period. It can be considered as an experimental attempt, but not radical. The treatment of the chorus departs from the current practice of that time in Brazil, with groans, screams, and spoken parts.

This piece also stands out because of its political references. The text, written by the poet Vinícius de Moraes (1913-1980), mentions concentration camps and could have been interpreted as a provocation to the generals of the dictatorship in Brazil. With the support of José Siqueira, the *Cantata* was scheduled to be premiered at Sala Cecília Meireles, one of the most important concert halls of Rio de Janeiro, during a time when Tacuchian was still an unknown composer. But when Ayres de Andrade (the artistic director of the venue) read the text, he said the work could not be produced: “With this government, there is no way the *Cantata* can be performed.”<sup>8</sup> Tacuchian laments: “I was so frustrated. It would have been my first big and important work to be presented in a major hall of Rio de Janeiro.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> TACUCHIAN, 2005. [“A versão que eu considero é a sinfônica. Nem tenho mais a versão para cordas no meu catálogo”]

<sup>7</sup> In 1987 he made a transcription of *Imagem Carioca* for four guitars, which was released on the CD *Imagem Carioca: Obras para Violão* (ABM Digital, *Lúdica I et al.*, various performers, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> TACUCHIAN, 2005. [“A platéia estava totalmente lotada, com pessoas sentadas no palco...Eu nunca tinha tido uma resposta tão entusiástica de um público. De certa maneira, a música exhibe o sentimento de revolta e liberdade da juventude. Reconheço que o sucesso da obra teve maiores razões políticas do que musicais...O público não parava de aplaudir e o regente decidiu apresentá-la na noite seguinte...Estas apresentações foram um dos momentos mais felizes e gloriosos da minha juventude como compositor. Foi o meu primeiro grande sucesso!”]

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

The *Cantata* was finally premiered thirteen years later in 1978, at the *Festival de Inverno de Ouro Preto* (Winter Festival of Ouro Preto), which brought together a large number of students and demonstrated a kind of political effervescence and eagerness for freedom. During the interview, Tacuchian exalts:

The audience was totally full, with people seated on the stage...I have never had such an enthusiastic response from the audience. In a way, it exhibits the feeling of revolt and freedom of the youth. I recognize that the success of the piece had more political than musical reasons... The audience did not stop clapping, and the conductor decided to perform it again on the following night...These performances were one of the happiest and most glorious moments of my career as a young composer. It was my first great success!<sup>10</sup>

Finally, one year later, Tacuchian was able to present the piece at Sala Cecília Meireles with himself conducting.

When the composer decided to abandon his nationalist/neoclassical style and turn to the avant-garde, he sought out the great Brazilian composer Claudio Santoro (1919-1989) during the late 1960s.<sup>11</sup> But even before he met Santoro, he already used contemporary devices, for example in the *Cantata dos Mortos* and the serialism in his *Wind Quintet* (1969). Referring to the serialism in his *Wind Quintet*, he mentions: "I did it by myself, in my own head, I needed an experienced master who could make comments, criticize, and make suggestions."<sup>12</sup>

The avant-garde in Brazil was very strong in its quest for a total break with tradition, seeking new sonorities, new structural forms, exploration of colors, timbres, and elements of indeterminacy. In fact, any object that could produce sound was considered valid to use. An example of this extremism is the piece *O Objeto Musical-Homenagem a Marcel Duchamp* (The Musical Object-Homage to Marcel Duchamp, 1972) by Gilberto Mendes (b. 1922) for fan and electric shaver, with theatrical play.

In Tacuchian's case, he had a solid traditional musical background, and while he wanted to free himself of that, he always unconsciously maintained some elements of tradition in his avant-garde music, even though very minimal. In the middle of the sonorous mass, rhythmic freedom, or

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Santoro had just been expelled from the Universidade de Brasília by the dictatorship. He was unemployed in Rio de Janeiro so he began teaching privately.

<sup>12</sup> TACUCHIAN, 2005. [Eu fiz por mim mesmo, por minha própria cabeça, eu precisava de um mestre que pudesse fazer comentários, críticas e sugestões.]"

uproar, suddenly a pentatonic melody, a square rhythm, or a modal scale could appear. The composer states: “I always wanted to give the listener a point of reference that the majority of the composers of that epoch did not provide.”<sup>13</sup> As example, we can cite a square rhythm and a cadential tonal moment in m. 29 of *Estruturas Divergentes* for flute, oboe, and piano (Divergent Structures, 1977).<sup>14</sup> In fact, his music was not considered very avant-garde by some musicologists, and he could even be defined as a conservative during the 1970s.

Asked if he also felt the incessant, obsessive search for the new, he responds:

I had to search very hard for the new symbol. Today I make a critical analysis of the epoch. In reality, the new symbols were compromised with elements of the tradition. During that time, I thought it was something entirely new, but it was not as new as that. I have never embraced the creed that the only value of an art work was the novelty. As an artist, evidently I wanted to be a creator. To create means making something new... But absolute novelty does not exist. This was an illusion of that time. There was something calling in my consciousness that humanity evolves as a spiral... it is changing but at the same time it is going back to the same place. I did not believe that only novelty could guarantee quality. It needed something more and this ‘something more’ you do not achieve spontaneously. It comes by hard work, talent, merit, and studies. Some avant-garde composers thought that creativity would be enough... They made something that caused a deep impact, but unsubstantial. At the second performance it did not have such importance.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* [“Eu sempre quis dar ao ouvinte um ponto de referência que a maioria dos compositores desta época não providenciavam.”]

<sup>14</sup> Measures 24-34 of *Estruturas Divergentes* are shown in Fig. 3.

<sup>15</sup> TACUCHIAN, 2005. [“Eu tive que procurar duramente pelo signo novo. Hoje, eu faço uma análise crítica da época. Na realidade, os novos signos estavam comprometidos com os elementos da tradição. Durante este período, eu achei que era algo inteiramente novo, mas não era tão novo assim. I nunca abracei o credo de que o único valor de uma obra de arte era a novidade. Como um artista, evidentemente eu queria ser um criador. Criar significa fazer algo novo... Mas a novidade absoluta não existe. Isto foi uma ilusão daquela época. Havia algo clamando na minha consciência que a humanidade se desenvolve como uma espiral... ela está mudando mas ao mesmo tempo retorna ao mesmo lugar. Eu não acreditava que somente a novidade poderia garantir qualidade. Era necessário algo mais e esse ‘algo mais’ você não alcança espontaneamente. Ele vem através de um árduo trabalho, talento, mérito e estudos. Alguns compositores vanguardistas achavam que a criatividade seria o bastante... Faziam alguma coisa que causava um grande impacto, porém sem substância. Na segunda apresentação, já não havia tanta importância.”]

Tacuchian also never embraced the avant-garde music that required a verbal and/or oral discourse in order for the public to understand it. For many composers of that time, sometimes the explanation of a piece was more important than the resulted sound of the work. The most important aspect was the idea itself, or the concept, therefore the sonorous result did not interest, as it was of secondary importance. Since he was not a radical avant-gardist, Tacuchian thought that the work had to be able to stand on its own merit. Although his avant-garde music had a conceptual dimension and depended to a certain degree on previous explanation, the final musical result is comprehensible by the listener even without the verbal/oral texts. He mentions: “The most important [thing] was to hear the work, understand it, regardless of any explanation.”<sup>16</sup>

At a time when the audience participated in the musical compositions, “happenings” were very common in Brazil, especially in its southeastern part. One of Tacuchian’s most famous “happenings” is *Libertas quae sera tamen* for percussion, flutes, cello and audience (1978). The audience interventions were controlled and rehearsed some minutes by the conductor before the piece started. These interventions are sentences such as the recitation of the title of the piece and some noises, such as the swing of key rings.

At a certain time, after such “excessive innovations” in the Brazilian music of the 1970s, the audience was abandoning the concert hall and avant-garde concerts were performed to closed groups: the composer presented his piece to other composers. Instead, Tacuchian always had the public in mind first:

You do not make music for composers; you make music for the audience... But in the 1970s, some composers went too far with the experimentalism and started to frighten away the public.<sup>17</sup>

Tacuchian understood then that this radical avant-garde did not interest him. He wanted to create an impact, to dare, to risk, to experiment with new procedures, but just to a certain degree.

The major pieces of his avant-garde period are those of his series *Estruturas* (Structures), composed during the 1970s, written for various (and some very unusual) instrumentations. The listener finds nothing here

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* [“O mais importante era escutar a música, entendê-la, independente de qualquer explicação.”]

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* [“Você não faz música para compositores; você faz música para o público...No entanto, na década de 70, muitos compositores foram muito longe com o experimentalismo e começaram a assustar o público.”]

related to the classical forms he used in the 1960s. In his notes of the CD recording of *Estruturas*, he mentions:

At the same time we see the signs of modern music of this period, such as cluster-tones, atonality, indeterminacy, experimentation with new ways of writing as well as new sounds on conventional instruments, the structure of the works is preserved in consistent and logical fashion. And always with emotion.<sup>18</sup>

Tacuchian used elements of indeterminacy in all *Estruturas*, but in a very controlled way: “I have never used the aleatory device with a high degree of freedom.”<sup>19</sup> The piece where indeterminacy is most prominent is *Estruturas Simbólicas* for clarinet (Bb), trumpet (Bb), piano, viola, and percussion (Symbolic Structures, 1973), premiered in 1974 by the *Ars Contemporanea* with the composer conducting. It was also performed in 1982 at Sala Cecília Meireles with John Neschling conducting, and in Los Angeles in 1988, again with the composer as conductor.

This piece is divided into four very short movements, or “structural groups” as indicated by the composer, and a coda. Each “structural group” is comprised of four very brief parts (the composer designates them as “structures”), each one written in a large rectangle, but only three are written. The fourth is a mixture of the previous “structures” with each instrument playing a different one.<sup>20</sup> In the performance notes on the score, Tacuchian explains:

This fourth structure of each structural group should never last more than thirty seconds, being possible to be interrupted even without the overall performance of the structure. The cut of the fourth structure, needless to say, will be given by either the conductor or the ensemble’s leader.<sup>21</sup>

With only the viola giving what would be expected, “the result for the composer is unpredictable,”<sup>22</sup> he mentions. Figs. 1 and 2 present Tacuchian’s performance notes of *Estruturas Simbólicas* and its “fourth structural

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<sup>18</sup> Commentary by Ricardo Tacuchian in the liner booklet of the CD *Estruturas* (Rioarte Digital, *Estruturas Simbólicas* et al., various performers, 1999. Original quotation in English).

<sup>19</sup>TACUCHIAN, 2005. [“Eu nunca usei a aleatoriedade num alto grau de liberdade.”]

<sup>20</sup> With the exception of the viola, they are assigned by the composer in the performance notes.

<sup>21</sup> Performance notes of *Estruturas Simbólicas*, 1973 (original quotation in English).

<sup>22</sup>TACUCHIAN, 2005. [“O resultado para o compositor era imprvisível.”]



group,” where indeterminacy is employed the most (observe that the piano plays only on the strings).

RICARDO TACUCHIAN

# ESTRUTURAS SIMBÓLICAS

SYMBOLIC STRUCTURES

The piano should be played directly on the strings whenever there is either the abbreviation PIZZ or a three-line staff (low, middle, and high register isn't used). POS NNT cancels the former indication and the pianist should play in the keyboard. The notation in the keyboard. The notation stands for striking the strings with the palm. Two or more notes inside a frame crossed by a line indicates execution of the written notes in irregular rhythm.

X All the notes between two notes written as an "x" may be played in a random rhythm.

The notation PIZZ indicates a random execution of every note of the suggested region, in a fast and irregular manner (in the piano, play on the strings with both hands; in the viola, use the four strings, in a guitar-like manner).

Ricardo Tacuchian ESTRUTURAS SIMBÓLICAS (Symbolic Structures)

For Clarinet Bb, Trumpet Bb, Piano, Viola, and Percussion (two cymbals, low and high, snare-drum, low tom-tom, cow-bell, wood-block). It is advisable to call for a conductor. The trumpeter should stay in the rear of the hall. On the Coda, he will walk slowly to the stage, playing simultaneously. Before the end of the piece, he should be together the other players in the stage.

- I Structural Group: a) 1st structure (written); b) 2nd structure (written); c) 3rd structure (written); d) 4th structure (made-up).
- II Structural Group: idem.
- III Structural Group: idem.
- IV Structural Group: idem.
- Coda: absolutely written but the last measure that is repeated in accelerando and crescendo, "h" times, up to a climax.

ESTRUTURAS SIMBÓLICAS is made up of 4 Structural Groups and 1 Coda. Every Structural Group is made up of 3 written structures and a fourth one made up of the following manner:

- a) the clarinet plays the part of the 2nd structure of the respective Structural Group;
- b) the trumpet plays the part of the 3rd structure of the respective Structural Group;
- c) the piano and the percussion play the part of the 1st structure of the respective Structural Group;
- d) the viola plays any of the three structures written in each Structural Group.

This fourth structure of each Structural Group never should last more than 30 seconds, being possible to be interrupted even without the overall performance of the structure. The cut of the 4th structure, needless to say, will be given by either the conductor or the Ensemble's leader.

There mustn't be any interruption between the structures of each Structural Group. Between one Structural Group and another there will be a little breathe (呼). DURATA ca 12 min.

RIO DE JANEIRO, 1973

Fig. 1. Performance notes of Tacuchian's *Estruturas Simbólicas*

IV GRUPO ESTRUTURAL 4th Structural Group

First Structure Durata: ca 1 min. 15 sec.

Second Structure Durata: ca 1 min.

The score consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the piano part with various performance instructions like 'PIZZ', 'POS NNT', and 'P'. The second system shows the piano and percussion parts with similar instructions. The third system shows the piano part with further performance instructions.

Fig. 2. *Estruturas Simbólicas*, fourth "structural group."

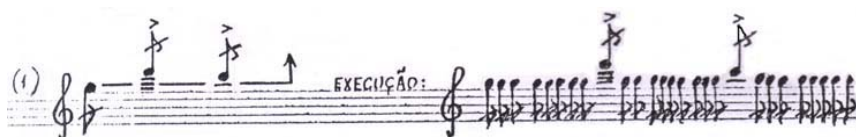
The other *Estruturas* that should be noted is once again the *Estruturas Divergentes*, which as *Cantata dos Mortos* shows his rebelliousness against the dictatorship:

The piece is a parable about the military dictatorship... The flute is subversive, indeterminate, hollering, using psychological time without a defined pulse... The oboe [in a square rhythm through almost the whole piece] in its turn, represents the backward forces of the army and the conservative sector of the church. I wrote, for the oboe, parodies of the national anthem, alluding to the false patriotism of the military in power, and also Gregorian chant, referring to the civil and clerical allies of the dictatorship... The piano represents the people, and oscillates between the flute and the oboe.<sup>23</sup>

Figure 3 shows mm. 24-34 of *Estruturas Divergentes*. Observe that there are no bar lines for the flute staff. The execution of the flute part in the first two measures of the oboe and piano is shown in Fig. 4.

**Fig. 3. *Estruturas Divergentes*, mm. 24-34 (note that there are no bar lines for the flute part)**

<sup>23</sup>TACUCHIAN, liner notes to CD *Estruturas* (original quotation in English).



**Fig. 4. Explanation provided by the composer for the flute performance of mm. 24-25 of *Estruturas Divergentes***

Beginning in the 1980s, Tacuchian adopted a new musical posture that, “in the absence of a better expression,”<sup>24</sup> he called postmodern. The composer states:

The postmodernist artist searches for new paths while departing from tradition. [The artist] intends to present a new proposal that overcomes the polarizations that governed the musical movements during all of music history, and that radicalized in the twentieth century. The polarizations overcome by the postmodern composers are, among others, national/universal, tradition/renovation..., equal temperament/microtonalism, functional/pure. It is not the question of nullifying these poles that will keep existing in the expression of many artists and in the perception of the audiences, but an option for ‘another new music,’ next to the pieces that already exist and will continue to exist. It would be more appropriate to define postmodernism as an esthetic behavior, instead of an esthetics itself. The [word] esthetics limits, defines, demarcates territory, [and] outlines rigid profiles. Postmodernism is exactly the opposite of all that.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> TACUCHIAN, “Ricardo Tacuchian: um depoimento” (personal written text by the composer, Rio de Janeiro, 1991), 1. [“na ausência de uma expressão melhor...”]

<sup>25</sup> TACUCHIAN, “Duas Décadas de Música de Concerto no Brasil: Tendências Estéticas,” in *Anais do XI Encontro Nacional da ANPPOM* (Campinas: Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1998), 149. [“O artista pós-moderno pesquisa novos caminhos a partir da tradição. Procura apresentar uma proposta nova que supere as polarizações que regeram os movimentos musicais durante toda a história da música e que se radicalizaram no século XX. Essas polarizações superadas pelos compositores pós-modernos são, entre outras, as referentes a nacional/universal, tradição/renovação..., temperamento igual/microtonalismo, funcional/puro. Não se trata de anular estes pólos que continuarão existindo na expressão de muitos artistas e na percepção das audiências, mas a opção por um ‘outra nova música,’ ao lado das músicas que já existem e continuarão a existir. Seria mais correto definir o pós-modernismo como um comportamento estético, ao invés de uma estética propriamente dita. As estéticas limitam, definem, marcam território, traçam perfis rígidos. O pós-modernismo é justamente o oposto a tudo isso.”]

In his text “*Ricardo Tacuchian: um depoimento*,” he completed the explanation of his views relating to postmodernism:

transformation of all compositional esthetics of our century [the twentieth century] in simple compositional techniques that enrich my arsenal of sonorous manipulation...the supremacy of sound and silence...emphasis on the interchange of lyric expression and strong rhythmic impulse...simplicity without populism and communication without cliché.<sup>26</sup>

Tacuchian found his manner “to overcome these polarities, to unify the extremes with the creation of his T-system.”<sup>27</sup> Almost all of his pieces since the birth of *Rio/LA* (1988) are written under this system, as is *Xilogravura* (2004) for viola and piano, a piece commissioned and dedicated to the author of this article.

The creation of the T-system happened spontaneously. Tacuchian was composing a piece, the nonet *Rio/LA* (1988) for English horn (F), Trumpet (Bb), French horn (F), trombone, tuba, piano, and electric bass guitar,<sup>28</sup> in which he wanted to utilize the urban environment as one of the features of postmodernism: “It is a piece that shows the similarities between the big cities of Los Angeles and Rio de Janeiro.”<sup>29</sup> The composer wished to write this piece using certain structural elements, among them a very dissonant five-note chord in a defined voicing (shown in Ex. 5) which could symbolize the hard sounds of both cities. The chord, labeled by Tacuchian as the T-chord,<sup>30</sup> would be one of the main elements of the structure of *Rio/LA*.

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<sup>26</sup>TACUCHIAN, “Ricardo Tacuchian: um depoimento,” 1-2. [“...transformação de todas as estéticas composicionais de nosso século em simples técnicas que enriquecem meu arsenal de manipulação sonora...a supremacia do som e do silêncio...ênfase na alternância da expressão lírica com forte impulso rítmico...simplicidade da linguagem sem populismo e comunicabilidade sem cliché.”]

<sup>27</sup>TACUCHIAN, 2005. [“superar estas polaridades, unificar os extremos com a criação do seu Sistema-T”]

<sup>28</sup>The composer was living in Los Angeles while composing this piece.

<sup>29</sup>TACUCHIAN, 2005. [“É uma obra que mostra as similaridades entre as grandes cidades de Los Angeles e Rio de Janeiro.”]

<sup>30</sup>Tacuchian chose this name because of the T shape of the written chord, which also coincides with the first letter of his name.

### Ex. 5. The T-Chord

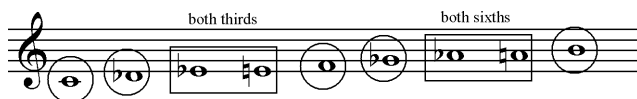


With this chord defined, the composer realized that he needed a specific scale from which he could improvise melodies based on this chord (which would be the harmonic basis of the piece), as jazz musicians regularly do. Therefore he constructed an artificial scale which needed to include these five notes. Tacuchian states:

The scale could not have more than nine pitches, otherwise it would be an ‘almost chromatic scale.’ If it had less than nine pitches, could resemble an octatonic scale, which is very close to the traditional scales. I found that the number nine would be the ideal.<sup>31</sup>

If the major scale is “major” because it includes a major third and a major sixth, he decided to insert both major and minor thirds and sixths, which would characterize it as neither major nor minor. Since the root relationship between dominant and tonic is one of the intervals that most characterize the tonal scale, the composer abolished the perfect fifth above the first degree of the basic T-scale. So the final T-scale is presented as follows:

### Ex. 6. Basic T-scale (circled notes are derived from the T-chord)



In *Avenida Paulista* (1999) for solo piano, it is interesting to note the way he keeps the first three pitches of the T-scale on C as an ostinato alternating with the other pitches of the scale (see Ex. 7).

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<sup>31</sup> TACUCHIAN, 2005. [“A escala não poderia ter mais de nove notas, senão seria ‘quase uma escala cromática.’ Se ela tivesse menos de nove notas, poderia lembrar uma escala octatônica, que é muito próxima das escalas tradicionais. Eu achei que o número nove seria o ideal.”]

**Ex. 7. Avenida Paulista, mm. 1-6, piano (numbers refer to the pitch order in the scale)**

In the process of the creation of the T-system, Tacuchian adopted the serialism device with nine pitches only (such as the row **Bb G F# E D CA F Db** used in *Xilogravura*); the use of consistent sets (trichords, tetrachords, and pentachords, also used by the fore mentioned School), and embedded scales (such as a D minor harmonic scale into the T-scale on C# as happens once again in *Xilogravura*).

**Ex. 8. Employment of serialism in *Xilogravura*. mm.126-130, viola and piano (numbers refer to the pitch order in the row)**

These “techniques” may be used together or isolated in a same section of a piece. The most significant characteristic of the T-system is that one can use its features in an organic manner, not falling into a patchwork: the system gives unity and personality to the work. Tacuchian used various compositional approaches in a single piece, while maintaining coherence throughout.

This is Tacuchian’s method of composing nowadays; the way he has chosen for his personal taste of the contemporary music. And he completes: “When I notice that in a future epoch this system will not “function” anymore, it will be the time to change again my compositional approach. Even if I have to abandon the T-system.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* [“Quando eu perceber que numa época futura este sistema não “funciona” mais, será o momento de mudar novamente meu enfoque composicional. Mesmo que eu tenha que abandonar o Sistema-T.”]

## Works Cited

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### *CD liner notes*

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Tacuchian: Música para Piano* (ABM Digital), Ricardo Tacuchian, *Avenida Paulista* et al., various performers, 2004.

### *Interview*

Interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro (residence of the composer), 13 June 2005.