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2003

The Complete Works of Frantz Casséus

Volume 1: Music for Solo Guitar

Edited by Marc Ribot



Photo by Harriet Ribot

Frantz Casséus, October, 1987.

STETSON UNIVERSITY
School of Music Library
DeLand, Florida

Tuscanu Publications

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FRANTZ CASSÉUS: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC

By Harriet Ribot and Marc Ribot

Carnegie Recital Hall, New York City, April, 1957. His tilted fedora signaled the approach of a man who expected to be adored. A scarf graced his neck. He had his coat slung across one shoulder holding it securely with a gloved hand, as though pledging allegiance. Seemingly, here was a man who, as he strode forward, expected the waters to part. They did. Waves of applause greeted his ensuing compositions. Yet, those who had known him throughout the years described him as a kind, patient, modest man with incredible dignity; a man dedicated to his music, family, and friends.

Frantz Casséus was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 1915. In his autobiographical essays,¹ Casséus wrote that his fascination with the guitar began early, when a cherished aunt who played the mandolin suddenly died. As was the custom, all the belongings of the deceased were discarded. "The sight of her mandolin perched on this pile of garbage and the memory of her music has never ceased to haunt me. I burned with desire, for I never forgot Aunt Andrée's mandolin."² At the age of twelve, Casséus decided to make a guitar. "It had a flat board for the fingerboard, nails for frets, and iron wires for strings." It occupied him for seven months before coming apart. His father eventually agreed to buy the boy a professional guitar ... from Sears and Roebuck.³

Casséus' introduction to classical music began in the early 1930s, when he studied with Werner Jaegerhuber, an Austrian musicologist and composer living in Haiti.⁴ Jaegerhuber introduced Casséus to Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Carulli, Tárrega, and others. Casséus also received encouragement and guitar method books from the wife of the former American ambassador to Haiti, Mrs. John Campbell White,⁵ and heard the early recordings of Andrés Segovia, which made a profound impression. By the time he was 22 years old, Casséus had introduced the classical guitar to Haitian audiences and had established a reputation as a classical guitarist within Port-au-Prince's cultural milieu.

Casséus's artistic ambitions were not limited to mastery of the available classical guitar repertoire. "The public appreciated my efforts," he recalled, "but I felt myself to be without originality. ... Odette Rigaud⁶ completely and forever changed my existence. She introduced to me the idea of executing my inherent compositions and of transcribing for the classical guitar the vast amalgam of our country."⁷

Frantz Casséus understood the diversity of his country's heritage and he had the talent and the grand vision to weave its integral parts into a cohesive Haitian musical identity. He experienced his musical epiphany at a cultural moment when, following the occupation by the U.S. military (1915-1934) and the widespread dissemination of the radio, many Haitians began to feel a need to reaffirm a national identity. In writing and in interviews, Casséus expressed a desire to protect and preserve Haitian music, presumably because he perceived its loss through outside influences to be a genuine threat. In an editorial entitled, "Our Meringue is Dying," Casséus wrote, "some with indifference, others with an indignant sadness, have witnessed the disappearance of one of our most delicious national dances, which is like a precious pearl ornament of our folklore. ... [The Haitian meringue] invites [one] to dance, contains a subtle and delicious melody. Its composition, ... [its] character, its simple and limited form, made it a dance with noble stature, and even a classic."⁸

Although the "indignant sadness" of loss, both personal and national, was clearly central to the formation of Casséus sense of musical purpose, it also seems that his relation with the culture of the U.S. occupiers was more complex than simple rejection. The soldiers brought their music with them, and the young Casséus was exposed to jazz, American fox-trot dance music, classical music played by military bands, etc. Indirectly revealing some of his own influences, Casséus stated, "We do not become musicians unexpectedly; it is only because of studies that it happens, whatever genre we are practicing. Fats Waller became a great pianist after he had studied with Godovsky, Duke Ellington studied with Percy Grainger, Xavier Cugat obtained a perfect technique of the violin and the science of harmony."⁹ In a personal conversation with Marc Ribot, Frantz

Casséus admitted that one of his purposes in moving to the U.S. had been to meet Fats Waller (who, unfortunately, died before such a meeting was possible).¹⁰ Stride piano and jazz harmonic influences are audible in Casséus' *Romance*.

Whatever 'anxiety of influence' issues existed around jazz and U.S. music, by the early 1940s Casséus had a clearly stated agenda to which he remained remarkably faithful during his career as a composer. "I believe it is the artist's function to render articulately and with beauty the soul of the land of his origin and also the world that he experiences. ... As you may know, my work is considered an expression of the Haitian spirit. Yet, critics have stated (and this has been my hope) that it transcends regionalism and enters the realm of transnational art."¹¹ "Haitian dance ... was all drum and vocal music. But my love was Haitian music and so I tried to make the guitar render it properly."¹²

Casséus' sense of cultural mission may have also been influenced by the literature of the Negritude movement.¹³ In the early 1940s, critic Marcel Salnave and other culturally active Haitians began to advocate the importance of cultural preservation. Haitian government responses included the creation of a Bureau of Ethnology and sponsorship of La Troupe Folklorique Nationale.

But before Casséus could incorporate Haitian folklore into the tradition of the classical guitar, he first had to study it. As a relatively protected son of a civil servant (his father headed the Department of Water Supply), Casséus' direct experience of Haitian folk culture had been somewhat limited. It was not until the mid 1950s that the first commercial Haitian recordings were produced by IBO Records.¹⁴ Casséus stated that he proceeded to make contact "with certain 'Griots'"¹⁵ and certain people initiated in our culture. Thus strengthened, I overflowed with rhythms, forms, lyrics of my future compositions."¹⁶

At the same time, Casséus continued working on his development as a classical guitarist, studying the techniques of Francisco Tárrega and Andrés Segovia. Casséus' repertoire included works by Albéniz, Bach, Chopin, Falla, Gomez, Granados, Handel, Haydn, Malats, Mendelssohn, Moreno Torroba, Rubenstein, Scarlatti, Schubert, Sor, Tárrega, Villa-Lobos, Visée, transcriptions of music by the Haitian pianist Ludovic Lamothe, and—increasingly—his own compositions. His first professional appearance as a classical guitarist took place in Port-au-Prince in 1941, on a guitar he had made himself. The performance was very well-received by Haitian critics, many of whom understood quite clearly Casséus' incorporation of Haitian folk music within classical guitar composition and performance.

By July, 1946, encouraged by his success as a concert artist in Haiti, Frantz Casséus moved to New York City.

After brief stays with relatives, at the Sloan YMCA, and several upper west side addresses, he found an apartment at 112 West 87th Street, which he kept for the rest of his life. Becoming established as a musician was a struggle; he began to support himself by giving guitar lessons, but he couldn't afford a union card, a necessity for most performing jobs. He unsuccessfully applied to the Haitian government for a grant, arguing that his work would be helpful in the presentation of Haitian culture abroad. In 1947 Casséus made his New York City concert debut, a solo concert at the Meri Theatre under the auspices of the Society for the Classical Guitar, performing "on a guitar of his own make, an instrument beautiful in appearance and tone."¹⁷ In the following years he concertized across Latin America and the United States, including New York's Carnegie Recital Hall,¹⁸ receiving critical acclaim. The *New York Herald Tribune* reported, "He proved himself a sensitive musician with a delicate ear and a sensitive touch. His technical prowess, too, is considerable."¹⁹ The *New York Times* critic called his *Haitian Folk Songs* recording "outstanding."²⁰

By 1953, Casséus released *Haitian Folk Songs*, with singer Lolita Cuevas (Folkways FW811).²¹ The title is grossly misleading; of the album's selections, two were composed by Casséus, another two were his arrangements of works by Haitian composers Mauleare Monton

FRANTZ CASSEUS

Haitian Guitalist



TOWN HALL

MONDAY EVENING, MAY 10, 1954
AT 8:30 O'CLOCK

"A sensitive musician with delicate ear and delicate touch.
His technical prowess is considerable."

New York Herald Tribune

and Ludovic Lamothe. "Little Bird (Ti Zoiseau)" was a Casséus composition based on a fragment of a folk song, and the rest were highly stylized Casséus classical guitar and voice arrangements of folk songs. In 1954, Casséus recorded the second of his two Folkways albums, *Haitian Dances* (FW822).²² This album contained his magnum opus, the stunning four part *Haitian Suite*.

At the time, Casséus must certainly have been thrilled to have his work documented and made available through the Folkways recordings. In retrospect, the association of Casséus' music with a "folk" label and the decision of that label to emphasize folkloric elements on the album covers is regrettable. Even on the sophisticated *Haitian Dances*, the cover mentions only "Frantz Casséus—Guitar." Folkways owner Moses Asch²³ was well known for his "progressive" anti-racist views, and he must be credited with having had the intelligence to recognize Casséus' talent. Nevertheless, one must question the cultural environment in which a composer such as Casséus could only be presented in a "folk" format. Apparently Krin Gabbard's observation remained as true for Casséus in the 1950s as it was for Duke Ellington in the 1920s: "For many Americans ... a Negro composer was an oxymoron."²⁴

Casséus followed up the *Haitian Dances* release with a successful Town Hall concert on May 5, 1954. But in spite of critical acceptance, income from concertizing was sporadic and royalties for the publishing of his compositions proved difficult to collect. Over the course of his career, Casséus supplemented his income by teaching (both privately, and at the Manhattan School of Music) and by building over 150 classical guitars. He also edited and fingered *Carcassi: 32 Studies for Classic Guitar*²⁵ and compiled, edited, and fingered five books in the series "World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar."²⁶

In July of 1954, during the presidency of Paul E. Magloire,²⁷ Casséus received a small grant from the Haitian government in recognition of his services as a "cultural ambassador."

Beginning in 1955,²⁸ Casséus worked for two years as a side musician with pop singer Harry Belafonte.²⁹ They toured the U.S., appeared on radio and television, and made recordings for RCA records which included "Merci Bon Dieu," a Creole vocal adaptation of "Coumbite," the fourth and last movement of Casséus' *Haitian Suite*. "Merci Bon Dieu" became Casséus' most commercially successful composition, subsequently recorded under the title "Por Qua Bon Dieu" by vocalist Gille Dreux and various other artists, using French lyrics. Although no recorded or written record has been found, Casséus was also credited in the BCBC³⁰ *Pleumata* program with composing a dance

FRANTZ CASSEUS

Haitian Guitalist

Frantz Casséus was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. His "Haitian Suite" symbolizes the fruition of his childhood dream of adapting his country's music to the classic guitar. Casséus, who is completely self-taught, started concertizing in 1941 at Port-au-Prince. His first concert introduced the guitar as a classical instrument to the Haitian people.

He is well known to the South American concert audiences and has appeared in Venezuela at the invitation of the government. Although this is his Town Hall debut, he is already known to New York audiences through his concerts, radio appearances and recordings.

TOWN HALL

Monday evening, May 10, 1954 at 8:30 o'clock

Program

Prelude and Allemande	R. DE VISEE
Gavotte	
Minuet	
Sarabande	HANDEL
Prelude and Fugue	BACH
II	
Sonata	SCARLATTI
Largo y Allegro	
2 Etudes	SORS
INTERMISSION	
III	
Prelude	
Ariette	
Fandanguillo	MORENO F. TORROBA
Homenaje (Pour le Tombeau de Claude Debussy)	M. DE FALLA
*Haitian Suite	
(1) Petro	
(2) Yanvalouz	
(3) Mascaon	
(4) Coumbite	
Tremolo	F. CASSEUS
Folkways Record	TARREGA
FP 822	

TICKETS: Orchestra \$2.40, \$1.80; Balcony \$1.80, \$1.20; Loges \$1.00 per seat
Tickets on sale at Town Hall Box Office 3 Weeks before Concert!

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was choreographed by Geoffrey Holder under the title *Danse creole*.

In the late 1960s, Casséus began to compose again for voice and guitar, publishing *Haitienesques*³¹ in 1969 and, that same year, releasing the recording *Haitiana*³² on the Afro-Carib label. The LP consisted of three solo guitar pieces performed by Frantz Casséus—*Simbi*, *Dance of the Hounses*, and *On Sunday (Danse)*—and nine duets with singer Barbara Perlow. According to songwriter Rhoda Roberts, who did much to encourage his efforts, Casséus was inspired to begin this series of compositions by the work of several Haitian artists, including the Haitian-Panamanian painter Xavier Amiama, whose painting of dancing women was represented on the cover of *Haitiana*.

Although Casséus continued to compose through the 1980s, his career as a performing artist was hampered from 1970 onward by an increasingly debilitating tendon problem in his left hand. This eventually forced a premature retirement from concertizing and, in turn, a loss of Casséus' visibility in the U.S. classical guitar scene. His recordings were also generally unavailable; Afro-Carib had gone out of business and Folkways,

BBC's "Playhouse" program with composing a dance score for the Ballet Hispanico of New York which

highly disorganized in its later years, went out of

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Norman J. Seaman presents

FRANTZ CASSEUS

GUITARIST



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business in the 1980s. The Folkways catalog was later absorbed by the Smithsonian; thus Casséus' Folkways recordings of 1953-54—the only two recordings featuring Casséus performing his own works still in print—are available from Smithsonian/Folkways.

A lack of availability of sheet music also deterred guitarists from performing or recording Casséus' music. There were a few exceptions, notably Music of the World's production of *Haitian Suite 1987*³⁵ on the Music of the World label, and *Marc Ribot Plays the Solo Guitar Works of Frantz Casséus*, released in 1994 on the Belgian label Discs du Crénule. Ribot, the editor of the present collection, was a student of Casséus' who had gone on to become a sideman and bandleader mostly associated with the New York City "downtown" avant-garde. Although Ribot's main instrument was electric guitar, he had learned many of Casséus' compositions on classical guitar as a teenager, under Casséus personal supervision, and he took seriously the challenge of recording Casséus' music.

tains several previously unknown compositions. When Casséus became seriously ill, he gave Ribot some of his notebooks. "About three weeks before Frantz died," Ribot related, "he communicated with great difficulty that he wanted to see the notebooks. We went through them in the hospital. To my surprise, there were songs in them that were complete, and they were very beautiful. Frantz wanted me to record them, so I did." The pieces culled from these notebooks, *Merengue, Romance (1978), Improvisation, Untitled (July 16, 1957), Chanson, and Prelude No. 1*, were included in *Marc Ribot Plays the Solo Guitar Works of Frantz Casséus*, and are published here for the first time.

The popularity of Frantz Casséus continued undiminished among culturally aware Haitians. On May 5, 1985, he was honored at the University of Montreal by the Société de recherche et de la diffusion de la musique haïtienne. In 1992, Casséus' work was honored as "a living testimony" of Frantz' commitment to the preservation of authentic Haitian culture by the Recreational, Artistic, and Literary Haitian Club of New York. In Haiti itself, bootleg copies of his recordings continue to be circulated. Musicologist Claude Dauphin provided an interesting perspective on Casséus' importance to Haitians in a 1992 interview for Voice of America, "Frantz Casséus: The Pioneer of Classical Guitar in Haiti."

As an arranger and composer, he arranged Haitian music and classical pieces. Frantz Casséus composed a music that is so much like the folklore music that we can take it as folklore music, but it is not. It is his compositions inspired by folklore and all the traditions through his personal imagination. So, Frantz Casséus re-created his long musical heritage from memory. He exploited this music to gain an edge, but he did not copy the folklore. He has renewed a style inspired by folklore. His style translates the folklore but doesn't copy it. As a composer, he is extremely interesting because his composite knowledge is original for Haiti as well as for the white Caribbean and the Americas. He has composed a music inspired by Haiti and classical music. This mix made a *bon mariage* [good wedding], especially his pieces for voice and guitar called *Haitienques*. He is like the [Brazilian composer] Villa-Lobos in that he is using the same form, same construction, but has replaced the cello in [Villa-Lobos'] pieces with the voice. Casséus, by using the voice, expresses the voice of the Haitian people. He has gained a universal culture because his music is inspired also by the Baroque music of the sev-

his teacher's work.

In addition to all of the solo guitar compositions from *Haitian Dances*, *Haitiana*, and several pieces previously published in print form, the Crépuscule CD con-

centeenth century, especially Johann Sebastian Bach. Frantz Casséus was an extremely cultivated man.¹⁶

Frantz Casséus died on June 3, 1993. Although the musical project to which he devoted himself may seem

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obvious from a contemporary standpoint, in the Haiti of the 1930s and 1940s, it was anything but. To imagine a fusion of the European classical tradition and Haitian folk music, to imagine the "Haitian spirit" as relevant and necessary to "the realm of transnational art" was a bold and shocking innovation. Casséus carried out his project with great dedication, passion, aesthetic sensitivity, and lyric genius. He pioneered the introduction of classical guitar in Haiti and is the acknowledged father of the Haitian classical guitar. He challenged U. S. and European audiences with his translation of an Africa-based folk tradition whose rhythmic complexity approaches the limits of standard notation. Although schooled in a nineteenth century classical tradition, the musical-cultural ideas embodied in his work make it particularly relevant today.

With this volume, presenting the first complete, accurate collection of Casséus works for solo guitar, we hope finally to make available to guitarists the work of this unfairly neglected composer.

The author is indebted to Pascale Jutard, B.A., and Jesse Ribot, Ph.D.; and also to Marc Claude for their translations from the French and Creole, respectively.

ENDNOTES

1. Marc Mathelier, ed., *Essai bibliographique sur la vie de Frantz Casséus* (Mathel Productions, 1995)
2. *Ibid.*, "Les Années tendres," 5.
3. *Ibid.*, "Guitar of Fortune," 7.
4. Werner Jaegerhuber (1890-1953) pioneered research into Haitian folkloric songs. He produced *La Sinfonata Legba* (1934), composed *Complaints haitiennes* (Port-au-Prince: Litho d'Haiti, 1950).
5. Mathelier, *Essai*, "L'Aube," 10.
6. Odette Rigaud, wife of author Milo Rigaud, *La Tradition voodoo et le Voodoo haitien* (photos by Odette Mennesson-Rigaud, 1953).
7. Mathelier, *Essai*, "Merci, Odette," 12.
8. Frantz Casséus, "Notre Meringue se meurt," *Haiti-Journal* (1944).
9. *Ibid.*
10. Marc Ribot interviewed.
11. Excerpt from a letter written by Frantz Casséus to Victor Andrade, Ambassador of Bolivia, Washington, D. C.
12. Ira Landgarten, interview in *Frets Magazine* (Feb., 1980), 17.

15. Griot: "A story teller in western Africa who perpetuates the oral tradition and history of a village or family." *American Heritage Dictionary*, 3rd edition.
16. Mathelier, *Essai*, "Merci, Odette," 12.
17. Review by "C.L." in *Guitar News: The Official Organ of the International Classic Guitar Association* (Feb.-March, 1957).
18. Carnegie Recital Hall, April 28, 1957, and April 4, 1959.
19. *New York Herald Tribune* review of a concert in Sheridan Square, published December 16, 1952.
20. "... of his *Haitian Folk Songs* [recording of 1953] the NYT added its accolade, 'outstanding.'" (From the liner notes to *Haitian Dances*, 1954.)
21. *Haitian Folk Songs*, sung by Lolita Cuevas; Frantz Casséus, arrangements and guitar (Folkways Records, FP811 (1953);); currently Smithsonian/Folkways 06811.
22. *Haitian Dances*. Frantz Casséus, guitar (Folkways Records, FP822 (1954); currently Smithsonian/Folkways 06822.
23. Moses Asch, founder of Folkways Records.
24. Krin Gabbard, *Jammin' at the Margins: Jazz and the American Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 160.
25. By the Lewis Music Publishing Co., Inc.
26. *Selected Masterpieces for the Classical Guitar*, 5 vols., New York: Ashley Publications "World's Favorite" series nos. 56, 81, 108, 124, and 125.
27. Paul-Eugène Magloire, President of Haiti (1930-1956).
28. Frantz Casséus received the "Keys to the City" of Miami on May 5, 1955; he played at the Eden Roc with Harry Belafonte on December 21, 1956.
29. Harry Belafonte (b. 1927) almost singlehandedly created a craze for West Indian music in the United States in the 1950s. After a number of hit records, he also had a successful acting career.
30. Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College (BCBC).
31. Frantz Casséus, *Haitienesques* for voice and guitar (New York: Franco Colombo Pub. Co., 1969)
32. *Haitiana*, Frantz Casséus, composer and guitarist, and Barbara Perlow, singer (New York: Afro-Carib 101, 1969).
33. Rhoda Unger, songwriter, known as Rhoda Roberts.
34. *Haitian Folk Songs* and *Haitian Dances* are the original vinyl releases. The original liner notes are included in the current Smithsonian cassette and disk series (see nn. 21-22 above).

1969), 1.

13. Negritude: "an aesthetic and ideological concept affirming the independent nature, quality, and vitality of black culture." *American Heritage Dictionary*, 3rd edition.

14. Gage Averill, "Haiti," in *Garland World Music Encyclopedia* (1998), 890.

35. *Haitian Suite* 1987. Frantz Casséus, composer; Marc Ribot, guitarist. Produced by Bob Haddad (New York: Music of the World, MOW 202).

36. Interview by Paul G. Magloire (October 9, 1992) on Voice of America for a Creole audience. The interview was arranged by Magloire and Jacques Jean-Baptiste.

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Frantz Casséus: List of Works for Guitar Solo

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED WORKS

Haitian Suite (Pétro, Yanvaloux, Mascaron, Coumbite), recorded 1954, published New York: Ricordi, 1956. Later publication: in Casséus, ed., *World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar*, Vol. 5 (World's Favorite Series, No. 125) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1980), 14-29.

Deux pièces caractéristiques (Congo, Rara), published New York: Ricordi, 1961.

Simbi [Haitian Dance No. 6], recorded 1968, published 1970 in Casséus, ed., *World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar*, Vol. 3 (World's Favorite Series, No. 108) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1978), 89-92.

Dance of the Hounsiés, recorded 1968, published New York: Franco Colombo/Belwin-Mills, 1971. Later publication: in Casséus, ed., *World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar*, Vol. 5 (World's Favorite Series, No. 125) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1980), 30-32.

On Sunday: Danse, recorded 1968, published 1980 in Casséus, ed., *World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar*, Vol. 5 (World's Favorite Series, No. 125) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1980), 33-34.

Prelude [No. 2], published 1978 in Casséus, ed., *World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar*, Vol. 2 (World's Favorite Series, No. 81) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1970), 40.

Romance, published 1978 in Casséus, ed., *World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar*, Vol. 2 (World's Favorite Series, No. 81) (Carlstadt, New Jersey:

Sérénade lointaine (published 1980 in Casséus, ed., *World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar*, Vol. 5 (World's Favorite Series, No. 125) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1980), 12-13.

PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED WORKS

Chanson
Improvisation
Merengue
Prelude [No. 1]
Romance
Untitled Piece

WORKS EDITED OR ARRANGED BY F. C.

Matteo Carcassi, *32 Studies for Classic Guitar*, revised, edited and fingered by Frantz Casséus (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Lewis Music Publishing Company, Inc., 1973).

World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar, Vol. 1 (World's Favorite Series, No. 56) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1970)

World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar, Vol. 2 (World's Favorite Series, No. 81) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1970)

World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar, Vol. 3 (World's Favorite Series, No. 108) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1978)

World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar, Vol. 4 (World's Favorite Series, No. 124) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1980)

World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar, Vol. 5 (World's Favorite Series, No. 125) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1980)

Valse, published 1978 in Casséus, ed., *World's Favorite Selected Masterpieces for the Classic Guitar*, Vol. 2 (World's Favorite Series, No. 81) (Carlstadt, New Jersey: Ashley Publications, 1970), 41.

Herbert Haufrecht, *Waltz* (Casséus' arrangement in above, Vol. 5, p. 7)

Manuel Ponce, *Estrellita* (Casséus' arrangement in above, Vol. 2, p. 102).

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Frantz Casséus

EDITOR'S NOTE

It was Frantz Casséus' stated intention that his work be inscribed within the history and tradition of the classical guitar. It was also his intention that his work engage the folk music traditions of Haiti. Within those folk traditions, the composer encountered percussion-based ensembles in which



were played simultaneously with against the dominant



rhythm. Haitian musicians used this as a device for generating rhythmic tension. Casséus, in his notation, usually used



but in his performance of his own work, he often in-

Beyond that, Frantz Casséus faced (and I have faced again) a problem encountered by anyone wishing to represent "non-western" musical influences in European notation: how to do so without deracinating the music, on the one hand, or disfiguring the score through overuse of quintuplets, 24th notes, etc., on the other.

Those wishing to notate the extremely subtle rhythmic distinctions of the jazz idiom have had the advantage of a widely shared common language among musicians: a composer may make his intentions understood simply by writing "40s swing" or "bebop" and notating eighth notes, without resorting to the sub-sixteenth-note subdivisions which would otherwise be needed.

I doubt whether printing the name of the appropriate *loa** over these compositions would communicate to non-Haitian musicians with the same degree of effectiveness.

I've dealt with the discrepancies between written and performed versions by usually using the written version, but occasionally providing footnotes of the performed

flected these phrases, with varying degrees of subtlety, with triplet or quintuplet nuance.

Could or should Casseus have attempted greater notational accuracy? In some cases he did (see Rara). I'm certain, based on personal conversation (*ca.* 1982) that he felt constrained by what he believed to be the limitations of his readers: many of his pieces were published in an Ashley Publications series intended for middle level students.*

*See "List of Works for Guitar Solo, Previously Published Works."

version. Where I believed the notated version to be in error, I substituted the performed version. I based these judgments on Mr. Casséus' recorded versions of his work, my experience of having studied the pieces with Mr. Casséus, and my memory of my own 1980s recordings of the pieces in this book for Disc du Crepuscule and the now defunct MOW label, both of which were made in close consultation with the composer.

—Marc Ribot

**These Afro-Haitian deities are associated with particular rhythms.

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15

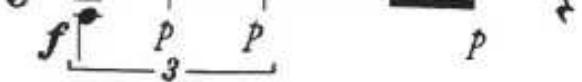
Haitian Suite

for guitar

Frantz Casséus
1954

1. Petro

The sheet music consists of six staves of musical notation for guitar. Staff 1 starts with a dynamic *f* and a bass drum. Staff 2 begins with a bass drum. Staff 3 starts with a bass drum. Staff 4 begins with a bass drum. Staff 5 starts with a bass drum. Staff 6 starts with a bass drum. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as triplets and sixteenth-note figures, with specific fingerings indicated by numbers above the notes. The music is in common time throughout.



*M. 1 performed as follows:



**Mm. 3, 7, 11, & 15 performed with this rhythmic inflection:



***Mm. 9 & 13 are performed as follows:



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14

22

f

27

f

32

f

37

ff

42

ff

47

1. *rit.* 2. *Slower...*



cantabile

CVII

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15

CVII

CVII

CVII

a tempo

CVII

81

86

rall.

Coda

D.C.

al $\textcircled{\Phi}$

Fin

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16

2. Yanvalloux

Lentement

avec grace **p**

7

CVII

14

CVII

21

CV

1. 2.

28

D. S. al Coda

⑤

A musical score for page 34, section CvII. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the treble clef and includes measures 34-35. Measure 34 starts with a forte dynamic (F) followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Measure 35 begins with a eighth-note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The bottom staff is for the bass clef and includes measures 36-37. Measure 36 features a sustained eighth note. Measure 37 starts with a forte dynamic (f) followed by a sixteenth-note pattern.

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17

Musical score for piano, page 10, measures 46-47. The score consists of two staves. The left staff uses a treble clef and has a key signature of one sharp. The right staff uses a bass clef. Measure 46 begins with a half note followed by a dotted half note. Measure 47 begins with a quarter note followed by a eighth note. The music concludes with a repeat sign and the number '1.' above it.



70

barm.
XII

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18

3. Mascaron

À volonté

Allegretto, bien rythmé

7

12

17

24

30

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19

35

40

45

50

al coda
(dopo segno)

55

58b

CIII Cv

CI

Cv

64

Cv

Cv

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20

71

CIII

p i m

f

77

Cv

CvI

ff

83

f

Cv

CvI

89

CvIII

CvI

ff ff

95

i p i p

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21

139

146

152

ritardando

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22

4. Coumbite

Allegretto

f *rhythmé et soutenu*

5

10

15

20

0

3

7

25

f p

3

CvII

30

3

CII

3

TPS-016

23

CvII

3

6

40

3

3

CV

CV

4

50

p

p

55

5

CV

60

65

70 To Coda

Coda XII

Dal Segno, with repeats, to Coda

*Performed as follows:

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24

CONGO

FOR VOICE AND PIANOFORTE

NY 2192



FRANTZ CASSÉUS

CONGO

Congo'm mandé ça ouap fait pou moin,
 moin mandé ça ouapé fait,
 Congo'm rélé lan nuit' cou li jou pou
 los yo descend cé foi moin cé té
 moin cé sang'm
 La rivié rou lé sabla s'ns nannan.

Congo, moin oué zétoile moin filé la'l
 déié mon'n la tè chèche zannimo
 sans graisse fem'm moin sans
 répit bois pas donnin.

Sô ala rélén rélé ala tandémoin
 tandé, ala rélém rélé zantraille
 moin pé raché.

Congo, I am asking what you will do for me,
 I am asking what you will do.
 Congo, I cry night and day,
 So the spirits will come upon me.
 This is my fate,
 This is my land,
 This is my blood.
 The river flows and the sand has no substance.

Congo, I saw my star fall away behind
 the mountain.
 The land is dry, the animals have no fat,
 My wife has no relief, the trees don't grow.

Sister, how much did I cry,
 How much did I hear, how much did I cry—
 My stomach is torn apart.

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25

Deux Pièces Caractéristiques

Suite for Guitar

Frantz Casséus

No. 1: Congo

Moderato

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

XII CV CVII

Musical score pages 16, 22, 27, and 31. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the vocal parts and a bass clef staff for the piano. The vocal parts are marked with fingerings (e.g., 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) above the notes. The piano part includes dynamic markings like f and p , and performance instructions like "cresc." and "dim.". Measure 16 starts with a forte dynamic. Measures 22 and 27 show rhythmic patterns with eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 31 features a piano dynamic f .

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Musical score pages 26, 35, 39, and 44. The vocal parts continue with fingerings and dynamics. Measure 35 includes a crescendo instruction. Measure 39 shows a piano dynamic f followed by a dimissive instruction. Measure 44 includes a piano dynamic mf and a tempo instruction "poco a poco".

Musical score page 49. The vocal parts continue with fingerings and dynamics. The piano part ends with a fermata over the final measure.

No. 2: Rara

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 76$

CVII

4

CII

8

CII

CII

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27

12

CVII

CV

15

19

CXII

CVII

23

0

26

29

C^{VII}

32

C^{XII}

C^{VII}

C^{VII}

36

D. S.

al

Coda

C^{VII}

C^{VII}

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29

Simbi

Agitato ad libitum

Frantz Casséus

simile

4

7

10

C^{II}

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30

0

3 CIII

④ ③ ⑤

3

3

2 0 CII

②

3 C VII 3

3

C VII

③ ② ④

3

3 3 3 C VII

② ③ ④

9

0 4 0 CII

⑤ p i m a ④ 0 0

3

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..A.

52

C VII

3 3 3 3 3 3 al Coda

56

3 3 3 3 3 3

59

1 4 3

62

66

Dal segno
al coda \oplus

Coda

73

XII
harm.

CVII

harm. VII

76

XII
harm.

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32

to Rhoda
Dance of the Hounslies

Frantz Casséus

Moderé et bien rythmé

6

p

f

p cresc.

f

f decisif

11

16

f

21

p

26

p

31

p

37

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33

CVII

43

2.

f

48

Cv

Cv

Cv

Cv

53

CV

CvII

(3)

(5)

58

0

0

0

63

0

2

68

0

1.

73

2. CvII

3

0

4

4

3

5

77

CvII

3

0

4

4

3

5

81

XII

harm.

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34

for Rhoda On Sunday (Danse)

Frantz Casséus
1969

Adagio cantabile

The musical score consists of ten staves of music for piano. The key signature is A major (three sharps). Measure 1 starts with a forte dynamic. Measures 2-3 show a melodic line with grace notes and slurs. Measures 4-5 feature eighth-note patterns with grace notes. Measures 6-7 continue the melodic line with eighth-note patterns. Measures 8-9 show eighth-note patterns with grace notes. Measure 10 concludes with a forte dynamic.

4 CII

7 CIX

10 CVII CII

13 CIV CII 4 3 1.

18 2. CVII CII

22 CVII CIII

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35

25 CV

CVII



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36

Prelude [No. 2]

Frantz Casséus

A continuation of the musical score. It begins with a 'Largo' dynamic and a 'Coda' section starting with a melodic line. The score then transitions to a section labeled 'Coda' with a melodic line consisting of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score concludes with a final section labeled 'D. S. al Fine'.

4

CII 2 0 2 1

CVII

8

12 rit. a tempo

16 fff

20 rit. (4) (5) (6) barm

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Romance

Frantz Casséus

Largo

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39

Valse

Frantz Casséus

3

7

15

23

31

38

45

53

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Andante

The sheet music consists of six staves of musical notation, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature varies between common time and 2/4.

- Staff 1:** Measures 1-3. Fingerings: 1 4 -4, 2 4 -4 -4. Measure 3 ends with a repeat sign.
- Staff 2:** Measures 4-6. Fingerings: 4, 4, 2, 3, 2.
- Staff 3:** Measures 7-9. Fingerings: CVII, 4, 5, 3, 2, 3, CVII, 2, CV.
- Staff 4:** Measures 10-12. Fingerings: 1, 0, 1, 4, 4, Cv, ②, 1, Cv.
- Staff 5:** Measures 13-15. Fingerings: Cv, Cv, Cv.
- Staff 6:** Measures 16-18. Fingerings: Cv, Cv, Cv.

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22

A musical score page featuring a single staff in treble clef. The first measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 3, 4, 4, 3, 3, and 2. The second measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, and 0. The third measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 5, 3, 2, 3, 0, and 1. The fourth measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 4, 4, 3, 3, 2, and 1.

CVII

25

A musical score page featuring a single staff in treble clef. The first measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 2, 1, 0, 1, 0, and 1. The second measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 3, 1, 0, 1, 0, and 1. The third measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 4, 4, 3, 3, 2, and 1.

28

A musical score page featuring a single staff in treble clef. The first measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, and 0. The second measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, and 0. The third measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, and 0.

31

A musical score page featuring a single staff in treble clef. The first measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 3, 1, 0, 1, 0, and 1. The second measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 3, 1, 0, 1, 0, and 1. The third measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, and 0.

34

A musical score page featuring a single staff in treble clef. The first measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, and 0. The second measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, and 0. The third measure shows a sequence of eighth notes with fingerings: 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, and 0.

Chanson

Frantz Casséus
July 1957

Andante

CVII

CVII

6

CV CVII

12

CVII

18

CVII

Cv

24

30

1.

2.

Harm XII

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Improvisation

Frantz Casséus

Larghetto



Merengue

Frantz Casséus

Andante

6 =D

5

9 Cv

14

18

22 to Coda

1. 2.

Coda

Fin

D. S. al Coda

Prelude No. 1

Frantz Casséus

Andante

Frantz Casséus

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20

Cv
CvII
Harm.
XII

Romance (1978)

Frantz Casséus

Largo

0 4 3 ② CII

5 CIV ② 2 4

8 0 4 -4 CIV 1 2 4 3 ③ ② ③ ③ 1 0

12 CIV 2 4 1. 4 Cvii 2. rit. rit. Fin

poco rit.

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