David Bruce

## Caja de música

for Harp



**RED BALLOON MUSIC** 

## Program Note

"Caja de música" means music box in Spanish.

Down the road from where I live in St Albans, England, there is the most extraordinary instrument museum. It's actually called an "organ museum" but this is a misnomer, as it is full of mechanical musical instruments of all shapes and sizes. Some are huge contraptions, rescued from some derelict Victorian sea-front, with a thousand hammers, saxophones and accordions squeezing and puffing away by themselves; others are smaller scale music boxes, with exquisite bells tinkling away when you open the lid. It's the most fantastic and unexpected treasure-chest of a place, though it is also somehow slightly unnerving at the same time.

I have always found something appealing about the music a music box plays. It is true that, like the organ museum, the music can have a slightly macabre quality—the ghostly, soul-lessness of machine-made music. But it also invariably has a charming naïve simplicity.

For some reason, when Bridget Kibbey asked me to write this piece, the music from the organ museum came into my mind. The harp is certainly capable of creating the kind of toy-like sounds I was thinking of. At the same time, however, a diametrically opposing musical thought came to me. I had not long before come across the wonderful *Joropo* music from Venezuela, which is usually written for a trio of harp, Cuatro (a guitar-like instrument) and shakers. This music has a totally different approach to using the harp from the coloristic clience we might associate it with in the Classical tradition. It is raw, vibrant and above all, rhythmic. I knew straight away that this was another aspect of the harp I would want to try to bring to the piece.

So the resulting piece, in three movements, is a strange hybrid of these two totally unconnected traditions. There are strong hints of *Joropo* throughout—including a 3beats-to-a-bar time signature at the start of all three movements. But there is also something of that music box naiveté here too, though I instruct the performer to let any mechanical motions the music might have take care of themselves and to concentrate on making the three dances as human as possible!

-DAVID BRUCE

duration: ca. 14 minutes

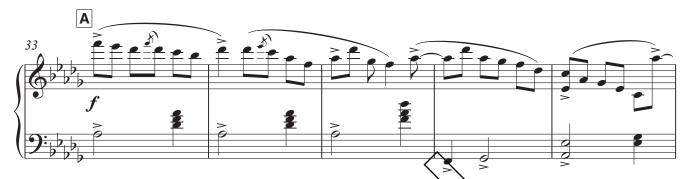
commissioned by Concert Artists Guild

World premiere: Bridget Kibbey, Weill Hall, Carnegie Hall, 28 April 2009



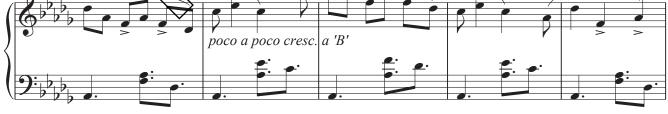
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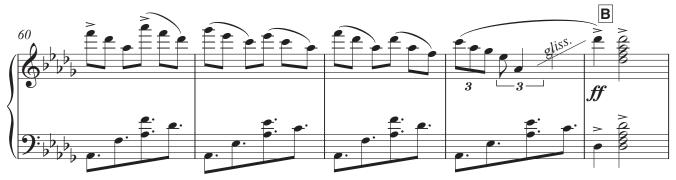








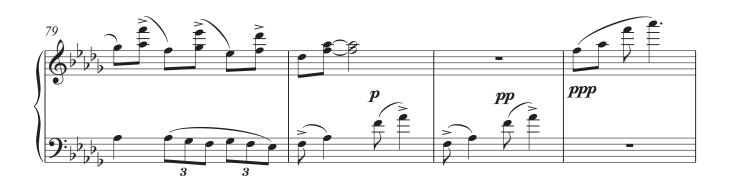


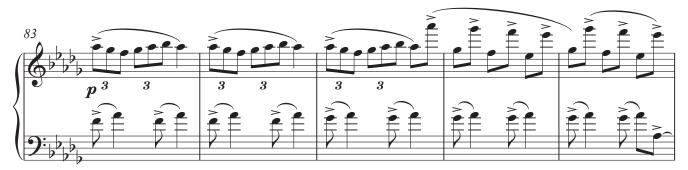










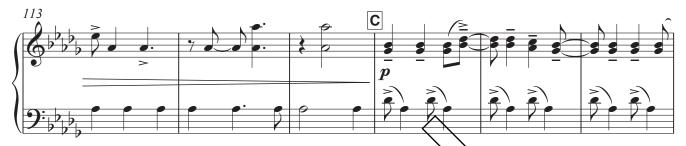






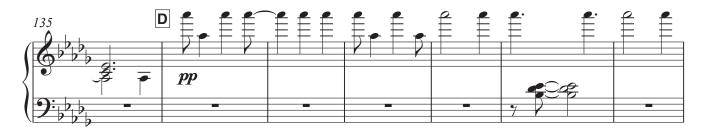


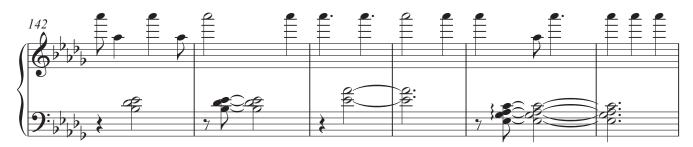






















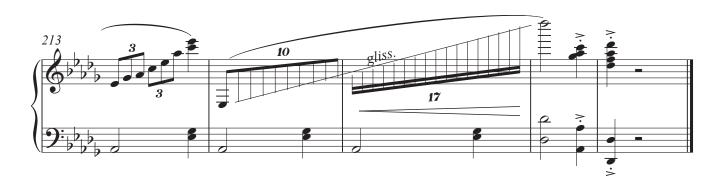












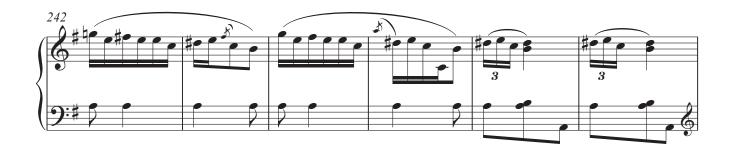
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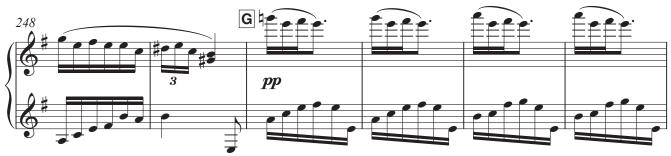


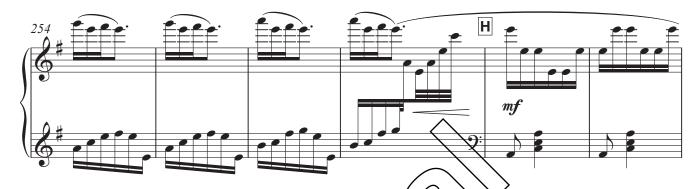






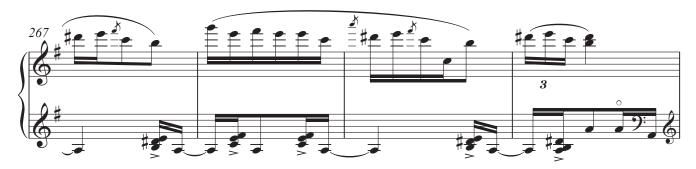




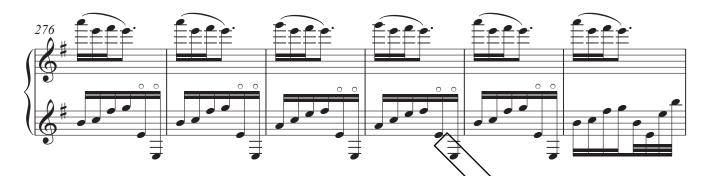


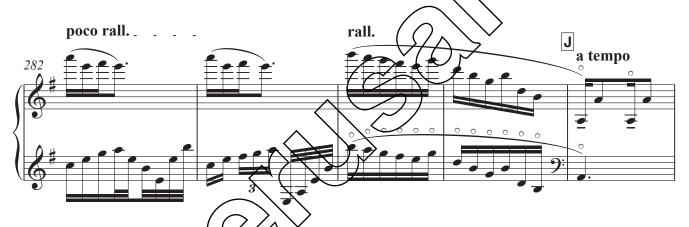


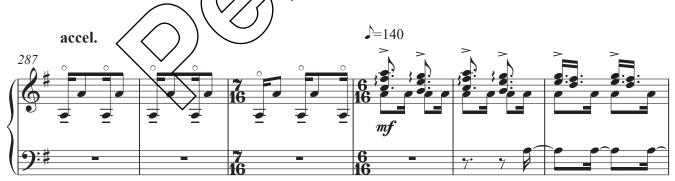




















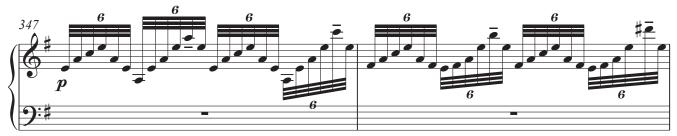


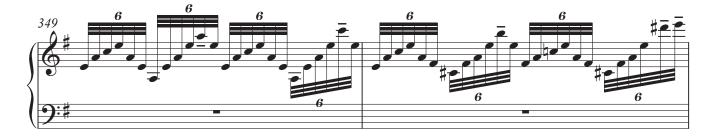




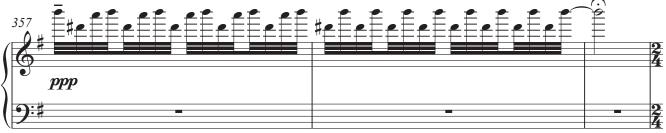




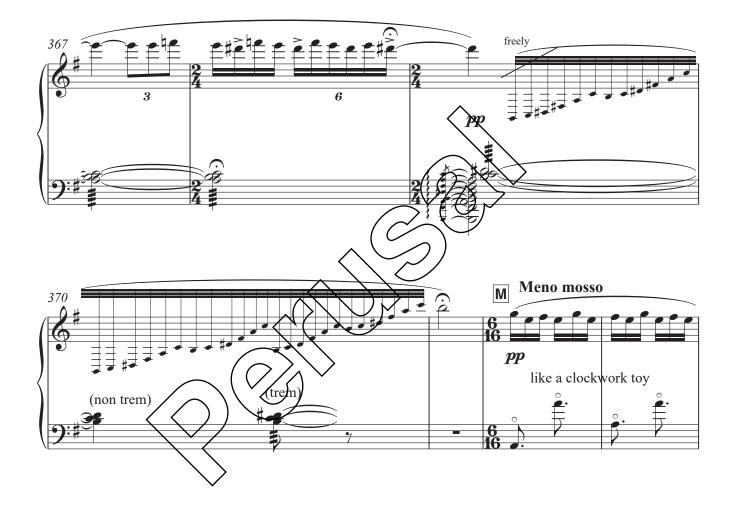


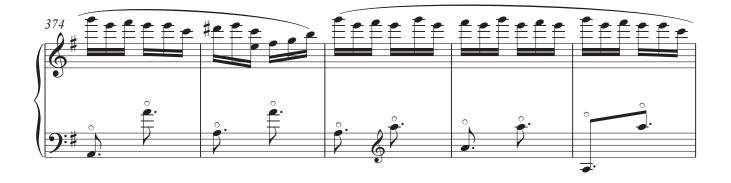


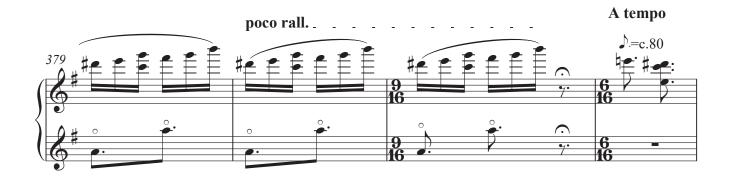


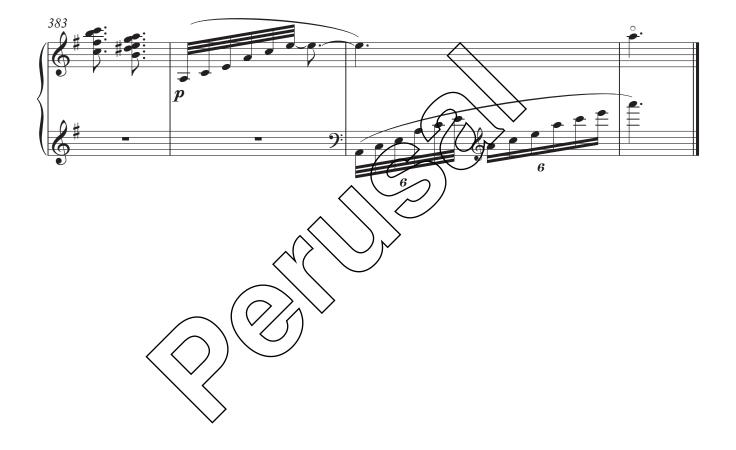












III.































