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Lovers and rulers, the real and the surreal: harmonic metaphors in Silvio Rodríguez songs

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Abstract

This article, which analyzes 136 of Silvio Rodríguez over 500 songs and provides a close reading of seventeen, highlights musical patterns that recur in songs with similar themes across three periods: 1967-1970, when Rodríguez was censured; 1971-1989, when nueva trova became institutionalized; and post-1990, in Cubas Special Period. Differing viewpoints and emotions are often set in different keys (Debo partirme en dos (1969)); songs with a political message are set in simple repeating patterns (Resumen de noticias (1969)); and many of his love songs are highly chromatic or harmonically unstable (Ojalá (1969)). Double-plagal progressions often signify fatalism and never-ending struggle (Sueño con serpientes (1974), Reino de todavía (1994)). Analyses are complemented by Rodríguez comments regarding his creative process.

Keywords

Silvio Rodríguez, nueva trova, analysis -- popular music, analysis
Schenkerian, ethnomusicology popular music, Cuba, politics Cuba.

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