

# FOGO POSTO

(ARSON)

para/for

Piano Solo

**João Godinho**

Score/Partitura

Partitura de consulta  
(Interdita a cópia e utilização em concerto)

© João Godinho (b.1976)

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Approximate duration: 8'00"

Commissioned by MUSMA/Festival do Estoril 2011

Dedicated to Joana Gama

## Program notes

Commissioned by: Festival do Estoril / MUSMA 2011

The month of August, 2010, was tragic for Portugal's forests. During the summer, more than 15,000 fires were recorded, representing more than 100,000 hectares of devastation (more than 1% of the country). It was unsettling to follow this tragedy in the media, and it was especially disturbing to find out that the authorities estimated that at least 40% of the fires were intentional (arson).

I was challenged to write a piano piece inspired by the theme "Liszt and Landscape" on one of these hot August days.

As a rule, the destructive acts that human kind inflicts on nature have identifiable commercial, cultural or demographical motives behind them. There are, however, unusual cases that do not fall under any of these categories, such as pyromania. Arson, when committed by a pyromaniac, is an isolated case in which a human being destroys nature with the singular goal of experiencing the euphoria of destruction and the visual and audible show that fires provides.

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*Arson is a musical hallucination narrated from the mind of a pyromaniac who commits the crime and stays to watch the spectacle. The piece fantasizes about the trip for the senses that the ignition sparks in the perpetrator as he watches the spreading of the flames and contemplates the colors and textures that emanate from leaves, trees, bushes and earth. He lets himself be hypnotized by the sound of crackling all around him and listens to inflammable fragments of music that melt in the heat of the adrenaline that invades him. And he hallucinates... he hallucinates about Liszt, virtuoso like fire. Pyromaniac and fire become one; divine, purifier, voracious, out of control. In the vertigo of this sound furnace he finds serenity – satiating and pacifying – even if ephemeral like fire itself.*

# Notas de programa

Encomenda: Festival do Estoril / MUSMA 2011

Ao longo do mês de Agosto de 2010, Portugal assistiu a um período trágico para as suas florestas. Só durante o Verão foram registados mais de 15.000 incêndios, representando uma devastação superior a 100.000 hectares (mais de 1% do país). Foi inquietante acompanhar esta tragédia nos jornais e na televisão, e foi especialmente perturbador constatar que as autoridades portuguesas asseguram que pelo menos 40% dos incêndios foram intencionais (fogo posto).

O desafio de escrever uma peça para piano inspirada no tema “Liszt and Landscape” chegou numa destas tardes escaldantes de Agosto de 2010.

Regra geral, as acções nefastas que a humanidade exerce sobre a natureza têm por detrás motivos de ordem comercial, cultural ou demográfica perfeitamente identificáveis. Há no entanto casos insólitos cujo móbil não se enquadra em nenhuma destas categorias, como a piromania. O fogo posto, quando ateadado por um pirómano por puro prazer e fascínio, é um caso singular em que o ser humano devasta o meio ambiente tendo exclusivamente em vista a euforia da destruição e o espectáculo visual e sonoro que o fogo proporciona.

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*Fogo Posto é uma alucinação musical narrada a partir da mente de um pirómano que comete o delito e permanece em cena para assistir ao espectáculo. A peça fantasia sobre a viagem de sentidos que a ignição desencadeia no autor do crime, enquanto observa a propagação das chamas e contempla as cores e texturas que emanam das folhas, árvores, arbustos, chão; enquanto se deixa hipnotizar pelo som do crepitar à sua volta e escuta fragmentos inflamáveis de música que derretem no calor da adrenalina que o invade, e alucina, alucina Liszt, virtuoso como o fogo. Pirómano e fogo, um só, divino, purificador, voraz, descontrolado. É na vertigem dessa fornalha de som que encontra a serenidade, saciante e apaziguadora, ainda que efémera como o próprio fogo.*

# Performance notes

For any questions concerning the performance of this piece,  
please feel free to contact the composer at:  
[mail@joaogodinho.com](mailto:mail@joaogodinho.com) or (+351) 966 064 313

## **Character and Expression**

This piece lives out of contrasts of Character, Tempo, Dynamics and Colour. All aspects of the performance should contribute to reinforce these contrasts.

The quantitative *tempo* indications are merely suggestions. When choosing comfortable *tempos*, the performer should give priority to expressive/qualitative indications and to the resulting acoustics. In difficult passages, it is more important to clearly hear each note than to maintain speed metronomically.

The main texture of this piece consists on alternating notes between hands. In the context of this technique, articulation expressions like *marcato* and *legato* acquire slightly different meanings and possibilities:

*marcato* – it means that within each hand notes are to be played *marcato*. Since hands alternate most of the time, the resulting sound should be well articulated but a bit smoother than the usual meaning of the musical term *marcato*.

*legato* – it means that the notes within each hand should be played *legato*. Since hands alternate, notes overlap and the resulting sound is somewhat more blurred than the usual meaning of this term.

*molto legato* – it means that the notes within each hand should be played *molto legato*. The resulting sound of both hands playing should be even more blurred than in the previous case, since the amount of overlapping is bigger.

*legato between hands (b.h)* – it means that the performer should focus on the resulting melody of both hands alternating and try to make the resulting melody sound like a normal *legato*.

Occasionally the performer is asked to play combinations of these, for example *marcato* on the right hand (r.h.) and *legato* on the left hand (l.h.).



this notation means that the key should be held down until the *sostenuto* pedal has been depressed or until the finger that plays this note is needed again; it is also used to identify some of the notes that are being sustained due to the used of the *sostenuto* pedal.

### **Rhythm and Patterns**

The main texture of this piece is a *moto continuo*. Its “skeleton” is built upon the combination (alternation) of different numbered patterns between hands. Most of the sections in this piece are a result of this process. The “formulas” are shown above the first note of each small section, which makes the sections them identifiable. For example, (6 x 5) means that in that section the right hand plays a 6 note pattern against a 5 note pattern in the left hand. (Individual patterns of each hand are not to be emphasized in the performance.) Although there are several exceptions within these formulas, the formulas might be helpful in the process of reading/decoding the score.

Although the score has an unusually high number of notes considering its duration, the memorization of the piece will be considerably easier once the performer has understood its repetitive patterns and the way they work together. In spite of the complex harmonic and rhythmic feel of the piece, the parts of each hand can be sometimes surprisingly simple; that can be easily understood if hands are played separately.

Due to the nature of the piece, the rhythmic feel is sometimes complex and there’s more than one regular beat “to grab on to”. Notes are usually beamed in groups of four or three, according to the time signature, but it is to the performer to discover and emphasize the resulting rhythmic feel of each passage.

### **Accidentals**

The basic concept behind this texture of alternating hands relies on the fact that most of the time they work at different “heights”. During most of the piece, while one hand is playing only “black” keys, the other one only plays “white” keys, in such a way that hands avoid collision.


Accidentals are valid during the whole bar. However, since the texture of this score is visually complex, cautionary accidentals are used frequently.

### **Pedals**

This piece requires the use of the *sostenuto* pedal, besides the *una corda* and *sustain pedal*. Due to the fact that the *sostenuto* pedal is rarely required, the performer should inform the venue in advance about the need of a well calibrated pedal.

When the  $\text{Ped}$  symbol is used alone, it refers to the sustain pedal. Occasionally, since more than one pedal might be used at the same time, the cautionary word “sustain” appears in front of it. Besides its conventional uses, the *sustain* pedal is used in the following ways:

$\frac{1}{2}$   $\text{Ped}$  - Half pedal – The sustain pedal should be slightly depressed in such a way that it doesn’t “flood” the harmonies (unless that is specifically requested). This of course varies according to the instrument, to the acoustics of the concert room and to the register being played. After a  $\frac{1}{2}$  pedal indication, usually follows a “full” pedal indication cancelling out the “ $\frac{1}{2}$ ”.

$\text{Ped}$   Depress the sustain pedal gradually and release it abruptly at the end of the closed triangle.

The *sostenuto* pedal is used in a conventional way, that is, after certain keys have been played or depressed silently (*senza sonare*).

In this piece it is essential that the “amount” of *sustain* pedal used in each occasion considers the piano size and acoustics of the room.

### Dynamics

When only one dynamics indication appears, it applies to both hands, regardless of its position.

### Ossias:

Notes in brackets are optional.

This piece contains some *ossias* indicated in the score.

The first section of the piece (bars 1-7) requires subtle *sostenuto* pedal effects. If the conditions of the piano or concert room make it difficult for the audience to clearly listen to these delicate sounds, then consider using the following alternative procedures:

Bar 2: instead, press these notes *senza sonare*:



Bar 3: instead, press these notes *senza sonare*:



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please read performance notes for better understanding of the composer's intentions.

para Joana Gama  
**Fogo Posto**  
(Arson)

João Godinho

**A**

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$   
*stealthily*

Piano

*mf* *sfz* *mf* *mf* *sfz*

senza sonare *Ped. sostenuto* senza sonare *Ped. sost. (until bar 8)*

Piano

5 *mf* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

8<sup>vb</sup> 8<sup>vb</sup> 8<sup>vb</sup>

**B**

$\text{♩} = 120 - 140$  [Tempo I]  
*suddenly, like a fire igniting* *deciso; like a fire spreading*

Pno.

*marcato* *sfz* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

una corda (until bar 27) *Ped.* *mf* *p* *Ped.* *mp* *Ped.*

Pno.

11 *mf* *p* *Ped.* *mp* *Ped.*

Pno.

14 *mf* *mp* *Ped.* *mf* *mp*



2 17 [8 x 5]

Ped. mf

20 [6 x 5]

Ped. mf

23 (hold down keys until sost. pedal is pressed) [4 x 7] C

Ped. sost. mp molto legato

26 *con fuoco* [8 x 5]

*f marcato* rfz

tre corde

29 *subtle* [3 x 4] *deciso* [4 x 5] [5 x 4]

*mp subito, legato una corda* *mf marcato tre corde* mf

32 [6 x 5]

*p subito marcato*

legato between bands (b.b.)

35

Pno.

38

Pno.

*f*

*mp subito, molto legato*  
una corda

Ped.

[4 x 7]

41

Pno.

*f*

*marcato, quasi staccato*  
tre corde

[5 x 6]

44

Pno.

*mf subito*

*staccato right hand (r.h.)* **D**

[6 x 5]

*legato left hand (l.h.)*

46

Pno.

49

Pno.

[ossia 1: play with both hands]  
[ossia 2: alternate chords between hands]

*stringendo* *rit.*

*mf* *ff*

*legato* *mf*

Ped.

Tempo I  
like a whirlwind

51

[8 x 9]

Pno.

*mf*  
*legato*

*rfz*

54

**E** *calmer*

[4 x 5]

Pno.

*mf marcato*

57

(8)

[8 x 5]

Pno.

*mp*

*mp*  
una corda

60

(8)

Pno.

*legato b.h.*

*legato b.h. etc.*

63

(8)

Pno.

66

(8)

*con brio*

(both hands)

Pno.

*f marcato*  
tre corde

69 *f* *mf subito, marcato*

72 **F** *like sparks and crackles*  
*pp subito marcato*  
 una corda

75 *sffz*

78 *sffz*

80 **G** *sffz* *like gusts of wind*  
*f* *rfz* *mf marcato* *rfz* *mf* *rfz*

83 *mf* *f* *ff* *f*  
*molto legato*

**H** like fire spreading fast

Piano score for measures 86-92. The piece is in 12/16 time. Measure 86 has a *mp legato* marking and a *[6 x 5]* fingering. Measure 90 has a *p molto legato* marking. The right hand has a *H* dynamic marking. Pedal markings include *Ped. \* Ped. \** and *etc...*.

Piano score for measures 89-92. Measure 89 is marked *crescendo*. The right hand has a *sfz* marking. Pedal markings include *rfz* and *sfz*.

Piano score for measures 93-95. Measure 93 is marked *f*. Measure 95 is marked *ff*. Pedal markings include *Ped. \* Ped. \* etc.* and *Ped. \* Ped. \* etc.*. A *più f* marking is also present.

Piano score for measures 96-98. Measure 96 is marked *f marcato*. Measure 98 is marked *legato*. A *[3 x 4]* fingering is shown in the right hand.

Piano score for measures 99-101. Measure 99 is marked *mf molto legato* and *late rall. dying out*. Pedal markings include *Ped. \* Ped. \** and *etc...*.

Piano score for measures 102-106. Measure 102 is marked *I* and *ca. 120*. The right hand has *senza sonare* markings. Pedal markings include *(without sostenuto pedal)*. Dynamic markings in the right hand are *p*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, and *p*.

108 *dark, lugubrious; murmurando*

Pno.

*una corda*

*pp mp p pp mp pp mp*

Ped. (sustain) Ped. Ped.

112

Pno.

*pp mp pp mp p pp mp p*

tre corde

If sostenuto pedal is unavailable add sustain pedal ad lib

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. (sost.)

118 **J** *cavernous (upper melody discreet)*

Pno.

*p (!) legato*

8<sup>vb</sup>

Ped. (sustain)

8<sup>vb</sup> (do not release sostenuto pedal until bar 126)

121 *accel. impetuous*

Pno.

*f rffz f*

Ped. (sustain)

122 *cavernous (upper melody discreet)*

Pno.

*p legato*

8<sup>vb</sup>

Ped. (sustain)

125 *accel.*  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 90$  *impetuous* *rall.*

Pno. *f* *rffz* *f*

*8va*

*Ped.* \*

**K**  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 100-110$   
*firm, tense, agitated*  
 126 [4 x 3 in one single hand]

Pno. *f marcato r.b.* [5 x 4 in one single hand] *f legato l.b.*

\* (release both sost. and sustain pedals)

128

Pno. *marcato*

*very tense and harsh*

*8va*

*b.h.*

130

Pno. *ff*

*8va*

132 *calming down* *very gradual and smooth transition to L*

Pno. *(8)*

**L** *oneiric (let harmonies blur)*  
 134 *poco accel.*

Pno. *pp* [6 x 3]

*Ped. (sustain)*  
*una corda*

**M** rapid changes of mood...

$\text{♩} = 120 - 140$

137

Pno. *mf marcato*

—| tre corde

139

Pno. *p subito, legato* *f subito, marcato*

142

Pno. *mp subito, marcato*

145

Pno. *ff marcato*

147

Pno. *rit.* *mp legato* *poco accel.*

149

Pno. *mf* *f*

[ossia: omit accompaniment and play upper staff using both hands]

$\text{♩} = 120 - 140$  *rit.*



♩ = 110 - 120

♩ = 120 - 140

151 *p subito, marcato* [3 x 2] *pp* [5 x 4]

*Ped.* (sustain)  
una corda

154 [3 x 4]

156 *poco rall.* *mp* *poco accel. stringendo* *p* *rfz*

1/2 *Ped.*  
tre corde \*

159 [3 x 5] *mf legato* [3 x 5] *mf marcato*

1/2 *Ped.* \*

162 [8 x 9] *tempestoso, crescendo* *mp* *f* *mp*

*Ped.* (until bar 187!)

164 *poco accel.* *mp* *f* *mf* *ff*

like a hypnosis

[3 x 5]

166

Pno.

*ff* *mf* *f*

168

Pno.

170

Pno.

(♩ = ca. 80) rit.

*p*

173

P

♩ = 90

*pp* una corda

*cristal like, oneiric (let harmonies blur)*

(do not release sustain pedal)

176

Pno.

179

Pno.

accel. senza crescere

♩ = ca. 120

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 120$   
*awaking from a dreamlike state*

*poco accel.*

183 **Q**  $[3 \times 4]$

Pno. *p* *legato*

(do not release sustain pedal)  
tre corde

186  $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 140$

Pno. *f*

\* Ped. \* Ped.

188 **R**  $\text{♩} = 120 - 140$  ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ )

Pno. *ff* *ff* *fff*

*Ab Irato; molto ritmico* (let the semiquavers *moto* be heard)

\* (release sustain pedal)

191 (let the semiquavers *moto* be heard)

Pno. *ff* *fff* *fff*

194 *molto ritmico, aggressivo* *eroico*

Pno. *ff* *fff* *fff*

*seco marcato* *marcatissimo*

8<sup>vb</sup>

197  $[3 \times 4]$

Pno. *fff* *marcatissimo*

8<sup>vb</sup>

200

Pno.

(8) *fff*  
*legato*  
*b.h.*  
Ped. (maintain full pedal until bar 222)

**S**  $\text{♩} = 120 - 140$   
*grande crescendo ed acellerando*

203

Pno.

*ppp*  
*marcato*  
una corda

206

Pno.

208

Pno.

210

Pno.

*intense, clustered and very unstable in dynamics*  
[3 x 5]  
tre corde

212

Pno.

*presto possibile, brutale*

[ossia: play approximate clusters freely]

214

Pno.

*poco rall.*

216

Pno.

*fff*

clusters with palm of hands

ca. 7"

217

Pno.

*ffff*

8<sup>vb</sup>

(do not release sustain pedal)

♩ = ca. 100  
*like an echo*

ca. 6"

♩ = ca. 100  
*like an echo*

219

Pno.

8<sup>vb</sup>

*marcato*

*p*

*mp*

(do not release sustain pedal)

8<sup>vb</sup>

*marcato*

*pp*

*p*

222

♩ = ca. 60

release notes one by one until only F# is being depressed

let F# resonate for about 4"  
and then release note

Pno.

8<sup>vb</sup>

8<sup>vb</sup>

Ossia to bars 1-7 | In case the tonal pedal is unreliable or unavailable

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$   
*stealthily*

Pno. *mf* *sfz* *mf* *sfz*

Pno. senza sonare senza sonare  $\text{8}^{\text{va}}$

*mf* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

Pno. *mf* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

Pno.  $\text{8}^{\text{va}}$   $\text{8}^{\text{va}}$   $\text{8}^{\text{va}}$  (8)

Ossia to bars 1-7 | In case the auditorium is large or dry.

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 40$   
*stealthily*

Pno. *mf* *sfz* *mf* *sfz*

Pno. senza sonare senza sonare  $\text{Ped. sostenuto}$   $\text{Ped. sost. (until bar 8)}$

*mf* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

Pno. *mf* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

Pno.  $\text{8}^{\text{va}}$   $\text{8}^{\text{va}}$   $\text{8}^{\text{va}}$