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The purpose of this study is to research the life and work of Costa Rican composer Benjamín Gutiérrez (b.1937), with particular emphasis on his solo piano works. Although comprised of a small number of pieces, his piano output is an excellent representation of his musical style. Gutiérrez is regarded as one of Costa Rica's most prominent composers, and has been the recipient of countless awards and distinctions. His works are known beyond Costa Rican borders only to a limited extent; thus one of the goals of this investigation is to make his music more readily known and accessible for those interested in studying it further.

The specific works studied in this project are his *Toccata y Fuga*, his lengthiest work for the piano, written in 1959; then five shorter pieces written between 1981 and 1992, namely *Ronda Enarmónica*, *Invención*, *Añoranza*, *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra* and *Danza de la Pena Negra*. The study examines Gutiérrez's musical style in the piano works and explores several relevant issues, such as his relationship to nationalistic or indigenous sources, his individual use of musical borrowing, and his stance toward tonality/atonality. He emerges as a composer whose aesthetic roots are firmly planted in Europe, with strong influence from nineteenth-century Romantics such as Chopin and Tchaikovsky, but also the "modernists" Bartók, Prokofiev, Milhaud, and Ginastera, the last two of whom were Gutiérrez's teachers.

The research is divided into six chapters, comprising an introduction, an overview of the development of art music in Costa Rica, a biography of Gutiérrez, a brief account

of piano music in the country before Gutiérrez and up to the present day, a detailed study of his solo piano compositions, and conclusions. Since this music is not readily available outside Costa Rica, this paper includes an appendix with all of Gutiérrez's solo piano pieces, including the author's editorial suggestions.

COSTA RICAN COMPOSER BENJAMÍN GUTIÉRREZ
AND HIS PIANO WORKS

by

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Benjamín Gutiérrez (b. 1937) is one of Costa Rica's most celebrated living composers. Born and raised in San José, Costa Rica's capital and most important city, Gutiérrez also studied music in Guatemala City, Boston, Ann Arbor, Aspen and Buenos Aires. Gutiérrez achieved an early success with the premiere of his opera *Marianela* in 1957, when the composer was only twenty years old, and thanks to this event he was offered a scholarship to study composition at the New England Conservatory. His teachers have included Ross Lee Finney, Darius Milhaud and Alberto Ginastera. His compositions range from piano solo and chamber music to orchestral music and opera, and they have been performed in several Latin American countries, the United States, Europe and Japan. He has received many awards and distinctions, among them the National Prize of Composition in Costa Rica on six different occasions (1962, 1964, 1973, 1977, 1980, and 1985). In 1999, *La Nación*, Costa Rica's leading newspaper, named him Musician of the Century, and in the year 2000 he was awarded the *Premio Magón*, the highest distinction bestowed upon an individual for a life dedicated to the development of culture in Costa Rica.

His reputation and musical activities have not been limited to composing; he has also been a very active conductor, and a concert and collaborative pianist. In addition, he

is considered one of the most influential music pedagogues in Costa Rica, having mentored several students who developed into successful composers in their own right.

In spite of his being the most publicly recognized and widely performed of Costa Rica's composers, there is an obvious lack of comprehensive research on his life and work. This study will attempt to fill that gap partially by accomplishing three objectives: 1) providing more biographical documentation of the composer than currently available, 2) elucidating particular elements of his compositional style, and 3) studying in detail his compositions for piano solo. In order to provide a historical background to Gutiérrez's work the research also includes a synopsis of the development of art music in Costa Rica, from colonial times through the establishment of the young nation, up to the present.

Gutiérrez's piano output, although small, is an excellent representation of his musical style. His lengthiest piano solo work is *Toccata y Fuga*, written in 1959 while the young Gutiérrez was studying under Darius Milhaud in Aspen, Colorado. Around ten minutes in length, it earned Gutiérrez an honorable mention at the Aspen Music Festival. The remaining solo works are five short pieces written between 1981 and 1992. Four of them were grouped together and published in 1993 under the title *Cuatro Piezas para Piano Elemental*. Their individual names are *Invencción*, *Añoranza* (Nostalgia), *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra*, and *Danza de la Pena Negra* (Dance of Black Grief). Another piece, called *Ronda Enarmónica* and also bearing the label *Piano Elemental*, also appeared in 1993 as an appendix to a reprint of the fugue alone from the 1959 *Toccata y Fuga*.

Besides his solo piano works, Gutiérrez's most extensive project for the piano is the *Variaciones Concertantes para Piano y Orquesta*, written in 1969 and premiered the same year by the Costa Rica National Symphony with the composer at the piano. The work has been performed only four times in Costa Rica, three times by the composer as soloist and once by the young Costa Rican pianist Carlos Quesada. In one movement, the Variations are about seventeen minutes in length. This work, however, will not be the focus of the present study which will concentrate only on his works for piano solo. Gutiérrez has also written concertos for violin, viola, clarinet, flute, saxophone, trombone quartet, bassoon quartet and marimba. A few of these, including the clarinet and violin concertos, have been performed both in Costa Rica and abroad. Some of the short piano solo works have also been performed around the world, but the piano variations are not known beyond Costa Rica's borders. It is to be hoped that this research will shed light on the piano works by this major Latin American composer and make their existence known to musicians in the United States and elsewhere.

Limitations of the Study

Although a comprehensive biography of Benjamín Gutiérrez is needed, especially since he has achieved the stature of a national cultural icon, this treatise will not attempt to accomplish that task. The primary objective of the biographical section of this document will be to provide a context for Gutiérrez's musical growth. Therefore, investigation of his development as a musician will be detailed, but personal information and biographical events not clearly related to the development of his compositional style will be omitted. Other areas of Gutiérrez's music, such as chamber music, symphonic

works or opera are also excluded from this research. Finally, the descriptive approach to Gutiérrez's works presented here emphasizes stylistic traits, historical contexts and influences: a detailed theoretical analysis of his works lies beyond the scope of this study.

Status of Related Research

With the exception of a few newspaper and journal articles and several brief paragraphs in a handful of books, research on the work of Costa Rican, and in fact most Central American living composers, has been neglected. Because of Gutiérrez's status as a national celebrity, local newspapers have often published interviews and articles about him, but most of these articles provide little information relevant to a scholarly investigation. At most, they provide a limited amount of information by transcribing Gutiérrez's comments and insights on his own life and music. Antonio Briceño's online interview for *Tiquicia.com* is the most comprehensive published to date and contains two sections,¹ the first with background information about Gutiérrez and the second with the interview. The second part of this interview, in five sections, includes Gutiérrez's recollections of his youth and some of his musical influences, as well as his views on musical education in Costa Rica and his view of his legacy. Also online, the Costa Rican conductor Susan Campos, who resides in Madrid, has recently created the *Benjamín Gutiérrez Sáenz Project*, the most extensive website concerning Gutiérrez's life and work, as part of her doctoral dissertation at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.²

¹ Benjamín Gutiérrez, "Maestro Benjamín Gutiérrez," interview by Antonio Briceño, *Tiquicia.com* (accessed on 10 September 2006), <<http://www.tiquicia.com/entrevistas/0008Benjamin/>>

² Susan Campos, "The Benjamín Gutiérrez Sáenz Project" (accessed 29 January 2007), <<http://www.benjamin-gutierrez-saenz.inspiriart.com/WELCOME.html>>

Although still under construction, Campos's project already provides a wealth of useful data including life chronology, lists of works, biographical material, stylistic observations and a number of links to material about Gutiérrez and some of his contemporaries.

A few journal articles by American scholars also mention Gutiérrez's work. The most relevant to the present research is Ronald R. Sider's 1984 article titled *Contemporary Composers in Costa Rica*, which studies the work of the two leading composers in the country: Benjamín Gutiérrez and Bernal Flores (b. 1937).³ The article is, to date, the only one to appear in an American music journal that discusses the music of Costa Rican composers in some detail. Sider himself is also the author of one of the most comprehensive studies of the development of art music in Central America. His doctoral dissertation, *The Art Music of Central America: Its Development and Present State*,⁴ gives detailed accounts of music schools, orchestras, and the most important composers of each Central American country, with analyses of selected works. In addition to being a composer, Bernal Flores (born, coincidentally, in the same year as Gutiérrez) is also a scholar who has published several books and articles in Costa Rica about significant Costa Rican musicians and also about the country's music history. His book *La Música en Costa Rica* (1978) is the most comprehensive research available on the country's music.⁵ It provides an overview of Costa Rica's musical development from

³ Ronald R. Sider, "Contemporary Composers in Costa Rica," *Latin American Music Review/Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (Autumn-Winter, 1984): 263-276.

⁴ Ronald R. Sider, "The Art Music of Central America: Its Development and Present State" (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 1967).

⁵ Bernal Flores, *La Música en Costa Rica* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1978).

the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries and a detailed account of the country's musical activity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Two Spanish-language dissertations written by Costa Ricans in the early 1990s are also relevant to the music of Gutiérrez and other Costa Rican composers. Juan Israel Carrillo's doctoral dissertation, *Survey of Choral Music by Selected Costa Rican Composers*, contains biographies, a few stylistic considerations, and analyses of some of their choral works.⁶ Besides Gutiérrez, the composers discussed include Belarmino Soto, Carlos María Gutiérrez (no relation to Benjamín), Alejandro Monestel, Julio Fonseca, Luis Diego Herra and Mario Alfagüel. The other study is a music education thesis written by Evelio Andrés Medrano in 1991, titled *La Música Contemporánea Costarricense en la Educación Secundaria: Una Propuesta para Novenos Años (Contemporary Costa Rican Music in Secondary Education: A Proposal for Ninth Graders)*. It analyzes the compositional techniques of five Costa Rican composers including Gutiérrez.⁷

Besides Susan Campos' *The Benjamín Gutiérrez Sáenz Project*, the research in progress of two other Costa Rican doctoral students involves the music of Benjamín Gutiérrez. Gerardo Meza's dissertation at the Universidad Nacional in the city of Heredia deals with the music of those Central American composers who studied in the Instituto Torcuato di Tella in Buenos Aires, including Gutiérrez, the Salvadorean Germán Cáceres, and the Guatemalan Jorge Sarmientos. Jorge Carmona's treatise, on the other hand,

⁶ Juan Israel Carrillo, "Survey of Choral Music by Selected Costa Rican Composers" (Ph. D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1993).

⁷ Evelio Andrés Medrano Suárez, "La Música Contemporánea Costarricense en la Educación Secundaria: Una Propuesta Didáctica para Novenos Años" (thesis for the degree of *Licenciado en Música con énfasis en Educación Musical*, Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica, 1991).

focuses on the Central American composers who utilize twelve-tone and other serial techniques. Although Gutiérrez experimented only briefly with this style, Carmona's research studies in some detail the few works he wrote using serial techniques.⁸

Organization of the Text

This document is divided into six chapters with this introduction as Chapter One. The second chapter gives an overview of the development of art music in Costa Rica. Chapter Three provides a biography of Gutiérrez. Chapter Four offers a brief account of the development of piano music in Costa Rica. Chapter Five examines Gutiérrez's compositional style and then focuses on his piano works, covering such issues as his relation to "indigenous" or "nationalistic" sources, his treatment of "musical borrowing," and his handling of tonality/atonality. Chapter Six summarizes the conclusions of the study. An appendix includes all the piano works discussed in this study, including the author's editorial suggestions.

Procedures

Due to the limited scholarly investigation of Gutiérrez's music, analyses of musical scores and personal interviews with the composer form the primary source for this study. Some of these interviews were conducted by the author but those done by Jorge Carmona and Gerardo Meza were also significant sources of information and are

⁸ Jorge Carmona Ruiz, "Sonatas para Piano de Construcción Serialista en Centroamérica en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XX." (thesis for the Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Arts and Letters in Central America. Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica, work in progress).

used consistently throughout the document.⁹ All the interviews, the author's as well as those by Carmona and Meza, were conducted in Spanish, Gutiérrez's native language, and translated into English by the author. Also, to provide additional insight into Gutiérrez's works, the author conducted interviews with Gerardo Duarte, a piano professor at the University of Costa Rica who has performed much of his solo and chamber music; Isabel Jeremías, a bassoon teacher at the same institution and the founder of the Phoenix Bassoon Quartet, an ensemble that has commissioned and premiered some of Gutiérrez's works; and, Mario Alfagüel, a Costa Rican composer who studied with Gutiérrez. These interviews also shed some light on the development of Costa Rican piano music in the twentieth century, a subject yet to be investigated in depth.

The author also found some information at the archives of the Teatro Nacional in San José, Costa Rica, where most of Gutiérrez's works have been performed. These documents include concert programs, newspaper reviews and articles. In addition, the author visited the archives of the Escuela de Artes Musicales at the University of Costa Rica, where Gutiérrez worked for nearly thirty years, and some significant data regarding his teaching, performing, and conducting was obtained there.

⁹ The author and the treatise supervisor, Dr. John Salmon, have received Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certification.

CHAPTER II

ART MUSIC IN COSTA RICA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Colonial Period

To trace the development of music in Costa Rica, it is useful to first look at Central America as a whole. Costa Rica's neighboring countries share with it a common colonial history, which is determinant in both the introduction and the development of art music in the area. In contrast with the Spanish colonial centers of Mexico and Peru, the Central American region underwent a much slower process of development during the Colonial period. The fever for gold and other precious metals, which divided the Spanish between the territories formerly inhabited by the Aztec and Inca empires, delayed Spanish settlement in the continent's isthmus. In fact, it was not until the second half of the sixteenth century that the settlement truly began, and in Costa Rica this process was marked by the arrival of Juan Vásquez de Coronado as governor in 1562.¹⁰

Prior to Columbus's discovery of the New World, music played an important role in the religious and social life of all the different civilizations that flourished in the continent. However, no music in notational form dating from Pre-Columbian times has been preserved, which makes it hard to assess the complexity of their musical systems or to know whether it developed as far as other arts, such as architecture, sculpture

¹⁰ Eugenio Rodríguez Vega, *Biografía de Costa Rica* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1981), 19.

and writing.¹¹ With colonization underway, the process of acculturation meant not only the imposition of Spanish culture but at the same time the eradication of anything native that could have threatened the Spanish goal of cultural domination. Thus the writings of the Indians were almost completely destroyed, possibly obliterating any musical notation that they might have used.¹² In Central America, the earliest extant musical notation dates from the nineteenth century,¹³ almost three hundred years after the French explorer Jean de Lery (1536-1613) first notated five melodies of Brazil's Tupynambá Indians.¹⁴ It is hard to know to what extent these melodies have been tainted by Spanish influence, or if they have managed to survive in a somewhat unadulterated form. Example 1 shows a melody notated in 1879 by the Costa Rican musician Pedro Prado Gómez; it is a motif from the Chorotega Indians who inhabited the country's northern region. Example 2 illustrates a melody of Bribri origin that was notated by the composers Julio Fonseca and Ismael Cardona in 1907.



Example 1. *Danza al Dios del Sol* (Dance to the Sun God).

¹¹ Gilbert Chase, *A Guide to the Music of Latin America* (Washington: Pan American Union, 1962), 15.

¹² Ronald R. Sider, "The Art Music of Central America: Its Development and Present State" (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 1967), 7.

¹³ Bernal Flores, *La Música en Costa Rica* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1978), 29.

¹⁴ Chase, 15.



Example 2. *Canción del Cazador* (Hunter's Song).¹⁵

The most significant role of music during the early days of the Spanish Colony was in the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church, which required a considerable amount of music. In the isolated Province of Costa Rica, however, the slow process of Spanish settlement delayed the introduction of European music.¹⁶ It was not by any means that music was not a priority in the colonization process, as it is evidenced by the activity in other more significant colonial centers. For instance, in 1524 in Texcoco, Mexico, only three years after Cortés' conquest of Mexico, Pedro de Gante founded the first music school in Latin America.¹⁷ Also in Mexico, the first edition of music in the New World took place in 1556, an ordinary of the mass.¹⁸ Guatemala City, the ruling province of the Captaincy General of Guatemala, had its cathedral built in 1534,¹⁹ and an organist and a *chantre* were appointed to it by order of the Pope Paul III. The organist was expected to

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Maria Clara Vargas, "Música y Sociedad: Prácticas Musicales en Costa Rica (1880-1914)," in *Re-Visión de un Siglo, 1897-1997* (San José: Museo de Arte Costarricense, 1998), 51.

¹⁷ Flores, 30.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The *Captaincy General of Guatemala* was the name of Central America from the sixteenth century until its independence from Spain in 1821. It included the state of Chiapas (Mexico), Guatemala (including present day Belize), Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

provide the music for every festivity, while the *chantre* was responsible for singing, conducting and teaching a choir school.²⁰

In the Province of Costa Rica, on the other hand, the presence of music both sacred and secular was not documented until much later. Some churches, however, were established in very early days, even before the arrival of Juan Vásquez de Coronado in 1562. The first church was built in Nicoya in 1544, but a fire destroyed it ninety years later and with it the archives that might have recorded any musical activity taking place in the church. Although it was rebuilt in 1644, there are no documents from later years that mention the importance or even the presence of music at the church. It is not until almost one hundred and fifty years later that music is documented in the archives of another church. Here a true aspect of acculturation becomes evident in the assimilation of some native musical instruments into the Church's services.²¹ In an inventory made at the church of Orosi in Cartago in 1785, the list of instruments used in the church's ceremonies includes not only guitars and violins, but also a marimba and two *chirimías*, a type of indigenous flute used widely during the Colony.²²

Because no manuscripts from the time of the Colony have survived, it is difficult to determine with precision the quality of the music being performed in Costa Rica during that time. Neither it is possible to tell with exactitude if any music was

²⁰ Sider, 15.

²¹ Flores, 33.

²² Ibid.

being composed in the new province at all.²³ In this regard also, Guatemala continues to be in an advantageous position due to the intense musical activity that took place early on. There are two surviving scores by a Spanish musician named Hernando Franco who worked in the Guatemala City cathedral from 1554 to 1573; they are a five-part *Lumen ad Revelationem* and a five-part *Benedicamus Domino*. The cathedral's archives as well as those from other churches in the country contain manuscripts from several composers active in other Spanish colonies, as well as manuscripts of some of the great composers of the Spanish and Flemish Renaissance such as Morales, Guerrero, Victoria, Ceballos, Isaac, Compère, Mouton and Sermisy.²⁴ The splendor of early Guatemalan musical life contrasts drastically with the absence of any records that could document similar activity in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. A similar situation is found in Panama, where no compositions from the time of the Colony are extant.²⁵

In 1821, independence from Spain came to Central America when Spanish authority was overthrown in Mexico and all Central American provinces agreed on a joint declaration of independence.²⁶ After a few attempts of the Mexican Empire to exercise control over the region, all the Central American countries joined in creating a federation. It was called the Federal Republic of Central America and it functioned

²³ Vargas, 51.

²⁴ Gerard Béhague, "Guatemala, Art Music," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (accessed 13 November 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

²⁵ Gerard Béhague, "Panama: Art Music," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (accessed 13 November 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

²⁶ Iván Molina and Steven Palmer, *The History of Costa Rica* (San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 2005), 47.

between 1823 and 1840. In 1838 Costa Rica withdrew from the federation, declaring itself a sovereign nation.²⁷

The Nineteenth Century

During the first few decades of the nineteenth century, musical activity in Costa Rica continued to follow Spanish customs and traditions, absorbing some of the elements of the native cultures. This meant that music had basically three different roles in society: the services of the Catholic Church, musical soirées in private homes, and military music accompanying official events.²⁸ The development of music in Costa Rica benefited greatly, before and after independence, from the arrival of foreign musicians who settled in the small country throughout its short history. Most of these foreign musicians, as well as the local ones, engaged in varied musical activities in order to make a living. Bernal Flores explains:

The work possibilities for a musician [in Costa Rica] during the nineteenth century were very limited, having in most cases to combine music with another profession. A musician could play in a band, take part in religious services at a church or teach music, either at a music school or privately.²⁹

Some of the earliest accounts that document the migration of musicians from other countries to Costa Rica date from this period. In 1804 for instance, some musicians from Nicaragua were hired to work at the newly built cathedral in the city of Heredia (1797).

²⁷ Molina and Palmer, 52.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Flores, 61. Translated by the author.

The fact that Costa Rica was at the time dependent on the dioceses of Nicaragua contributed to the constant migration of Nicaraguan musicians during the next few decades.³⁰ From 1845 onwards a more systematic process of documenting musical activity began. According to Bernal Flores, in that year the Costa Rican government hired the Guatemalan musician José Martínez to organize the Dirección General de Bandas.³¹

The role that military bands played in most Latin American countries in the nineteenth century was of tremendous significance. After Costa Rica became politically independent from Spain in 1821, a slower more gradual process of social and ideological independence continued. In this process of developing each country's identity, the national values portrayed by a country's military were of primary importance to the government, hence the strong support that military music received in Costa Rica throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century.³² Pompilio Segura Chaves explains in regard to the military bands:

Although these bands very seldom participated in military conflicts, they were considered as such because they remained subjected to the disciplinary regime of the army. Their members received all the military

³⁰ Bernal Flores, "La Vida Musical de Costa Rica en el Siglo XIX." In *Die Musikkulturen Lateinamerikas im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Robert Günther, 261-275 (Munich: Gustav Bosse Verlag Regensburg, 1982), 262.

³¹ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 40-41. There are some discrepancies as to whether the *Dirección General de Bandas* was created in that year or almost two decades later. María Clara Vargas in *Música y Sociedad. Prácticas Musicales en Costa Rica (1880-1914)*, 52, argues that in 1845 José Martínez was hired as an instructor, but that the institution did not begin to function until 1866, year in which it appears for the first time in some official documents. That being the case, the first director of bands would have been the Costa Rican Manuel María Gutiérrez and not José Martínez, who died in 1852.

³² Carlos Meléndez, *Manuel María Gutiérrez* (San José: Editorial Universidad Estatal a Distancia, 1979), 11.

ranks up to colonel, but these ranks were conferred for good behavior and long lasting artistic service, and not for military actions...³³

In Costa Rica, besides military duties, these bands fulfilled other social events such as religious ceremonies and public performances. These concerts evolved from previous military practices, as María Clara Vargas explains:

Gradually, these ensembles ceased to be merely reinforcement for the military activities, and assumed a fundamental role in the social entertainment of the civilians. The musical commands, '*de retraite*' in French, that were used to alert the army to cease activities and, during the evenings, to summon the troops back to the headquarters, became true concerts outdoors. They were called *retretas*, if they took place during the evening and *recreos* if they were held at some point in the afternoon.³⁴

The absence of symphony orchestras during this period meant that military bands were the only large musical ensembles capable of performing a limited variety of repertory in several communities.³⁵ Each band would normally perform at a kiosk especially built in the central park of each community. The programs usually included some transcriptions of arias from Italian opera, which became very popular in Costa Rica during the nineteenth century, selections of Spanish zarzuelas, Viennese waltzes and other dances such as polkas, mazurkas, gavotas, and works by local composers.³⁶ Before the organization of the Dirección General de Bandas, local bands often consisted of no

³³ Pompilio Segura Chaves, *Desarrollo Musical en Costa Rica durante el Siglo XX. Las Bandas Militares* (Heredia: Editorial Universidad Nacional, 2001), 42.

³⁴ María Clara Vargas, "Práctica Musical en Costa Rica, 1845-1942." (M.A. thesis, Universidad de Costa Rica, 1999), 104. Translated by Manuel Matarrita.

³⁵ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 40.

³⁶ Flores, *Vida Musical*, 265.

more than ten musicians, but by the 1860s their number had increased, reaching in some cases more than sixty players.³⁷ The Dirección General de Bandas was a musical institution of crucial value during the nineteenth century since it provided musical instruction to all the musicians that were part of the bands of the different provinces. Since no music schools or conservatories were established until the very end of the century,³⁸ the Dirección General de Bandas was the only center of music education in the country for almost half a century aside from a few musicians who imparted private lessons.³⁹

It is in relation to the Dirección General de Bandas that the first Costa Rican composers of relevance can be mentioned. In 1852, after José Martínez died,⁴⁰ the Costa Rican Manuel María Gutiérrez (1829-1887) became the new Director of Bands. Gutierrez was perhaps the first Costa Rican composer to achieve personal recognition for his work as a composer, transcriber, conductor and teacher. Gutiérrez's most notable contribution was the composition of the Costa Rican National Anthem in 1852. He also wrote numerous marches for military band, the *Marcha Santa Rosa* being the most popular, a few overtures for small orchestra, and a great number of salon pieces such as mazurkas,

³⁷ Vargas, *Música y Sociedad*, 52.

³⁸ A few sources mention two early attempts to create music schools in the city of Heredia. In 1816, the musician José María Morales was hired by the city's priests to attend the music at the cathedral and also to be in charge of imparting music lessons to children for a period of five years. Eleven years later, in 1827, the Nicaraguan organist Pablo Jirón obtained a position with similar responsibilities. The surviving records lack any information describing the extent of the musical education offered, but it can be inferred that it was subject to the means and needs of the church. It is also significant to mention that Pablo Jirón was the first organist in the country whose presence has been documented. (Meléndez, 12-13).

³⁹ Flores, *Vida Musical* 263.

⁴⁰ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 41.

paso dobles and polkas⁴¹. As mentioned earlier, parallel to the activity in the church and the military bands, musicians in nineteenth-century Costa Rica sought different sources of income and different ways to diversify their profession. In a quote provided by María Clara Vargas, Manuel María Gutiérrez offers a description of his various musical activities:

Now that I am able to have some free time during the day, I have decided to use those hours to teach guitar, piano, harmonica, flute, violin and voice... I do not promise to achieve great results, because my limitations are known; but I do offer my best services, trying to please all those who want to be taught by me... [I also offer] music pieces, easily arranged for the piano, guitar, etc... Among them, polkas, mazurkas, dances, contradances, marches, extracts from the best operas for voice and piano; music arranged for a single instrument, for two or more, as well as for small ensembles or military bands.⁴²

Another Director of Bands, Rafael Chávez Torres (1839-1907), was Gutiérrez's successor and an important composer as well. Most of his works are either written for band or are salon music. His most significant work and one that has remained popular in Costa Rica and abroad is the funeral march *El Duelo de la Patria* (The Grief of the Fatherland) composed in 1882 after the death of President Tomás Guardia.⁴³ This march was also performed at the funerals of three European monarchs: Alfonso XII of Spain in 1885, the French president Carnot in 1894, and Queen Victoria of England in 1901.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Meléndez, 101-102.

⁴² Quoted in Vargas, *Prácticas Musicales*, 58. Translation by author.

⁴³ Otto Mayer-Serra, *Música y Músicos de Latinoamérica* (Mexico D.F.: Editorial Atlante, 1947), 288-289.

⁴⁴ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 63.

Still another important composer is Pilar Jiménez (1835-1922). Although not many of his works have survived, his name has achieved a legendary character. Very active as a cellist, composer and school teacher, he founded a great family of musicians and was the great-grandfather of Benjamín Gutiérrez. Jiménez wrote a great number of religious works.⁴⁵ Finally, perhaps the most important foreign musician to settle in Costa Rica in the nineteenth century was the Spanish composer José Campabadal, who moved to Costa Rica in 1876. Campabadal is mentioned in Felipe Pedrell's *Diccionario Técnico de la Música* as one of the most distinguished Spanish musicologists.⁴⁶ His production is vast and includes many sacred choral works as well as chamber music, military and orchestral works.

Early Twentieth Century

The number of local composers who began to make a name for themselves increased gradually towards the end of the century. Some of the most relevant were Pedro Calderón Navarro (1864-1909), Gordiano Morales (1839-1917), Carlos María Gutiérrez (1865-1934), Roberto Campabadal (1881-1931), the son of José Campabadal, and Enrique Jiménez Núñez (1863-1932), the son of Pilar Jiménez, who studied in Belgium, being one of the first Costa Rican musicians to study abroad.⁴⁷ Towards the end of the nineteenth century the possibilities for musical education began to change, when two music schools were opened, The National School of Music (1889-1894) and the

⁴⁵ Ibid., 64.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 66.

Santa Cecilia School of Music (1894-1956). During this period, several young students had the opportunity to pursue musical studies in other countries, especially Belgium, the United States, Italy and Mexico.⁴⁸ The two most significant composers of this group were Alejandro Monestel (1865-1950) and Julio Fonseca (1885-1950).

Alejandro Monestel is without a doubt the most important composer of sacred music in Costa Rica, and the most influential one during the first half of the twentieth century, earning him the label of “dean of Costa Rican composers.”⁴⁹ He was born in San José and studied with José Campabadal and Pilar Jiménez, among others. At the age of sixteen he moved to Belgium to enroll in the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, where he studied with renowned Belgian organist and composer Alphonse Maily.⁵⁰ He graduated four years later in both organ and composition and upon his return to Costa Rica in 1884, he became the organist and choirmaster at the Metropolitan Cathedral, the director of the newly formed National School of Music and soon after, when that school closed its doors, the founder and first director of the Santa Cecilia School of Music. In 1891, Monestel premiered the organ of the Metropolitan Cathedral, which had been built in Brussels by his own initiative and to his specifications.⁵¹ In 1901 he moved to New York where he lived for many years, earning a reputation as a remarkable organist, composer and teacher. He worked as organist and choirmaster at St Mary’s Roman

⁴⁸ María Clara Vargas Cullel, *La Música*, in *Costa Rica en el Siglo XIX*, vol. 1, Eugenio Rodríguez Vega, ed., (San José: Editorial de la Universidad Nacional a Distancia, 2004), 3.

⁴⁹ Nicholas Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945), 175.

⁵⁰ Flora Elizondo, ed., Alejandro Monestel y Juan de Dios Páez: *Musica para Piano* (San José: Editorial Universidad de Costa Rica, 1998), 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Catholic Church in Long Island, and later at the Church of St. John the Baptist and at Our Lady of Grace Church in Brooklyn, New York.⁵² He also taught at a Carnegie Hall studio where his duties included teaching piano, organ, and harmony, vocal coach in church and operatic repertoire and accompanist. His name was also listed in the faculty of several schools such as the Italian Conservatory of Music in New Haven, Connecticut, the New Rochelle School of Music in New Rochelle, New York, and the School of Musical Art in New York City.⁵³ Thus Monestel became the first Costa Rican composer to achieve international status, reflected by the fact that he remains today the most published Central American composer. Many of his works have appeared in publications by Marmontel in Brussels, and in the United States by Carl Fischer, Theodore Presser, Olive Ditson, Hamilton S. Gordon and G Schirmer.⁵⁴ In 1937 he returned to Costa Rica, becoming one of the founders of the National Conservatory of Music in 1942. Besides religious music, his output includes salon pieces for piano, some chamber music, and a few works for military band. He was one of the first Costa Rican composers to use native music elements in some of his compositions, for example in his two *Rapsodias Guanacastecas*, which he wrote later in his life.⁵⁵

The composer Julio Fonseca (1885-1950) and Alejandro Monestel share a number of similarities: they both studied in Brussels, wrote a great deal of sacred music, investigated and adapted some elements of folk music into their compositions and,

⁵² Sider, 166.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 127.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

coincidentally, died in the same year, 1950. What sets Fonseca apart from Monestel is the extent of his production: he wrote 205 works. Fonseca was the first Costa Rican composer to write principally for symphony orchestra.⁵⁶ He was a prolific composer, whose large number of secular and sacred choral works rival those of Monestel. He generated a vast production of piano music, works for violin and piano, voice and piano, voice and orchestra, band, a children's opera and an operetta. Following his studies in Europe, Fonseca moved to New York in 1914 in an attempt to promote his works, but the outbreak of the First World War disrupted his plans and he returned to Costa Rica a year later. One of his works however, the famous waltz *Leda* (1914), was printed by G. Schirmer, becoming his most popular work at home and abroad, and his orchestral piece *Azucena* was recorded by RCA Victor.⁵⁷ He was also involved with the Santa Cecilia School of Music as its director for many years and in 1942 became the chair of theory and harmony at the National Conservatory of Music. He also established an academy in 1934, Academia Euterpe, which he directed until 1939.⁵⁸ Fonseca's style can be considered late romantic with explorations into impressionism. Besides salon piano music, his chamber music exemplifies the post-romantic style; such is the case with his Sonata for Violin and Piano (1905), whereas his Suite Tropical for orchestra makes use

⁵⁶ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 128.

⁵⁷ Sider, 177.

⁵⁸ Sider, 176.

of folk melodies and a more impressionistic style. In his work *Himno Cantata a la Música* (1936) for choir and orchestra, he also experiments with whole-tone melodies.⁵⁹

With the exception of Fonseca's few incursions into impressionism and whole-tone techniques, music written in Costa Rica in the first half of the twentieth century was mostly tonal and, within its obvious limitations, it followed European models. Flores summarizes the state of the country's music during this period:

The musical movement during the first decades of the twentieth century was very poor. The music being heard, within the limited concert activity taking place, was predominantly tonal, of the periods baroque, classic and romantic... The ears of local composers were being nurtured only by the music of the past, being natural to them to "imitate"—consciously or not—this music in their compositions. There were only a few (like Julio Fonseca or Alejandro Monestel or a few others) who had a more ample and advanced technical knowledge; the majority wandered dreamily through the regions of a primitive harmony, sometimes revealing a valuable musical sense and particular talent, but working with very rudimentary technical tools.⁶⁰

The main reason composers before Fonseca did not write for symphony orchestra was the absence of such an ensemble in the country throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Costa Rican society had become aware of the need for an orchestra to accompany the touring opera companies that often visited San José, and to introduce the great works of European symphonic music, which up until the end of the century were virtually unknown

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁶⁰ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 130. Translation by author.

in Costa Rica.⁶¹ The absence of a suitable concert hall or opera house in which to present these events, and the lack of institutionalized musical education were further causes of concern. But this was soon to change; the last few decades of the nineteenth century saw a rapid social transformation led by a group of politicians, businessmen and intellectuals whose primary ideal was the development of a Europeanized society. These efforts were made possible thanks to a fast growing economy based on the production of coffee, and it was in fact the coffee elite who were directly responsible for the realization of one of these projects, the construction of the National Theater, Costa Rica's most important musical venue. This coliseum was inaugurated in 1897 with a production of Gounod's opera *Faust*, presented by the French company P. N. Aubry.⁶² This group of reformists that were leading the country on different fronts was also concerned with education in their attempt to emulate European society, as Molina and Palmer explain:

The Church, the Liberal State, and the radical intelligentsia all shared an obsession to evangelize, civilize and redeem the lower classes. The source of this desire was a profound rejection of popular culture, whose irreverent style and plebian concerns worried priests, good bourgeois citizens, and progressive intellectuals alike. Their attempts to transform the behavior, the language and the world views of the plebes, particularly through education, were resisted and manipulated by peasants, artisans and workers, who appropriated what they wanted to, discarding or adapting "decent" culture as they saw fit.⁶³

In spite of this natural resistance, the efforts put into developing cultural life soon began to bear fruit. This attitude from the leaders was greatly beneficial to the

⁶¹ Vargas, *La Música*, 21.

⁶² Molina and Palmer, 55-56.

⁶³ Molina and Palmer, 81.

development of art music, as evidenced by the support the government offered to the creation of two music schools, the construction of the National Theater, the organization of a number of philharmonic societies and the importation of foreign musicians. Costa Rica had entered the twentieth century without a symphony orchestra, and it was not until 1926 when the first serious attempt was made to create one. In 1907, the Belgian musician Juan Loots had been hired by the government as a successor to Rafael Chavez Torres to head the National Direction of Bands. Loots was greatly concerned with improving the musical education of all the members of the bands and in 1909 he had established the Escuela Militar de Música.⁶⁴ In 1926, Loots organized the first symphony orchestra, called Orquesta Sinfónica de Costa Rica, but it functioned for only two years. For the next thirteen years no stable orchestras were organized in the country and most of the public musical activity was taken up by military bands, philharmonic societies and a few string quartets.⁶⁵

Another element essential to the development of musical institutions in the first half of the century was the initiative of independent musicians and citizens who created private organizations in an effort to promote and multiply musical activity in the city. Such is the case of the Asociación de Cultura Musical, formed in 1934 and having as some of its primary objectives the organization of chamber groups and concerts, the creation of a music library, a conservatory and an orchestra.⁶⁶ In 1940, thanks to the efforts of the group, government support became available and the Orquesta Sinfónica

⁶⁴ Vargas, *La Música*, 9.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁶ Vargas, *La Música*, 19.

Nacional was formed. Its first conductor was the Uruguayan violinist and conductor of Italian descent, Hugo Mariani. Parallel to the founding of the National Symphony Orchestra, the project for creating a conservatory also became a reality in 1942 when the National Conservatory of Music opened its doors. Soon after, the conservatory would become part of the University of Costa Rica. These two institutions would become the pillars of musical activity and education throughout the twentieth century.

Besides Fonseca and Monestel, two other composers had important careers, one locally and the other in the United States. Julio Mata (1899-1969) studied in the United States for five years and returned to Costa Rica to become a band director and a nationally renowned cellist. He wrote many art songs on texts of Central American poets and also two operettas, *Toyupán* and *Rosas de Norgaria*, both based on national themes. In some of his symphonic works like the *Suite Piedras Preciosas* or the symphonic poem *El Libertador*, he briefly experiments with an atonal language.⁶⁷ On the other hand, José Castro Carazo (1895-1982) made his career in the United States; he was a violinist and conductor whose friendship with Louisiana governor Huey P. Long earned him a position as director of the Louisiana State University band. He wrote several works for that ensemble, two of which, *Touchdown for LSU* and *Darling of LSU*, became very popular at the time.⁶⁸ Other composers that deserve mention for their contributions, especially in the field of education, are José Joaquín Vargas Calvo (1879-1956), who for several years served as director of the Escuela de Música Santa Cecilia, José Daniel Zúñiga (1899-

⁶⁷ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 134.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

1981), and Alcides Prado (1900-1984). These composers wrote mostly popular songs and other works inspired by national subjects. Also, the composer Dolores Castegnaro (1900-1971), who studied in Italy and settled in Mexico, distinguished herself as a successful song writer, some of her songs being recorded by such artists as Blanca Bellini and Montserrat Caballé.⁶⁹

The Second Half of the Twentieth Century

With the changes produced by the establishment of the National Conservatory and the National Symphony Orchestra, a new generation of composers began to thrive. The earliest of these figures was the remarkable musician Carlos Enrique Vargas Méndez (1919-1998). Son of the composer and diplomat José Joaquín Vargas Calvo, he was perhaps the most versatile and well-rounded musician of twentieth-century Costa Rica. Due to his father's diplomatic duties, the family lived for several years in Detroit, Michigan, where Carlos Enrique Vargas, as a young boy, began receiving a thorough musical education.⁷⁰ They returned to Costa Rica in 1934 and soon after, at the age of fifteen Carlos Enrique had already become his father's assistant at the Santa Cecilia School of Music.⁷¹ Later on, when his father was appointed General Consul in Rome and the family moved to Italy, Carlos Enrique entered the Conservatorio Santa Cecilia, from which he graduated in 1939 in piano. Parallel to his piano studies, he studied harmony, composition, organ and Gregorian chant at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in

⁶⁹ Vargas, *La Música*, 29.

⁷⁰ Anabel Campos Cantero, *Carlos Enrique Vargas: Vida y Música* (San José: Editorial UNED, 2003), 33.

⁷¹ Campos, 36.

Rome.⁷² After he returned to Costa Rica in 1940, he gradually established himself as one of the most outstanding pianists and well-prepared pedagogues in the country. His activities included professor of music at the Colegio Superior de Señoritas (1940-1958), official organist of the Metropolitan Cathedral in San José (1950-1972), founder and director of the University of Costa Rica Chorus (1955), and official conductor of the Costa Rican National Symphony (1968-1970).⁷³ He also became one of the most renowned private piano teachers in the country. Throughout his life, Vargas was very active as a soloist and chamber musician, performing many recitals on piano and organ, and appearing as soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra on many occasions. As a collaborative pianist, he performed with musicians such as Henryk Szering, Ricardo Odnoposoff and Rubén González.⁷⁴ Vargas built a reputation not only as a performer and pedagogue, but also as a conductor, arranger, editor and musicologist. It was not however until after his death that he started to be recognized as a composer in his own right, and since then a gradual rediscovery of his compositions has taken place. Although the number of his works is small, several of them deserve to be better known. He wrote thirty works for piano, four orchestral compositions, five choral works, and a number of arrangements and orchestrations of works by other composers.⁷⁵ Some of his most significant works include the first piano concerto (1944) and the first symphony (1945) ever written in Costa Rica. Both works, while demonstrating a thorough knowledge of

⁷² Sider, 189.

⁷³ Campos, 47-48.

⁷⁴ Campos, 117.

⁷⁵ Campos, 137-147.

orchestration, traditional forms, and non-functional harmony, remain rather conservative. The orchestral suite *Antígona* (1961), on the other hand, is more adventurous, including quartal and quintal harmonies, tone clusters and added-note chords.⁷⁶ Later in his life Vargas gave up composing almost altogether to concentrate mainly on teaching and performing.

Another important composer who developed her career abroad was Rocío Sanz (1934-1993). She studied in California and at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, settling in Mexico in 1953. Her works include the music for 18 plays, a number of ballets, chamber music and a few orchestral works. Her most well-known works are the *Cantata de la Independencia* for baritone, chorus and symphonic band, and a collection of songs for soprano and piano that became very popular both in Mexico and in Costa Rica.⁷⁷

Two composers, both born in 1937, dominated the scene during the second half of the twentieth century: Benjamín Gutiérrez and Bernal Flores. Benjamín Gutiérrez, who is the main subject of this study, will be dealt with in later chapters. Bernal Flores was not only the first truly avant-garde composer in the country, but also a distinguished pedagogue, music historian and ethnomusicologist. After early studies with Carlos Enrique Vargas, he moved to Rochester, New York, where he studied at the Eastman School of Music, obtaining the bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in musical composition. Soon after graduating, he joined the theory department at that institution and taught there for a few years, before returning to Costa Rica to become a professor at the

⁷⁶ Sider, 279.

⁷⁷ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 135.

University of Costa Rica. His teachers while at Eastman included Bernard Rodgers, Wayne Barlow and, most importantly, Howard Hanson, whose compositional techniques of “intervallic projections” he adopted for many of his compositions.⁷⁸ Several of his works have been premiered abroad, including his opera *The Land of Heart’s Desire*, written in Rochester and based on an original play by William Butler Yeats. Other important works are his *Concerto for Piano, Percussion and Orchestra* and *Pentatonic Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra*; the symphonic poem *Mar y Nieves*, premiered in 1962 at the American Festival of Music in Rochester; his two symphonies, the first of which was premiered in 1965 at the Third Festival of American Music in Washington, DC; a song cycle for contralto and orchestra premiered in Rochester in 1962 with Howard Hanson conducting; *Variaciones para Violín y Piano*, commissioned by Arizona State University for the Festival of Latin American Music in 1976 and the *Seven Dodecaphonic Toccatas for Piano*, published in Costa Rica in 1978.⁷⁹ Bernal Flores’ legacy also includes a wide variety of scholarly publications on Costa Rican music, including articles in many local and international journals, and several books and biographies of Costa Rican composers. His book *La Música en Costa Rica* (1978) is up to this date the most comprehensive study on the history of music in the country. He also wrote the essay on Costa Rican art music for *Grove Music Online*. In *La Música en Costa Rica*, he describes

⁷⁸ Sider, 279-80.

⁷⁹ Ronald R. Sider, “Contemporary Composers in Costa Rica,” *Latin American Music Review/Revista de Música Latinoamericana* 5, no. 2 (Autumn-Winter 1984): 273-74.

his own style as contemporary-experimental, interested in all the sonorities contained in the dodecaphonic scale, as well as in the study of the mathematics of rhythm.⁸⁰

The 1970s saw some important changes in the structure of Costa Rica's two leading musical institutions, the National Symphony and the National Conservatory. Both Flores and Gutiérrez were key figures in the transformation of the latter. While Gutiérrez was the director of the conservatory, Flores organized a movement to revise the programs of study being offered and to provide the institution with better facilities. Thus between 1975 and 1976 the model of European conservatories which had been followed from its beginnings in 1942 was augmented with more comprehensive academic programs, offering university degrees. The new programs were more in tune with the needs of the environment, placing more emphasis on music education, in contrast with the earlier goals of the conservatory that had focused on preparing virtuoso soloists in piano, voice and other instruments, in a country that could not possibly offer professional opportunities for a concert career. The conservatory also changed its name to Escuela de Artes Musicales and moved to a brand new building in the campus of the University of Costa Rica.⁸¹

The National Symphony, for its part, experienced a radical transformation in a process that was nicknamed "the musical revolution," which captured the attention of the press, both nationally and internationally for several months. In 1970 the Vice-Minister of Culture, Guido Sáenz, undertook the initiative of reorganizing the orchestra from its core:

⁸⁰ Flores, *La Música en C.R.*, 138.

⁸¹ Flores, *La Música and C.R.*, 114.

many musicians were fired and many foreign players, mainly from the US and Europe were hired to play in the orchestra and teach at the newly formed program called Programa Juvenil de la Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional. The result was an ensemble of a more professional level than the previous ones, and the possibility of forming orchestra musicians through the youth program to fulfill the needs and demands of a professional symphony orchestra.⁸² In 1974 the Chilean choral conductor Marco Dusi was engaged to lead a new hired Coro Sinfónico Nacional, created to complement the two previous projects. Finally, in 1980 the Compañía Lírica Nacional was founded, allowing the production of at least two different operas per season.⁸³

At the same time that these institutions were evolving, others were being created as a reflection of the new understanding of music and its role in Costa Rican society. The most important was the School of Music of the Universidad Nacional, founded in 1974 and oriented from the outset to focus on the most neglected areas of music in Costa Rica. Therefore, careers such as music education, voice and choral conducting, musical community promotion, and instrumental studies with a pedagogical emphasis were favored.⁸⁴ Especially in the area of music education, the School of Music of the National University has had a pioneering effect over the last three decades, and in later years has also contributed greatly in the area of choral conducting and piano performance,

⁸² Guido Sáenz, *Para qué Tractores sin Violines* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1982), 7-10.

⁸³ Vargas, *La Música*, 35.

⁸⁴ Juan Israel Carrillo, "Survey of Choral Music by Selected Costa Rican Composers" (DMA diss., College-Conservatory of Music of the University of Cincinnati, 1993), 25-26.

especially since the arrival in the mid nineties of the Russian trained piano teacher Alexander Sklioutovsky.

This process of professionalizing music, begun in the seventies, resulted in an increasing number of people pursuing musical careers, many of whom went on to study abroad. Among the composers of this generation who have remained active, the following should be mentioned: Mario Alfagüell (b.1948), Luis Diego Herra (b.1952), Allen Torres (b.1955) and Alejandro Cardona (b.1959). Alfagüell is perhaps the most prolific, experimental and curious of the composers of his generation. A student of Benjamín Gutiérrez, Alfagüell also studied in Fribourg, Switzerland and has written incessantly for many different types of chamber ensembles, symphony orchestra and choir. His large catalogue includes works that explore different techniques such as “collage,” improvisation, the involvement of the audience in the creative process, and the use of phonetics.⁸⁵ Luis Diego Herra was also a student of Gutiérrez and continued studies in France where he studied both composition and conducting. His style is postmodernist, and although many of his earlier works are atonal, in later years his compositions have reflected an effort to attain a balance between traditional forms and elements of Latin American popular music.⁸⁶

In the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the present one, a great many young composers have taken an active part in the country’s cultural scene, some of them already achieving national and international recognition. Among the most

⁸⁵ Vargas, *La Música*, 38-40.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

outstanding representatives of these younger generations are Carlos Castro (b.1963), Carlos Paz (1963), Marco Quesada (b.1964), Eddie Mora (b.1965), Marvin Camacho (b.1966), Vinicio Meza (b.1968), Carlos Escalante-Macaya (b.1968), Alejandro Argüello (b.1972), Otto Castro (b.1972), Adrian Quesada (b.1982) and Pablo Chin (b.1982).⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Ibid., 42.

CHAPTER III
BENJAMÍN GUTIÉRREZ: BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Beginnings

Benjamín Gutiérrez was born in Guadalupe, a town outside San José, on January 3, 1937. He was born into music, for almost everyone in his family played a musical instrument. His father, Benjamín Gutiérrez Mora, owned a shoe factory and was an amateur violinist and his mother, Lupita Sáenz Jiménez-Núñez, was a housewife who played the piano.⁸⁸ From early childhood he started taking piano lessons from his grandmother, Rosa Jiménez Núñez, the daughter of the composer Pilar Jiménez (1835-1922). According to Gutiérrez, he is also related to another legendary figure in Costa Rica's musical history, the composer Manuel María Gutiérrez (1829-1887), who was the author of the country's National Anthem.⁸⁹

Rosa Jiménez taught her grandson for several years, until she realized it was time for him to undertake a more formal musical education, because she felt she had taught him everything she knew. In Gutiérrez's words:

We all had to learn to play something, or to sing, and those who couldn't do anything at all were in trouble. They had to learn to recite or something like that, because back in those days the mandate was "every house must have a piano." Back in that time, in the houses with pianos

⁸⁸ Benjamín Gutiérrez, interview by author, tape recording, Guadalupe, San José, 19 December 2006.

⁸⁹ Meléndez, 9.

families and friends always got together on Saturdays for social time. It used to be very important. We all had to be put to the test. I started when I was four years old, but not to become professional. None of us were allowed to become professional. In my case it was sort of an accident [that I became a professional]. I learned piano with my grandmother like everyone else in the family, and there came a time when she did not have anything else to teach me.⁹⁰

On her recommendation he joined the newly opened Conservatorio de Música in San José which did not have a building of its own but used the Colegio de Señoritas facilities in the afternoons. He continued his piano lessons at the conservatory when he was thirteen years old under the tutelage of Professor Miguel Angel Quesada. This was a turning point in Gutiérrez's relationship with music. Quesada instilled in him a sense of commitment and discipline and persuaded him to apply himself to the piano uncompromisingly. Gutiérrez remembers Quesada telling him that unless he practiced three or four hours daily to perfect himself, it was not worthwhile to continue.⁹¹ At this point, Gutiérrez received the advice of another teacher, Francisco "Paco" González, a professor of sight singing at the conservatory, who suggested that Gutiérrez drop out of the Liceo de Costa Rica high school and enroll in the new Omar Dengo School which held classes at night. Gutiérrez did so, with his father's approval, enabling him to practice piano throughout the day.⁹² He continued lessons in the conservatory under Miguel Angel Quesada for a total of four years until his teacher realized that the pupil was ready to

⁹⁰ Briceño.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Gutiérrez, interview by author, 19 December 2006.

move on to the next stage in his studies and suggested that he further his musical development in Guatemala.

Guatemala

In the fifties, Guatemala had the most advanced cultural development in Central America, superior to that of Costa Rica in many areas including music.⁹³ The level of the professional degrees offered was evidence of that: while in the conservatory in Costa Rica only a diploma named Primer Ciclo was offered, in Guatemala a Bachelor of Music degree was already available. The difference in infrastructure between the two countries was also obvious. Guatemala had recently opened a three-story building for the Conservatorio Nacional, a building that had, as Gutiérrez recalls with amusement, “not only a piano in each room but even a few harps.”⁹⁴ They apparently also had enough of a budget to offer scholarships to a few foreign students.⁹⁵ One of these scholarships was offered to Gutiérrez, and he left Costa Rica in 1956 to enroll in the Conservatorio Nacional de Música de Guatemala, where he studied piano and composition with Augusto Ardenois, a Belgian composer, pianist and conductor who had immigrated to Guatemala during World War II.⁹⁶ Ardenois later became one of the founders and the first Music Director of the Coro Nacional de Guatemala from its beginning in 1966 until

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Benjamín Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza, transcript, Guadalupe, San José, 16 August 2006.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

his death in 1974.⁹⁷ Gutiérrez says that his relationship with Augusto Ardenois was a turning point in his life as a musician, and a determining factor in his decision to become a composer. He remembers Ardenois telling him that as a concert pianist it would be virtually impossible to compete with all the great international figures that were often coming to the region to perform.⁹⁸ During the war and the post-war years many world-renowned soloists gave extensive tours throughout Latin America, and some of the artists whose tours included concerts in Central American countries were Arthur Rubinstein, Claudio Arrau, György Sandor, Daniel Ericourt, Alexander Brailowsky and Witold Maluczynski, to name only a few.⁹⁹ According to Gutiérrez, Ardenois suggested that he become a composer after hearing him improvise once:

He suggested to me, not because of my talent, but when he saw that I could be a composer he told me that it was better to pursue a career as a composer because it was not worth it to try to make a career as a concert pianist when in Central America we have six or seven countries and only six or seven pianos...we should have one country and more pianos...But also he said that the composer has more prestige, and more possibilities of transcending internationally.¹⁰⁰

Ardenois' words seem to have made a strong impression on young Gutiérrez who quickly started to focus his improvisation and composition experiments into what was

⁹⁷ Carlos E. Wer, "El Coro Nacional. ¿Muerte por inanición?" *Diario La Hora* (accessed on January 20, 2007), <<http://www.lahora.com.gt/26-10-01/paginas/opinion.htm#n3>>

⁹⁸ Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza.

⁹⁹ Guido Sáenz, *Piedra Azul: Atisbos en mi vida* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 2003), 312. In his historically informative autobiography, the Costa Rican ex-minister of culture Guido Sáenz sheds some light on the artistic activity taking place in Costa Rica and the Central American region.

¹⁰⁰ Gutiérrez, interview by author.

going to become his first opera. After one year in Guatemala, Gutiérrez obtained the Bachelor of Arts with emphasis in Piano¹⁰¹ and returned to Costa Rica.

Marianela

Before going to Guatemala, Benjamín Gutiérrez had started working as a music teacher at an elementary school that bears the name of his ancestor, composer Pilar Jiménez, located in Gutiérrez's home town of Guadalupe. On his return, he was appointed music teacher at the Liceo de Heredia high school, with a better salary and a grand piano which he would use for both his teaching and his daily practicing.¹⁰² Besides his duties as a teacher and his commitment to the piano, he continued developing his compositional skills and working on his first grand-scale work, his opera *Marianela*. When he premiered it on October 7th, 1957 in San José's National Theater, it received great public and critical acclaim, placing young Gutiérrez at the forefront of the local musical scene. The composer was only twenty years old at the time and the occasion served as his debut, not only as a composer but also as pianist and conductor. The work included an overture in the form of a fantasia for piano and orchestra and featured Gutiérrez at the piano, accompanied by the National Symphony and its official conductor and founder, Hugo Mariani. After the overture Gutiérrez took the podium and conducted the rest of the work. The opera is based on the novel of the same name by the great Spanish writer Benito Pérez Galdós (1843-1920), and the libretto was created by

¹⁰¹ The degrees given by the conservatory were different from those of American institutions. For instance, instead of having a Bachelor in Music it granted a Bachelor of Arts with specialization in different areas such as soloist (vocal or instrumental) and composer.

¹⁰² Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza.

Gutiérrez's Guatemalan friend Roberto Paniagua. The cast included some well-known local singers such as Albertina Moya and Luis Pacheco in the leading roles, the bass Claudio Brenes who was a well-respected university professor, and Emer Campos, Julieta Bonilla and José Rafael Ochoa in supportive roles. The premiere of *Marianela* became a milestone in the development of Costa Rican art music since it was the first opera written and premiered by a Costa Rican composer.¹⁰³ Its success was the last determining factor in Gutiérrez's decision to follow a career in composition. Gutiérrez narrates how the thought of writing an opera came to be:

Ardenois' advice to me of choosing a career as a composer instead of a concert pianist sounded too academic to me in those days. However, when I thought that we had a National Theater that would get sold out every time an opera company came from Europe during the post-war years, I started changing my mind. I had just read *Marianela* in school because it was required for us to read Pérez Galdós and I immediately envisioned *Marianela* on stage, with me playing the overture with piano and orchestra.¹⁰⁴

Gutiérrez also explains that it was the overture, innovatively conceived as a brilliant fantasy for piano and orchestra, that attracted the attention of conductor Hugo

¹⁰³ In his book *La Música en Costa Rica* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1978), Bernal Flores provides a detailed account of the development of vocal music in Costa Rica, from the appearance of the first theater in 1837 (although not used for musical events until much later), through the arrival of the first touring opera company in 1862, to the performance of the first musical works written for the stage by Costa Rican composers. According to Flores most of these works fall into the categories of zarzuela and operetta, including works by the most significant composers of the first half of the century, such as Julio Fonseca (*El Dinero no es Todo*, written sometime at the beginning of the century; and *Caperucita Encarnada*, 1916), and Julio Mata (*Rosas de Norgaria*, 1937; *Toyupán*, 1938). Flores, however, briefly mentions an opera called *Zulay y Yontá*, written by Daube Barquero, a composer of obscure origin, but offers no date of composition or performance, nor an explanation why the work should be called an opera and not just an operetta.

¹⁰⁴ Gutiérrez, interview by author.

Mariani and allowed Gutiérrez to present the opera in the National Theater, reserved otherwise for European touring opera companies.¹⁰⁵ As a matter of fact, prior to being adapted as the overture for the opera, the work was presented as a fantasy for piano and orchestra at a competition in Guatemala where it obtained second place.¹⁰⁶

The premiere of the opera on October 7th 1957 was recorded and broadcast on radio on October 9th by the local radio station Nueva Alma Tica.¹⁰⁷ Also, two more performances of the work followed two months later. The premiere involved only one performance because Gutiérrez's father had been able to pay the orchestra and rent the National Theater, but only for one night. However, due to its success the conductor Hugo Mariani decided to invite Gutiérrez for two more performances.¹⁰⁸ They took place on December 13th and 15th and again were followed by enthusiastic reviews.

Marianela's success consolidated even further Gutiérrez's path to a music career, and that in spite of his parents' wishes of not having any of their children pursue a musical career. Even his musical studies in Guatemala were not considered by Gutiérrez and his parents as a commitment to a path in music, but only as a stage in his general education. His father's expectations, as a matter of fact were for Benjamín to become an architect, but after the success of *Marianela* he was offered a scholarship to study at the New England Conservatory in Boston.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ *La República* (San José), 5 October 1957.

¹⁰⁷ *La Nación* (San José), 9 October 1957.

¹⁰⁸ Benjamín Gutiérrez, interview by author, telephone interview, 5 March 2007.

When I returned from Guatemala I presented the opera *Marianela* in the National Theater. I was only twenty years old and was going to study architecture because that is what my father wanted. Everything was planned but that opera had a great success, because it was the first opera presented by a Costa Rican composer. The night of the premiere the ambassador of the United States came to see the opera and called me after the performance asking me to go by his office the next day. He gave me the name of a secretary named Mrs. Aragón and they offered me a scholarship to get a master's degree in Boston. He was very impressed that a Costa Rican, who had not studied conducting, would conduct his own opera. Of course, when I told this to my father he said to me: 'Well, go and get that master's because that is the United States and that is a totally different story...' ¹⁰⁹

The scholarship was granted by the Instituto Internacional de Educación, an American organization which no longer exists and that had been created with the purpose of granting scholarships to Costa Rican students. ¹¹⁰ In the fall of 1958 Benjamín left Costa Rica to enroll in the Master of Music program in composition at the New England Conservatory.

United States

While in Boston he studied composition principally with Francis Judd Cooke (1910-1995), a student of Sir Donald Francis Tovey, who wrote a great number of symphonic and choral works. Additional composition studies were taken with Carl McKinley. Up to this point Gutiérrez had been self-taught as a composer, and his works were all written in a tonal language, resembling the style of the Italian operas frequently presented in Costa Rica at the time. He recalls how his teacher Francis J. Cooke told him

¹⁰⁹ Briceño.

¹¹⁰ Gutiérrez, interview by author, 5 March, 2007.

soon after that it was time for young Gutiérrez to give up tonality.¹¹¹ Cooke was an advocate of dodecaphonic music, and Gutiérrez spent his first year at New England writing in that style before switching to the class of Carl McKinley. As he recalls, McKinley was more permissive when it came to personal style, but he insisted on a thorough knowledge of counterpoint and imitation before venturing into more avant-garde techniques. The influence of these two teachers produced in Gutiérrez a style that he refers to as lyric dodecaphonic writing, similar to the style of Alban Berg (1885-1935).¹¹²

While studying at the New England Conservatory, Gutiérrez met the clarinetist Sherman Friedland, who was also studying at the conservatory at the time and both young men established a friendship that would last until the present day. Gutiérrez dedicated to Friedland two of his most significant works, his *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* (1959) and his *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra* (1960). Both works were written while in New England and premiered by Friedland. The concerto, which became Gutiérrez's master's thesis, was premiered in 1960 by Friedland with the Manhattan School of Music orchestra in New York City, when Gutiérrez's work was selected to be performed at a music festival organized by the Manhattan School of Music.¹¹³

By the end of his first year at the New England Conservatory, Gutiérrez was already recognized as one of the institution's most outstanding students. He was awarded the Alpha Iota Association prize for the academic year 1958-59, and later, in the summer

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Gutiérrez, interview by author, 19 December 2006.

of 1959, he received a scholarship from the conservatory to attend both the Casals Music Festival in Puerto Rico and the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado. It was in Aspen that Gutiérrez met Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), who was on the faculty at the festival. Milhaud had a particular affinity for Latin American culture, having lived in Brazil for almost two years (from January 1917 through November 1918) as attaché to the French Embassy in Rio de Janeiro. The influence of Brazilian folk music is evident in many of Milhaud's works, most evidently *Le Boeuf sur le Toit* (*The Ox on the Roof*, 1919) and *Saudades do Brasil* (*Souvenirs of Brazil*, 1920-1921), both written soon after his Brazilian sojourn, but also in later works such as the suite for two pianos *Scaramouche* (1937).¹¹⁴ Although Gutiérrez's meeting with Milhaud was brief, it remains a very positive experience in Gutiérrez's memory. According to him Milhaud was very encouraging of the fact that Gutiérrez was at the time much more inclined to write in a rather tonal language, unlike most of his peers at the festival. Gutiérrez's most challenging work for piano solo, the *Toccata and Fugue*, dates from his days in Aspen and it received an honorable mention at the summer festival student competition.¹¹⁵ Gutiérrez also remembers a valuable piece of advice that he received from Milhaud:

I was fortunate enough to meet Darius Milhaud when I went to Aspen. He had a thorough knowledge of the Latin American cultural world because of the years he spent in Brazil as attaché to the French Embassy. He told me that I should always remember that I was from Latin America and that the most important thing was what I liked. He told me to learn and use all the formulae that I was being taught in the States and apply it to what I

¹¹⁴ Jeremy Drake: "Milhaud, Darius," *Grove Music Online* ed L. Macy (accessed 7 March 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹¹⁵ Gutiérrez, interview by author, 19 December 2006.

liked, and to what was inherent to my roots. That was very important for me because I became an advocate of that principle.¹¹⁶

Upon his return to Costa Rica in 1960 he was quickly advised by the minister of education, who at the time was Estela Quesada, to take advantage of another opportunity to study abroad. Gutiérrez remembers that he received enormous support from his country in those formative years, and having obtained a master's degree at the age of twenty-three was another advantage. Also, Emma Gamboa, the dean of the School of Education of the University of Costa Rica at the time, advised him to pursue studies in music education with the agreement that upon returning home he would be given a teaching position at that school. He agreed and in 1961 he was sent on a scholarship to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to obtain a master's degree in music education.¹¹⁷ During this brief period, prior to his second journey to the United States, Gutiérrez wrote his *Improvisación para Cuerdas (Improvisation for Strings)*, a work that has been performed widely and as recently as 2006 when it was programmed to open that year's concert season of the Central Aichi Symphony Orchestra in Japan.¹¹⁸ Besides pursuing a major in music education, Gutiérrez enrolled as a minor in composition, and thus had the opportunity to study with Ross Lee Finney (1906-1997). Finney was an American composer and educator who had studied with Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979), Alban Berg and Roger Sessions (1896-1985), among others. Finney had a wide range of musical interests that he brought into his compositions, from folk music and jazz to serial

¹¹⁶ Benjamín Gutiérrez, interview by Jorge Carmona, transcript, 9 February 2006.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ *La Nación*, San José, Costa Rica, May 17, 2006.

techniques and electronic music. A distinguished teacher, some of his most renowned students include William Albright (1944-1998), George Crumb (b.1929), Leslie Basset (b.1923), and Roger Reynolds (b.1934).¹¹⁹ Although Gutiérrez stayed in Michigan for only one year, he quickly realized that his studies in music education were not his main interest and also were not allowing him enough time for composition. So he decided to abandon the program and returned to Costa Rica. The year that he studied with Ross Lee Finney, however, was also an important step in his evolution as a composer, as some of Finney's suggestions helped Gutiérrez make important decisions regarding his future:

He was an excellent teacher. The conversations I had with him were always very interesting. With him I wrote a symphonic prelude that I have kept at home.¹²⁰ He did not like opera and was opposed to the fact that I was an opera composer, but that was very helpful to me because he taught me a totally different style of orchestration which helped me a lot when I went to study with Ginastera. He told me: 'What you have to do is go and find the best Latin American composer and study with him, otherwise you will always be an opera composer.'¹²¹

While in Michigan he wrote the *Pavana para Cuerdas (Pavane for Strings)*, and although it was not premiered until January 1968, it became one of Gutiérrez's most

¹¹⁹ Borroff, Edith, "Finney, Ross Lee", *Grove Music Online* ed L. Macy (accessed 8 March 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹²⁰ According to Gutiérrez, the symphonic prelude in question was performed in Costa Rica only once. He decided not to have it performed again, due to the resistance of both the musicians and the public to works that were written using more current idioms. (Gutiérrez, interview by the author, 19 December 2006).

¹²¹ Ibid.

popular works afterwards. It is a short piece in neo-classic style and written in memory of a girl named Carmen María who belonged to a family Gutiérrez knew.¹²²

When he returned to Costa Rica in 1962 he immediately started teaching at the School of Education of the University of Costa Rica, and as soon as his post was secured he began looking for a scholarship through the university to go to Buenos Aires and study with Alberto Ginastera. In the meantime he formed a women's choir at the school and started working on his next large-scale work to be premiered in Costa Rica that same year, the *Absolutio Post Missam pro defunctis*, an oratorio for four soloists, choir and symphony orchestra. The work had a great success and it was awarded the Aquileo J. Echeverría National Prize in Composition in its first edition in 1962.¹²³

In 1963 he began teaching at the Conservatory, later to become the Escuela de Artes Musicales of the University of Costa Rica; it was the beginning of an association that would last until the present day, as Professor Emeritus of that institution. His first responsibilities included accompanying the school's choir, which was conducted by Hugo Mariani, the conductor of the National Symphony, and soon after he was asked to teach music history. In 1965, however, Gutiérrez took a leave of absence when he

¹²² Benjamín Gutiérrez, *Concierto Orquesta De Cámara de la Universidad de Costa Rica* (Museo Nacional, August 8, 1968), Program Notes.

¹²³ Aquileo J. Echeverría (1866-1909) was a Costa Rican poet, journalist and diplomat. The National Prizes were created by the Costa Rican Government (*law number 2901*, approved by Congress in 1961) by initiative of the congressman Fernando Volio. These prizes were originally divided into three different categories: 1) *Premio Nacional de Literatura "Magón"* presented to an individual for a lifetime achievement in literature; a few years later this prize would become the *Premio Magón de Cultura*, inclusive of all areas of cultural activity; Benjamín Gutiérrez would receive this prize in the year 2000; 2) *Premios Aquileo J. Echeverría*, divided into nine sub-categories: a) Novel, b) Short story, c) Essay, d) Poetry, e) History, f) Theater, g) Music, h) Painting, i) Sculpture; and, 3) *Premio Joaquín García Monge* in Journalism. Rafael Cuevas Molina, *El Punto sobre la "i": políticas culturales en Costa Rica* (San José: Imprenta Nacional, 1995), 99.

obtained a fellowship, again from the University of Costa Rica, to study at the *Instituto Torcuato di Tella* in Buenos Aires with Argentinean composer Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983). The previous year, 1964, he had received for the second time the National Prize in Music, this time for his Concerto for Violin and Orchestra,¹²⁴ and with that award as a credential Gutiérrez was easily able to obtain permission and support to move to Argentina for the next two years.

The Concerto for Violin and Orchestra had been commissioned by the conductor of the National Symphony, Hugo Mariani, and it was premiered in 1963 by the symphony and its concertmaster and dedicatee, the Costa Rican violinist and teacher Walter Field. The work has become Gutiérrez's most popular concerto for soloist and orchestra, having been performed not only several times in Costa Rica, but also in other Central American countries, Mexico, Switzerland and the United States. In fact, to the present day it remains the only violin concerto by a Costa Rican composer that has been premiered and performed nationally and internationally.¹²⁵

Alberto Ginastera

When Gutiérrez arrived in Buenos Aires in 1965, he found a city where musical life was booming. Indeed, Buenos Aires had slowly become during the mid-twentieth century the most flourishing musical center in Latin America. As Gerard Béhague

¹²⁴ The National Prize in Music for the year 1964 was shared by Gutiérrez and Dr. Bernal Flores for his opera *Land of Heart's Desire*, which had been Flores' doctoral dissertation in composition at the Eastman School of Music.

¹²⁵ Benjamín Gutiérrez, *Benjamín Gutiérrez: Concierto para Violín y Orquesta en Do menor* (Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica, 9th Concert, October 6 and 8, 2006 Concert Season, National Theater, San José), Program Notes, 7.

explains,¹²⁶ the reasons for this development included the renewed vitality of some institutions previously established such as the Teatro Colón and the Asociación Wagneriana, as well as an increasing number of state-funded symphony orchestras and concert-promoting associations. Furthermore, a gradual and consistent improvement in the level of musical instruction at both the public and private universities had taken place over the previous decades. One of the aspects that reflected this improvement was an increasing interest in new-music activities.¹²⁷ One of the private institutions that exemplified this development was the Torcuato di Tella Institute in Buenos Aires. Created in 1958 with the clear vision of promoting the study and research in scientific, cultural and artistic areas at a high level, it consisted of ten different specialized centers, including arts, social sciences, economy and urbanism. One of these centers was the Latin American Center for Advanced Musical Studies, established in 1962 and directed by Alberto Ginastera. The center would offer two-year fellowships to twelve promising Latin American composers biannually. This was an extremely important opportunity for composers from developing Latin American countries to break free from the cultural and musical isolation to which their local environments confined them. At the CLAEM¹²⁸ the students were exposed to some of the most advanced techniques of composition of the time. Although the center had to close its doors in 1970 due to lack of support, while it

¹²⁶ Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction*, Prentice-Hall History of Music Series, ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 328.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Initials in Spanish for the Latin American Center for Advanced Musical Studies (*Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales*).

functioned it brought most of the leading composers of the time for seminars and concerts. Some of these composers included Olivier Messian, Iannis Xenakis, Luigi Nono, Aaron Copland and Luigi Dallapiccola. It also established an electronic music seminar and sponsored concerts featuring faculty members' and fellows' compositions.¹²⁹

When Gutiérrez met Ginastera in 1965 the latter was 49 years old and he was already in what has been called his third compositional period. Ginastera himself divided the evolution of his style into three different periods which he called “objective nationalism” (1934-47), “subjective nationalism” (1947-57), and finally “neo-expressionism.” Objective nationalism refers to the direct use by the composer of Argentine folk elements in his compositions, within traditional tonal means. In subjective nationalism Ginastera uses rhythmic and melodic elements of folk music in a sublimated way so that these elements are not distinctly stated, but their presence creates an original Argentine style. Finally, in the period that he called “neo-expressionism,” the composer turns to more avant-garde procedures such as polytonality and serial techniques.¹³⁰ This division in stylistic development, however, was formulated by Ginastera in the late 1960s, before his music evolved even further to what could constitute a fourth and final period. From 1976 onward, Ginastera began using post-serial techniques with a new application of indigenous elements, this time not only Argentine but pan-American in nature.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Béhague, *Music in Latin America*, 328.

¹³⁰ Deborah Schwartz-Kates, “Ginastera, Alberto,” *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (accessed 15 March 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

During his years as director of the Torcuato di Tella Institute, Ginastera was writing music in the neo-expressionistic style, and his interest in serial techniques was not only reflected in his own music but also in his teaching. He was a strict teacher who expected those who studied with him to be fully committed to write music in the latest musical idioms at the time. According to Gutiérrez, Ginastera was, nevertheless, very open minded and also encouraging to all his students and the styles in which they were inclined to write. But while at the institute he expected them to focus on all the avant-garde techniques that were in vogue, a specialization which justified the existence of the CLAEM.¹³² Therefore Gutiérrez had to write again pieces in dodecaphonic style such as his *Concierto para Cuerdas* and his *Música para Siete Instrumentistas*. The first work was premiered at the auditorium of the Torcuato di Tella Institute with the wind quintet of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic, Gerardo Gandini, a recognized local pianist, and the first percussionist of the Teatro Colón. The *Concierto para Cuerdas* was premiered by the string section of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic with Gutiérrez conducting. An enthusiastic critic from the Argentinean newspaper La Nación commented about the first work:

Regarding the concert by Latin American composers, presented on November 10 [1965], at the Torcuato di Tella Institute, if we had to make a scale of value, we would have to place Benjamín Gutiérrez in first place for his *Música para Siete Instrumentistas*.¹³³

¹³² Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza.

¹³³ Quoted in the program notes for the concert of the Chamber Orchestra of the University of Costa Rica that took place on May 21, 1968 in the National Theater.

However, not all was vanguard and Gutiérrez narrates how Ginastera allowed him to start working on his *Variaciones Concertantes para Piano y Orquesta*, which would become his most significant piano work:

Alberto Ginastera used to give us one private lesson once a month where he would get to know us a little better and assess our individual progress. In one of those meetings he gave me permission to start working on my *Variaciones Concertantes for Piano and Orchestra*. They were not from the vanguard but he told me to write them because I was a good pianist. However, he told me not to perform them in Buenos Aires, so I waited and premiered them in San José in 1969 with the National Symphony, and Carlos Enrique Vargas conducting.¹³⁴

Gutiérrez has described his years in Buenos Aires as the most significant and enriching experience of his musical career for three different reasons: 1) Gutiérrez's studies with Ginastera and the influence that his personality and his teachings have had on Gutiérrez's artistic development and musical style; 2) Gutiérrez's exposure to and contact with some of the greatest musical minds of the twentieth century; and 3) the opportunity to meet and even develop long-lasting friendships with some of the most renowned Latin American composers of the present day.¹³⁵

In 1966, while still in Buenos Aires, Gutiérrez was awarded the prize *Juegos Florales* in Guatemala. He obtained the prize for the composition and performance of his symphonic poem which bears the title *Homenaje a Juan Santamaría*. The work was commissioned by his friend and colleague, the Guatemalan composer Jorge Sarmientos (b.1933), who at the time was also studying at the Torcuato di Tella Institute. Sarmientos

¹³⁴ Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza.

¹³⁵ Gutiérrez, interview by the author, 19 December 2006.

had organized a concert in Guatemala City with new works commemorating the independence of the Central American countries from Spain.¹³⁶ The figure of Juan Santamaría, however, is associated not with Costa Rica's independence from Spain but with another significant event in Costa Rica's history, the Battle of Rivas of 1856,¹³⁷ and he is referred to as Costa Rica's "unknown soldier." Gutiérrez used the image of the national hero to symbolically represent freedom from the oppression of invaders.¹³⁸ Gutiérrez's symphonic poem is a highly descriptive work, in which the composer portrays and confronts the image of a peaceful and religious society of the time, against the tragedy of the war and the death of the unknown soldier. Since its premiere in Guatemala, *Homenaje a Juan Santamaría* has also become over the years one of Gutiérrez's most widely performed compositions, having been played regularly in Costa Rica, but also in Washington, Rochester, Mexico, El Salvador, Panama, Ecuador, Buenos Aires and France.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza.

¹³⁷ On April 11, 1856, Costa Rican troops defeated the army of William Walker, an American mercenary who had attempted the annexation of all Central America to the southern states of the USA. The regularly small Costa Rican army was supplemented by peasant and artisan volunteers, among whom was Juan Santamaría, a humble laborer from the province of Alajuela. Santamaría's courageous act of setting the enemy's building on fire cost him his life, but played a determining factor in winning the battle. Iván Molina and Steven Palmer, *The History of Costa Rica* (San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 2005), 62-64.

¹³⁸ Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza.

¹³⁹ Benjamín Gutiérrez, *Homenaje a Juan Santamaría* (Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica, 5 May 1977. Teatro Nacional, San José), Program Notes.

Composer, Performer, Pedagogue

After returning to Costa Rica at the end of 1967 Gutiérrez resumed his obligations as professor at the University of Costa Rica. The next few decades would be prolific for Gutiérrez as a composer, conductor, and performer. As well, he became active in the establishment and development of the music-composition degree at the university.

In 1968 and for the next several years, his duties would also include being the conductor of the Chamber Orchestra and Choir of the University of Costa Rica, and in 1969 he became the Compositor Oficial de las Bandas Nacionales, a position he has held until the present day.¹⁴⁰ Nineteen sixty-nine also saw the premiere of his *Variaciones Concertantes para Piano y Orquesta*, which he had begun while studying with Ginastera. The performance took place in the National Theater with Gutiérrez at the piano and Carlos Enrique Vargas conducting the National Symphony. Gutiérrez himself performed the work two more times with the National Symphony, in 1974 with Gerald Brown and 1989 with Irwin Hoffman.

In 1971, he was named Assistant Conductor of the newly restructured National Symphony Orchestra whose conductor was now Gerald Brown. About this Gutiérrez has said:

The year 1970 was very important because the process of professionalizing musical activity in Costa Rica was taking place and many musicians from the National Symphony had to be fired. It was a difficult and controversial measure carried out by the government of José

¹⁴⁰ Gutiérrez, interview by the author, 19 December 2006.

Figueres with his minister of culture Guido Sáenz.¹⁴¹ More than half of the musicians were fired and they asked me to work with the remaining musicians, as an alternative to closing the orchestra completely, while Gerald Brown was in the process of hiring the new players from the United States, South America and Europe. In 1971, when the new orchestra was completed, they named me assistant to Gerald Brown, mostly as a political measure so that people could see that [the orchestra] was not only foreign, but that there was also a Costa Rican musician involved in the direction of the orchestra.¹⁴²

In the meantime Gutiérrez continued teaching at the university and in 1972 he assumed the directorship of the conservatory, a post he held until 1975. These were transitional times for the Conservatorio de Música, which in 1975 abandoned the programs of study that had been adopted after the model of European conservatories, and offered instead university degrees in several different music fields. It also moved to a new building, located on the campus of the university, leaving behind its downtown location near Parque Morazán, which had hosted the conservatory for over ten years.¹⁴³ To accompany all these changes, the conservatory changed its name to Escuela de Artes Musicales de la Universidad de Costa Rica.¹⁴⁴ Also in 1972, Gutiérrez traveled to Mexico to participate in the Music Festival of Guanajuato where he premiered his trio for violin,

¹⁴¹ In actuality Guido Sáenz was not minister but vice-minister of culture (1970-1974) when he restructured the National Symphony Orchestra. He was appointed minister of culture for the following term by President Daniel Oduber (1974-1978), and again by President Abel Pacheco (2002-2006).

¹⁴² Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza.

¹⁴³ Since its founding in 1942, the Conservatorio de Música functioned in different buildings in downtown San José. The first one was at a high school for girls called Colegio de Señoritas, where the music lessons began after 3:00 pm; the conservatory used this building until 1958. A small private building was rented from 1958 through 1965, the year in which the conservatory moved to an old house on the southeast corner of Parque Morazán, in the heart of the city. In 1976 the conservatory was given its own building in the Ciudad Universitaria Rodrigo Facio. José Franciso Viquez, *Escuela de Artes Musicales: Memoria del Cincuenta Aniversario, 1942-1992* (San José: Litografía e Imprenta Garino Ltda., 1992), 1.

¹⁴⁴ María Clara Vargas Cullel, "La Música," in *Costa Rica en el siglo XX. Tomo I*, ed. Eugenio Rodríguez Vega (San José: Editorial de la Universidad Estatal a Distancia, 2004), 36.

violoncello and piano, performed by his two Swiss friends Jan Dobrzelewski and Jaques Tulle, with Gutiérrez at the piano. The positive reception of the work by the Mexican audience and press compelled the three friends to premiere the work in Costa Rica shortly after, but the reception was not as warm this time:

In 1972 we traveled with the trio to Guanajuato. The festival required composers to submit works that were written in modern idioms and with the trio we had great success. They gave me a silver medal and the trio received great reviews. But when we returned, we played it here after the initiative of Jan Dobrzelewski and people did not like it. When I have to send chamber works to be performed abroad I am more daring and write in a more contemporary language, but here [Costa Rica] I try not to write music the people will not understand.¹⁴⁵

The following year, 1973, the Ministry of Culture awarded Gutiérrez the National Prize of Music Aquileo J. Echeverría for the third time, this time for the premiere of a fantasy for piano and band which has not been performed ever since.¹⁴⁶ Four years later, in 1977, when Gutiérrez celebrated his 40th birthday, the prize was granted to him one more time for his *Tres Canciones para Soprano y Orquesta*, a work which was premiered with Gutiérrez conducting the National Symphony and the Costa Rican singer Amelia Barquero as soloist. The text is based on a poem by the Salvadoran writer Miguel Espino and it reflects three stages in the life of a peasant woman. The songs explore a more chromatic language than previously heard in orchestral works by Gutiérrez. They also represent a return to vocal music, after a period of twenty years producing mostly

¹⁴⁵ Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza.

¹⁴⁶ Although Gutiérrez has kept this work at home for more than thirty years, he is currently working on making an edition in *Finale* for the *Dirección General de Bandas*' archives. (Gutiérrez, interview by the author, 19 December 2006).

chamber and orchestral works. From this point on and throughout the next decade, the composer devoted his efforts mostly to stage works of increasingly elaborate format and always containing, as a common denominator, vocal forces. An exception, however, is his work *Variaciones Rítmicas para Orquesta de Cámara* (1978), which was awarded the National Theater Chamber Music Prize.

The next two years saw the birth of two major works by Gutiérrez, *Presencia de Jorge Debravo* (1979),¹⁴⁷ for soprano and orchestra, a work which combines orchestral sections with the reading of poems by the Costa Rican poet; and Gutiérrez's only symphony, *Sinfonía Coral, en memoria de Johannes Brahms* (1980). The symphony was commissioned by Gerald Brown, the conductor of the National Symphony, and it has the special significance of being the second symphony ever written by a Costa Rican composer.¹⁴⁸ It is written in a post-romantic style and contains both melodic elements and orchestration that are reminiscent of the music of Johannes Brahms. The work was also awarded the National Prize of Music in 1980.¹⁴⁹

Twenty-five years after the premiere of *Marianela*, Benjamín Gutiérrez presented his second opera, *El Pájaro del Crepúsculo* (1982), with the Compañía Lírica Nacional at the National Theater. The opera, which also contains a ballet, is based on a tale by the Japanese writer Junji Kinoshita (1914-2006). In 1983 he was awarded the Premio Ancora from *La Nación*, Costa Rica's most influential newspaper. Earlier that year he had been

¹⁴⁷ Jorge Debravo (1938-1967) is regarded as Costa Rica's most prominent poet, who died in a car accident when he was only 29 years old.

¹⁴⁸ As mentioned earlier, Carlos Enrique Vargas Méndez (1919-1998) was the first Costa Rican composer to write both a piano concerto (1944) and a symphony (1945).

¹⁴⁹ Gutiérrez, interview by Gerardo Meza.

asked to compose the music for the first film written in Costa Rica, *La Segua*, produced in Mexico in 1984; it is based on a popular Costa Rican legend. That same year the composer traveled to Paris to attend a seminar on electronic music at the IRCAM¹⁵⁰ directed at the time by Pierre Boulez. In 1985, motivated by the success of his previous opera, Gutiérrez premiered *El Regalo de los Reyes*, which also bears the title *Las Dos Evas*; it is an early opera mostly written during the Boston years that is based on O. Henry's short tale, *The Gift of the Magi*. The work earned Gutiérrez the National Prize of Music one last time. The following year Gutiérrez wrote the scenic cantata *Fuego y Sombra de Federico García Lorca* (1986), a work for a large ensemble of soloists, choir, orchestra and ballet. This cantata was dedicated to the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) on the fiftieth anniversary of his death as an early casualty of the Spanish Civil War. The text is written by the Costa Rican playwright Lil Picado and it is based on Lorca's last poem, *Gazela de una Muerte Oscura* (Gazelle of a Dark Death).¹⁵¹ The work has been performed in Costa Rica, Argentina, Switzerland, Spain and Belgium.

In 1986 Gutiérrez retired from his regular duties as professor at the Escuela de Artes Musicales. Soon after, the title *Profesor Benemérito de la Universidad de Costa Rica* was bestowed on him, reserved for those who have achieved national and international recognition for their outstanding contributions to the university.

¹⁵⁰ The initials IRCAM in French stand for *Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique* (Institute for Music/Acoustic Research and Coordination). The centre was founded in 1969 by Georges Pompidou and it is entirely dedicated to contemporary musical research and production. It has been directed by Pierre Boulez, Laurent Bayle, the philosopher Bernard Stiegler and currently Frank Medlener (www.ircam.fr/ircam/institut).

¹⁵¹ Susan Campos, *The Benjamín Gutiérrez Sáenz Project*, <<http://www.benjamin-gutierrez-saenz.inspirat.com>>

In the years after his retirement he has continued to be very active as a composer, pianist and arranger. Also, in his effort to promote young Costa Rican talents, Gutierrez became in 1994 the liaison for a program that awards scholarships to Costa Rican students to pursue musical studies in the United States and France.¹⁵²

In 1999, he was declared *Músico del Siglo XX* (Musician of the 20th Century), by the newspaper La Nación, and in the year 2000 he was awarded the *Premio Magón*, the highest recognition in the country, offered to an individual for a lifetime of cultural achievement.

He has remained in his post as Official Composer of the National Bands, which he accepted in 1969, and this position has allowed him to continue writing new works as well as re-orchestrate some of his earlier works for numerous different ensembles. One of his main interests in later years has been producing works for soloist and symphonic band, with the purpose of having a more effective projection of his music into the different communities, towns and cities that have regular symphonic bands around the country. Some of these works are new compositions, but others are often new versions of earlier works, re-written as concertos or fantasies for soloist and band. By doing this he engages in a relationship of reciprocal benefit with young performers, where they gain opportunities to perform as soloists, while Gutiérrez's music, whether in original or re-orchestrated versions, continues to be programmed.¹⁵³ Besides that, his duties as official

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Gutiérrez, interview by the author, 19 December 2006.

composer of national bands require him to provide music for occasional ceremonies or events, such as hymns or others short pieces.¹⁵⁴

During the last five years, Gutiérrez has also devoted himself to the slow task of editing most of his works in the Finale computer program, a project that has allowed him to revise some of his earlier works. All this activity is characteristic of Gutiérrez's energy and enthusiasm for his profession. On several occasions, he has said, "I spent almost thirty years teaching. I teach to live, but I live to compose."

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

PIANO MUSIC IN COSTA RICA

The majority of music written for the piano during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Costa Rica was salon music. Composers such as Manuel María Gutiérrez (no relation to Benjamín) and Rafael Chaves Torres produced some of the earliest examples of this style. Although the first pianos arrived in the country in the mid 1830s,¹⁵⁵ the concept of the piano as a concert instrument would not begin to develop in Costa Rica until the first half of the twentieth century. Due to the social function of playing the piano in family gatherings or small house recitals, most music produced throughout the nineteenth century was rather simple and consisted of short pieces and dances such as waltzes, polkas, mazurkas, and pasillos. Among the composers who wrote several of these pieces are Juan de Dios Páez (1878-1937) and Alejandro Monestel. Example 3 shows a pasillo¹⁵⁶ by Juan de Dios Páez, of which he wrote several. Example 4 illustrates one of Monestel's piano pieces called *Soñando* [Dreaming].

¹⁵⁵ Flores.

¹⁵⁶ Pasillo is a folk dance that originates in the Austrian waltz and is particularly popular in Colombia and Ecuador.



Example 3. Juan de Dios Páez, *Remembranza*, mm. 1-5.



Example 4. Alejandro Monestel, *Soñando*, mm. 1-6.

Perhaps the lack of possibilities for a concert career, and the fact that musicians had to make a living by spending their time with a number of different activities, prevented the level of piano writing and playing from developing sooner. Every musician played the piano, but none made a career as a concert pianist or wrote music other than casual. As the musical level improved and specialization began to take place, more complex music was written. Local musicians continued to travel abroad for studies and their understanding of the instrument was evidenced in the music they wrote. The most compelling case was Julio Fonseca, who wrote a great number of works for piano, including many waltzes, one of which, named *Leda* (1914), acquired a great success and

was published by G. Schirmer.¹⁵⁷ Although most of his works are still considered salon music, he also wrote pieces of greater difficulty and length. These include *Danza de los Gnomos*, *Nocturno*, *Estudio en Fa*, and the *Suite Wheaton Hill*. However, the work in which he exhibits the most idiomatic writing for the instrument is his sonata for violin and piano in which the piano shares equal forces with the violin (Ex. 5). Written in 1905 when the composer was only twenty years old and a student in Brussels, the work is in a tonal, post-romantic style.

The image shows a musical score for a violin and piano piece. It consists of two systems, each with four staves. The top staff of each system is for the violin, and the bottom three are for the piano. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The piano part features several triplet figures. The first system has a 'cresc.' marking in both the violin and piano parts. The second system has 'f' and 'p' markings in the violin part, and 'f' and 'pp molto express.' markings in the piano part. There is also an '8va' marking with a dashed line in the piano part of the second system.

Example 5. Julio Fonseca, *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, mm. 291-298.

¹⁵⁷ Sider, *Contemporary Composers*, 77.

The next composer to make a significant contribution to the development of piano music in Costa Rica was Carlos Enrique Vargas Méndez. Not only was he one of the first concert pianists in the country, but he was also very active as a composer, conductor, organist, and pedagogue. He wrote some thirty minor works for piano, and some of these are already conceived for the concert hall, such as his *Allegro Enérgico* Op. 6 (1940) and his *Variations* Op. 9 (1941) (Ex. 6). Vargas's most significant work for piano, however, is his *Concierto para Piano y Orquesta* (1944), the first piano concerto written in Costa Rica and in Central America. The work was pioneering as regards both symphonic and piano music in the country, and it exhibits some virtuoso writing and an understanding of the instrument that was unprecedented. It is written in a post-romantic style, in both traditional formal structure and harmonic language, with Richard Straussian moments of tonal ambiguity.¹⁵⁸



Example 6. Carlos Enrique Vargas, *Piano Variations* Opus 9, var. 8, mm. 1-4.

¹⁵⁸ Manuel Matarrita Venegas, "An Analytical Study of Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 13, by Costa Rican Composer Carlos Enrique Vargas" (DMA diss., Louisiana State University, 2004), 20.

A contemporary of Benjamín Gutiérrez, Bernal Flores (b.1937) is the most avant-garde composer of the mid twentieth century in Costa Rica. He wrote a number of orchestral works, chamber music, an opera and two significant works for piano, namely his *Siete Toccatas Dodecaphonicas* (1956-58) and his *Concierto para Piano Percusión y Orquesta* (1973). The seven toccatas date from his days of studies at Eastman and they are written in a twelve-tone technique; they are very short, with the shortest being eight measures long and the longest only twenty-two. Each toccata uses within its brief number of measures all the keys of the piano; in four of them all eighty-eight keys are played only once¹⁵⁹ (Ex. 7). His concerto *William* was inspired by the famous character of the same name created by the English writer Richmal Crompton. The work is written using the Howard Hanson system of intervallic projections.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Medrano Suárez, 62.

¹⁶⁰ Medrano Suárez, 61.

Example 7. Bernal Flores, *Toccata Dodecafónica* No. 1.

The innovations that were taking place in music composition in the late fifties were led by these two young composers with very contrasting styles. In 1959 Benjamín Gutiérrez wrote his *Toccata y Fuga*, a work which presented new possibilities in concept, harmony and pianism, by departing from the familiar forms and tonal language of salon music and attempting a more virtuoso writing for the piano. An accomplished pianist himself, Gutiérrez's early work evidences his familiarity with the instrument, as well as

his personal aesthetic, which combined traditional elements with modern notions and was quite new to Costa Rican ears at the time. The *Toccata y Fuga*, which represents a turning point in the country's piano music, will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

With Gutiérrez and Flores, composition in Costa Rica transitioned from being an “on the side activity” to a more professional occupation. Although composers still had to engage in other activities in order to make a living, they were now regarded as composers first, which reflected a change in mentality unknown before them. This was produced by the incipient process of professionalizing music, as discussed in Chapter II. In a way, Gutiérrez and Flores are both early products and initiators of this process. Their model served as inspiration for later generations of composers who continued in the search for new creative paths. Some of the composers whose production includes piano music are: Mario Alfragüel (b.1948), who has written a very large number of works for piano including sonatas, variations, collections of short pieces and two piano concertos; Luis Diego Herra (b.1952) who also wrote a piano concerto (2001) and a short piano solo piece called *K 509*, and more recently Carlos Escalante (b.1968), who wrote a lengthy, four-movement piano sonata (2002) dedicated to the author.

CHAPTER V
GUTIÉRREZ'S PIANO WORKS

General Aspects of Gutiérrez's Musical Style

When asked to describe his music, Benjamín Gutiérrez readily answers with two words: opera and drama. He considers himself an opera composer up to this day, not just because he has written three operas (*Marianela*, 1957; *El Crepúsculo de los Dioses*, 1982; and *El Regalo de los Reyes*, 1985), but also because, as he points out, there is an inherent sense of drama that characterizes most of his music.¹⁶¹ Although this categorization does not imply writing music in the style of any particular time period, in Gutiérrez there is a strong influence from the late Romantics. A determining factor is the fact that Gutiérrez grew up listening to numerous productions of touring Italian opera companies, especially with works of Verdi and Puccini, an experience that played an important role in forming his musical taste. As a young composer, his first success was the opera *Marianela*, when he was only twenty years old. Ironically, Gutiérrez did not want the work to be performed again, or copies of the score to be distributed, perhaps as a result of his later-life judgment that the work was a bit green or that it followed too closely in the footsteps of Verdi and Puccini.¹⁶² Without the score, it is difficult to assess the Italian composers' full effect. But according to some accounts of the time, the work

¹⁶¹ Benjamín Gutiérrez, unpublished interview by Jorge Carmona, transcript, 9 February 2006.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

has strains of the style of late Romantic, Italian opera.¹⁶³ In his own words Gutiérrez explains: “My music is very dramatic, that is, you are always going to find a moment of climax in all of my works.”¹⁶⁴ Because of this, he has earned the label of a “neo-romantic composer,” although his style is actually an eclectic blend of Romantic and modern elements, as Bernal Flores explains:

His style is contemporary-romantic, with firm orchestration and dissonant harmony without extremes, in which the use of tonality, within a free context, appears darkened by chords that speak twentieth-century idioms.¹⁶⁵

Over the years, his writing has changed from the Romanticism of works like *Marianela* and his *Clarinet Concerto* (1960), to a style that shows the influence of some of his teachers and other sources. According to Ronald Sider, his earlier works display an expansive and romantic spirit and also the presence of Latin American influences, shown in their rhythmic vitality, the use of modality and ostinatos, and a style of orchestration reminiscent of Ginastera and Revueltas.¹⁶⁶ Sider also mentions shifting tonalities, polytonal experiments and the use of dodecaphonic techniques.

Though Ronald Sider mentions Latin American influences, Gutiérrez seems to avoid regional references in his piano music. Even *Danza de la Pena Negra*, his most popular piano piece, is no exception, although it invokes the musical language of

¹⁶³ *La Nación* (San José), 15 December 1957.

¹⁶⁴ Gutiérrez, interview with Jorge Carmona, 9 February 2006.

¹⁶⁵ Flores, *La Música*, 137.

¹⁶⁶ Sider, *Contemporary Composers*, 268.

Ginastera, particularly the malambo and quartally constructed chords. But it must be admitted that emulating or writing in the style of Ginastera does not constitute drawing upon indigenous sources, however much one thinks of Argentina when hearing Ginastera's music. Also, Sider's reference to dodecaphonic techniques does not apply to Gutiérrez's piano music.

Although Gutiérrez has experimented with avant-garde idioms, he has always gravitated towards more traditional practices, and his more mature style bows to neo-romanticism rather than to modernism. Harmonically, his music is constructed mostly of chords and key centers that can be recognized and analyzed according to tonal procedures. He particularly likes to use tritones, major sevenths and minor seconds. His melodic treatment sometimes shows hints of Romanticism by reaching a peak toward the end of the melody, as in the case of *Invención*. Sometimes he uses modal scales, but, even here, tends to introduce leading tones and modulations, which point toward a definite key. Rhythmically he exercises great freedom and constantly changes meters to emphasize melodic and harmonic arrivals. This can be seen particularly in early works such as the *Toccata y Fuga* and the *Clarinet Sonata*, both from 1959.¹⁶⁷ Gutiérrez also acknowledges the influence of jazz in some of his music, like the *Variaciones Concertantes para Piano y Orquesta*, and therefore the *Preludio* for piano, which in essence is the piano solo version of the slow middle section of the *Variaciones*.

¹⁶⁷ Krista Helfenberger, *Análisis Musical de la Sonata para Clarinete y Piano de Benjamín Gutiérrez* (2006). <<http://www.dykrom.com.br/KRISTA/>> [accessed 16 April 2008].

Compositional Issues Raised by the Piano Works

Gutiérrez's piano works raise several esthetic issues that reflect and define his compositional personality. These issues include his stance toward nationalistic or indigenous elements, his practice of musical borrowing, his relation to atonal/modernist music, and his grounding in the nineteenth-century virtuoso and Romantic traditions.

Nationalistic and Indigenous Elements

By the time Gutiérrez came to musical maturity, in the mid to late 1950s, several generations of Latin American composers of works intended for the concert hall (as opposed to the salon, church, or military events, as discussed on p. 14 of the present treatise) had already dealt with the option of incorporating indigenous or nationalistic elements into their compositions. Many of the most prominent of these composers, such as the Mexicans Manuel Ponce (1882-1948) and Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940), tapped nationalistic sources, as well as Pedro Humberto Allende (1885-1959), who incorporated Chilean folk music into such works as the piano set *12 Tonadas* (composed 1918-1922); Carlos Chávez (1899-1978), who drew inspiration from (Native American) Indian chants in such compositions as *10 Preludes for Piano* (composed 1937); and Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), who weaved the tunes of Brazilian chorões (wandering street musicians) into such works as *A Prole do Bebê* (composed 1918–21).

But other composers steered clearly away from Latin America and headed to Europe or the United States for inspiration. In some cases, it seems to have been an intentional decision.

This attitude often resulted from a conviction that musical nationalism was producing works of dubious quality and that it demeaned Latin American music by resorting to a facile exotic regionalism. Some composers' inclination towards a non-nationalist means can be construed as a deliberate endeavor to gain recognition through the intrinsic quality of their works rather than through external means: they strove to win approval by the international community of composers without concession to nationalism.¹⁶⁸

Gutiérrez clearly belongs to this group of composers whose esthetic framework lay almost entirely in Europe. As will be shown, his piano music reflects clear influences from the nineteenth-century Romantics Chopin, Wagner, and Tchaikovsky, as well as the early twentieth-century modernists Bartók, Milhaud, and Prokofiev. He also shows an affinity for music of the Iberian Peninsula, showing no resentment of the Spanish colonial era in Costa Rica's history. Finally, as mentioned above, there are signs of Ginastera's influence and, while Ginastera himself used indigenous music, Gutiérrez's use of phrases and idioms associated with Ginastera does not qualify as his own assimilation of indigenous elements.

In this context, it is somewhat irrelevant that a precise definition of the murky terms "nationalism," "indigenous," "Amerindian," or "mestizo" be offered here.¹⁶⁹

Gutiérrez embraces his European heritage and does not seek to be a "Costa Rican

¹⁶⁸ Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 224.

¹⁶⁹ As Gerard Béhague noted in 1979, "Latin American musical nationalism has never been defined to the satisfaction of all." *Music in Latin America: An Introduction*, p. 124. The article on *mestizo* in the Encyclopædia Britannica states, "In Central and South America [mestizo] denotes a person of combined Indian and European extraction... In some countries—e.g., Ecuador—it has acquired social and cultural connotations; a pure-blooded Indian who has adopted European dress and customs is called a mestizo... In Mexico the description has been found so variable in meaning that it has been abandoned in census reports." Encyclopædia Britannica Online. (accessed 18 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9052254>>

composer.” It is not that indigenous music did not exist in Costa Rica. Surely Nicolas Slonimsky’s blunt 1945 conclusion, “Costa Rican music is a white man's music, and of all Latin American countries is the least influenced by either the Indian or the Negro culture,”¹⁷⁰ was an overstatement and not an explanation of Gutiérrez’s avoidance of Costa Rican indigenous sources. Ethnomusicology blossomed after World War II, after Slonimsky’s research, and produced evidence of several indigenous Costa Rican musics, such as that of the Chorotega Indians, the Bribri tribe (discussed in Chapter 2, p. 10, of the present treatise), and in later years the Cabécar, Guatuso, Guaimí, Boruca and Térraba Indians, as discussed by Laura Cervantes Gamboa.¹⁷¹ Given Gutiérrez’s musical family, intense musical training, and immersion in Costa Rican culture for the first nineteen years of his life (as detailed in Chapter 3), it is likely that he was aware of Costa Rica’s ethnically influenced folk music, but intentionally avoided its incorporation into his own works designed for the concert stage. It is this author’s contention that Gutiérrez did so precisely for the reasons Béhague gives—the avoidance of “facile exotic regionalism” and the desire to “gain recognition through the intrinsic quality of [the compositions].” Although Gutiérrez has never said this explicitly, it is not a large leap to make the inference, based on the fact that he never mentioned regional or indigenous elements in any interview. It is also telling that, in an interview with Gerardo Meza in August 2006

¹⁷⁰ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America* (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1945), 173.

¹⁷¹ Laura Cervantes Gamboa: “Costa Rica. Traditional Music”, *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed April 22, 2008), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>. In her article for *Grove Music Online*, Cervantes Gamboa lists 32 bibliographic sources for indigenous Costa Rican musics, published from 1961 to 1997, including E. Lopez de Piza’s “Xirinachs de Zent, una comunidad Cabécar de Costa Rica,” *América indígena*, xxxiv/2 (1974); *Lo que se canta en Costa Rica*, J.D. Zúñiga Zeledón, ed. San José, 1937, 12/1980); D. Stone’s *Las tribus talamanqueñas de Costa Rica* (San José, 1961); and W. Alpírez: *Música indígena costarricense* (San José, 1972)

(partially quoted on p. 56), Gutiérrez expresses a subtle preference for the “contemporary language” accepted abroad, which, in Costa Rica, would not have been understood.

Musical Borrowing

Gutiérrez’s piano compositions also raise the issue of musical borrowing. The history of musical borrowing is a long one, encompassing eleventh-century organum based on chant, eighteenth-century variations based on folk tunes, nineteenth-century character pieces that include hymns, and twentieth-century bebop saxophone improvisations that quote popular songs. The motives for such borrowing practices are diverse. The line added to an 11th-century chant—as described in Guido of Arezzo’s *Micrologus* (1025–6), for example—may have merely started out as a way of performing the original material (the chant) in a new, enhanced way.¹⁷² An 18th-century theme & variations based on a folk tune—Mozart’s Variations on “Ah vous dirai-je, Maman,” K. 265/300e, for example—increased the composition’s popularity among young piano students and the general public, but also proved a sophisticated compositional point: that the most ordinary harmonic sequence, given compositional craft, can become high art. A 19th-century character piece that included a hymn—Fanny Hensel’s citation of the Easter hymn “Christ ist erstanden” in her composition *März*, from *Das Jahr*, for example—made the extramusical meaning more explicit. A 20th-century saxophone improvisation that quoted a popular tune—Charlie Parker’s quotation of Percy Grainger’s “Country Gardens” in an improvisation over “I Got Rhythm,” for example—provided a humorous

¹⁷² J. Peter Burkholder, “Borrowing,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy, (accessed 20 April 2008), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

moment and instantaneous connection to the audience in an otherwise abstract, virtuosic solo.

Gutiérrez's citations of the Prokofiev Toccata in his own Toccata, as well as virtual quotations of Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro* in *Añoranza* and *Danza de la Pena Negra* belong to the "quotation as homage" type of musical borrowing. It, too, has a long, honorable tradition: Nineteenth-century composer Carl Loewe (1796-1869) paid tribute to Beethoven, his unabashed idol, in several sonatas, including Loewe's *Frühling* Sonata, op. 47 (composed in 1824) which boldly quotes passages of Beethoven's "Pastoral" Sonata, op. 28.¹⁷³ And Robert Schumann's quotation of Beethoven's "An die ferne Geliebte" at the end of the first movement of Schumann's *Fantasie*, op. 17 is another example of "quotation as homage," doubly meaningful with connotations of the composer's beloved Clara. Gutiérrez not only pays tribute to Prokofiev and Bartók through these quotations, but also joins the esthetic domain conjured up by Prokofiev's Toccata and Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro*.

Tonality and Atonality

Gutiérrez composed his first piano piece, the *Toccata y Fuga* in 1959. At the time, the world's musical front was mostly dominated by composers whose explorations lead them, by and large, to findings past the realms of tonality. In Europe this current was represented by names such as Pierre Boulez, Bruno Maderna, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, and it had its counterpart in the United States with composers like Elliott Carter, George Perle, and Milton Babbitt. This atonal spirit permeated the atmosphere in

¹⁷³ John Salmon, *The Piano Sonatas of Carl Loewe* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 82-83.

Boston, where Gutiérrez studied composition at the New England Conservatory. His first composition teacher at NEC, Francis Judd Cooke, actually told Gutiérrez that it was time to “give up” tonality, as discussed on p. 43, a position echoed only a little less stridently by his second NEC mentor, Carl McKinley.

Countercurrents could be found, of course, particularly in the United States where Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, and Samuel Barber only experimented with serial techniques and found a wide audience through neo-classical, neo-romantic, and popular idioms. For Gutiérrez, one of the most important representatives of the modern composers using tonal idioms was Darius Milhaud, with whom he studied at Aspen in 1959. Unlike the more academic training that Gutiérrez was receiving at NEC, Milhaud’s approach was more informal, and he encouraged Gutiérrez to find his own voice, whatever the language.

Summary of Musical Style

Gutiérrez indeed forged an individual language in his piano works, combining elements of the European tradition, such as thematic transformation,¹⁷⁴ with more vernacular idioms such as: the Spanish Phrygian tetrachord and “gruppetti” figures found in Iberian music; jazz sounds and forms as exemplified in the jazz ballad; and a reconfiguration of Argentinian-sounding folk music, in his assimilation of Ginastera’s style. And while Gutiérrez clearly derives some harmonic usages (such as his placement

¹⁷⁴ For information on thematic transformation see Rudolph Réti *The Thematic Process in Music* (New York, 1951); also *Thematic Patterns in Sonatas of Beethoven* (New York: Macmillan, 1967); Arnold Schoenberg, “Linear Counterpoint” from *Style and Idea* (New York, 1950, enlarged 2/1975/R by L. Stein with additional material; and Hugh Macdonald: “Thematic Transformation” *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy, <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

of half-diminished seventh chords at dramatic points, like Chopin and Tchaikovsky) and approaches to virtuosity from nineteenth-century Europe, he also shows traits of twentieth-century modernism, such as the “percussive toccata” and non-resolved, harsh dissonance. Gutiérrez’s distinctive practice of “musical borrowing” in three of the piano pieces, in which an intentional homage is paid to particular composers, further distinguishes his compositional style.

Toccata y Fuga

Gutiérrez’s *Toccata y Fuga* is his lengthiest work for piano solo, written in the summer of 1959 while Gutiérrez was studying with Darius Milhaud at the Aspen Music Festival. The composition and performance by Gutiérrez of the *Toccata y Fuga* earned him an honorable mention at the Aspen Music Festival’s student composition contest. The work gained particular significance in the development of Costa Rican piano music as one of the first piano pieces written for the concert hall, at a time when most music composed for the instrument fell into the category of salon music.¹⁷⁵

This early work already presents some of Gutiérrez’s most common stylistic traits: melodic ideas that use wide intervals, chromaticism, rhythmic vitality, and freely changing meters, use of dissonance and tonality within atonal contexts. It also shows Gutiérrez’s connection to late Romantic piano writing, with double octaves passages, often encompassing the whole range of the keyboard, rich harmonies with frequent use of chords spanning ninths and tenths, some percussive elements such as repeated notes and chords, and fast unison passages in both hands. But perhaps most importantly, these

¹⁷⁵ Gerardo Duarte, interview by author, tape recording, Tibás, San José, 16 December, 2006.

elements signify Gutiérrez's esthetic decision to create a musical style derived wholly from European sources. As a student composer in Aspen, Colorado in 1959, surrounded by many composers of various backgrounds but all presumably rooted in European "art music," Gutiérrez is bound to have been aware of the need to "find his own voice" and the role his Latin American background should play in that process. In his *Toccata y Fuga*, Gutiérrez staked out a decidedly European esthetic. Costa Rica may have been Gutiérrez's home, but it was not the source of his first and largest piano work. A closer look into the work and its most salient features will reveal some of the elements of Gutiérrez's newly found personal voice.

The basic form of the toccata is A-B-A' or A-B-A'-B', where B' functions as a 12-measure coda. Section A is marked *Andante*, and from that fact, we surmise that this toccata does not belong, at least at the beginning, to the driving, *perpetuum mobile* type of toccata exemplified in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by Czerny, Schumann, Prokofiev, and Ravel. The title alone evokes the baroque keyboard practices of imitation and improvisation, pioneered by Frescobaldi and Froberger, and developed by J.S. Bach, for example in his Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565. Gutiérrez's toccata begins in a lyrical, quasi polyphonic manner with three and sometime four lines, the two lower parts providing an accompaniment in parallel fifths (Ex.8).

Andante.

Piano

p legato

Example 8. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 1-4.

The head of the theme is a three-note motif (first three notes in the top voice of m. 1, Ex. 8) that is freely inverted (Ex. 9) or transformed (Ex. 10) but retaining the rhythmic pattern of two eighth notes followed by a long note. The constant change of meter is consistent with the freedom of melody, which actually dictates the meter changes, often by emphasizing the three-note motif and placing it in different metrical contexts. This is reminiscent of J.S. Bach's practice of varying the placement of fugal subjects, as in the C Major Fugue, WTC I.

Free inversion of motif

p cresc...

Example 9. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, m. 8.

Transformation of motif

Example 10. Gutiérrez, *Toccatà y Fuga*, m. 11.

Although Gutiérrez puts a key signature (three flats), there is no clear tonal center at first. Chords are recognizable—for example, a G half-diminished seventh chord in m. 2, a B-flat major triad in m. 3, and B-flat minor six chord in m. 4—but there is no definition of or movement toward C minor until measure 6, when a cadence is suggested with the G major to C minor triad (Ex. 11). On paper, it is a V to i cadence, even if it does not sound conclusive by virtue of its sudden appearance, static bass and the C minor triad being in second inversion. Interestingly enough, a modulation to D-flat major, mm. 15-17 (Ex. 12) is more definite, including a strong bass movement from dominant to tonic.

5

c: V₇ _____ i

Example 11. Gutiérrez, *Toccatà y Fuga*, mm. 5-7.

The image shows a musical score for Example 12, consisting of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 13 to 19. It is written in D-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The right hand has a melodic line with various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings include 'dim ...' and 'Rall...'. The second system covers measures 17 to 19, starting with a tempo marking 'a tempo' and a dynamic marking 'p'. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand provides a steady accompaniment.

Example 12. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 13-19, modulation to D-flat major in mm. 16-17.

D-flat major remains for the next sixteen measures. Little digressions, such as the G major triad in measure 24, or the G minor triad in measure 25 (Ex. 13), offer momentary distraction from the recurring D-flat major chords (mm. 19, 21, 28, 30) and diatonic passages (mm. 18, 20, 30). Although no modulation has occurred, at this point D-flat is more clearly a tonal center than the opening, “presumed” key of C minor. On the other hand, the frequent use of parallel fifths and tenths reminds the listener that the present work does not follow strict rules of harmony and counterpoint (Ex. 13).

The image shows a musical score for Example 13, measures 24-26. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is G major (one flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins with a forte (ff) dynamic marking. The first measure (24) features a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The second measure (25) is marked 'Parallel tenths' and shows a box around the bass line. The third measure (26) is marked 'dim...' and shows a box around the bass line. The key signature changes from G major to G minor between measures 25 and 26.

Example 13. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 24-26.

Gutiérrez develops some melodic ideas in a manner reminiscent of Schoenberg’s “developing variation” or the *Grundgestalt* principle where a basic motif in the music undergoes repetition, variation and transformation.¹⁷⁶ The three successive, two-bar phrases in measures 17-22 show a melodic fragment (mm. 17-18) that is varied at its repetition by the use of a triplet (m. 20), and then more dramatically altered in the third iteration by the increased use of chromaticism, while retaining the original rhythmic pattern of the melody (mm. 21-22, Ex. 14). While Gutiérrez never took private lessons from Schoenberg, the latter’s influence on the compositional community in the United States was profound. As a highly influential professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and through books such as *Style and Idea* (1950),¹⁷⁷ Schoenberg spread his ideas about motivic development and structural unity, ideas Gutiérrez could have easily picked up at the New England Conservatory in the late 1950s.

¹⁷⁶ Michael J. Schiano “Grundgestalt,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (accessed 25 April 2008), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

¹⁷⁷ Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950).

The image shows a musical score for Example 14, consisting of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 17-19, and the second system covers measures 20-23. The music is written for piano in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first system begins with a tempo marking 'a tempo' and a dynamic marking 'p'. The right hand has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system includes a triplet in the right hand at measure 20 and a 'cresc...' marking in the left hand. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the right hand.

Example 14. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 17-23.

Gutiérrez recalled that at the time he composed *Toccata y Fuga* (summer 1959), most of his training at the New England Conservatory emphasized the cultivation of the prevailing academic style of 12-tone composition, and that his studies with Darius Milhaud were, in this sense, a breath of fresh air for Gutiérrez.¹⁷⁸ Milhaud encouraged all his students to compose in their own voices, regardless of current trends.¹⁷⁹ Although *Toccata y Fuga* does not contain elements of Milhaud’s style such as the freely bi-tonal procedures or the reliance on ethnic or jazz languages found in *Le Boeuf sur le Toit* and *Christophe Colomb*, a subtle pianistic trait does link the two composers, namely the use of tenths in the left hand (Exx. 13 and 15). Both Gutiérrez and Milhaud had large hands.

¹⁷⁸ Benjamin Gutierrez, interview by author, San Jose, 19 December 2006.

¹⁷⁹ He gave similar open-ended encouragement to many students, including Dave Brubeck, who studied with Milhaud at Mills College 1946-47. Milhaud emboldened Brubeck to use the language of jazz in his compositions. John Salmon, “What Brubeck Got From Milhaud,” *American Music Teacher*, February/March 1992, 26-32.



Example 15. Milhaud, “Copacabana” from *Saudades do Brasil*, mm. 21-24.

Gutiérrez ends the lyrical first part of his toccata on a portentous half-diminished seventh chord, the chord that became an almost “signature sonority” for the quintessentially Romantic composers Frédéric Chopin, Richard Wagner and Peter Tchaikovsky, who used it at key dramatic moments. Due to its unstable nature the chord functions like a dominant seventh and has usually been used by composers, especially of the Romantic period, as a substitute for that chord. Gutiérrez’s half-diminished seventh chord appears at the transition into the B section of the toccata, and his choice of that chord over the dominant seventh links him directly to the Romantic tradition.

In the opera *Tristan und Isolde* (Ex. 16), the half-diminished seventh is the first chord of the entire opera. After the opening gesture, a rising minor sixth from A to F, then a descent to E, one might have expected a D minor chord, but not an F half-diminished seventh (spelled by Wagner in a way that leads to the E7 chord that follows, but definitely perceived as an F half-diminished seventh chord). To begin this opera with such an unstable sonority and in such an unpredictable tonal context forecasts the drama to come.



F half-diminished 7th

Example 16. Wagner, opening chord of *Tristan und Isolde* (F half-diminished seventh).

In the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, the sweeping half-diminished seventh-chord arpeggio in measure 48 comes after the work's first cadenza, which is a series of virtuosic flourishes based on diminished seventh chords. To conclude this cadenza with the half-diminished seventh chord, which Tchaikovsky marks fortissimo and ends with a fermata, heightens the sense of expectancy and makes the famous D-flat theme that follows seem even more triumphant (Ex. 17).



E-flat half-diminished 7th

Example 17. Tchaikovsky, B-flat Minor Piano Concerto, first movement, m. 48 (E-flat half-diminished seventh).

Chopin also uses the half-diminished seventh at structurally decisive moments, as illustrated in Example 18 in the first Ballade Op. 23, where it serves as a modulatory chord between two distant keys, E major and E-flat major. Significantly, Chopin marks

this passage with a *fff* sign, one of only two places in the entire ballade with this dynamic marking (the other is at the conclusion, seven bars from the end, when the contrary motion octaves close in on each other).

122

124 *fff*

dim.

E# half-diminished 7th

Example 18. Chopin, Ballade Opus 23 in G minor, mm.122-125.

In the Gutiérrez example, the G half-diminished seventh chord is marked *pp*, contrasting with the Tchaikovsky and Chopin, and is first played with a fermata (which it has in common with the Tchaikovsky example). Gutiérrez repeats the upper part of the G half-diminished seventh chord, a B-flat minor chord stretched out over a tenth (another example of his large stretch), and the chord gains in urgency through repetition and syncopations (Ex. 19).

31

Rall... *pp* sost... cresc ...

35

poco ... a ... poco ... accelerando ...

38

f *sf* *p* Presto marcato

G half-diminished 7th

Example 19. Gutierrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 31-40.

In all four instances, the half-diminished seventh chord signifies suspense and drama. This is a clear example of Gutierrez's strong relation to nineteenth-century Romanticism, and a reminder of his stated influence from Puccini and Verdi. Not only does Gutierrez use the half-diminished seventh chord, he uses it in a way that Chopin, Wagner, and Tchaikovsky used it—to demarcate an important section (Chopin, Tchaikovsky) and to forecast gripping moments.

Tchaikovsky's influence is also apparent in Gutierrez's use of virtuosic double octaves (Ex. 19, mm. 38-40). Not only does Gutierrez mirror the texture and shape of

Tchaikovsky's octave writing (ascending for one bar, then descending the next) as illustrated in mm. 258-59 of the first movement of the B-flat Minor Piano Concerto, Gutiérrez also constructs his line using an augmented fourth (although somewhat obscured), as in the Tchaikovsky example (Ex. 20).

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It consists of two staves, a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The music is marked 'p' (piano) and '8va' (octave) with a dashed line above the treble staff. The melody is characterized by ascending and descending octaves, often grouped in triplets. A specific interval of an augmented fourth is highlighted in the original image. The score spans approximately eight measures.

Example 20. Tchaikovsky, B-flat Minor Piano Concerto, first movement, mm. 258-59.

Chopin's pianistic textures are present as well, as in the *strepitoso* unison passage in mm. 46-48, reminiscent of Chopin's E-flat minor prelude, Op. 28, and the *Finale* of his second sonata, Op. 35 (Exx. 21, 22 and 23).

44 *8va*

p subito *molto* *ff* *strepitoso*

47 *dim ...*

Example 21. Gutiérrez, *Toccatà y Fuga*, mm. 44-48.

Example 22. Chopin, second piano sonata, Op. 35, fourth movement, mm. 53-56.

Example 23. Chopin, Prelude in E-flat Minor, Op. 28, no. 14, mm. 4-9.

These examples (Exx. 19-23) demonstrate also Gutiérrez's deep roots in the tradition of nineteenth-century virtuosity. For piano students of Gutiérrez's generation in Costa Rica (and, for that matter, almost anywhere else in the world where classical piano study was a discipline), Chopin and Tchaikovsky were staples. It is normal to see evidence of these styles crop up in Gutiérrez's first solo piano work and telling that, unlike some composers of his generation who wished to distance themselves from traditional idioms and create new languages (e.g., Frederic Rzewski, b. 1938, and Philip Glass, b. 1937), Gutiérrez embraces his European heritage and builds on it.

The B section of the Toccata, marked *Presto marcato*, contrasts with the lyrical section before it. Its principal theme (Ex. 24) is derived from a snippet of melodic material found in measures 8-9 (Ex. 25) which also appeared, in a metrically displaced version, in measure 21 (Ex. 26). Once again, Gutiérrez's connection to European

practices, more particularly German, comes to the fore. As a composition student of Francis Judd Cooke at the New England Conservatory, Gutiérrez was, in a sense, the “grandchild” of one of the most penetrating theorists of the German repertory, Sir Donald Tovey. Despite the liberating influence of Milhaud, Gutiérrez associated “serious” composition with “motivic development,” an essential trait in German music which he did not inherit from Milhaud.

Presto marcato

sf p

Example 24. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 40-41.

cresc...

Example 25. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 8-9.



Example 26. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 20-22.

The *Presto marcato* section of the Toccata, though faster and more jarring than the previous section, still does not evoke the qualities which defined the genre from Czerny through Ravel (perpetual motion sixteenth notes and, in Schumann, Prokofiev and Ravel, repeated notes) until mm. 49, when Gutiérrez virtually quotes the opening of Prokofiev's Toccata, op. 11 (composed 1912). The repeated Ds of mm. 49-53 in Gutiérrez's Toccata (Ex. 27), in exactly the same register as Prokofiev's Op. 11, punctuated by the same chromatic lower and upper neighbors (C-sharp, E-flat) as Prokofiev's Toccata, make this connection inescapable (Ex. 28). By integrating Prokofiev's reference into a work built on motivic development, Gutiérrez deftly merges two toccata styles, the Baroque and the twentieth-century.

49

p

52

The musical score consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 49-51) is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. Measure 49 features a series of triplets in the upper staff and accented eighth notes in the lower staff. Measure 50 continues the triplet pattern in the upper staff. Measure 51 shows a change in rhythm with eighth notes in the upper staff and accented eighth notes in the lower staff. The second system (measures 52-54) continues the piece. Measure 52 has triplets in the upper staff and accented eighth notes in the lower staff. Measure 53 features a triplet in the upper staff and a crescendo hairpin in the lower staff. Measure 54 concludes the passage with a triplet in the upper staff and accented eighth notes in the lower staff.

Example 27. Gutiérrez, *Toccatà y Fuga*, mm. 49-54.

Allegro marcato.

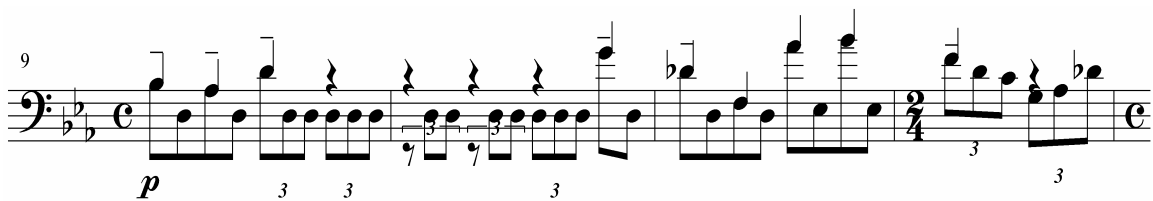
Example 28. Prokofiev, *Toccata*, Op.11, mm. 1-19.

Gutiérrez’s ingenuity is also very much in evidence, since, within this reference to Prokofiev (mm. 51-54), he embeds the opening three-bar melody (mm. 1-3), in an augmented rhythm (Ex. 29a and b), and the parallel fifths of m.1 and m. 11 appear in mm. 55-56 (Ex. 30a and b). Like the “thematic transformation” or “motivic development” discussed earlier, here Gutiérrez strives for compositional cohesion by putting motifs in different contexts (slow and lyrical, then fast and driving) and changing

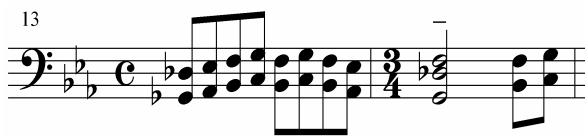
their rhythmic value (from eighth notes to quarters). This is a common trait of German compositional practice.



Example 29a. *Toccata* mm. 1-3.



Example 29b. *Toccata* mm. 51-54.



Example 30a. *Toccata*, mm. 1-2.



Example 30b. *Toccata*, mm. 55-56.

Gutiérrez's invocation of the Prokofiev Toccata deserves more commentary. Given how obvious the musical reference is and the familiarity of the Prokofiev Toccata, we can reasonably conclude that Gutiérrez incorporated these musical borrowings into his own Toccata purposefully. This quotation can be viewed as a combination of several different rationales: an honor-laden tribute to Prokofiev who practically defined the genre

in the twentieth century; a tongue-in-cheek, almost humorous “in joke” to the pianists who would play the work and to the cognoscenti in the audience; and, moreover, a deft demonstration of compositional craft (by welding the main theme within the repeated Ds). This shows not only remarkable compositional skill, but also marks Gutiérrez’s distinctive voice. In an era when many composers felt the need to establish an entirely new language or incorporate indigenous elements, Gutiérrez builds on old European models but with new twists such as this innovative borrowing technique.

At m. 95 the A material returns, this time with a triumphant character which Gutiérrez achieves by doubling the theme in octaves, making the left-hand parallel fifths into full triads, and transposing the opening theme a perfect fourth higher (Ex. 31*d*). This transposition however does not appear to have a tonal function within the toccata, but instead it seems to be employed by the composer to give the opening material a new color and accomplish a climactic effect. Once again, Gutiérrez shows his dedication to thematic transformation by incorporating the triplet idea of the fast part of the Toccata in this reprise of the lyrical section. The original idea has now undergone a rather dramatic renovation and migration, as shown in Examples 31*a-d*.



Example 31*a*. *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 17-18.



Example 31b. *Toccatà y Fuga*, mm. 21-22.



Example 31c. *Toccatà y Fuga*, mm 40-41.

Tempo I (ma non fuoco)

94

Poco Sost. *f*

f legato

Example 31d. Gutiérrez, *Toccatà y Fuga*, mm. 94-100.

Thematic transformation continues with the beginning of the fugue whose subject is derived from the opening measures of the Toccata. The first three notes of the subject preserve the contour of the initial motif of the Toccata, descending by whole step and

ascending this time not by tritone but by the consonant interval of a perfect fourth. This alteration gives the opening theme of the fugue a more tonally stable quality. However, a tritone is still present, and only deferred to the end of the second measure. On the other hand, there seems to be a rhythmic inversion taking place in this three-note idea, where the toccata's "short-short-long" pattern has become "long-short-short" for the fugue. (Exx. 32-33). Furthermore, the theme of the fugue seems to unfold through the transformation and extension of this three-note idea as seen in the three bracketed segments of Example 33.

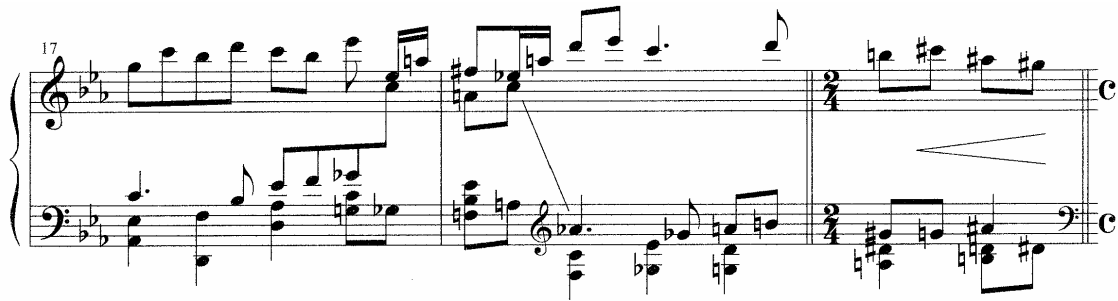
Example 32. Gutiérrez, *Tocatta y Fuga*, mm. 1-4.

Example 33. Gutiérrez, opening bars of the fugue, mm. 1-4.

Gutiérrez's work reflects J.S. Bach's practice of placing the subject in different parts of the measure (as in Bach's Fugue in D-sharp Minor, WTC I, or the Fugue in A-flat Major, WTC II, where subjects appear in both halves of a 4/4 bar) with the entrance of the fourth subject in bar 12, placed on the third beat, instead of the downbeat. Such metrical replacements were common in J.S. Bach's fugues, and it is obvious that Gutiérrez had studied Bach carefully (Ex. 34). The doubling at the octave does not contradict the three-voice texture implied until that point, since organists frequently employ double-stops in fugues. However, from measure 16 on, there is considerable use of free counterpoint and the addition of extra notes for harmonic support, transcending a strictly fugal texture.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piece in 4/4 time. The first system, measures 11-13, features a treble and bass clef. Measure 11 shows a subject entering on the third beat. Measure 12 has a dynamic marking of *mf* and an arrow pointing to a note with the label "Metric displacement". The second system, measures 14-19, continues the piece. Measure 16 has a dynamic marking of *f* and an arrow pointing to a note with the label "Free counterpoint".

Example 34. Gutiérrez, *Toccatà y Fuga*, mm. 11-19 (cont. on next page).



Example 34 (cont.). Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 11-19.

A climax is reached at measure 20 and a diminuendo over the next five bars leads to a sustained chord under which the left hand introduces the rhythmic motif of the countersubject in octaves in the low register. This arrival resembles measure 34 of the toccata, just before the beginning of the B section (Ex. 35). After a fermata the second section of the fugue begins with fragmented expositions of the subject, the answer and the countersubject. At the beginning of this section, the subject, placed this time in the tenor, becomes secondary to the countersubject, now in the soprano. In other words, a reversal of roles seems to occur, where the countersubject acts as the main theme while the subject accompanies it (Ex. 35).

23

Poco Rall . . .

pp seco

a tempo

p

26

8^{vb}

Example 35. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 23-28.

In measure 31, the sixteenth notes that originated in the countersubject are used in a sequence, and in measure 33 they break into continuous sixteenth notes (Ex. 36). This is reminiscent of some of J.S. Bach's double fugues, in which a second subject in sixteenth notes is introduced later in the fugue (e.g., the Fugue in F-sharp Minor, WTC II) or of fugues where a similar countersubject appears only after the exposition of all parts (e.g., Fugue in A Major, WTC I).

The image displays a musical score for Example 36, consisting of three systems of music. The first system (measures 29-31) shows a right-hand part with sixteenth-note patterns and a left-hand part with a bass line. A 'ped' marking is present under the first measure. The second system (measures 32-33) features a 'legato' marking and a dynamic shift from 'f' to 'p subito'. The third system (measures 34-35) continues the sixteenth-note texture in the right hand and the bass line.

Example 36. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 29-35.

The rest of the fugue unfolds combining the new element of the moving sixteenth notes with fragments and occasional full statements of the subject and the countersubject. The piece reaches its final climax at measure 53, where syncopation and strong dissonance underscore the tension that has been built to that point (Ex. 37). On measure 54 there is a diminished triad pedal point (G—B-flat—D-flat) which resolves unconventionally to a sustained G major chord in first inversion. This arrival provides both, a sense of arrival and release of tension, but also an element of surprise by its unanticipated harmonic resolution. After a long pause, the bass and the soprano alone

state the subject and countersubject as an epilogue to the whole work, which ends with a C major seventh chord.

The musical score for Example 37, Gutiérrez's *Toccata y Fuga*, mm. 52-end, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 52-53) shows a complex texture with multiple voices and dynamic markings such as *sf*, *ff*, and *sf*. The second system (measures 54-56) includes markings for *sf*, *Rit...*, *pp*, *tranquillo*, and *marc.*. The third system (measures 57-58) features *Molto Rit...* and concludes with a C major seventh chord.

Example 37. Gutiérrez, *Toccata y Fuga*, mm.52-end.

In a work devoid of jazz harmonies or rhythms, one may wonder if the last chord is a harmonic or stylistic non sequitur. Despite Gutiérrez's admission of jazz influence in some of his works, nothing in *Toccata y Fuga* sounds like jazz, with the possible exception of the very last chord. But twentieth-century classical composers had long

since begun to appropriate such “signature” jazz harmonies,¹⁸⁰ including Gutiérrez’s teacher Milhaud who closed many a work with chords straight out of Duke Ellington (1899-1974) or Bix Beiderbecke (1903-1931) (acknowledging, of course, that Milhaud actually preceded Ellington and Beiderbecke in such seventh-chord usage, raising the question of what makes jazz harmonies unique).¹⁸¹ So, it is unlikely that Gutiérrez suddenly intended to invoke the language of Cole Porter and Erroll Garner at the close of a serious work like his *Fugue*. Rather, he wanted an uplifting, Picardy-third ending (as did J. S. Bach in some minor fugues), with a richer mix of overtones than a mere C major triad could provide.

Toccata y Fuga gives an accurate reflection of a critical moment in the compositional development of Benjamín Gutiérrez, who only two years earlier had finished writing a very tonal, romantically-influenced opera. A composer in 1959 felt undeniable pressure to write dissonant, “modern”-sounding music, under the shadow of the serialists and such compositional standard-bearers as Stockhausen, Berio, and Boulez. There was also a wave among many Latin American composers—Carlos Chávez, Alberto Ginastera, and Heitor Villa-Lobos, to name three of the most prominent—that emphasized indigenous or nationalist elements. Gutiérrez sought his compositional identity through neither of these strains, basing his musical language instead on the procedures of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, and Prokofiev. The result is an

¹⁸⁰ Examples of major seventh chords used outside a jazz context abound in the second quarter of the twentieth-century. They include Leonard Bernstein’s *Seven Anniversaries* (1944), Lukas Foss’s *Fantasy Rondo* (1946), Paul Creston’s *Six Preludes, Op. 38* (1949), and Norman Dello Joio’s *Nocturne in E* (1950)—all music that Gutiérrez could have known.

¹⁸¹ For example Milhaud’s “Ipanema” from *Saudades do Brasil*, which ends with a major seventh chord (plus other extensions).

emerging personal style, decidedly non-nationalistic, with strong roots in Europe. His musical voice finds expression through thematic transformation procedures developed by German composers, certain chords and textures used by the Romantics, and a distinctly modern combination of “musical borrowing” techniques. The language is both freely tonal/modal and freely dissonant, which parallels, to a certain extent, the musical language of Prokofiev, who never abandoned tonality or consonance and who used dissonance for particular expressive effects. The result is a well-crafted, original, effective addition to the repertoire.

Short Pieces

Besides *Toccata y Fuga*, Gutiérrez wrote five short compositions for solo piano. These are mostly re-workings of early material used in larger symphonic or choral works. Twenty-two years separate the *Toccata y Fuga* from the first of the shorter pieces, though stylistic similarities are discernible. Four of these pieces appeared in a publication of the University of Costa Rica Editorial in 1993 under the title *Cuatro Piezas para Piano Elemental* and dedicated to Flora Elizondo, one of that institution’s piano pedagogues. “Piano Elemental” is the academic name used at the University of Costa Rica to refer to the secondary piano level within the program of musical studies. This, however, does not mean that all four pieces contained in the collection have only a moderate level of difficulty. The two most popular pieces are *Danza de la Pena Negra* [Dance of the Black Grief] and its prelude, and in fact they exert considerable demands on the performer. In an interview with the author, Gutiérrez expressed that the main reason he gathered all four pieces together was for publishing purposes, and that his main intent was to present

Preludio y Danza de la Pena Negra.¹⁸² Nevertheless, the two extra pieces included in the set are worth mentioning, since they are good representatives of Gutiérrez's musical style. In the 1993 publication, the pieces appear in the following order: *Invención*, *Añoranza*, *Preludio*, *Danza de la Pena Negra*. One more piece, called *Ronda Enarmónica* and also bearing the label "Piano Elemental," appeared in 1993 as well. These five pieces will be studied in the next section.

Musical Style in *Añoranza*

Gutiérrez's brief piano piece *Añoranza* [homesickness, yearning, or longing] lives up to its title by evoking these strongly affective qualities in under two minutes' playing time. There are moments that evoke the feeling of being unmoored, expressed in m. 1 by ascending duplet octaves on B and, in mm. 2, 12, and 18 by the prominent display of a tritone, the interval most commonly associated with doubt and ambiguity (Ex. 38).

comodo e rubato

The image shows a musical score for the first two measures of the piano piece 'Añoranza'. The score is written for piano (p) and is in 8/8 time. The tempo/mood is marked 'comodo e rubato'. The right hand (R.H.) plays ascending duplet octaves on B in the first measure, and a tritone interval in the second measure. The left hand (L.H.) provides a simple accompaniment.

Example 38. Mm. 1-2 of *Añoranza*, feeling unmoored through the use of duplet octaves and tritone.

¹⁸² Benjamín Gutiérrez, interview with author, 19 December 2006.

A subtle allusion to Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro* appears in m. 8 of *Añoranza* and again at the end of the piece, in mm. 16-17. The juxtaposition of an F-sharp minor chord with a C-sharp diminished chord¹⁸³ mirrors the same chords in *Allegro Barbaro*, and, like the allusion to Prokofiev's Toccata in his own *Toccata y Fuga*, shows Gutiérrez engaging in the practice of "musical borrowing." Just as the similarity of the repeated Ds' register and ornamentation draws attention to the relationship between Gutiérrez's Toccata and Prokofiev's, similarities of voicing and rhythm assure that *Añoranza*'s F-sharp minor/C-sharp diminished pairing will recall the *Allegro Barbaro*, arguably Bartók's most famous piano work.

Among piano students and the public, *Allegro Barbaro* is to Bartók what *Für Elise* is to Beethoven and what *Clair de lune* is to Debussy: instantly recognizable, instantly identifiable, among the most played piano pieces. For many piano students, *Allegro Barbaro* is their first and perhaps only piano piece of Bartók's piano repertoire. There can be no doubt that Gutiérrez intentionally refers to this classic, which Gutiérrez himself studied and played.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ In *Añoranza*, the C-sharp diminished chord has a G-sharp in the left hand, unlike the pure C-sharp diminished triad in *Allegro Barbaro*, which gives the chord a harsher sound.

¹⁸⁴ *Danza de la Pena Negra*, as will be seen shortly, also alludes to this 1911 classic of Bartók's, further proof that *Allegro Barbaro* was an important piece to Gutiérrez.

Tempo giusto. (♩ = 76 - 84)

Piano

Example 41. Bartók, *Allegro Barbaro*, mm. 1-13.

Since the allusion is intentional, it follows to speculate on just what was intended by this quotation. Unlike the Prokofiev quotation in *Toccata y Fuga*, this example of musical borrowing is not a tongue-in-cheek reference to the title (since the titles *Añoranza* and *Allegro Barbaro* have nothing to do with each other, unlike Prokofiev’s *Toccata* and Gutiérrez’s *Toccata* which share the same generic heritage). Nor is it a matter of heightening an extramusical meaning (since there is no “program” beyond the generalized sentiments of loneliness and longing connoted by the title) or demonstrating compositional craft (unlike Gutiérrez’s sophisticated quotation in *Toccata y Fuga* which meshed the Prokofiev *Toccata* with the main theme of Gutiérrez’s *Toccata*, in augmentation).

Rather, Gutiérrez seems to have found a new category of “musical borrowing”—an exact quotation of two chords whose original meaning is altered by the new context. The “barbaric” quality Bartók achieved by pounding out F-sharp minor chords at the

beginning of *Allegro Barbaro*, making us think that F-sharp minor is a stable tonic, is made even more “barbaric” by making the C-sharp chords (which had the opportunity to serve as dominant and justify F-sharp minor as tonic) into diminished triads, thus undermining any sense of tonal stability. Bartók seems to be saying that the world is brutal and unpredictable. Gutiérrez’s transformation of these chords retains Bartók’s brutality and instability but, by virtue of the slow, sad context (quarter note = 58; predominance of unrelated minor triads), adds an element of despair.

Perhaps Gutiérrez is saying here that homesickness can be so intense as to be barbaric. Or perhaps these two chords, one a bona fide F-sharp minor chord and the other a faux dominant (C-sharp minor with G naturals), expressed what no other sonority could. The very chord F-sharp minor, if no other key prevails as is the case in measure 8, suggests the tonality of F-sharp minor, at least for that instant, and that may have had special meaning to Gutiérrez, in the same way that B minor was, for Beethoven, the “black tonality.”¹⁸⁵ As Rita Steblin lays out in the book *A History of Key Characteristics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*,¹⁸⁶ F-sharp minor has long implied melancholy and tragedy. Gutiérrez probably has the same sensitivity to tonalities that most composers have had since the advent of equal temperament. Alas, Gutiérrez evidently did not write anything on the back of the manuscript of *Añoranza* that might have given a hint of the passage’s hidden meaning. But that the quotation was deliberate seems probable, given Gutiérrez’s formal training. In the author’s opinion, for a pianist

¹⁸⁵ Beethoven scribbled on his manuscript of the Cello Sonata, op. 102, no. 2 “H-moll die schwarze Tonart.”

¹⁸⁶ Rita Steblin, *A History of Key Characteristics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983).

seeking new programming ideas, *Añoranza* would make an effective prelude to Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro*.

Musical Style in *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra*

In 1988 Gutiérrez published a short piano piece titled *Danza de la Pena Negra* (Dance of the Black Grief), which quickly became well known and was performed by several local pianists. A few years later the composer decided to write a prelude to accompany the dance, hence its title. Both pieces originate in the *Variaciones Concertantes para Piano y Orquesta*, and the prelude contains the essential material of the second section of the original work.¹⁸⁷ They are, as Gutiérrez has called them, a synthesis for piano solo of the *Variaciones*.

The *Preludio* shows Gutiérrez's influence from the world of jazz or popular idioms. It has a loose A-B-A'-B' form, and without a key signature, the piece starts off in what seems to be F minor. But it soon moves through a harmonic progression that is common in the pop ballad world, in which F minor is a supertonic that precedes a B-flat dominant seventh, initiating a kind of ii – V7 – iii – V7/ii cycle in the key of E-flat major. However, a sophisticated turn, the tritonal descent in the melody between bars 2 and 3 exceeds pop accessibility (Ex. 42).

¹⁸⁷ In an interview with the author [19 December 2006], Gutiérrez expressed that he wrote the Prelude with the intention of allowing original material from the *Variaciones* to be heard more often. Due to the small number of symphony orchestras in the country, concertos by local composers are only programmed once every several years and therefore several composers are inclined to re-work them into piano solos or chamber music versions, as a more viable means of promoting their music.

Tritonal descent

Espressivo

The image shows a musical score for Example 42. It consists of two systems of piano music. The first system is in 4/4 time and features a right-hand melody with a tritonal descent (Bb to Ab) and a left-hand accompaniment of sustained chords. The second system continues the piece with similar melodic and harmonic textures. The tempo/mood is marked 'Espressivo' and the dynamics include 'p'.

Example 42. Gutiérrez, *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra*, mm. 1-5.

A modulation to D major (in mm. 8-9) brings a luminous and hopeful effect to the B section, contrasting with the sense of nostalgia conveyed in the first eight measures of the piece (Ex. 43). An interesting bitonal arpeggio descent in measure 16, the right hand in E minor, the left in D-sharp major, produces an eerie and dramatic effect (Ex. 44).

Tempo giusto

The image shows a musical score for Example 43. It consists of two systems of piano music. The first system is in 4/4 time and features a right-hand melody with a bitonal arpeggio descent in measure 16 and a left-hand accompaniment of sustained chords. The second system continues the piece with similar melodic and harmonic textures. The tempo/mood is marked 'Tempo giusto' and the dynamics include 'pp'.

Example 43. Gutiérrez, *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra*, mm. 6-11.

Example 44. Gutiérrez, *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra*, mm. 15-23.

Two very different sound worlds are juxtaposed, alternating discordant arpeggios (mm. 16 and 19) with popular music (mm. 17, 18, 20). The result is a novel mix of idioms, probably more captivating than confusing to first-time listeners. The final G minor arpeggio, with spicy dissonances (F naturals and F sharps in the same pedal), leaves a rich sonic impression, with overtones that blend with and react against each other (Ex. 45). This final sonority, to be achieved through the damper pedal's depression, reminds one of similar finales by Ginastera, such as the final two bars of "Danza de la moza donosa" (Dance of the Graceful Young Woman) from *Danzas Argentinas* (Ex. 46) or the last three bars of the third movement of his Sonata, Op. 22 (Ex. 47). All three

endings paint a picture which diffuses gradually into the distance, following Ginastera's markings, *lontano* and *lontanissimo*: distant and very distant.

The image shows a musical score for Example 45. It consists of two staves: a piano part on the left and a right-hand part on the right. The piano part begins with a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking. The right-hand part features a melodic line with a '15^{ma}' (fifteenth) interval marked above it. The tempo marking 'Rall.' (Ritardando) is placed above the piano part, and 'R.H.' (Right Hand) is placed above the right-hand part. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Example 45. Gutiérrez, *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra*, mm. 30-31.

The image shows a musical score for Example 46. It consists of two staves: a piano part on the left and a right-hand part on the right. The tempo marking 'Molto lento' is placed above the right-hand part. The piano part has a 'pp' (pianissimo) marking. The right-hand part has a 'pp lontano' (pianissimo, distant) marking. The score concludes with a double bar line and an asterisk.

Example 46. Ginastera, "Danza de la moza donosa," mm. 77-81, from *Danzas Argentinas*.

The image shows a musical score for Example 47. It consists of two staves: a piano part on the left and a right-hand part on the right. The tempo marking 'allargando' (ritardando) is placed above the right-hand part. The piano part has a 'pp sonoro ma lontanissimo' (pianissimo, sonorous but very distant) marking. The right-hand part has an '8va' (octave) marking above it. The score concludes with a double bar line and an asterisk.

Example 47. Ginastera, *Sonata No. 1, Op. 22, Mvt. III*, mm. 68-70.

Musical Style in *Danza de la Pena Negra*

Danza de la Pena Negra (Dance of the Black Grief) was written on Christmas Eve of 1987 and contains elements from the last section of the *Variaciones Concertantes*. Its main theme, however, originates in Gutiérrez's work *Cantata Escénica Fuego y Sombra* (1986). *Danza de la Pena Negra*, Gutiérrez's most popular piano piece, is both a dance and a toccata, with repeated rhythms and a relentless drive that reaches its only break with the final fortissimo chord. The influence of his teacher, Ginastera, is evident from the start, particularly in two aspects: the major seventh chords that are played against an accompaniment that suggests A minor; and the use of the *malambo* rhythm, used widely by Ginastera. In his doctoral treatise, Francis Pittman describes the main characteristics of this indigenous Argentine dance:

The *malambo*, danced exclusively by men, is probably the one dance that most typifies the *gauchesco* tradition and spirit in Argentina...Musically, the *malambo* is distinctively characterized by a fast tempo in compound meter of 6/8 and a persistent eighth-note motion. Integrated into the ceaseless momentum are numerous rhythmic variants including the ubiquitous *sesquiáltera*. [the Spanish equivalent of a *hemiola* where there is either the metric simultaneity or alternation of 3/4 and 6/8].¹⁸⁸

Although Gutiérrez notated his dance in 12/8 instead of 6/8, the effect is no different from a notation in 6/8. The resemblance to some of Ginastera's *malambos*, as seen in Examples 48, 49 and 50, is unmistakable. In Gutiérrez's and Ginastera's *malambos*, quartal chords are repeated in the right hand against a single-line ostinato in

¹⁸⁸ Francis Davis Pittman, "A Performer's Analytical Guide to Indigenous Dance Rhythms in the Solo Piano Works of Alberto Ginastera" (DMA diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2006), 10.

the left hand. The eighth-note motion is nonstop, and the *sesquiáltera* rhythms are prominent. Harmonically, a distinctive element of Gutiérrez’s style is the use of augmented fourths. While both composers often utilize seventh-chords with a fourth in the middle, Ginastera seems to prefer perfect fourths, while Gutiérrez has a predilection for the tritone, as can be seen in the opening measures. One recalls the importance of the tritone for Gutiérrez, as observed in *Toccata y Fuga* (Ex. 8), and in *Añoranza* (Ex. 38). He seems to share this proclivity to use the tritone with Bartók, whose presence will be felt even more keenly a few measures later (Ex. 52).

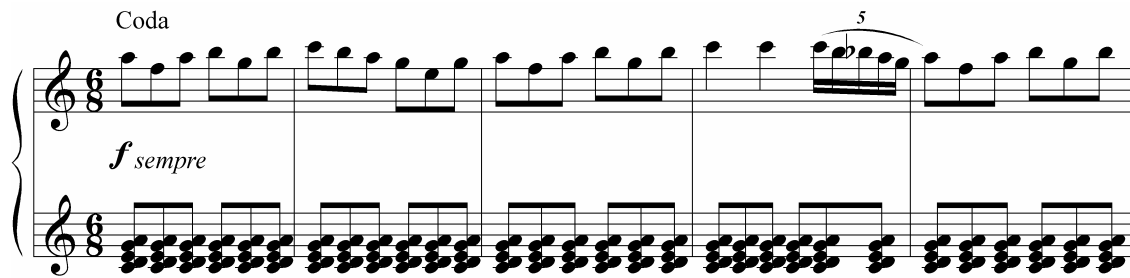
Allegro energico

mf stacc. *fz*

Example 48. Gutiérrez, *Danza de la Pena Negra*, mm.1-2.

f

Example 49. Ginastera, “Malambo,” mm. 70-74, from *Suite Estancia*.



Example 50. Ginastera, “Malambo,” mm. 124-28, from *Suite Estancia*.

The descending Phrygian tetrachord progression, A – G – F – E in the bass (in mm. 13-14), common to Andalusian and gypsy music, once again shows Spain’s influence on Gutiérrez (Ex. 51).



Example 51. Gutiérrez, *Danza de la Pena Negra*, mm. 13-15.¹⁸⁹

Bartók’s influence on Gutiérrez once again emerges in measure 33, with a quotation from Bartók’s *Allegro Barbaro* that is even more explicit than the one in *Añoranza* (Ex. 52).¹⁹⁰ This is another instance of “musical borrowing.”

¹⁸⁹ This is a clear example of the so-called “Andalusian cadence,” as described by Hipólito Rossy (*Teoría del Cante Jondo*. Barcelona: Credsa, 1998. Pp. 20-22). The bass notes outline the notes A-G-F-E, the bottom tetrachord used in the Phrygian mode and central to all Flamenco music.

¹⁹⁰ Which Gutiérrez has acknowledged. Interview with author, 19 December 2006.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *ff* *strepitoso* is placed above the first measure of the second system. The second system continues the piece with similar notation, showing a continuation of the melodic and rhythmic patterns.

Example 52. Gutiérrez, *Danza de la Pena Negra*, mm. 31-37.

Whereas Gutiérrez’s allusion to Bartók’s *Allegro Barbaro* in *Añoranza* was disguised somewhat by the lyrical character and unhurried pace, the quotation of Bartók’s *Allegro Barbaro* in *Danza de la Pena Negra* follows the same driving tempo as Bartók’s *Allegro Barbaro*. Gutiérrez quotes the passage almost note for note, similar to his quotation of the Prokofiev Toccata in his own Toccata.

For a composer who did not align himself with the serialists, yet wanted to transcend the purely tonal procedures of the late Romantics, it was a natural and joyful combination of motives and styles, with a specific goal: to connect the piece he is writing to the specific mood/effect of another composer or style. So, in *Danza de la Pena Negra*, Gutiérrez pays homage to two of the germinal composers of the twentieth century, Bartók and Ginastera, the latter of whom was his mentor (1965-67). There is also a clear tribute to Spain, via the “Andalusian cadence,” reminding us of Gutiérrez’s infatuation with

Spanish culture which he first demonstrated in 1957 with his opera *Marianela* (based on a novel by Spanish author Benito Pérez Galdos).

Musical Style in *Invención*

Gutiérrez's *Invención* is the piano version of his *Vocalise* for soprano and SATB choir, and the composer had previously used the same material in his opera *El Pájaro del Crepúsculo*.¹⁹¹ For pianists, a work titled "Invention" probably brings to mind J.S. Bach's two-part inventions. At first glance Gutiérrez's *Invención* does resemble a two-part invention of Bach: two independent lines, to be played by two hands, in imitation. But the flowing lines, narrow range, modal melodies in mostly conjunct motion, and mild imitation could just as easily conjure up, at least in the opening measures, a pre-Baroque style. For the first few seconds of *Invención*, one might think of early Renaissance vocal music, perhaps a passage from one of the masses of Guillaume Dufay (ca. 1400-1474) (Exx. 53 and 54).

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with a fermata over the final note. The lyrics 'lei son.' are written below the staff. The bottom staff also begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a similar melodic line with a fermata over the final note. The lyrics 'lei son.' are written below this staff as well. The number '75' is written above the first staff.

Example 53. Guillaume Dufay, "Kyrie" from *Missa Sancti Jacobi*, mm. 74-79.

¹⁹¹ Carrillo, 57.



Example 54. Gutiérrez, *Invención*, mm. 1-4.

Thereafter come distinct modulations to A minor, E minor, D major, G major, G minor and B-flat major—all within the span of eight measures or about twenty-four seconds of playing time. This is an abrupt departure from Renaissance practice, even transcending the Baroque era when modulations existed but were less frequent and less far afield than this example. Even so, imitation abounds between the two voices and the dance-like rhythms of mm. 8-13 could have come from Bach’s Two-Part Inventions. In measure 13, however, a third voice comes in, signaling the end of strict counterpoint. Two bars later (m. 15), a climax is reached, brought about by a completely new element that seems to have nothing to do with the polyphonic music of either the Renaissance or the Baroque era: it is a turn in thirty-seconds characteristic of Spanish guitar music, which Romantic Spanish composers deployed to impart a specifically Iberian flavor to their compositions (Ex. 55). Two composers who used widely this type of *gruppetto* in their compositions are Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999) and Enrique Granados (1867-1916) (Exx. 56 and 57).

Example 55. Gutiérrez, *Invención*, mm. 14-17.

Example 56. Rodrigo, *Concierto de Aranjuez*, second movement, mm. 5-8.

Example 57. Granados, *El Fandango de Candil* from *Goyescas*, mm. 10-13.

Furthermore, the harmonies are related to Spanish practices as well, especially the descending Phrygian Spanish tetrachord, which was seen earlier in the *Danza de la Pena Negra*, and can be recognized in the bass-line of mm. 18-19 (G – F – E-flat – D), a pattern that appears frequently in Spanish music (Exx. 58 and 59).

Example 58. *Invencción*, mm. 18-20, with descending Spanish Phrygian tetrachord in bass (G – F – E-flat – D).

Example 59. Granados, *Danza Española No.2*, mm. 33-43. The descending Spanish Phrygian tetrachord, in a slightly altered fashion, occurs in mm. 38-41.

Unlike the tonally ambiguous or wandering first half of *Invención* (mm. 1-14), the last half (mm. 15-25) stays clearly in G minor and retains the Iberian aura. The thirty-second-note grupetto becomes the new stylistic focus of the piece, repeated twelve times at the final cadence.

Many twentieth-century composers have used the title “Invention” with no reference to Bach’s Two-Part Inventions, opting instead for a kind of imaginative fantasy.¹⁹² Others have written pieces clearly modeled after J.S. Bach’s Inventions.¹⁹³ Gutiérrez is one of the only composers, perhaps the only one, to model the first half of his *Invención* on Bach and/or Renaissance style, and to invoke a completely new language for the second half. These apparently opposing styles, however, are skillfully balanced as a whole, where the more romantically infused second half of the piece works as a culmination to the contrapuntal and harmonic wanderings of the first. Audiences who have heard the author’s performances of Gutiérrez’s *Invención* have not seemed to mind the stylistic hopscotching at all, responding instead with enthusiasm to the work’s expressive quality.

Musical Style in *Ronda Enarmónica*

Dated 1981, *Ronda Enarmónica* appeared only in 1993 as an appendix to a second publication of the 1959 fugue from *Toccata y Fuga*. It is a short musical joke in polytonal Bartókian writing, where the right hand seems to be in D major while the left is

¹⁹² For example, Carlos Chávez in his 1960 piano piece *Invención* and William Bolcom in his 1988 piano etude (from *12 New Etudes for Piano*), both imaginative fantasies with no discernible relation to the Two-Part Inventions of Bach.

¹⁹³ For example, Halsey Stevens in his 1964 “Invention” from *Seventeen Piano Pieces* and Virgil Thomson in his 1981 “Invention: Theodate Johnson Busy and Resting.”

in D-flat major. Gutiérrez says that he wrote the piece as an encore for young pianists or children who were learning music along the lines of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*.¹⁹⁴ In fact, the piece has a close, but not literal, resemblance to one of the pieces from *Mikrokosmos*, where Bartók's combination of two diatonic tetrachords creates an octatonic scale¹⁹⁵ (Ex. 60). The jest of the matter is that Gutiérrez uses the theme of a popular Costa Rican song, *De la caña se hace el guaro* (*Guaro is made of sugar cane*),¹⁹⁶ to write *Ronda Enarmónica*. And as he expresses with a smile: "it is a prank, which reflects how we Costa Ricans are, *De la caña se hace el guaro* in Bartókian style"¹⁹⁷ (Exx. 61 and 62).

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of 'Ronda Enarmónica'. The score is written for piano in 6/8 time and D-flat major. The tempo is marked 'comodo' and the dynamics are 'mf'. The right hand part features a melodic line with slurs, while the left hand part provides a bass line with fingerings 1-2-3-4. The word 'legato' is written below the bass line.

Example 60. Gutiérrez, *Ronda Enarmónica*, mm. 1-4.

¹⁹⁴ Gutiérrez, interview with author, 19 December 2006.

¹⁹⁵ Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 183.

¹⁹⁶ Guaro is the popular Costa Rican liquor which is distilled from sugar cane.

¹⁹⁷ Gutiérrez, interview with author, 19 December 2006.

Example 61. “Diminished fifth,” from Bartók’s *Mikrokosmos*, Vol. 4, mm. 1-7.

Voice

A - no - che dor mien el sue - lo dor mien el

sue lo te nien do ca - ma. Por cul - pa dee - se mal

di - to dee se mal di to ro de ca ña.

Example 62. *De la caña se hace el guaro*. Popular Costa Rican song.

The title *Ronda Enarmónica* probably refers to the two opposing qualities of the piece: simplicity and complication. The word *ronda* in Spanish often refers to a children’s song. Leaving aside for a moment the observation that it is a bit mischievous for Gutiérrez to use the term for a children’s song in referring to this melody, a well-

known drinking song, *ronda* connotes childlike simplicity.¹⁹⁸ By using the word *enarmónica*, Gutiérrez is engaging in a little hyper-sophistication and jovial misuse of the word, as there is no traditional enharmonic spelling within the work. Rather, Gutiérrez is merely commenting on the bitonality and “exotic” octatonic context within which this “children’s song” occurs.

So *Ronda Enarmónica* once again demonstrates Gutiérrez’s predilection for musical borrowing, in this case from two sources, Bartók and folk song, which he skillfully merges. Unlike the earlier, rather serious references to Bartók and Prokofiev, this one is meant to be humorous. The result is a charming piece that, despite its compositional sophistication, can be played by beginning piano students and enjoyed by adults.

Summary

A close examination of Benjamín Gutiérrez’s piano works revealed some of the most characteristic traits of his musical style, which can be considered a unique blend of Romantic and Modern elements with a distinctive personal voice. There is an inherent sense of drama in all of Gutiérrez’s music which, as he admits, originates in his fondness for the opera, and his piano music is no exception. One also recognizes Gutiérrez’s immersion in the great European music across several centuries: *Invencción* reflects familiarity with early Renaissance vocal music, and a clear indebtedness to J.S. Bach; the *Toccata y Fuga* has connections to Bach, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Prokofiev,

¹⁹⁸ One recalls another slightly irreverent composer, Claude Debussy, who jokingly inserted a quotation from Wagner’s very serious opera *Tristan und Isolde* into the lighthearted “Golliwog’s Cakewalk.”

Schoenberg, and Milhaud—a virtual compendium of European masters, which Gutiérrez absorbs to create his lengthiest piano work, a youthful composition that already exhibits most elements of his distinctive musical style; *Añoranza* shows a strong reference to Bartók, composer who, as Gutiérrez admits, influenced greatly his own piano writing;¹⁹⁹ *Danza de la Pena Negra* invokes both Ginastera and Bartók; and *Ronda Enarmónica* comes back to Bartók as a stylistic source.

To these “proper,” “art music” sources, Gutiérrez does add elements of the vernacular or musical lingua franca, but not from Costa Rica (except for *Ronda Enarmónica*). Instead he uses Iberian idioms, as seen in his *Danza de la Pena Negra* and *Invencción*. Jazz also crops up, as seen in the ballad aspects of *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra*. And while Ginastera’s malambo rhythms and gestures contribute to *Danza de la Pena Negra*, it is more likely that Ginastera’s style was a source for Gutiérrez’s own creativity, than that he himself was alluding to indigenous Argentinian folk music. Gutiérrez’s nod to the music of his own country comes in the brief *Ronda Enarmónica*, which humorously refers to the Costa Rican song, *De la caña se hace el guaro*.

In describing Gutiérrez’s individual style, a discussion of his practice of musical borrowing is central. He contributes to the long tradition of intentional musical allusion, by quoting Prokofiev and Bartók, indeed arguably from their most famous piano pieces, the Toccata, Op. 11, and *Allegro Barbaro*, respectively. In *Toccata y Fuga*, Gutiérrez not only uses the percussively repeated one-note figure Prokofiev practically invented, he

¹⁹⁹ Gutiérrez, interview with author, 19 December 2006.

picks the very note that opens Prokofiev's Toccata, D below middle C. Every aspiring concert pianist in the late 1950s knew Prokofiev's 1912 signature piece, the ultimate rousing encore. Gutiérrez's quotation is clearly intentional, a whimsical allusion for pianists and seasoned concertgoers. But Gutiérrez ingeniously combines Prokofiev's chromatic upper neighbors with his own main theme (Exx. 29-31), in essence, creating a new form of musical borrowing—the sophisticated “in joke.”

In *Añoranza*, Gutiérrez quotes the very chords that Bartók used in *Allegro Barbaro*—F-sharp minor with the third on top and a kind of C-sharp diminished triad with the augmented fifth on top—in an attempt to impart the perhaps “barbaric” quality of homesickness (one of the meanings of *Añoranza*). As in the quotation of Prokofiev, Gutiérrez's reproduction of the exact notes, with no attempt to transpose or otherwise disguise their source, must be viewed as a forthright salutation to Bartók, both homage to the creator of a decisive musical language in the twentieth century and a calling forth of the uniquely unstable atmosphere those notes create. Gutiérrez's devotion to Bartók also comes through in *Ronda Enarmónica*, which mirrors the pitches used in one of the *Mikrokosmos*, readily admitted, with a wink, by Gutiérrez himself (“*De la caña se hace el guaro* in Bartókian style”).²⁰⁰

Milhaud emboldened Gutiérrez to embrace tonality or, at least, not to “give [it] up,” contradicting an earlier composition teacher. Hence, Gutiérrez's piano works are never without a tonal center, and traditional dissonances (minor ninths, major seconds) are reserved for key dramatic points (downbeat of measure 53 of the *Toccata y Fuga*, or

²⁰⁰ Benjamín Gutiérrez, interview with the author, 19 December 2006.

downbeat of measure 19 of the *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra*, for example, as shown in Exx. 38 and 45). But Gutiérrez is just as likely to employ the half-diminished seventh chord as used by Chopin and Wagner, at important structural places (Exx. 17-20). There are instances of “exotic” scales, such as the descending Phrygian tetrachord associated with Spanish music (Exx. 52 and 59) and bitonally generated scales (Ex. 61).

Gutiérrez’s writing is pianistically idiomatic, reflecting an intimate connection with the virtuosic textures of Romantics such as Chopin (Exx. 22-24) and Tchaikovsky (Exx. 20 and 21), but also “modernists” like Milhaud (Exx. 13 and 15) and Ginastera (Exx. 49-51). And, of course, by invoking the language of Prokofiev and Bartók, Gutiérrez inevitably mirrors their idiosyncratic patterns, whether percussively repeated notes in the tenor range of the keyboard or the alternation of two distinctive chords. Above all, his music, while technically demanding, “fits the hands.” It is inventive but never maladroit, showing the composer’s excellent pianistic training.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Benjamín Gutiérrez is both a product of and an initiator in the gradual process of the professionalization of music in Costa Rica, a phenomenon whose origins are detectable in the mid nineteenth century. Early in his life, in the 1940s as Costa Rica still remained in the cultural shadows of Guatemala, to say nothing of Argentina or Mexico, Gutiérrez benefited from his frequent attendance at performances in San José of touring Italian operas and Spanish zarzuelas. This connection to the European continent would prove pivotal as he began to orient himself artistically and stake out his compositional voice. Despite his education in Guatemala, the United States and Argentina, Gutiérrez was esthetically tethered to Europe, the home of "high art" in the West. It is significant the fact that study with Darius Milhaud and Alberto Ginastera, both of whom incorporated folk or popular idioms into their formal compositions, produced no such inclination in Gutiérrez. Perhaps one of the ultimate freedoms awarded to a Latin American composer in the twentieth century is precisely the ability to choose a musical language that does not include indigenous materials.

In a country that did not have a master's degree in music until the early 1990s and that viewed musicians until the mid twentieth century largely as functionaries of military, church, school, or social events, Benjamín Gutiérrez is a pioneer. *Marianela* (1957) was the first opera by a Costa Rican composer, mounted in Costa Rica. *Toccata y Fuga* (1959) is one of the first serious piano compositions by a Costa Rican composer.

Considered as a whole, Gutiérrez's pianistic output—his solo works *Toccata y Fuga*, *Añoranza*, *Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra*, *Danza de la Pena Negra*, *Invención*, and *Ronda Enarmónica*, but also his *Variaciones Concertantes para Piano y Orquesta*, not discussed in the present study—merits attention from scholars and performers. His decision to base his musical language principally on European models rather than indigenous sources adds another interesting chapter to the discussion of national identity in mid twentieth-century Central American composers. But pianists and audiences alike should take delight in these well-crafted, individual, and highly inventive pieces, quite independent of their musicological context.

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APPENDIX
THE WORKS FOR PIANO SOLO OF
BENJAMÍN GUTIÉRREZ

Toccatà y Fuga

B. Gutiérrez

Piano

Andante.

p legato

3 5 3-4 4

2 1 1 1
5 4 3 2

4 3 5 1 2 1 4

6

cresc ...

1 2 5
3 4

5 1 3 2 5 4 3 4

10

f

1 2 1 5 1-2

5 5 4 3 2 5 4 3 4

14

dim ... Rall... a tempo

1 2 3 5 2 1 2 1 2 4 5 2 4 5 1 2

3 2 5 5 4 5 4 5 2 4 5 4 5 2 4

5 4 5 2 4 5 2 4

18

1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 5

cresc ...

22

3 5 4 1 2 3 1 2 1 3 4 1 5

ff

26

3 4 5 3 2 1 2 4 4-5

1 2 1 2 1 2

dim ...

30

4 3 2 4 5

4 5

Rall... **pp** sost...

34

cresc ... poco ... a ... poco ... accelerando ...

38 *f* *Presto marcato* *sf p* *8va*

41 *cresc...* *f* *8va*

45 *p subito* *molto* *ff* *strepitoso* *dim...* *8va*

48 *p*

51

54

55 56

p

57

58 59 60

dim ... *p* *f* *8va*

61

62 63

p subito *cresc ...*

64

65 66

ff

67

68 69

dim ...

70

f *p* *f*

74

p legato *p* cresc...

77

ff

81

p legato marc. 1-2

84

p cresc... 8va

(8^{va})

87 *ff* non legato

90 *sf* *p*

94 Tempo I (ma non fuoco) *f* legato

Poco Sost. *sf*

98

101 *p*

1 3 2 5 5
1 2 3 5 1 1

5 2 5 4 5 4 5

1 1 1
3 2 2
5 4 4

1 3 5

105 *p* cresc ...

107 *f* *ff*

Presto marcato

109 *p* cresc ...

112 *ff* dim ...

115

116

p

Attacca subito

121 Fuga. Moderato

pp legatissimo

125

p marc. e legato

128

mp simile

131

mf

134

137

140

143

146

ff *dim...*

Poco Rall...

pp *seco*

a tempo

p

8vb

- 9 -

160

sf p

162

165

mf *sf p subito cresc...*

168

ff

170

mf

ped etc.

172

sf *ff* *sf*

174

sf Rit... *sf* *pp* tranquillo marc.

177

Molto Rit...

Detailed description of the musical score: The score consists of three systems of piano music. The first system (measures 172-173) shows a complex texture with multiple voices in both hands, featuring slurs, accents, and dynamic markings of *sf* and *ff*. The second system (measures 174-175) includes a *Rit...* section with a decrescendo hairpin, followed by a *pp* section marked *tranquillo* and *marc.*. The third system (measures 176-177) begins with *Molto Rit...* and ends with a final chord. Fingerings and articulations are indicated throughout.

Ronda Enarmónica

B. Gutiérrez

comodo

mf

legato

f *sf*

f *mf*

legato

rall... *p*

1981

Añoranza para piano

B. Gutiérrez '37

comodo e rubato

p

R.H.

cresc.

f

dim...

p

rall...

Invención

Benjamín Gutiérrez

Comodo e Rubato

Piano *p*

5 2 1 1 5

5 3 1-2 2

8 4 3 5 2 2 1 3 4 2 1 5 1 3

11 1 1 4 5 3 1 3 5-3 2 4 5 4 5 3 2 1 4 4 3 2-1 5-1

pp *cresc.* *p* *mf*

15 *f* *espressivo* *sempre legato*

18 *dim. poco a poco* *sfz* *pp* *sfz*

21 *p*

23 *sfz* *pp* *ppp*

Preludio para la Danza de la Pena Negra

B. Gutiérrez '37

Espressivo

Piano *p*

Tempo giusto

pp

This page of musical notation consists of seven systems of staves. The first system includes a 15-measure rest (15^{ma}) and a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The second system features an *ad libitum* instruction and a right-hand (R.H.) section. The third system begins with a piano (p) dynamic. The fourth system starts with a pianissimo (pp) dynamic. The fifth system contains a 15-measure rest (15^{ma}). The sixth system includes a *Rall.* (Ritardando) instruction for the right hand (R.H.). The piece concludes with a *Rea* (Rehearsal) mark.

Danza de la Pena Negra

B. Gutiérrez
Costa Rica

Allegro energico

mf stacc.

mp sempre stacc.

f

mp

f

espressivo

5 2 1 3 1 2 4 1 2 4 2 3 2 1 5 3

5 2 1 5 3 1 5 3 4 2 A

p stacc. < >

3 1

This system shows the beginning of a piece. The right hand has a complex, rhythmic melody with many sixteenth notes. The left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. There are fingering numbers (5, 2, 1, 3, 1, 5, 3, 4, 2) above the right hand and (3, 1) below the left hand. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and the instruction *stacc.* (staccato) are present. A hairpin crescendo and decrescendo are shown above the right hand. A fermata is placed over the final note of the right hand.

A

This system continues the piece. The right hand has a melodic line with some rests. The left hand continues with eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. A hairpin crescendo is shown above the right hand. A fermata is placed over the final note of the right hand.

1 5 1 5

sfz *pp*

5 3 1 2

This system features a change in dynamics. The right hand has a melodic line with some rests. The left hand continues with eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *sfz* (sforzando) is present, followed by *pp* (pianissimo). A hairpin crescendo and decrescendo are shown above the right hand. Fingering numbers (1, 5, 1, 5) are above the right hand and (5, 3, 1, 2) are below the left hand.

simile

1 5 1 5 1 5

This system is marked *simile*. The right hand has a melodic line with some rests. The left hand continues with eighth notes. Fingering numbers (1, 5, 1, 5, 1, 5) are above the right hand.

cresc. poco a poco

This system is marked *cresc. poco a poco*. The right hand has a melodic line with some rests. The left hand continues with eighth notes. A hairpin crescendo is shown above the right hand.

ff strepitoso

This system is marked *ff* (fortissimo) and *strepitoso* (strepitously). The right hand has a melodic line with some rests. The left hand continues with eighth notes. A hairpin crescendo is shown above the right hand. A fermata is placed over the final note of the right hand.

First system of a piano score. The right hand features a melodic line with accents (^) and slurs. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with eighth notes.

Second system of a piano score. The right hand continues the melodic line. The left hand has a section marked *p stacc.* (piano staccato) with a change in rhythm to eighth notes.

Third system of a piano score. The right hand has a dense texture of chords. The left hand continues with eighth notes. A *rit.* (ritardando) marking is present.

Fourth system of a piano score. The right hand has a melodic line with accents (^) and slurs. The left hand has a steady accompaniment. The dynamic marking *ff strepitoso* (fortissimo, stormy) is present.

Fifth system of a piano score. The right hand has a melodic line with accents (^) and slurs. The left hand has a steady accompaniment. The dynamic marking *D.C.* (Da Capo) is present.

Sixth system of a piano score. The right hand has a melodic line with accents (^) and slurs. The left hand has a steady accompaniment. The dynamic marking *tutta forza* (tutti) is present.