

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PIANO  
IN POPULAR CUBAN MUSIC:  
A HISTORY OF MUSICAL NATIONALISM

RUBEN VAZQUEZ GARCIA

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## ABSTRACT

This research is an attempt to clarify the role of the piano in Cuban music and culture through history. Most of the dissertation is carefully focused on the actual music compositions and seeks to present a survey of the devices, techniques, architecture, and genres found in the vast piano repertoire produced in Cuba. As soon as the piano arrived in Cuba at the end of the eighteenth century it became a favorite musical instrument in society. Since its introduction it has played a significant role in the musical expression of the island and soon after it became a symbol of nationalism. Throughout its history in Cuba, the piano has continued to define the stylistic characteristics of a new and emergent musical culture, and even today the piano remains one of the favorite instruments of the country. The importance of the instrument is reflected in the oeuvre of several piano composers who helped develop authentic Cuban genres.

This study discusses and analyzes the musical traits and character of the most distinguished Cuban pianists and composers, and it examines the significance of the piano pedagogues who played a vital role in providing the groundwork for the foundation of the Cuban piano school. It also explores the origin and characteristics of Cuban musical genres which are found in the work of the early piano composers and performers who defined the music traditions of the island. The origins and characteristics of some of the most recognized musical genres and styles, some of which played an influential role in the music of the Caribbean and the Americas, are examined and considered.

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# Chapter I

## 1.1 Introduction

Art music in Cuba has been a fundamental form of artistic expression in the early 1600s with the arrival of the Spanish in Cuba. This research considers the piano as a central tool of Cuba's popular musical expression across more than four centuries. One of the factors that motivated me to pursue this study was to discover the characteristics and traits of Cuban music. The diversity of genres and influences developed in Cuba is found in the piano compositions of early Cuban composers. It is also interesting to identify the blend of cultures and traditions that contributed to the development of the hybrid and idiosyncratic musical genres and forms so characteristic of the island's repertoire.

The story of Cuban music is directly linked to the introduction of the piano toward the end of the eighteenth century. Interestingly, piano compositions fall within the spectrum of authentic Cuban music, however, not much research has been done on their historical development. It is difficult to find academic works that represent and analyze the complexities of the evolution of piano music in Cuba, specifically in the context of popular music. This intriguing topic demands a richer understanding of the development of popular piano in the island.

Although I intend to focus on the role of the instrument in musical society and its relation to popular music styles, the piano's evolution in Cuba was influenced by European based movements and African influences. We cannot fully comprehend why piano music developed to such an extent on the island without exploring the different influences that shaped this development from its early formation. It is important to accept that all throughout history, Cuban

music has always been influenced by European musical movements such as Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionism, Expressionism, and twentieth century musical trends.

Early Cuban piano composers found a unique way of preserving existing European musical forms and styles while combining them with the influences of African rhythms and melodic motives. These prolific Cuban composers, including Manuel Saumell, Ignacio Cervantes, and Ernesto Lecuona, adapted Cuba's popular music and introduced the results to the concert halls of the island and the world. The works of these composers reveal the character of the music and the people and are a representation of Cuban nationalism expressed music. In other words, these highly influential composers expressed their desire and support for Cuba's independence and recognition as an autochthonous society, and music was their mode of expression. They are responsible for the development of a distinct Cuban music style and identity, and this is evident in their piano compositions.

To better situate this research, progressive trends such as *afrocubanismo* and its most representative composers are considered. Amadeo Roldán (1900-1939), and Alejandro García Caturla (1906-1940) were credited with cultivating a kind of nationalism that was expressed in the afrocubanismo musical movement, originally developed by Cuban intellectuals, where symphonic forms were linked with authentic Afro-Cuban rhythmic structures and characterized by themes taken from Cuban music, dance, and literature (Carpentier 2004). The work of these composers left a footprint in the development of popular piano styles in Cuba. This development has also been influenced by a wide range of economic and socio-political changes that shaped traditional performance practices and the perception of some of these genres and composers.

Lots of academic research has been conducted on specific genres and musical developments in Cuba; however, not much has been done on the piano composers who were in

part responsible for its development. This begs the question: How is it that composers of such relevance not only to Cuba but to the music of the region have such little mention?

What made this study even more intriguing was that although the Cuban piano repertoire has received little attention from scholars around the world, popular contradanzas that were meant for the concert hall and to be performed by different types of orchestras were notated for the piano and many of them had a defining role in shaping the music of the island and of the Americas. The first authentic Cuban contradanza, “San Pascual Bailón,” was notated for the piano. Later, Saumell composed his piano contradanzas and Cervantes his piano danzas. Lecuona continued the piano tradition in the twentieth century with his piano works. Their piano works clearly represent a bridge between two main cultural forces: the European and African traditions. Later, I will examine the music of Lecuona, its features, and main influences.

The diversity and richness of Cuban musical genres motivated me to examine the different diasporas that contributed to its development. Musicologist and anthropologist Fernando Ortiz coined the term “transculturation”<sup>1</sup> as an attempt to explain the fusion of cultural traditions that took place. This is a socio-cultural development that has always been of great interest to me. I will analyze this process and its most significant consequences on music.

For this study, it is important to establish the socio-political factors that shaped Cuban music from early colonization to the present. The music of Cuba is a blend of diverse and rich traditions that spanned more than five centuries, and “transculturation” was the result of it. This interpretation was formulated by Ortiz:

I have chosen the word transculturation to express the highly varied phenomena that have come about in Cuba as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture that

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<sup>1</sup> Transculturation is the term used by Cuban ethnomusicologist Fernando Ortiz to describe the convergence of multiple cultural forces which helped create something entirely new.

have taken place here, and without a knowledge of which it is impossible to understand the evolution of Cuban folk, either in the economic or in the institutional, legal, ethical, religious, artistic, linguistic, psychological, sexual, or other aspects of its life (Ortiz 1995, 98).

Furthermore, how the piano made its incursion into some of the earliest African American ensembles and how its role was developed, expanded, and modeled? I intend to study the role of the piano as a concert instrument and its addition to the charanga ensemble and the conjunto de son.

This research will be centered on the collection and musical analysis of selected pieces of the most defining figures and influential Cuban and foreign piano composers. This study will help me understand common performance practices and interpretation techniques. A social and historical background of these piano pieces and composers is necessary to obtain a better understanding of the stylistic characteristics.

## 1.2 Early Cuban Composers

Since early in the conquest of America, Cuba's geographic position in the center of the Caribbean supported its political and economic growth. During the early 1600s the city of Havana was the point of arrival and departure of the Spanish fleet, and the city became an important center of commercial trade and development.

During the eighteenth century the island experienced profound economic changes and development that were centered primarily on slavery and the production of sugar, coffee, and tobacco. Around the middle of the century creoles<sup>2</sup> began to acquire a sense of national identity that propagated primarily after the defeat of the English army which had captured Havana in 1762.

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<sup>2</sup> Criollos is the Spanish word used to refer to those born in the colonies, descendants of European or of mixed race.

The hero of the Cuban victory was a creole named Pepe Antonio born in the town of Guanabacoa. As a result, creoles began to develop economic freedom which in turn helped them form a nationalistic conscience independent from Spain. The population of the island was beginning to develop its own way of life and its own identity. In James Edward Alexander's 1831 account of his arrival in Havana, he describes the advantageous location of the city's port and its flourishing economy:

I could not help feeling much pleasing excitement at the prospect before me; I was about to see the most important and interesting city in the West Indies, the key of the glorious island of Cuba, which is within an eighth as large as England: I was about to view a city which, on account of its noble harbour and favorable site for commerce, has accumulated much wealth, and is peopled by a strange mixture of inhabitants (Alexander 1833, v1, 318).

Multiple theaters were built in Havana which allowed musical presentations and other types of entertainment. These presentations featured Italian opera, Spanish *tonadillas*<sup>3</sup> and instrumental and vocal concerts. According to Carpentier, a clavichord concert took place as early as 1792 and it was well received by the aristocracy. In the early 1800's musical performances featured renowned European singers and instrumentalists accompanied by the piano. As more resources began to reach the island, the piano began to arrive from several European countries. Sales of pianos brought from England were announced in the Havana newspapers. Around the same time, the piano began to replace the clavichord and the organ as the preferred keyboard instrument (Carpentier 2001). Walter Goodman on his book *Pearl of the Antilles* reveals the type of pianos that were arriving to Cuba during the century: "Pianos of American manufacture are

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<sup>3</sup> A type of theatrical miniature opera that was popular in Spain and later became popular in Cuba and other Spanish colonies.

popular in Cuba; but Pleyel instruments are preferred by some, on account of their soft tone and durability.” (Goodman 1873, 118).<sup>4</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century, the music of Cuban composers showed distinct musical features that were associated with the Baroque and the Classical era. These influences were coming directly from the European continent, and they were noticed in the music of three of the first serious Cuban composers of the time, Estevan de Salas y Castro (1725-1803), Juan París (1759-1845) and Antonio Rafellin (1775-1882).

Esteban Salas was probably Cuba’s most influential composer of the eighteenth century. Salas was born in Havana in 1725. He was an eminent organist, composer, philosopher, and theologian. In Havana, Salas studied the organ and the violin. He also studied music composition, counterpoint, and the Gregorian chant. After moving to Santiago de Cuba in 1764, he began to work for the cathedral of the city (Orovio 2004).

Salas was one of the first Cuban composers and one of the first in the Americas. While working at the Cathedral of Santiago de Cuba, he organized choirs and instrumental ensembles. He was also responsible for being the first to organize and perform the music of Haydn and other classical masters in the island. Carpentier explains: “Salas was the starting point for the practice of serious music in Cuba; that is, he initiates a distinction between popular music and cultured music, with an evolving coexistence between the two.” (Carpentier 2001, 108). Salas’ musical oeuvre includes mostly religious works such as *villancicos* for choir (Christmas carols), masses, motets, hymns, and psalms. Some of his music shows a variety of musical traits that embody the Classical era. His musical works have been compared with those of Joseph Haydn, the Neapolitan school

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<sup>4</sup> Pleyel pianos were Frédéric Chopin’s favorite. He referred to them as “non plus ultra” (Voynich, E. L., Opienski, Heynrick, 158, 1939).



and French opera, and they show a mastery of composition, counterpoint, harmony, and orchestration.

Salas was stylistically a classical composer who had a great deal of influence on the composition style of the next generation of piano composers, as Carpentier explains:

In sum, Salas was a classic composer of Cuban music. A classic who was not an isolated phenomenon, since he established solid connections with the European music of his time, imposed certain enduring disciplines, and for the first time brought to the island certain lasting stylistic characteristics, some of which even passed over to specific expressions of popular music (Carpentier 2001, 117).

Salas set the stage for the new generation of Cuban composers by providing a bridge between European musical traditions and authentic Cuban forms. Unfortunately, his music is rarely performed today, or even formally studied in conservatories. However, he was undoubtedly a pioneer of Cuban music.

Juan París was a priest, composer, and teacher who succeeded Estevan Salas in the Cathedral of Santiago de Cuba. París was born in Barcelona, Spain in 1759 and died in Santiago de Cuba in 1845. As a piano teacher, he taught the works of Pergolesi, Haydn, Cherubini, and other classical composers to a whole generation of pianists. He had an extended musical career at the Cathedral of Santiago de Cuba, where he prepared concerts and musical events. He also promoted and performed the works of Beethoven and was one of the first to perform his string quartets in the island. París' musical work has been often undervalued but he was also a skilled composer who continued and expanded on the legacy of his predecessor. París composed a variety of religious works such as masses, motets, villancicos, psalms, introits, and other works. His compositions reveal a sophisticated knowledge of orchestration and arranging and showed stylistic

features that connect him with the Classical period, specifically with the music of Mozart (Carpentier 2004).

Another relevant composer was Antonio Rafellin. He was Cuban of French descent and was born in Havana in 1796. As a youngster, he showed that he was quite talented in the art of composition. At the age of nine, Rafellin composed his first song, “La Boca”, which was later published in New York (Carpentier 2001, 117). He was a multi-instrumentalist and studied bass, cello, and violin. He also studied counterpoint and the art of the fugue (Orovio 2004, 174). His music compositions were also derived from the classical style. According to Carpentier:

Antonio Rafellin was the composer who bridged music made and heard in Cuba at the end of the eighteenth century and a certain ‘Cuban classicism’-a nationalism born within the norms of classical writing-and which would later manifest itself in the oeuvre of a Manuel Saumell (Carpentier 2004, 177).

Rafellin was an active figure in the music scene of Havana during the first half of the nineteenth century. He founded an orchestra and taught music classes. He also founded the Philharmonic Academy of Cristina, an academy which was later joined by Manuel Saumell (Carpentier 2004).

In 1836 Rafellin moved to Paris where he continued his remarkable musical career. He composed three symphonies which were performed in Paris and were received with great approval. Later in his life, Rafellin moved to Philadelphia and committed himself to composing only religious works. His religious works are comprised of masses, hymns, motets, and other liturgical music. He also published a musical magazine called *La Lira Católica* (The Catholic Lyre). In 1862, Rafellin was invited to perform a mass for the pope and the same year he performed a mass for the queen of Spain.

Antonio Rafellin was certainly another link between the classical composers and the new generation of Cuban composers. Like Salas and París, his music was also classically influenced in context and style and marked the beginning of Cuban musical nationalism, later cultivated by Manuel Saumell and Ignacio Cervantes during the eighteenth century.

Estevan Salas, Juan París and Antonio Rafellin formed a group of early composers who showed the skill of Cuban musicians at the time. Their contributions to the musical culture of the island influenced the development of popular piano music. Together they set the stage for the arrival of a new wave of musicians that were influential on the development of popular piano music in Cuba.

## Chapter II

### 2.1 The Origins of the Cuban Contradanza

The history of Cuba is a history of transculturation, immigration, and assimilation. When the Spanish arrived in Cuba, they encountered the Taíno indigenous people. The Taíno had already developed their own musical styles, which were associated with religious ceremonies called Areito. By the end of the sixteenth century the Taino population was decimated due to wars and disease. Soon after, the colonizers brought African slaves mainly from the coastal regions of Africa. Their lives were devastated as they were separated from their culture and families. They were brought to Cuba to work mainly in the tobacco, coffee, and sugar plantations. Immigrants from different parts of the world also arrived, Portuguese, Jews, Anglo-Saxons, French and even people from the Macao region of China had influences on the formation of the Cuban society, its culture and music (Ortiz 1995).

According to Fernando Ortiz, this process of transculturation was a phenomenon that brought together different musical elements that shaped and forged the Cuban music tradition. The rhythm of the contradanza is the perfect musical example which represents the process of transculturation. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the contradanza transformed into the most popular and influential musical genre that came out of Cuba. It was influential not only in Cuba but also for the music of the Americas.

We know that the English country dance was the ancestor of the Cuban contradanza. The English country dance was a set of dances that became popular during the latter part of the sixteenth century in England. Later it was introduced into France and other European countries towards the end of the seventeenth century, replacing the minuet as the favored dance. Peter

Manuel notes: “While originating in the latter 1500s as a rustic folk dance, it was soon danced at the court of Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603), by masters and servants together.” (Manuel 2009, 4).

The European contradance was formulaic in character and in form. It was characterized by simple diatonic melodies in major keys and common harmonic progressions of the era. Its form consisted of two contrasting phrases of eight measures each. Each phrase was repeated to form a binary AABB (Manuel 2009, 190). Peter Manuel tells us that the rhythm of what we know today as the habanera shows in some of the dances of John Playford’s 1651, *The English Dancing Master*. He specifically mentions the dance “The Elector of Hanover” as an example of this argument (Manuel 2009, 6). Other dances such as “A la Mode de France” and “Amarillis” also show elements of the rhythm of the habanera.

The origins of the Cuban contradanza are controversial and probably its actual roots will never be fully understood. Galan humorously referred to the origins of the contradanza as “anglofrancohispanoafrocubano” (Galan 1983, 312). Carpentier argues that the contradanza was introduced in Cuba by French colonizers fleeing the Haitian revolution of 1792. Many of these colonizers fled to places such as New Orleans, while others arrived in the eastern province of Santiago de Cuba.

Peter Manuel, on the other hand, supports the argument that the French contredanse arrived in Cuba before the Haitian revolution: “The French contredanse enjoyed considerable popularity in Spain from the early 1700s and would thus likely have been imported from that country to Cuba well before the Franco-Haitian immigration.” (Manuel 2009, 54). On the other hand, musicologists Zoila Lapique Becali and Natalio Galán argue that the contradanza was introduced directly to Cuba by the Spanish before the end of the eighteenth century, and that the French contradance served to

replenish what was already developing in Cuba. They also argue that it is quite possible that the contradanza was introduced to Cuba by Spain, French and English visitors earlier in the eighteenth century.

As mentioned earlier, the distinctive rhythm of the habanera of a dotted eighth, sixteenth and two eighths served as the foundation of the melodic line of some of these English dances (See Ex. 1). However, in the Cuban contradanza this rhythmic pattern functions differently. It provides an underlying ostinato that becomes the basis of the accompaniment.

French journalist Jean-Baptist Rosemond of Beauvallon observed the differences between the European contredanse and the creolized Cuban contradanza that was performed by black Cuban musicians:

This is no longer the French contredanse or the Spanish fandango. More original than the one, fierier than the other, this dance, perhaps indefinable, is perfectly in harmony with the character and personality of the young woman of Havana... (its) airs are full of freshness and originality: but bristling with syncopations and measures in countertime, which renders them unusually difficult. The celebrated violoncellist Bohrer confessed to me that he tried in vain to decipher a contrabass part executed every night in the Havanera by a negro who couldn't read a note (in Sublette 2004, 125).

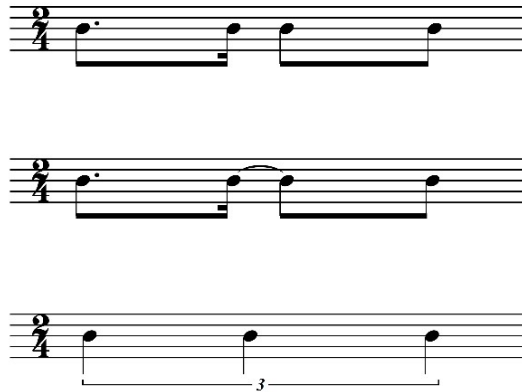
We know that the addition of the rhythmic motif of the tresillo and the upbeat produces the rhythm of the contradanza. This rhythm was also known as habanera or tango. The tango rhythm pattern is the fundamental element that distinguishes the Cuban contradanza from its predecessors.

The term *tango* was already in use in Cuba in the early eighteenth century as Sublette explains:

This rhythmic cell would infect the music of the world. With the name tango already applied to it in Cuba, it is identical with the rhythmic cell of the later Argentine tango (about which, more later). As it travelled the cell acquired a different name, which to use the jargon of a later time, branded it as Cuban: the habanera. The two names were applied indistinctly to the same rhythm (Sublette, 134).

According to Peñalosa, the rhythm is found in Afro-Cuban musical forms of the Nigerian Yoruba, specifically, in the batá parts of the rhythm *Ogun Agere* (Peñalosa 2009, 40).

Ex. 1. Tango habanera, the tresillo, and its alternate notation in triplets.



The rhythm of the habanera appears in most Cuban contradanzas from the beginning of the eighteenth century as an ostinato. Later, midway through the century the figure of the tresillo emerges (Ex. 1). The tresillo is a variant of the habanera and it derives from tying the sixteenth note to the second beat of the measure.

At times, the tresillo appears in the piano music of Manuel Saumell with the alternate notation of triplets, hence the name “tresillo”. The word tresillo in Spanish means “triplet”. Normally it refers to the irregular beats that occur in a specific time signature and is notated with the number three. However, in Cuban vernacular language it also refers to the arrangement of three notes into a measure. In the popular contradanza “Tu madre es conga” from 1856, the tresillo alternates with the habanera rhythm (Ex. 2) (Carpentier 2001).

Ex. 2. "Tu madre es conga."



Other rhythmic variants of the tango and the tresillo began to appear midway through the century in the music of Saumell and other composers. The first of five rhythmic patterns shown below (Ex. 3) is referred to as the amphibrach while the second example is a subtle alternation notated with a triplet and two eighths. The third and fourth patterns are slightly more ornate rhythmically. The last variant of this example is the so-called *cinquillo* which is commonly found in the music of Saumell. Composers were not always consistent in writing these variants in their scores and they recognized the challenge of indicating rhythmic feel as being impossible to overcome with staff notation.

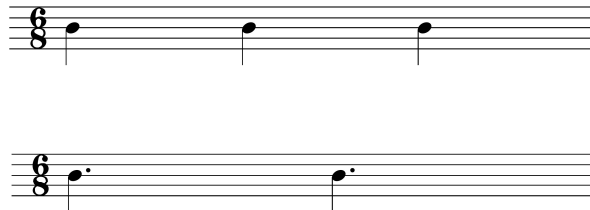
Ex. 3. Five variations or "patterns" of the tresillo and the tango rhythm.





We also need to consider how Spanish folkloric danzas influenced the Cuban contradanza. These danzas include the *zarabanda*, *canarios*, *gurumbé*, and the *retambico*. These Spanish danzas were heard across much of Europe and made their way to Cuba sometime after the discovery of America. Some of them were also influenced by African rhythms and characterized by the *sesquiáltera* or hemiola rhythms (Rodríguez Ruidíaz 2017). The *sesquiáltera* was the name given in Spain to the hemiola, (Ex. 4) and can be defined as the alternation of binary and ternary rhythms, but also can be interpreted as a juxtaposition on 6/8 and 3/4-time signatures. This juxtaposition has become a “cultural marker” for musical styles generally considered to be Latin or Latin American. Leonard Bernstein exploited this cliché and used this duality of binary and ternary to drape his song “America” from *West Side Story* with a Latin flavor depicting the culture of Puerto Rican immigrants.

Ex. 4. Sesquiáltera or hemiola.



The *sesquiáltera* was already popular in Spain much before it arrived in the Americas, and it might have been adopted as a musical element to create new rhythmic forms as explained by Rodríguez:

Apparently, that peculiar rhythmic pattern of the *sesquiáltera* was already ingrained in Spain since long before the conquest of America and was gladly adopted by the population of the new world, which took it as a basis for the creation of new musical genres. Hence, many of these song-dances with the rhythm of the *sesquiáltera* were associated from very early to the Americas by the Spanish people and mentioned in important works such as *La Ilustre Fregona* of Cervantes, where the author calls the Indian chaconne *amulatada*, as

well as *El Amante Agradecido* (The Thankful Lover) by Lope de Vega, in which it is mentioned that genre had entered Spain ‘through the post’ (Rodríguez Ruidíaz 2017, 6).

The vertical sesquiáltera (Ex. 5) may have been one of the principal influences of the habanera. Its binary reinterpretation could be what we know today as the rhythm of the habanera or tango-habanera (Rodríguez Ruidíaz 2017).

Ex. 5. Vertical sesquiáltera.



Some of the earlier triple metered piano contradanzas by Manuel Saumell support this argument, such as “La Matilde,” “La siempreviva” (Ex. 6), and “La paila” (Ex. 7). Even though they were composed in a 6/8, the notation used by Saumell resembles that of a 3/4-time signature. The rhythmic freedom and flexibility of African rhythmic structures is present in the music of early Cuban composers.

In Cuba, the triple metered contradanza was vital in the development of the guajira and the clave,<sup>5</sup> while the duple metered version resulted in the danza, the habanera, and the danzón. Manuel Saumell was able to bring together many of these features in his more than fifty contradanzas.

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<sup>5</sup> The Clave is a popular Cuban genre create by Jorge Anckermann based on the style Coros de Clave.

Ex. 6. “La siempreviva,” mm. 1-4 with pickup.

The musical score for Ex. 6 is in 6/8 time and marked 'Vivace' and 'p'. It consists of four measures with a pickup. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

Ex. 7. “La paila,” *segunda* section, mm. 17-32.

The musical score for Ex. 7 is in 6/8 time. It consists of five measures. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

The first Cuban contradanza ever notated was an anonymous piece called “San Pascual Bailón” (Ex. 8) was first published in 1803. The printing of Anselmo López was then reprinted in *La Habana Artistica* by Serafín Ramírez in 1891 (Gaddles 2016). Even though this contradanza was performed by a variety of small ensembles, it was originally notated for the piano. The score indication *trompas* (french horns) used by López (in his printing of the piece around 1881) gives us an idea of the preferred brass instrumentation used in the Cuban contradanza. The opening figure features the standard two part “horn call” of classical music with intervals of minor sixth, perfect fifth, and major third. Brass instruments were very common in Cuba because of their use in military bands.

The first section was called the *primera*. It is a simple duple metered dance with classical traits that could have easily been composed by the likes of Haydn or Mozart. The second section,

or *segunda*, introduces the tango or habanera. The left-hand accompaniment emphasizes the syncopated lower notes of the bass line. This emphasis on the off beats is where the Cuban contradanza departs from its English predecessor. Both the *segunda* and the *primera* are made of eight measures repeated, making each section sixteen measures long. This was the traditional form of the contradanza until it began to change towards the middle of the century.

The piece is based on traditional European harmonic methods that were well established at the time. It is a simple alternation between the dominant and the tonic. The *segunda* introduces an F natural, creating a mixolydian sound and suggesting a modal harmonic language that was not common to Cuban music at the time, nor was it common to the contradanza of the dance hall or the concert hall.

However, the use of modality is not completely absent in Cuban music, and it is probably extracted from Spanish folkloric songs. The Spanish-influenced music of Ernesto Lecuona gives us a compelling example of modality in the music of Cuba. This process will be discussed in chapter 6. Manuel Saumell did not use modality as often as Lecuona did, although we find a mixolydian flavor in his piano piece “El pañuelo de Pepa” (Pepa’s Handkerchief). This is perhaps the only instant that Saumell implements modality in his piano danzas.

Ex. 8. "San Pascual Bailón."

(Trompas.)

5

1. 2.

10

18

## 2.2 Danza

From the contradanza, Cubans developed danza, which in many ways was similar to its predecessor although there were some fundamental changes to its format, performance features, and dance styles. The term *danza* was beginning to replace *contradanza* during the decade of the

1820s and public events that featured the musical genre of danza occurred during the 1840s in Cuba (Madrid, Moore 2016, 7).

One of the clearer characteristics of the Cuban danza was the use of slower performance tempos. Argeliers León argues that this performance practice coincides with the introduction of new European dance forms into the island such as the *vals*, which might have influenced the deceleration of the tempos of the contradanza. “In the ad of a dance academy in the capital mentioned the figurative waltz, Russian, French and the mousarrina...” (Argeliers 1998, 38). According to Argeliers León the *vals* became slower in Cuba and sometimes a singing section was added.

On his visit to Cuba in 1831, Captain Sir James Edward Alexander described the dancing characteristics of the Cuban danza:

The ball-room was always brilliantly lighted up, the ladies sitting in rows round it as usual, and the men in groups, or lounging about in the galleries smoking; when the dancing commenced, the band, consisting of nine performers, three violins, two violoncellos, hautboys, and French horns, would play in a most animating and excellent style, a waltz, fandango, or a contradanza, the latter a combination of the waltz and quadrille; and certainly, for grace and elegance in the dance, the Havanners are unrivalled (Alexander 1831, 348-349).

Alexander was referring to the dancing style of the waltz, which traditionally began with a group of couples performing the *ala*, *cadena*, *lazo*, *paseo*, *alemanda* and *rueda*. In the last section of the piece, the *cedazo*, the couples would separate, and dance individually like in the waltz (Rodríguez Ruidíaz 2018, 3).

The choreographic figure of the *cedazo* is described by Estevan Pichardo in his dictionary as: “Cedazo. – N. s. M. – Figure of the Cuban Danza: It is a waltz (although in two-four-time

signature) reduced to the eight bars of the repetition of the second part, with which the danzas always end, or their thirty-two bars, whatever the previous figures are.” (Pichardo 1862, 58).

The Cuban danza gave more and more freedom and flexibility to the dancer and gradually the old choreographic figured dance was abandoned in favor of single couples. Yvonne Daniel explains the distinctions between dancing style of the contradanza and danza in Cuba:

The contradanza, like the minuet and quadrille, had used passing and turning formulas that led couples in line and circle formations, usually with bows and greetings. This was the kind of group dance that was practiced in Cuban dance schools of the eighteenth century. Danza, on the other hand, allowed independent couples to hold each other through the dance and to use individual couple floor patters (Daniel 1995, 38).

Another important variant that was developed in Cuba was the formal structure of the danza. Like the contradanza, danza consisted of two sections of eighth measures each that were repeated, to make thirty-two measures in total length. However, at some point the danza began to use a Da Capo (D.C) sign that repeated the whole piece with the purpose of extending public dances, which were known to last for several hours (Rodríguez Ruidíaz 2018, 6).

It is possible that the formal structure of the Cuban danza could have been expanded using improvisation, especially in the second section of the *cedazo*, in which musicians would improvise to create a kind of theme with variations (Galán 1997, 77). Walter Goodman alludes to this improvisational character of the Cuban danza:

The ‘Danza criolla’ is the patriotic music of Cuba, and every fresh carnival gives birth to a new set of these ‘danzas’. When the air happens to be unusually ‘pegajosa’ or catching, a brief song is improvised, and the words of this song chime so well with the music which suggests them, as to form a sort of verbal counterpart of the melody (Goodman 1873, 121).

The use of improvisation as a performance practice was not formally notated by Cuban composers of the era. However, the use of variation and improvisation appears in many of the Cuban inspired works by foreign composers. In “La gallina,” “Ojos criollos,” “Dí que sí,” Louis Moreau Gottschalk uses variations on the *segunda* section. This is also evident on the piece “Agiaco cubano” by Norwegian composer Ole Bull. Polish composer Julian Fontana composed “El canto de los negros de la isla de Cuba” and “La ley brava” using variations, and Italian composer Camillo Sivori based his piece “Canto del sinsonte” on the formal structure of the developing Cuban danza (Galán 1997, 77).

The Cuban danza may have been introduced into Europe by Spanish sailors and later it spread throughout Latin America. Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, the vocal genre of the *habanera* developed out of the Cuban danza. The *habanera* was a big success and became recognized internationally. Spanish composer Sebastian Yradier brought recognition to the genre with his song “La paloma” (The Dove) and “El arreglito” (The Little Arrangement). “El arreglito” was later adapted by Georges Bizet into “L’amour est un oiseau rebelle.” (Love is a Rebellious Bird) the famous mezzo-soprano solo aria from his 1875 opera *Carmen*. Entitled “Havanaise” the aria became also known simply as “Habanera” in the English-speaking world.

Other European composers took the model of the *habanera* as the basis for their compositions. Maurice Ravel’s composition for piano and violin: “Piece en forme de Habanera” of 1907 and his orchestral suite *Rapsodie Espagnole* (1907-08) features a movement entitled “Habanera” which counterpoints the triplet and sixteenth note versions of the tresillo patterns against one another. Camille Saint-Saëns composed his “Havanaise in E major” for violin and orchestra. Jules Massenet also uses the *habanera* rhythm for his orchestral work “Andalouse”, one



of the movements of the second act of his opera *Le Cid* (1885) and very much like Bizet, alludes the sounds of Spain and Cuba.

The habanera and its tango rhythm became popular over the world. It became the rhythmic foundation of some early Argentinian tangos including “El Choclo” and “La Morocha” (See example 9). Sublette explains:

The dance that became worldwide in the mid-1910s as *tango* was Argentine in style and its drama, but the underlying rhythm was imported from in the nineteenth century from Havana to Argentina, a country without a large black population. It was, after all, the habanera (Sublette 2007, 76).

The contradanza or habanera also had a unique way of influencing the music of jazz. Jelly Roll Morton noted that and referred to it as the Spanish Tinge:

Now take the habanera “La Paloma”, which I transformed in New Orleans style. You leave the left hand just the same. The difference comes in the right hand — in the syncopation, which gives it an entirely different color that really changes the color from red to blue. Now in one of my earliest tunes, “New Orleans Blues”, you can notice the *Spanish tinge*. In fact, if you can't manage to put tinges of Spanish in your tunes, you will never be able to get the right seasoning, I call it, for jazz (Morton 1938).

During the first decades of the twentieth century the habanera continued its popularity and appeared in the compositions of many African American musicians. William H. Tyers composed “Maorí: A Samoan Dance,” “Panamá,” and “Trocha: A Cuban Dance” (1896) using the rhythm of the tresillo of the contradanza. The latter was the piano composition that brought him recognition. The song was then rearranged and published as a tango in 1913.

William C. Handy composed the second section of his “Memphis Blues” (1910) and “St. Louis Blues” (1913) under the influence of the rhythm of the habanera. By the time W.C. Handy composed those pieces he had visited the island in 1900 during the U.S. occupation. Scott Joplin’s “Solace,” subtitled “A Mexican Serenade,” was also composed in the style of the habanera. It is

widely acknowledged, and it is well documented that the rhythm was of the contradanza was present at the birth of ragtime, cakewalk, and jazz (Sublette 2007).

Ex. 9. “El Choclo.”<sup>6</sup>

Introducción Música de A.G. Villoldo

Piano

5 Canto  
*mf*

9

13

17

<sup>6</sup> In this example, it appears that on measure three the minor ninth on the left-hand chord was deliberately notated, while the right-hand sounds the seventh of the dominant chord.

## 2.3 Danzón

The genre of the *danzón* developed out of the *contradanza* and the *danza*. The genre has great significance to the music of the island because it has permeated other popular music genres such as the *bolero*, *son*, *cha cha chá*, and *mambo*. The origins of the genre coincided with the first two independent wars waged against Spain, so the *danzón* is recognized as the national musical genre of the country.<sup>7</sup>

The Spanish word *danzón* was used by Cubans to describe a social event in which the *danza* was performed and danced. According to Ruidíaz the word constitutes a hyperbole of the word *danza*. “The first mention of the word *danzón* that has come to us do not seem to refer to a specific musical genre, but to a large dance event, a *danzón*, as we Cubans say *fiestón* or a *rumbón* using the augmentative suffix.” (Rodríguez Ruidíaz 2018, 18).

Carpentier wrote about the *danzón*:

As set forth by Saumell, the *danzón* would become enshrined as the new type of dance by Matanzas native Miguel Faílde, who in June 1877 composed four *danzones* titled ‘El deliro’ (Delirium), ‘La ingratitud’ (Ingratitud), ‘Las quejas’ (Complaints), and ‘Las alturas de Simpson’ (Simpson Heights). It has been said that Faílde invented *danzón*, without taking into account that *danzones* were published -and already called that- at much earlier dates (Carpentier 2001, 222).

However, Faílde composed another *danzón*, of the same name “Las alturas de Simpson” (Simpson Heights), which was first performed at the Liceo of Matanzas on January 1, 1879. The latter piece featured the characteristics rhythmic and formal structure of what we have come to know as the traditional Cuban *danzón*.

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<sup>7</sup> The first war of independence against Spain was the Ten Year’s War (1868-1878) which was followed by the Little War (1879-1880). The Cuban War of Independence (1895-1898) was the last war waged against Spain.

Miguel Faílde Pérez was a composer, arranger, conductor, and cornetist. He was born in 1852 in Caobas, the municipality of Guacamaro in the province of Matanzas. His father was from Galicia and his mother was a mulatta. He came from a family that had a profound musical tradition. His father was a trombonist and his first music teacher. At an early age, Faílde played the cornet for the band of fireman in Matanzas. He studied harmony concepts and composition with French teacher Federico Pecher. Faílde also learned to play the viola and the double bass and took part in concerts of classical music (Orovio 2004, 76).

In 1871, Faílde formed his own orchestra *típica cubana*, formed of cornet, ophicleide, two violins, two clarinets, trombone, double bass, and two percussionists on timbales and guiro (Rodríguez Ruidíaz 2018, 25). He became a popular figure in Cuba with his orchestra. Later in his life he became a teacher and was involved in the independence war against the Spanish colonial regime. Faílde was a prolific composer of *danzones* such as “A la Habana me voy” (To Havana I am Going), “Cuba libre,” “Los chinos” (The Chinese), “La Malagueña,” and many other. He also composed *pasodobles*, *marchas*, and *waltzes* (Orovio 2004, 77).

In this example (See Ex. 10) we can observe the three-part ABAC structure of the genre, which differed from the two-part form of the *contradanza* and the *danza*. However, the form of the *danzón* became even more flexible during the twentieth century and its form was at times either extended or altered to become ABACA, ABABACAB, or ABAC. Sometimes there were popular *danzones* that featured four or five sections (Rodríguez Ruidíaz 2018, 26).

In section A, the *cinquillo* appears primarily on the right hand. However, section C introduces the typical rhythmic structure of the genre, which is the alternation of the *cinquillo* with an even measure typically of eight notes. On this section C, we see the *cinquillo* of the *danzón* used as a rhythmic *ostinato*.

As a result of the enormous success of *danzón*, the genre had a deep influence on many different popular forms in Cuban music. Its influences were felt on many other genres developed on the twentieth century. The music style also became a loved musical form in Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Ex. 10. "Las alturas de Simpson."

The musical score for "Las alturas de Simpson" is presented in five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The piece is in 2/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 1-5) begins with a treble staff containing a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system (measures 6-10) includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The third system (measures 11-14) features a melodic line with a slur and a bass staff with a steady accompaniment. The fourth system (measures 15-18) continues the melodic and accompanimental lines. The fifth system (measures 19-22) concludes the piece with a final melodic phrase and accompaniment.

23 *al*  $\text{♩}$

OTRA

27 2.

32

36

40

## Chapter III

### 3.1 Jean-Frédéric Edelman

One of the defining figures in the development of piano music in Cuba was the pianist and composer Jean-Frédéric Edelman (1795-1848). Edelman was born in Strasburg, the capital of the Grande Est, the region located on the northeastern part of France close to the border with Germany. His father was the Alsatian composer Jean-Frédéric Edelman, who was executed by French revolutionaries under unknown and mysterious circumstances. The elder Jean-Frédéric was himself a distinguished composer who was praised by Mozart. He composed fifteen volumes of sonatas, quartets, and concertos.

His son Jean-Frédéric studied at the Conservatory of Paris where he excelled by winning a first prize in harmony at the age of seventeen. At that incredibly young age, Edelman was already a gifted and respectable pianist in Europe. Perhaps because of the tragic death of his father and influenced by the wishes of his mother, they decided to emigrate to the United States at the end of 1815 (Carpentier 2001, 185).

Edelman went to Havana in 1832 to perform a concert at the Teatro Principal. The concert was extraordinarily successful, and his performances were so well received by the public that he decided to stay in Havana. This decision had a profound impact on the development of Cuban piano music. Once he settled in Cuba, he became active in music circles there. He managed the Saint Cecilia Philharmonic Society, which was one of the first academic musical institutions in the island, and vital in the formation of a generation of pianists and musicians. In 1836, Edelman also founded his own music publishing house which edited and published countless works of Cuban composers (Carpentier 2001, 185).

Edelman had a profound influence in developing and implementing a structural musical education system. He is considered the father of the Cuban pianistic school and his influence was such that, by the middle of the eighteenth century, a distinct lineage of pianists and educators is clearly recognizable. The most important disciple of Edelman was Manuel Saumell y Robredo (1817-1870). Two other notable students of Edelman, Pablo Desvernine (1832-1910) and Fernando Arizti (1828-1888), were both recognized outside of Cuba as performers and as educators.

Arizti began his musical studies with Edelman, but in 1842 moved to Paris and continued his musical studies under the tutelage of Frédéric Kalkbrenner (Orovio 2004, 19). Upon his return to Cuba in 1848, he devoted his musical career to piano education. His most influential pupil was Nicolás Ruiz Espadero (1832-1890).

Nicolás Espadero was without question the most recognized Cuban pianist and composer of his time (Carpentier 2001). His mother, Dolores Espadero, was a distinguished pianist and pedagogue herself. She was born in Cádiz, Spain, and was well-recognized in Havana for her performances of the music of Haydn and Mozart (Carpentier 2001). She inspired her son to pursue a musical education. Nicolás Espadero also studied piano with renowned Spanish teacher José Miró y Anoria (1815-1878) (Orovio 2004).

At the age of twenty-two, Nicolás Espadero met American pianist and composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk, who visited the island for the first time in 1854. Espadero and Gottschalk developed a lasting friendship. Gottschalk became captivated with the musical forms of the island and had a great influence on the life and the music of Espadero, helping him promote some of his works in France and Spain (Carpentier 2001).



Espadero's piano pieces "Pureza y calma" (Purity and Calm), his "Barcarole," and "Canto del guajiro" (Song of the Peasant) (Ex. 11) reveal an accomplished composer. In "Canto del guajiro," published in Paris like many of his works, Espadero attempts to capture the sounds of the Cuban countryside and demonstrates his knowledge of Cuban folkloric music forms. Espadero depicts the sounds of the guajiro (peasant) and the Cuban countryside by using the characteristic compound time signature (12/8) associated with the genre 'guajira.'<sup>8</sup> The playful nature of the piece is manifested in the use of crossed hands and high staccato notes played by left hand.

Espadero describes his approach in the notes of the composer:

In this composition I wanted to paint one of the characteristic scenes of creole peasants, and to make known, at the same time, one of the diverse rhythms of Cuba, whose music, far from rejecting the rules of musical art in terms of style and expression, on the contrary, demands their exact application. This is so true that the principal basis of creole musical manifestation is melody, at times tinged with languidness and melancholy, at times flirtatious and voluptuous, indolently cooing over a backdrop of a tormentous accompaniment, but symmetric. In this fragment...I have tried to translate local expression and color, maintaining their slightest nuances, even in cases that might be considered as rudimentary lapses of harmony (Carpentier 2001, 201).

Espadero was perhaps the most recognized pianist and composer of his time. However, as a composer, it is possible that he became overly influenced by European Romanticism and that could be one of the reasons why his music did not achieve the same lasting recognition as that of Saumell and Cervantes. Carpentier explains: "The Espadero case is highly significant. It shows us how dangerous it can be for a musician of the Americas to unquestioningly accept European tendencies." (Carpentier 2001, 203).

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<sup>8</sup> The guajira is a musical genre derived from the punto guajiro or punto cubano. It was a musical style that has its origins in Andalucía and the Canary Islands. In Cuba, punto cubano, incorporated elements of African descent, such as the use of claves, the guiro, and the guayo.

Ex. 11. “Canto del guajiro,” mm. 1-5. French publication shown.

à M. Antoine RUBINSTEIN

## Chant du Guajiro (Campagnard Créole)

GRANDE SCÈNE CARACTÉRISTIQUE CUBAINE

N. R. Espadero. Op. 61

**Allegretto.** ♩ = 104

Piano

*p*

*il accompagnamento*

MG MG MG MG MD

*Ped.*

Nicolás Espadero was a brilliant pianist, but he spent most of his musical career as a teacher. Some of his most important disciples include Angelina Sicouret, who was a virtuoso of the piano and a renowned performer, and Cecilia Arizti, also an exceptional performer and the daughter of Fernando Arizti. (Orovio 2004). Other students of Ruíz Espadero include Carlos Alfredo Peyrellade, Eduardo Peyrellade, Gaspar Villate, Ernesto Edelman, and of course, Ignacio Cervantes (Gell Fernández-Cueto 2008).

It was during the second half of the nineteenth century when many important piano pedagogues began to appear in the most important cities. In Santiago de Cuba, Laureano Fuentes Pérez and Rafael Pascual Salcedo were well-respected piano teachers. Catalina Berroa was a well-

respected teacher in Trinidad, while in Camagüey, Clemente Peichler and Carlos Alfredo Peyrellade had successful teaching careers (Gell Fernández-Cueto 2008).

### 3.2 Louis Moreau Gottschalk

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) visited Havana in 1854, again in 1857, and lived in Cuba from 1859 until 1862 (Gadles 2016). He not only visited Havana but toured the island thoroughly on multiple occasions. His travels are well documented and his ability to speak Spanish, French and English aided him to become acquainted with the Cuban and creole musical forms of the island and its people. During his numerous visits, Gottschalk befriended and supported some of the most significant Cuban musicians. His musical colleagues included pianists Manuel Saumell, Nicolas Ruiz Espadero, Ignacio Cervantes, violinist virtuoso, José White, and other prominent musicians. Gottschalk helped Cuban musicians to pursue a musical education in European conservatories and helped them publish and promote their own piano works. He learned the contradanza rhythm directly from Manuel Saumell. Sublette explains:

In Havana, he was fully accepted into the fraternity of Cuban pianists and composers. He played such a prominent role in the musical life of Cuba and composed and performed so fluently in the Cuban musical idiom, that it might be appropriate to speak of him as a Cuban composer (Sublette 1951, 149).

His piano piece “Bamboula” was composed in 1848 at the age of eighteen (Ex. 12). The piano piece includes the characteristic rhythm of the already well-known tango-habanera. In *Bamboula* the tango figure appears as part of the repeated rhythmic figure notated in the treble clef but requiring both hands for proper execution. Some of his later compositions position the tango figure as a form of accompaniment.

Ex. 12. "Bamboula," mm. 1-16.

# Bamboula

(Danse de Nègres)

L. M. GOTTSCHALK Op. 2  
*de la Louisiane.*

Allegro ♩ = 112

The score is written for piano in 2/4 time, key of B-flat major. It consists of 16 measures. The tempo is Allegro, with a quarter note equal to 112 beats per minute. The piece is marked with a key signature of two flats (B-flat major). The score is divided into four systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system shows the bass line with four measures of fortissimo (fff) chords. The second and third systems show the treble line with melodic fragments and the bass line with chords, including markings for *mf*, *Stacc.*, *fff*, *Red.*, *p*, and *sec.*. The fourth system shows the treble line with a melodic line and the bass line with chords, including markings for *fff*, *Red.*, *p*, *sec.*, and *cres - cen - do*.

His piece, “El cocoyé” (Gran Caprice Cubain de Bravura) was highly successful and made him widely popular in Havana (Ex. 13). It was an impromptu based on a popular Cuban tune. The piece suggests the rhythmic structure of the cinquillo, which he probably adopted from the French contredanse that was popular in his hometown of New Orleans or perhaps from his numerous visits to the city of Santiago de Cuba, in which he must have been exposed to the popular rhythmic melody.

The cinquillo is penned in a very clever form, in which both hands alternate rhythmically to create the melodic gesture of the rhythmic motive. Gottschalk uses the percussive qualities of the instrument as an expression tool and imitates the rhythmic character of the drums through the piano. This is a pianistic device that we encounter repeatedly in the development of Cuban popular piano forms. The imitation of percussion instruments is one of the main characteristics that define the individuality of the Cuban piano school. The development of Cuban pianistic devices and other forms of accompaniment such as the piano montuno and the cha cha chá guajeo follow a similar method.

We also find the cinquillo in the piano compositions of Manuel Saumell, who we know was associated with Gottschalk and showed him some of the most representative musical elements of the island. Sublette explains: “Saumell was not only an excellent composer. His influence was felt not only in Cuba but in the United States, through his influence on Gottschalk, as he subtly tutored his apt American friend in musical cubanía.” (Sublette 1951, 150).

Ex. 13. "El cocoyé," mm. 1-24.

(♩ = 120)

Piano

*deciso.*

*fff*

*3*

*3*

*3*

*3*

2nd Version.

*f* *strepitoso e con impetu*

M. D.

*a tempo ma deciso*

*ff*

*fp*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*in tempo*

*precipitandosi*

*f*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

*Ped.* \*

Gottschalk was truly a visionary and a pioneer of what would soon become recognized as folkloric American music. He was at the time one of its most prominent artists. His piano piece “Ojos criollos” (Danse Cubaine-Caprice Brilliant), which he composed in 1859, introduces elements that foreshadow the genres of cakewalk and jazz (Ex. 14). The piece shows harmonic diminished passing chords, melodic arpeggiated chords and chromatic passing notes that became representative of the music of Scott Joplin and other ragtime composers at the turn of the nineteenth century. The left-hand bass note, and upper register chord accompaniment later became the metric and harmonic structure of cakewalk and ragtime. The second section of the piece is marked by the rhythm of the habanera in the left-hand accompaniment part. By the time he composed this piano piece, he had traveled the island.

Gottschalk composed and produced a large-scale concert which was performed at the Teatro Tacón in Havana in 1860. His orchestral work *La Nuit des Tropiques* was inspired by the large-scale symphonic works of Hector Berlioz (1803-1869). It was meant to be performed by a large orchestra made of numerous clarinets, violins, french horns, tubists, trombonists, and a choir of almost 200 voices and a tumba francesa percussion group.<sup>9</sup> Unable to gather such an enormous number of musicians, Gottschalk recruited and employed forty pianists that included some of the most recognized names of the Cuban piano school, including Saumell, Espadero, Desvernine, a young Ignacio Cervantes, Edelmann, Laureano Fuentes, and many others (Carpentier 2001, 198).

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<sup>9</sup> Tumba francesa is a music and dance genre that emerged in Oriente, Cuba. The genre was introduced in Cuba by the end of the eighteenth century by French colonists and slaves fleeing the Haitian revolution.

Ex. 14. "Ojos criollos," mm. 1-32.

# Ojos Criollos

Danse Cubaine- Caprice Brillant

Louis Moreau Gottschalk

The musical score is presented in four systems, each consisting of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The first system (measures 1-4) is marked **Brillante** and *8<sup>va</sup>* in the treble staff, and *elegante* in the bass staff. The second system (measures 5-8) features a *8<sup>va</sup>* marking in the treble staff. The third system (measures 9-12) is marked *8<sup>va</sup>* in the treble staff. The fourth system (measures 13-16) also features a *8<sup>va</sup>* marking in the treble staff. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.



17 *ben misurato*

21

25

29 *cresc.* *f* *ff* 8va

Gottschalk travelled extensively throughout numerous Caribbean and Latin American countries. He visited Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Guadalupe, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. He passed away in Rio de Janeiro at the early age of forty, most likely from a ruptured appendix. Throughout his travels, he collected the musical elements from many of these countries and incorporated them into his own music. Gottschalk was in every way an expert in Latin American and Caribbean

musical forms and the most representative figure of music originated in the Americans (Sublette 2004).

A resurgence of a musical movement in the United States towards the end of the nineteenth century, saw Gottschalk's printed piano works become mainstream. His piano works were extremely popular and created a point of confluence between the works of Manuel Saumell and Scott Joplin. Gottschalk biographer S. Frederick Starr explains:

The Saumell-Joplin link may be direct, via Gottschalk, or through later Cuban composers, whose works filtered into the United States in original form or through Mexican or North American copies. Whatever the route, it is undeniable that many chord progressions, bass lines, and even melodic devices employed by Saumell and Gottschalk recur later in Joplin's music (Starr 1995, 185).

The music of Scott Joplin reflected not only melodic and harmonic devices but also rhythmic structures that were being developed in Cuba at the time, such as the danzón. The cinquillo of the danzón forms the rhythmic foundation of Joplin's famous piano piece "The Entertainer," while the "Maple Leaf Rag" clearly exhibits a Cuban feel with the use of the tresillo rhythm as a melodic device in the second section and the trio (Sublette 2004).

## Chapter IV

### 4.1 Manuel Saumell y Robredo

The most notable disciple of Jean-Frédéric Edelman was Manuel Saumell y Robredo (1817-1870). He learned music theory autodidactically but later studied with Edelman, who taught piano, composition and music theory. He also studied orchestration, counterpoint, fugue, and harmony with Maurice Pyke, who at the time worked as an arranger for the Italian opera company residing in Havana. He went on to become the single most important figure of the Cuban piano school and he is recognized as the father of Cuban music.

As a pianist he was perhaps limited, but it was his fifty contradanzas that separate him from other piano composers of the time. His piano contradanzas were the first attempt at incorporating the instrument of the piano as a favorite in the culture. These piano pieces became a method of study for many generations of pianists on the island.

Ex. 15. Photo of Manuel Saumell y Robredo (Source: Public Domain).



Saumell was a musical innovator of his time and even though he came from a disadvantaged family, that did not stop him from developing an authentic sound. He lived a hectic musical life playing at churches, at dances, preparing concerts, teaching, composing, arranging, and orchestrating (Carpentier 2001).

During the first half of the eighteenth-century Cuban composers were still drawn to European musical forms but Saumell separated himself by combining “classical” music forms with creole rhythms. Even though he was not the creator of the contradanza, he was responsible for developing and elevating the popular dance into a concert piano piece. Many of his piano contradanzas were meant to be performed in the concert hall rather than in the dance hall. Saumell characterized the contradanza as a genuine concert form, a miniature of a piano concert piece combined with creole rhythms. His piano music became a representation of nationalism and a symbol of Cuban identity.

Most of his contradanzas were composed in 2/4 and a few were in 6/8. He used binary forms and demonstrated a knowledge of symmetry and balance that is consistent with classical music. He divided his binary form into symmetrical phrases of sixteen plus sixteen measures and rarely broke away from this format. The exception perhaps is “La virtuosa,” (The Virtuous) where he uses an asymmetrical form of seventeen plus fifteen, adding an extra bar to his first section and deducting a bar from the second.

In his piano pieces, Saumell always shows a contrast of character between the two sections. This is consistent with the traits of the contradanza, and it is illustrated in his piece “La Josefina” (Josephine). The character of the opening has the content of a piano concerto with symmetrical rhythms of quarters and eights. The *segunda* is completely different from the *prima* in character. Saumell uses a creole rhythm based on syncopated notes in the melody and the accompaniment.

The piano piece is a marriage between European traditions and creole rhythms that alternate between the sections.

Ex. 16. "La Josefina."

*A la Sra Da Ma Josefa Herrera*

# La Josefina

contradanza

**Allegro deciso**

The musical score is written for piano in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second system starts at measure 5. The third system starts at measure 11 and includes dynamics of forte (*f*) and piano (*p*). The fourth system starts at measure 17 and is marked piano (*p*). The fifth system starts at measure 21 and includes a forte (*f*) dynamic and first/second endings. The piece concludes with a triplet in the bass line.

At times Saumell uses melodic gestures and content that are consistent with classicism and reveal numerous similarities to the music of Mozart and Haydn. However, his motivic development shows the ingenuity of a great composer. Saumell uses classically styled melodic resolutions that appear in the form of appoggiaturas. His pieces “El pañuelo de Pepa” (Pepa’s Handkerchief) and “La asesora” (The Adviser) display ascending melodic gestures that could be identified as the Mannheim rocket device of the late Classical era (See ex. 17 and 18 below).

Ex. 17. “El pañuelo de Pepa,” mm.1-4.



Allegretto

*mf*

Ex. 18. “La asesora,” mm. 1-4.



Allegro energico

*ff*

His pieces have been used for pedagogical purposes because many of them display pianistic difficulties and could be considered piano etudes. Saumell uses arpeggiated chords, solid chords, melodic lines constructed with sequential material and scale patterns. “La asesora,” (The Adviser) employs parallel ascending unison octaves in both hands.

“La pendencia” (The Pendency) is a perfect example of applied technique for the piano (See ex. 19). In the *primera* section, Saumell works with broken descending octaves in the right-hand part, with solid descending octaves in the left hand. On the next staff, he employs the same mechanism although in contrary motion. In the *segunda*, he uses rapid ascending parallel thirds against the tango habanera ostinato of the left-hand accompaniment. The *molto vivace* tempo adds complexity to the performance of this piece.

Ex. 19. “La pendencia.”

**Molto Vivace**

The musical score for "La pendencia" is presented in four systems of piano notation. The first system begins with the tempo marking "Molto Vivace" and the dynamic *f* in the right hand, while the left hand plays solid descending octaves. The second system features a right-hand melody with an *8va* marking and a *loco* section, accompanied by a left hand with *ff marcato* dynamics. The third system includes accents (>) and a *pp* dynamic. The fourth system contains first and second endings and concludes with the instruction "Da capo".

Quite a bit of research has been done about the classical influences of the contradanzas of Manuel Saumell, but it is possible that his music could reveal traits related to the Romantic era. I believe there are certain aspects of Romanticism in the music of Saumell which demonstrate an understanding or at least an awareness of the late musical style.

In pieces such as “La territorial,” “Las quejas,” and “La niña bonita,” Saumell notates triplet eighth notes in the melodic line as a form of variation for the amphibrach. The figure of the amphibrach could sound mechanical to the listener; however, the triplet figure provides and allows a more horizontal interpretation of the melodic line.

We can also recognize the sectional change of character of the Cuban contradanza, which was borrowed from the European one. In example 20, “La niña bonita” (The Beautiful Girl), we can hear the shift in character between Saumell’s accustomed binary sections. The *primera* displays elements associated with the Classical era. Saumell uses symmetry, and melodic gestures typical of the music of Haydn and Mozart such as appoggiaturas and acciaccaturas. He also employs cadential harmonic endings typical of the style. In the *segunda*, Saumell resumes with a lyrical melodic line and one of the earliest examples of Romanticism in the music of the island. Saumell uses a chromatic melodic line between the principal voice and the inner voice. It reveals the skill and ingenuity of the composer, and it is a clear indication of his understanding of Romanticism. Saumell adds the note “*con passione*” which suggest a technique commonly linked to the era. It functions as a description of the character of the piece, and it is intended for its interpretation. Notes of musical expression such as “*con passione*”, a rhythmic flexibility and harmonic chromatism are often linked to this musical style. Although this harmonic language is not common in the music of Saumell, it later transformed into a symbol of Cuban identity and nationalism, and it is later thoroughly expressed in the music of Cervantes.



Ex. 20. "La niña bonita."

A la Srta Da. Isabel Mora

# La niña bonita

contradanza

Andante molto tranquillo

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems of music. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked "Andante molto tranquillo".

- System 1 (Measures 1-5):** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes in measures 2, 3, and 4. Measure 5 has a fermata over a chord.
- System 2 (Measures 6-10):** Continues the piano accompaniment. Measure 10 has a fermata over a chord.
- System 3 (Measures 11-15):** Features a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 15 has a fermata over a chord.
- System 4 (Measures 16-20):** Marked "con passione". The right hand has a melodic line with triplets. Measure 20 has a fermata over a chord.
- System 5 (Measures 21-24):** Marked "mf". The right hand has a melodic line with triplets. Measure 24 has a fermata over a chord. The system ends with a first and second ending bracket.

In the piece “Luisiana” (Louisiana) Saumell goes further and notates triplet quarter notes in the left-hand accompaniment as a variation of the tresillo (Ex. 21). The left-hand triplets are a reinterpretation of the tresillo, and it is meant to be performed in a free manner. A flexible rhythmic accompaniment simply would not work on music meant for dance hall in which a stable and recurring rhythmic model is required, as we observed on the previous piece. “Luisiana” was a piano piece clearly conceived as a concert piece.

Ex. 21. “Luisiana,” mm. 16-25.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Luisiana" (mm. 16-25). The score is written for piano in 2/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system (mm. 16-19) is marked *tranzillo*. The right hand features a melodic line with a triplet of quarter notes in the third measure. The left hand has a bass line with triplet quarter notes in the second, third, and fourth measures. The second system (mm. 20-25) is marked *pp* and *pesante*. The right hand continues with a melodic line, including a triplet of quarter notes in the second measure. The left hand features a bass line with triplet quarter notes in the second, third, and fourth measures. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Many other structural elements of Cuban folkloric music appear on his piano contradanzas. Numerous of his pieces notated in 6/8-time signature have a sense of ambiguity between a triple and a duple meter feel. In his pieces, “La suavecita” (The Soft One), “La Caridad” (Caridad), “Toma, Tomás” (Take it, Thomas), Saumell alternates between a 6/8 and a 3/4 feel, suggesting the hemiola later used as the rhythmic base of the genre of the Cuban guajira created by Jorge Ánckermann.

Ex. 22. “La Caridad,” *segunda*, mm. 17-25.

The musical score for Ex. 22, "La Caridad," *segunda*, mm. 17-25, is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 17-21) features a right hand with chords and single notes, and a left hand with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system (mm. 22-25) includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.), with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking and a mezzo-forte (*m.s.*) dynamic marking. The piece is in 6/8 time and has a key signature of one sharp (F#).

We can also recognize the *cinquillo* and other rhythmic variations of the *danzón* on his pieces “El somatén” (The Hubbub) (Ex. 23). This rhythmic motive was already known to Saumell even before it was formally named and recognized as the *cinquillo* of the *danzón*. Interestingly, Saumell alternates almost precisely between a syncopated and a symmetrical measure, according to the rhythmic foundation of the *danzón*, which later became the formal structure of the musical genre.

The use of a *marcato* sign on a single note on the *cinquillo* is an imitation of the percussion instruments that often played the ostinato in the *orquesta típica cubana*. This representation of the piano as a percussion instrument in Cuban musical vernacular was later explored by Ignacio Cervantes, Ernesto Lecuona, and other pianists during the twentieth century.

Ex. 23. “El somatén.”

## El Somatén

contradanza

Allegro e staccato

*mf*

*f*

*ff*

*marcato*

The importance of this piano composer is underlined by his knowledge of Cuban musical forms even before they were recognized as such. Saumell was ahead of his time. In his piece “Sopla que quema” (Blow, that it Burns), he composes a melodic gesture that in many ways seems “to be in clave” (Ex. 24). Of course, we know that the conceptualization of the Cuban clave does not

occur until later in the nineteenth century with the formation of Afro-Cuban genres derived from rumba. We also know that the concept of “being in clave” does not represent only the physical presence of the rhythmic motif or the instrument, but it is also a geometric notion implied or suggested by the melodic and harmonic arrangement. The clave as a concept was probably still in its infancy state at the time in the island, but at some point Saumell must have encountered it. In this example Saumell, alternates without the slightest alteration a syncopated measure followed by an even one. This could be analyzed as a melodic representation of the 3-2 clave. The rhythm of the melodic line precisely accentuates the three side of clave. The *martellato* note added by the composer, suggests the percussive nature in which the piece is to be performed.

Ex. 24. “Sopla que quema.” *Segunda*.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano accompaniment. The first system consists of four measures. The second system consists of four measures, with the final two measures marked as first and second endings. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various chords and melodic lines. A *martellato* marking is present in the final measure of the second system.

Saumell is rightfully considered the father of Cuban music forms. Perhaps because of his inadequate socio-economic conditions, he was never recognized internationally. However, he was able to develop a type of Cuban nationalism that is often compared to that of Russian composer Mikhail Glinka (Carpentier 2001, 187). His nationalistic musical tendencies are reflected in his

more than fifty contradanzas and on the life of the composer. While he was still studying with Edelman, Saumell decided to compose a Cuban opera with a nationalistic theme. The opera was meant to be based on the Cuban novel *Antonelli* by José Antonio Echevarria, which was first published in 1839 in *La Cartera Cubana* newspaper. Even though Saumell did not complete the opera, in part because of lack of support and funding, he intended to do something that was unprecedented for the times in America, he had planned to include indigenous people, African slaves, and people of different races, to sing and take roles in the opera.

Manuel Saumell had an intricate and complex set of musical influences that combined European musical traditions with creole rhythms. He was able to indicate in many of his piano contradanzas the musical genres that were still in their initial stages of development on the island at the time. His contradanzas reveal the rhythm of the habanera, the tresillo, and even the manifestation of clave, which later became so important in the development of *son Cubano*. The cinquillo figure of the danzón is also found in his music, and his triple metered contradanzas became the starting point of what later developed into the guajira. His work is the most valuable early representation of the music of Cuba and the foundation of Cuban popular piano.

## Chapter V

### 5.1 The Life of Ignacio Cervantes Kawanagh

The great pianist and composer Ignacio Cervantes was born in Havana on July 31st, 1847. His musical talents and his workmanship made him the most influential composer of Cuban musical forms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His work was the culmination of a century of cultural and musical development in the island. The noted Cuban musicologist Alejo Carpentier wrote:

Ignacio Cervantes Kawanagh was Cuba's most important musician of the nineteenth century. It is possible that others - a Laureano Fuentes, a Gaspar Villate - have an advantage over him with a greater volume of compositions. But no one ranks higher in solidity of craft, innate good taste, distinctive ideas, elegance of style, a full sound, manifested in his minor works (Carpentier 2001, 204).

Ex. 25. Photo of Ignacio Cervantes Kawanagh (Source: Public Domain).



Carpentier is correct in acknowledging Cervantes as the greatest Cuban composer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is perhaps the Cuban composer who solidified the Cuban piano tradition and without question represented the pinnacle of Cuban music at the turn of the century. Cervantes embodied Cuban nationalism and because of that, his piano pieces are still relevant today.

Unlike Saumell, Cervantes came from an affluent family. His father was a lawyer who worked as mayor of the town of San Antonio de los Baños southwest of Havana from 1855 until 1856, and later as secretary of the University of Havana from 1874 to 1876. He was himself passionate about the arts and music and encouraged and supported his son to pursue his musical career. He was Cervantes' first piano teacher and taught him theory rudiments and solfège and worked on the piano etudes of Cramer with him (Sánchez de Fuentes 1936). Cervantes went on to study piano with Juan Miguel Joval until he was twelve years old (Gaddles 2016). At this time, he composed his first piano danza "La solitaria" (The Lonely One) which he dedicated to his mother María Soledad Kawanagh. The piece was later renamed "Soledad" by his daughter María Cervantes (Gadles 2016).

In 1859, Cervantes began to study the piano with Nicolás Ruiz Espadero, the most distinguished piano teacher in Havana at the time. Under his guidance, Cervantes worked on piano technique and was exposed to the works of the Romantic composers. He studied the piano etudes of Cramer, the piano works of Karlbrenner, Clementi, Moscheles, Dussek, Henselt, Alkan, Chopin, Gottschalk, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and other prominent piano composers (Ramírez 1891).

Cervantes may have been a pupil of Gottschalk himself. Gadles notes that Cervantes performed a concert for Gottschalk at the age of six. At any rate, it was Gottschalk who persuaded the young Cervantes to continue his studies in Paris. In 1865, at eighteen years old, Cervantes began his musical studies at the Imperial Conservatory of Paris (Carpentier 2001). At the Paris



Conservatory, he studied piano with Gottschalk's friend, Antoine Francois Marmontel and presumably solfège with Napoléon Alkan, the brother of pianist and composer Charles Henri Valentin Alkan (Gadles 2016).

While in Paris, Cervantes had a very successful and productive musical career teaching, conducting orchestras, and giving concerts. His hard work and perseverance earned him recognition among its peers and became associated with several prominent composers such as Saint Sæens, Gounod, and Liszt. He worked as piano accompanist for Italian composer Rossini who presented his picture to Cervantes inscribed: "A mom cher college Ignacio Cervantes, Gioachino Rossini." (Sánchez de Fuentes, 1936). He also met Polish Princess Marcelina Czartoryska, who was a close friend and pupil of Chopin. From her, Cervantes was able to examine, firsthand, Chopin's written notes about his own performance practices (Gadles 2016). This must have been an exciting experience for the young composer, who first found the works of Chopin while studying with Ruiz Espadero in 1859. Chopin would become one of the major influences on his work.

In 1866, Cervantes won the grand prize of piano performance at the young age of eighteen with the Piano Concerto no.5 of Henri Hertz. He was only the third Cuban to achieve this, before him José White won the first prize in violin in 1856 and clarinetist Félix Hernández won the second place in 1861. So much was the national pride felt by White, that he wrote the same day to his former teacher Espadero of the competition:

Esteemed friend Espadero: Today the piano contest was held at the conservatory and I want to be the first to inform your student, our friend Ignacio Cervantes, won the first prize with great success. Marmontel is 'enchanté'. Please accept my congratulations, 'cher ami'. Your old friend and colleague, José White (Gadles 2016, 109).

This accomplishment must have filled the young Cervantes with confidence. In 1867, he won the prize for harmony, and the following year won the prize in fugue and counterpoint. He aspired to take part in the prestigious Prix de Rome, but because of his situation as a foreigner was not allowed to compete.

That did not prevent the young composer from pursuing a very successful musical career. After a fruitful four years at the Paris Conservatory Cervantes returned to Cuba in 1870. In 1872, he married a young pianist and student of Ruiz Espadero, with whom he had eleven children of which only four survived to adulthood.<sup>10</sup> During the period from 1870 until 1875, he enjoyed an extraordinary musical career as a performer, teacher, composer, and conductor of the orchestra of the Payret Theater. He performed with local and foreign artists. He performed to great acclaim the piano sonatas of Beethoven, the works of Gottschalk, Bach, Chopin, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Alkan (Sánchez de Fuentes 1936). During this time Cervantes became a respected music personality in the artistic circles of Habana and a symbol of Cuban pianistic prowess.

In 1875 or 1876 (the date is not completely clear) he was forced to leave Cuba by the Spanish Captain General as he and violinist José White were accused of raising money for the Cuban war of independence. Curiously, the Captain was himself a musical admirer of Cervantes and offered him the choice of going to jail or leaving the island (Gadles 2016). While agreeing to leave, he pledged his support to the independence cause by continuing to raise money in the United States, where he remained for four years in exile. In New York, he was able to support himself and his family by performing concerts for a musical society named *La Sociedad para la Cultura Armónica* (Gadles 2016). He and White gave a series of very successful concerts in the United

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<sup>10</sup> His daughter María Cervantes became a well-known pianist, singer, and composer (Orovio 2004, 50).

States and kept their promise of supporting the revolution from abroad. After the exhausting ten-year pro-independence war concluded in 1878 with the Treaty of El Zanjón, which failed to recognize the independence of Cuba from Spain and the abolition of slavery, he returned to Cuba in 1879 to be with his dying father.

As cultural life resumed in Havana, Cervantes gave concerts at various cultural societies, institutions, and theaters such as the *Liceo Artístico y Literario*, the *Sociedad de Música Clásica*, the *Liceo de Guanabacoa*, *Círculo Habanero*, and “*La Caridad*” del Cerro (Sánchez de Fuentes 1936).

A concert review published at the *Revista Cubana* in 1885 praised Cervantes’ piano interpretations:

It is only fair to note, however, that this has gone in *crescendo* with the valuable and benevolent cooperation of our pianist Ignacio Cervantes, who in his last meetings brought the enthusiasm of the auditorium to delirium, executing the great trio in D minor of Mendelsohn and a piano and violin sonata of Grieg, challenging works, we could say, with an unspeakable purity of style, with surprising perfection of the mechanism, with an energy and warmth of an inspired artist (Ramírez 1891, 106).

In 1891, Cervantes, along with violinist Rafael Díaz Albertini, toured Cuba. They then gave a concert at the Teatro Nacional de Mexico with the orchestra of the conservatory under the direction of maestro José Rivas. Albertini played Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto in E minor, and Cervantes performed the works of Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, and importantly, his own piano danzas.

After a well-deserved success in Mexico, Albertini and Cervantes went to Tampa in 1892 to perform at the Ibor Theater for an audience mainly formed of Cuban tobacco workers. The concert was described in the newspaper *Patria* by Cuban hero José Martí:

Whole men, Cuban creators, Cuban founders proudly climb the stairs of the workshops, as the workshops of the Cayo have just climbed our two great musicians, Albertini and Cervantes. Nor did harmony like that escape from the sovereign keyboard of one, nor from the impeccable violin of the other.

Later José Martí proudly described the words pronounced by Cervantes after that concert:

There are two things which have made me proud: the first, to have been born in Cuba, and the second, to have won the First Prize at the Paris Conservatory so I can offer it as a tribute of love to my beloved country, and today the third, for this visit to the workshop where I have being welcomed this way by my beloved compatriots, the honest workers who are here (Patria Newspaper, May 7, 1892, pg. 2).

This speech by Cervantes speaks of the deep sense of nationalism he had for his country and his people, which will later be reflected on many of his piano compositions.

After the War of Independence resumed in 1895, Cervantes was forced to go into exile once again. At this point his movements were somewhat unclear. According to Carpentier he immigrated to Mexico and remained there until 1900, encouraged by the Mexican president Porfirio Díaz. Orlando Martínez contradicts this by stating that in 1899 during the American intervention, he prepared a musical festival at the Tacón Theater in Havana. It is still possible that Cervantes did travel to Mexico around 1898 to evade the “horrors of the American blockade” as described by Sánchez de Fuentes and a year later returned to prepare a concert in Havana.

In 1902, Cervantes toured the United States. He played a concert in Charleston, S.C. at the Hibernian Hall as a representative of Cuban arts and music. He performed selections from the Classical and Romantic repertoire that included Bach, Henselt, Chopin, Schumann and, given the purpose of this concert, perhaps some of his own danzas. He also performed concerts in Georgia, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and New York where he was offered a substantial contract which he refused because his wife wanted to come back to Cuba to take care of her aging parents (Martínez 1959).

The same year (1902), he returned to Cuba and gave his last concert in June. By this time, he was becoming ill and succumbing to a form of nervous disorder (Martínez 1959). In 1904, his son took him to New York to seek medical attention but unfortunately, his condition did not improve. They came back to Cuba and on April 29 of 1905 he passed away (Orovio 2004).

Ignacio Cervantes was a prolific composer. He became interested in composing music for zarzuelas, a type of musical theater that alternates unaccompanied dialogue with sung parts and dance. He composed two zarzuelas: *El submarino Peral* (The Peral Submarine) and *Los saltimbanquis* (The Mountebanks). Carpentier notes that this latter piece was very well received.

He also composed two orchestral waltzes *Hectograph*, and *La Paloma* and *Symphony in C*, an orchestral overture (Carpentier 2001, 208). His *Romanza* and *Scherzo capriccioso* are pieces intended for orchestra. Both orchestral pieces demonstrate a high degree of refinement and mastery of orchestration. He also composed his opera *Maledetto*, which he left unfinished (in part because of having to work with a weak libretto). Nevertheless, his two finished acts show skill in instrumentation and orchestral ingenuity.

However, it was his piano contradanzas that separated the composer from the rest. Although he regarded his piano danzas as minor piano works, they represent the nationalistic spirit of the composer. Unfortunately, many of his danzas have been lost, but more than forty have been preserved. They include popular piano pieces such as “Adios a Cuba” (Farewell to Cuba), “Ilusiones perdidas” (Lost Hope), “Vuelta al hogar” (Back at Home), “Los tres golpes” (The Three Strikes), and others. In many of these danzas, Cervantes’ writing brought out key characteristics that defined the music of Cuba.

Even though the danza may have already existed in Cuba since before the middle of the nineteenth century, it was Cervantes who established and gave recognition to the genre. His piano danzas exhibit lyrical melodic gestures and harmonic creativity demonstrating admiration of the music of Mendelssohn and Chopin. However, as we will see in the next section, he also retains the original character of the danza and the sounds of Cuban folkloric music.

## 5.2 The Piano Danzas of Ignacio Cervantes

The piano danzas of Cervantes were mostly composed in similar fashion to the contradanzas of Saumell. Like Saumell, Cervantes used elements of classical writing such as symmetrical melodic phrasing, form, and balance. The harmonic language was based on Western concepts of tonic, subdominant and dominant as well as applied dominants and augmented chords. He continued with the tradition of harmonizing melodic passages with thirds, sixths, or tenths, which was central to the stylistic character of the era. Like his predecessor, he fused these European elements of music with African rhythmic motives that he cleverly re-organized.

Generally, Cervantes builds his piano danzas on 8-measure phrases which are repeated to form a 16 measure *primera* and a 16-measure *segunda*, with a total of 32 measures. He used the binary formal structure of the contradanza of 16 plus 16 measures with just a few irregularities. The piece “La carcajada” (Laughter) has a 16 measure *primera* followed by a 17 measure *segunda*, which was extended by adding an extra measure to the first phase of the *segunda* section. The same occurs in “Homenaje” (Homage), which has an extended *segunda* section.

Another irregularity of the form is his danza “Almendares,”<sup>11</sup> which was published in ABA ternary form. The piece was perhaps published in ABA form to avoid ending on a dominant

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<sup>11</sup> This piece is probably dedicated to the Havana River or the district Almendares.

seventh chord. Gadles Mikowsky suggests that it is possible that the composer meant to end the piece on the dominant as he does with “Interrumpida” (Interrupted), as the title suggests. If that is the case, “Almendares” was also conceived in the traditional binary form of the Cuban contradanza.

Cervantes often used word painting to reflect the title or the mood of a piece. For example, his piece “Adios a Cuba” (Farewell to Cuba) suggests the sadness of the composer after he is forced into exile. On his piece “La carcajada” (Laughter), he evokes the sounds of laughter by using descending chromatic chords (See Ex. 26). Furthermore, the melodic line of the *segunda* of the piece “Siempre sí” (Always Yes), is based on the note B, which is of course the name of musical note Si in the Italian musical notation (Ex.27).

Ex. 26. “La carcajada,” mm. 21-25.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "La carcajada" (mm. 21-25). The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows measures 21-25, with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) in the bass staff. The second system shows measures 26-30, with a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) in the bass staff. The music features descending chromatic chords in the bass staff, which are highlighted by a line connecting the *f* and *ff* markings. The piece is in 2/4 time and has a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The notation includes various chordal textures, including triads and dyads, and some melodic lines in the treble staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Ex. 27. “Siempre sí,” mm. 17-24.

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, specifically measures 17 through 24 of 'Siempre sí'. The score is written in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 2/4 time signature. The music features a complex texture with multiple voices in both hands. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *p*. Performance instructions include *con pedale* and *cresc.* (crescendo). The score is marked with various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Manuel Saumell and other contradanza composers of the time achieved contrasting sections by adding the creole rhythms either the tango figure, the amphibrach or the tresillo to the *segunda* section. In Cervantes music we also observe contrasting sections between *primera* and the *segunda*. In pieces such as “La encantadora” (The Charming Woman), “Mensaje” (Message), “Cri-cri,” “Picotazos” (Peaks), “Decisión” (Decision), he introduces the creole rhythmic patterns in the *segunda*, and the *primera* functions as introductory material.

These previously mentioned pieces preserved the formal structure of the Cuban contradanzas, and they belong to a group of danzas that were composed in the earlier period of the composer (Gadles 2016). However, the way that Cervantes achieves distinct sections differs from his predecessor in other pieces. He achieves sectional contrast by using subtle variations and ingenious compositional techniques such as texture change, subtle modulations, or by using variants of the *tresillo* rhythmic motive.



Cervantes composed most of his danzas in 2/4 except for “La cortesana” (Lady in Waiting) which is in 3/4, in the spirit of the minuet. The piece reveals the musical character that permeated in Cuba during the nineteenth century.

Ex. 28. “La cortesana,” mm. 1-8.

The image shows a musical score for the piano piece "La cortesana" by Manuel Saumell, measures 1-8. The score is in 3/4 time, marked "Allegro" with a quarter note equal to 126. The piece begins with a piano introduction. The first system shows the right hand playing a melodic line with a slur over measures 1-4, marked *p* and *tranquillo*. The left hand plays a bass line with a slur over measures 1-4, marked *Senza pedale*. The second system shows the right hand playing a more active melodic line with a slur over measures 5-8, marked *mf* and *appassionato*. The left hand continues with a bass line, marked *Con pedale*.

Even though Cervantes was a gifted pianist himself, he did not favor virtuosic passages, instead, he favored beauty. He indicated pedal signs on his pages and used the full potential of the instrument by notating a wide range of dynamics and colors. His piano piece “Ilusiones perdidas” (Lost Hope) is a prime example of the compositional traits of the composer (Ex. 29). He maintains the traditional format of the contradanza of 16 plus 16 measures of the *primera* and the *segunda*. This compositional method was adopted by Cuban musicians from the English country dance and the French contradance. It reflected the classical elements that were preserved in the musical expression of the island and later became symbols of Cuban nationalism.

In this piece, Cervantes achieves contrast between the sections by introducing the conga rhythm sparsely in the *primera* while leaving space for the melodic line. In the *segunda*, he employs the conga rhythmic motive as an ostinato thus creating a distinct effect. A tonality shift from minor to major is evident in the *segunda*. The method of shifting from minor to major became a staple of authenticity in Cuban music. Later, Lecuona and other Cuban composers employed this technique.

“Ilusiones perdidas” reveals the highly developed compositional skills of Cervantes (Ex. 29). He begins the *primera* section with a two-voice melodic phrase accompanied by the *conga* motive in the left hand.<sup>12</sup> During the *primera*, he makes a sudden shift from a homophonic to a polyphonic texture, breaking with the conga rhythmic ostinato in favor of the melodic lines harmonized in tenths. It is in the *segunda*, where Cervantes remains true to the true nature of the danza by keeping a continuous rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand.

Cervantes envisioned his piano danzas for the concert hall. He interrupts the left-hand rhythmic ostinato in favor of the melodic line. He uses a wide range of performance notations and musical expression signs such as dynamic indications, rubato, and tempo indications intended to support the lyrical character of the melodic line. All these traits are typical of the Romantic era and are used at full capacity by the composer. The harmonic tone reflects on the admiration that the composer had of the music of Chopin.

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<sup>12</sup> The tresillo was also referred to as conga.

Ex. 29. "Ilusiones perdidas."

# Ilusiones Perdidas

(Lost Hope)

Ignacio Cervantes

Lento malincolico ♩ = 63

*mp*

*con pedale*

5

*dim. e rit.*

9

*a tempo*

13

*senza pedale*

*con pedale*

*dim. e rit.*

*p*

Detailed description: This is a piano score for a piece titled "Ilusiones Perdidas" (Lost Hope) by Ignacio Cervantes. The score is in 2/4 time, key of B-flat major, and is marked "Lento malincolico" with a tempo of ♩ = 63. The piece is written for piano and consists of 13 measures. The score is divided into four systems. The first system (measures 1-4) begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a "con pedale" instruction. The second system (measures 5-8) includes a "dim. e rit." instruction. The third system (measures 9-12) is marked "a tempo". The fourth system (measures 13) starts with "senza pedale" and ends with "con pedale", "dim. e rit.", and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and some chords. The bass line is generally more rhythmic, while the treble line has more melodic movement.

17 *a tempo*

21 *mf* *cresc.* *f* *ff*

25 *f* *cresc. rit.* *ff* *a tempo* *p*

29 *rit.* *pp a tempo*

una corda

While Manuel Saumell focused his piano contradanzas primarily on a homophonic texture, Cervantes explored the polyphonic capabilities of the piano in some of his piano danzas (as revealed in “Ilusiones perdidas”). He also employs a contrapuntal technique in his piano piece “Invitación” (Invitation). In this danza (Ex. 30), Cervantes ingeniously divides the tresillo of the habanera into a two-voice polyphonic accompaniment. Harmonically, he uses an ascending

chromatic line over a tonic pedal. This variation of the tresillo is ingenious and a more complex form of accompaniment, another indication that his piano danzas were meant for listening, rather than for dancing.

Ex. 30. "Invitación."

Moderato agitato molto ed appassionato ♩ = 76

*mp* *p* *mf*

*con pedale*

1. *cresc.* *f* *mp*

2. *rit. e dim* *mf*

*a tempo*  
*tranquillo*

The contrasting character of the *primera* and the *segunda* are also clearly suggested in this piece. The *primera* section is more cantabile, and the *segunda* is a stately dance that explores the creole character of the danza by utilizing rhythmic figures intrinsic to Cuban musical genre mixed with classical forms and symmetry.

Like Saumell, Cervantes based his piano danzas on the binary form, perpetuating the tradition of classically influenced musical forms in Cuban genres. Carpentier explains: “There is, as can be seen, a continuity with the classically rooted tradition, which is that of a highly esteemed Cuban musical nationalism.” (Carpentier 2001, 211). The traditional structure of the contradanza is maintained all throughout his piano works. Like many of his piano danzas, the 16 plus 16

measures arrangement is preserved, and the melodic phrases are symmetrically divided into two measures each.

The arrangement of the melodic phrases into two measures, along with the suggested melodic rhythm can be interpreted as “being in clave”. In many of his piano pieces the melodic line suggests a notion of clave, in which a two-measure melodic line is made of an even measure followed by an uneven one, or vice versa. While the concept of the clave was not fully developed at the time, it was a recurring feature observed on the music of Cervantes and other contemporary composers of the era.

Another compositional method utilized by Cuban composers was the modulation from minor to major. Initially it served as a tool to distinguish one section from another in the contradanza, but it developed into a symbol of Cuban idiosyncrasy. In “Invitación,” the *primera* is in minor and the *segunda* is in major. This is a very particular form of modulation that was rooted in European traditions. We find it in the music of Chopin, who we know was a huge influence on the music of Cervantes. Chopin employed numerous times the minor to major modulation, especially in his waltzes and mazurkas.

This type of modulation from minor to major was not new to Cervantes. Saumell and many of his contemporaries used this type of modulation in their contradanzas and habaneras. It is a testament to the contrasting nature of the sections of the contradanza that remained ingrained in the musical expression of the country. Nationalistic composer of the era, Eduardo Sánchez de Fuentes, used it in his emblematic habanera “Tú”. This piece was published in 1894, a year before the beginning of the last war against Spain. Soon after, the song became recognized as a hymn of patriotism.

This harmonic language is also found in the music of many twentieth century Cuban composers. The well-known Latin ballad “Siboney” composed by Ernesto Lecuona and the emblematic Cuban criolla “Quiéreme mucho” composed by Gonzalo Roig are examples of this compositional technique.

Chopin employed the rhythmic elements of his native Poland in many of his piano compositions and especially the mazurkas speak of the nationalistic ideal of the composer. Like Chopin, Cervantes emphasizes the rhythmic elements that were developing at the time in the island, and for this reason, his piano pieces are the most important of his output. One of the most representative rhythmic elements of Cuban music is the cinquillo. The cinquillo was a musical element that was already known to composers at the time. This rhythmic figure was notated by Cervantes in his piece “Porqué eh?” (Why, eh?) as a linking figure between the melodic phrases of the *segunda* (See Ex. 31).

Ex. 31. “Porque eh?,” *segunda*.

The musical score for Ex. 31, "Porque eh?", *segunda*, is written for piano in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and "a tempo" marking, followed by a piano (*p*) section with "rit." and "a tempo" markings. The second system includes a piano (*p*) section with "una corda" marking and a crescendo (*cresc.*) marking. Performance instructions include "con pedale" and "una corda".



Like Saumell, Cervantes was a visionary and a precursor of the popular piano tradition in Cuba. As discussed previously we recognize many traits of Cuban musical genres clearly represented in his music; the tango, the conga, the cinquillo, the notion of “being in clave” and many other creole rhythmic motives. We can also identify patterns of son montuno in some of his danzas. “La carcajada” (The Laughter), “La camagüeyana” (The Girl from Camaguey), and “Interrumpida” (Interrupted) are examples of the use musical elements related to Cuban son, such as the syncopated bass line, consciousness of the clave, and the humoresque musical character associated with the musical genre.

“La camagüeyana” is the only piano danza that Cervantes composed for a piano duo. The *primo* part carries the melodic line, and the *secondo* provides the accompaniment, similarly to the way a son ensemble functions. In son ensembles, the guitar and tres provide rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment to the vocal part. Although Cervantes does not use percussion instruments in this piece, the piano is inherently percussive and capable of functioning as such.

The and-of-two syncopated bass line is notated by Cervantes in the *secondo* part of this piano danza. This type of bass line is still used today in the musical genres of salsa and Latin jazz and is deeply rooted in the Cuban musical tradition. The right hand emphasizes the beats, similarly to the cowbell in the conjunto de son established by Arsenio Rodríguez. The harmonic progression of this piece is based on a simple alternation of tonic and dominant also similarly to the harmonic procedure of early Cuban son. All these musical elements found in the danzas of Cervantes, most were part of the musical environment at the time he composed his piano pieces.

Ex. 32. “La camagüeyana,” *secondo, segunda section*, mm. 9-24.

The image displays a musical score for piano solo, consisting of four systems of music. Each system is written for a grand piano, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The first system (measures 9-12) features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the bass clef and chords in the treble clef. The second system (measures 13-16) shows a melodic line in the treble clef with a slur over measures 13-15, and a bass clef line with eighth notes. The third system (measures 17-20) returns to the rhythmic pattern of the first system. The fourth system (measures 21-24) features a melodic line in the treble clef with a slur over measures 21-23, and a bass clef line with eighth notes. The score concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 24.

The use of octaves in unison or sometimes harmonized are well recognized in the piano solos of countless Cuban pianists of the twentieth century such as Antonio María Romeu, Bebo Valdés, Luis “Lili” Martínez just to name a few. Like Saumell before him, Cervantes also notated running parallel octaves. On this piano danza we observe the parallel octaves harmonized in tenths in the *primo* part of the *segunda* section.

Ex. 33. “La camagüeyana,” *primo, segunda section*, mm. 8-24.

The musical score is written for piano in 2/4 time, featuring a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of four systems of two staves each. The first system is marked with an *8<sup>va</sup> throughout* instruction. The melody in the right hand is characterized by eighth-note patterns and slurs, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment with chords and eighth-note figures. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a few notes in the left hand.

The idiosyncrasies of the people of the island are implied in the character of his piano pieces. The playful and humoresque character of his piece “Interrumpida” (Interrupted) is a musical representation of the character of the people (Ex. 34). The syncopated melodic accents playfully combine with a rhythmic bass line that is primarily based on the conga rhythmic motive and the tango-habanera figure. Interestingly, Cervantes here combines an even measure with a

syncopated one. Once again, the concept of “being in clave” is suggested in the rhythm of the melody and the accompaniment, indicating an awareness of this rhythmic pattern. The concept of being in clave is constantly implied not only by Cervantes, but by most Cuban composers of the era; it was perhaps in an experimental phase, but it was surely intrinsic in the musical environment at the time.

Ex. 34. “Interrumpida,” *segunda*, mm. 9-25.

The musical score for "Interrumpida" (segunda), measures 9-25, is presented in four systems. The key signature is two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is written for piano accompaniment, with a treble and bass clef. The first system includes a dynamic marking of *mf* and the instruction *con pedale*. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system also features a dynamic marking of *mf*. The fourth system concludes with an *espressivo* marking and a fermata over the final notes.

The piano compositions of Ignacio Cervantes demonstrate the rich and emerging musical culture of his homeland. The innate ability of the composer to portray different emotions in his music is the mark of a great composer. His piano compositions set him apart from the rest of composers of the era and became essential as didactical and pedagogical tools for generations of pianists after.

The nationalistic movement created by Manuel Saumell was continued and cemented by Cervantes. It was an era marked by the independence wars against Spain, which were noticed on many of his piano compositions. Cervantes, like Saumell was able to converge European and African musical traditions, and because of this, his compositions became relevant to people and to society in general. It was a society that was beginning to distance itself from Spanish colonialism. Saumell and Cervantes paved the way for the next generation of Cuban pianists, which was led from the early twentieth century onwards, by the enduring figure of Ernesto Lecuona.

## Chapter VI

### 6.1 The Life and Musical Career of Ernesto Lecuona y Casado

It is impossible to speak about the development of piano music in Cuba without mentioning the figure of Ernesto Lecuona y Casado (1895-1963) who was the most important musician of the twentieth century in Cuba. His oeuvre crossed over between classically influenced music and popular genres. By the end of the nineteenth century Cuban musicians did not need to travel abroad to study. There was an established musical system and numerous musical institutions capable of imparting musical education at the highest level. Ernesto Lecuona was a musician trained and developed in Cuba.

He is considered by many as the most internationally recognized and prolific Cuban composer of all time. He was himself a virtuoso pianist. However, not much has been written about his life or his music. Lecuona's work represented the peak of the development of piano music in the island and the continuation of the oeuvre of Saumell and Cervantes.

Lecuona's compositional career was extensive. He is credited with having composed more than 3500 pieces, including 176 piano pieces, some of which have transcended cultural borders. He also composed 400 songs based on Cuban genres, 31 orchestral pieces, 50 theatrical pieces, and 11 soundtracks. Interpretations of pieces such as "Siboney," "La comparsa," "Malagueña," "Andalucia," and "Siempre en mi corazón" (Always in My heart) earned him international recognition. His song "Siboney," released in 1929, became an instant success and a Latin classic. As a performer, Lecuona appeared in every major theater in Cuba and abroad and toured internationally performing piano concerts and conducting orchestras.

The political and social conditions in Cuba at the turn of the century played a role in shaping his music. The country was trying to find its own nationalistic identity and composers in Cuba were aiming at creating a unique sound, the Cuban sound, different from that of the Iberian Peninsula. He was not alone in identifying with the nationalistic movement in music that was expressed in the afrocubanismo musical movement; along with him were Amadeo Roldán, and Alejandro García Caturla.

However, Lecuona's input into Cuban cultural life was focused through a different lens because he was a prolific composer of various musical forms, although it is safe to say that his piano pieces embody the individuality and uniqueness of the composer. Through his piano compositions, Lecuona expressed himself as a Cuban and as a Latin American composer.

Ernesto Lecuona was born on August 6, 1895, in the Municipality of Guanabacoa in eastern Havana, one of the richest musical and cultural centers in Cuba. His family was eclectic and large. His father, Ernesto Lecuona-Ramos, was from the Canary Islands and married a Cuban, Elisa Casado y Bernal. They had fourteen children of which only seven survived to adulthood. His father was a successful editor of the newspapers *El Comercio* and *La Aurora de Yumuri* (Lecuona 2004, 60).

His first musical influences came through his sister Ernestina Lecuona (1882-1851). Ernestina was herself a noted composer, piano teacher, and performer who studied at the conservatory of Paris and gave numerous concerts in Cuba and America (Orovio 2004). She must have been a great inspiration to Ernesto, who showed at a very early age his talent for the piano. At the age of five he gave his first concert at the *Círculo Hispano de La Habana*, which consisted of international pieces such as "Las campanadas," "La Marsellesa," and the Cuban national anthem

(Estrada 2014, 370). The critics regarded Ernesto as a child prodigy. A chronicle published in 1901 in the magazine *El Fígaro* wrote: “A brilliant future in the life of art.” (Fajardo 2014, v1, 371).

Ex. 35. Photo of Ernesto Lecuona y Casado (Source: Public Domain).



The tragic death of his father in 1902 forced the young Lecuona to provide support for his family. He began to work providing piano accompaniment in a silent theater. Dutch composer Hubert De Blanck (who had settled in Havana back in 1833 and had founded his Conservatory of Music in 1885), persuaded Lecuona’s mother to keep him away from the family responsibilities that were interfering with his musical education. At the age of nine, he attended the prestigious conservatory of Carlos A. Peyrellade, where studied for three years (Jacobson 1983). He later furthered his music education with various piano teachers; one of them was Antonio Saavedra,



who had been a pupil of Ignacio Cervantes. He also studied piano with Joaquin Nin Castellanos, a great Cuban musicologist, pianist, and composer (Sublette 2004, 381).

In 1910, he became a student of Hubert De Blank at the Conservatorio Nacional. Three years later in 1913, Lecuona graduated from the conservatory at the age of 17. He was awarded the gold medal of his class for his interpretation of Schumann's *Piano Concerto in A Minor, op. 54*.

In 1916, he prepared his first trip to the United States. In New York City he organized a concert at the Aeolian Hall. He also organized a course in piano interpretation together with Mexican concert pianist and pedagogue Ernesto Berumen (Fajardo 2014, 32 vol. 1). Consequently, he was contracted to record his own piano works with RCA Victor, with Ampico Piano Co. and with Duo-Art for piano rolls (Jacobson 1983, 19).

Between 1919 and 1923 Lecuona produced the music for a set of zarzuelas and revistas musicales,<sup>13</sup> which gave him instant recognition as a serious composer. He composed the music for a set of ten theatrical pieces, that include *Domingo de Piñata* (Sunday of Piñata) and *La Liga de las Naciones* in 1919, and *Diabluras y Fantasias* (Mischief and Fantasia) in 1922 (Jacobson 1983, 19).

The 1920s were extremely productive and successful for the composer. He toured North America in 1922 and performed at the Capitol Theater in New York for eight consecutive weeks. In New York, he introduced the public to many of his own piano pieces, including his “Malagueña” and “Andalucia”.

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<sup>13</sup> The revistas musicales were a type of theatrical revue or show, which became popular in Cuba during the 1920s and featured a variety of artists.

Lecuona had a deep impact in the cultural environment of Havana, not only as a performer or a composer, but also in organizing orchestras and a variety of ensembles in the city. In 1922 he decided to create a symphonic orchestra association along with Gonzalo Roig, César Pérez Sentenat, and Joaquín Molina. They founded the Sociedad de Conciertos de la Havana, which was responsible for the creation of the Orquesta Sinfónica de la Havana. The orchestra was distinguished because it promoted the works of not only European composers but also the works of Cuban classic composers such as Saumell, Cervantes, Jose White, Espadero and the works of Lecuona himself. The orchestra also attracted international soloists such as Pablo Casals, Ernesto Halffter, Julián Carrilo and Juan Manén. The Orchesta Sinfónica de la Havana lasted for twenty-one years without any financial and political support until it was finally dismantled in 1943 (Fajardo 2014, v1, 22).

In 1924, he prepared his first tour of Spain accompanied by violinist Marta de la Torre Campuzano and her husband, the Colombian pianist Anibal Valencia who accompanied her on some pieces. Lecuona's performances of the music of Ernki, Rachmaninov, Moszkowski, Liszt and others were well received by the Spanish audience. The audience also enjoyed the Spanish influenced compositions of Lecuona's *Andalucia Suite*. The complete success of the Spanish tour brought him fame and recognition in his father's native country (Fajardo 2014, v1, 21). The Spanish public became infatuated with the figure of Lecuona and began to treat the composer as one of their own. He was hired to set music to librettos for works of the Spanish lyric-dramatic genre zarzuela. He composed the music for several theatrical pieces, the zarzuela: *Al Caer la Nieve* (When the Snow Falls), *¡Levántate y Anda!* (Get Up and Go), and the musical revue *Radiomanía*.

By this time, Lecuona had become an established figure in Europe and in Cuba. He came back to Havana in 1927 and continued a hectic musical career and focused his efforts on creating

a lyric theater, which he later named Teatro Lírico Cubano. That same year of 1927, Lecuona premiered his Latin song “Siboney” as part of the zarzuela *La tierra de Venus* (The Land of Venus). The song, also named “Canto Siboney,” refers to one of the indigenous populations that inhabited the island before the Spanish arrived, although the term also acts as a symbolic representation of the island.

“Siboney” was composed in the binary form of the contradanza and the danza. The sectional modulation from minor to major is directly influenced by the compositional style of the Cuban habaneras. It is a musical expression consistent with the Afrocubanismo movement of the first half of the century, in which the allusion to indigenous and African themes and was viewed as a symbol of the struggle against Spanish colonialism. The piece has all the characteristics of a song of the period, although ironically the melodic line has a Spanish flavor. There were no remnants of the music of the Siboney indigenous population in Cuban culture, therefore the melodic line is based on European musical elements. When he was asked if his piece had Indian influences he said: “Indio, or better said Siboney, almost nothing. My ‘Siboney’ is the fruit of my own fantasy, and not from findings or research.” (Kingham, 7). His lyrics:

*Siboney, I love you, I am dying for your love,*

*Siboney, in your honey mouth you have placed your sweetness,*

*Come here, I love you, you are my ultimate treasure,*

*Siboney in the rustle of your palm tree I think of you.*

Eager to continue touring, Lecuona prepared a tour to France in 1928 in association with his fellow countryman and teacher Joaquin Nin Castellanos, who worked at the time as a professor at the University of Brussels. It was at one of his concerts in Paris that Lecuona met with Maurice

Ravel, with whom he established a lasting friendship. Ravel expressed an interest in orchestrating his piano pieces “La comparsa” and “Danza negra.” What may have impressed Ravel about these pieces was not only the brilliance of the young pianist, but also the Afro-Cuban rhythmic structures that Lecuona was exhibiting in his piano pieces. John Sperry, executor of Lecuona’s estate noted: “Ravel and Lecuona became warm friends and the former once said of Lecuona that he was so struck by the sheer romance and enchantment of his music that he felt the ‘Malagueña’ was more melodic and beautiful than his own ‘Bolero.’” (Jacobson 1983, 19).

Paris at the time was considered at an intellectual center for artists of all types and forms. As Capentier puts it, “Paris, after the Exposition of 1900, seemed to symbolize the pinnacle of culture. The men of the Americas, poets, painters, thinkers, musicians, would go, like larks mesmerized by a mirror, toward the City of Light.” (Carpentier 2001, 247). His visit to Paris established Lecuona’s reputation in Cuba and in Latin America.

Back in Havana, Lecuona played a concert in 1928, in which he performed Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* for the first time. The concert was organized under the musical direction of his friend and colleague Gonzalo Roig and it was attended by Gershwin himself. The Los Angeles Times review of the concert was extremely positive and wrote: “Lecuona is a prodigious technician of the piano...Modern music is favored by his capacity as a performer, interpreting Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, as no one could play it as he does.” (Lecuona 2004, 111).

His reputation was now well-established in Cuba. He was given a homage of farewell by the Asociación de Reporteros de la Habana at the Payret theater before leaving on a tour of Panama and Costa Rica in 1929 (Lecuona 2004, 34).

The 1920s and 1930's were the golden years of the zarzuela in Cuba. Lecuona premiered a series of zarzuelas and musical *revistas* with national characters and themes which helped established a creole lyrical theater. Some of his most important theatrical works include: *La Despalilladora* (1928), *Alma de Raza*, *El Batey*, *El Cafetal*, *La Flor del Citio*, *El Amor del Guarachero*, *Niña Rita*, *La Liga de las Señoras* (1929), *Maria la O*, *El Maizal*, *El Calesero* (1930), *Rosa la China*, *La Guaracha Musulmana* (1932), *Julian el Gallo* (1934), and *Lola Cruz* (1935) (Lecuona 2004, 34).

In 1931, he played a series of concerts at the Teatro Fábregas in Mexico. His concerts at the Mexican capital were very successful, and he was invited back in 1933. Lecuona was hired by the Metro Goldwyn Mayer as composer and orchestra director for the movie *The Cuban Love Song* (Fajardo, 2014, 35 vol. 1). This was the first of a long list of Hollywood music scores for the composer, many of which featured Latin-American themes. From 1930 to 1958, he was hired for numerous movies including *Under Cuban Skies* (1931), *Free Soul* (1931), *Cuban Pete* (1946), *Tropicana* (1958), and others.

Lecuona had been interested in the movie industry since early in his life when he provided piano accompaniment to the first silent movies which were showed in Havana. His work for the industry was extremely productive and successful. Some of his musical works for film were nominated for the Oscar Academy Awards. The song "Siempre en mi corazón" was nominated for best song in 1942, only to lose to "White Christmas" sung by Bing Crosby. His other Oscar music nominations include scores for *One More Tomorrow* (Warner Brothers-1946), *Carnival in Costa Rica* (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox-1947), *Maria la O* (Mexican film-1948), and *Adios Buenos Aires* (Argentinian film).

In 1932, Lecuona returned to Spain and, together with the soprano Maria Fantoli, prepared a concert at the Lara Theater in Madrid. His tour of Spain continued with almost twenty concerts in Ferrol, Vigo, Gijón, Zaragoza, San Sebastian, Pamplona, and Madrid. The same year, he formed La orquesta Lecuona, which was renamed “Lecuona’s Cuban Boys” by empresario and artistic director, Sam Vermel (Fajardo 2014, 61 vol. 1). Even though he founded the group, Lecuona was not the regular pianist. He limited himself to performing his own piano works.

The Spanish tour was interrupted in 1933 when Lecuona fell ill with double pneumonia and was forced to come back to Cuba (Fajardo 2014, 58 vol. 1). However, Lecuona’s Cuban Boys, now under the direction of Armando Oréfiche, continued their tour of Spain and performed in Sevilla, Cadiz, Cordoba, San Fernando, and toured numerous cities in North Africa (the Lecuona’s Cuban Boys went on to tour the whole world for more than forty years). Spanish composer and musicologist Adolfo Salazar praised Lecuona’s performances in Spain in his columns for El Sol newspaper: “In Ernesto Lecuona, in fact, are combined an intense love for the creole song, a rich musical national past, with a throbbing interest for Cuban rhythms, or better said, Afro-Cuban rhythms, as intellectuals of the country like to call them.” (Fajardo 2014, v1, 45).

In 1935, he organized the Orquesta de la Habana, which went on to have great success. From 1936 to 1942, Lecuona traveled continuously. In March of 1936, accompanied by his sister Ernestina and other artists, he prepared a tour of Latin America which began in Santiago de Chile and Valparaiso followed by a succession of recitals and radio engagements in Buenos Aires (Fajardo 2014, v1, 109). The enormous success of his first tour to Argentina was followed by other trips in 1937 and 1940. He also toured Chile and Peru.

In 1943, Lecuona was invited to Washington to perform for the Unión Panamericana for diplomats and ambassadors. The concert was a complete success and the Washington Times-Herald column written by pianist and critic Dillard Gunn said:

Ernesto Lecuona, whose piano piece Malagueña has had countless instrumental arrangements and is broadcasted daily in 600 radio stations of this country, and whose piece Siboney is equally popular, was the guest interpreter by the Ambassador and Ms. Conchoso for the concert held at the Hall of the Pan American Union. Lecuona and Esther Borjas were welcomed with approval and ovations to a full theater (Fajardo 2014, v1, 232).

The same year, he organized a concert at the Main Hall of the Carnegie Hall paying tribute to Cuba's Independence Day. He invited a variety of artists such as Gonzalo Roig (who orchestrated his *Rapsodia Negra* for the event), Esther Borja, Ernestina Lecuona, and others. The concert was broadcast by some of the most important radio stations of the country (Fajardo 2014, v1, 236).

In 1948, Lecuona again performed a series of concerts in the United States which included presentations at the Carnegie Hall in New York, the Constitution Hall in Washington, and the Academy of Music in Philadelphia (Fajardo 2014, v1, 349).

The 1950s were equally hectic for the composer. He traveled to Madrid in 1950 to present a series of his most popular zarzuelas in the Spanish capital, which included the popular *María la O*, *Lola Cruz*, and the premier of his fantasía lírica, *Sueños Locos* (Crazy Dreams). Luis Amado Blanco wrote in his column at the diary *Informacion*:

Dream. Perhaps Lecuona is nothing else than a good dream of Cuba to be known around the world. A purpose that comes true, day by day, thanks to the tireless work of this ambassador without uniform, able to create the best of the understandings. He who springs from the spirit like a fountain on the indescribable cliff (Fajardo 2014, v1, 364).

In 1952, back in Havana he was given a tribute at the Auditorium for the 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of his first piano recital at the Círculo Hispano de La Habana which took place in the year 1900. The following year Lecuona and his Compañía Cubana de Estampas Líricas resumed his concert series in Madrid at the theater Álvarez Quintero with presentations of his zarzuelas *El Cafetal* and *María la O* with a mixed cast of Cuban and Spanish artists, followed by presentations at the theater Maravillas of the same city (Fajardo 2014, v2, 6).

In 1954, at the Payret Theater in Havana, there was yet another tribute to Ernesto Lecuona. Together with him were Cuban personalities and renowned artists such as the vedette Rita Montaner, Esther, Borja, and other singers of both, classical and popular music styles. Accompanying the show was the Orquesta de La Habana conducted by his friend Gonzalo Roig and by Lecuona himself (Fajardo 2014, v2, 23).

The work of Lecuona resonated with the Cuban people in many ways. Lecuona and his music were the representation of Cuba in the international arena. It was redacted in the newspaper *Prensa Libre* by reporter Sergio Piñeiro: “If Lecuona’s hands lend themselves to perform all of his works, we should be sitting for several days at a window enjoying Cuba made music” (Fajardo 2014, v1, 23).

In 1955, after many efforts by Lecuona and Gonzalo Roig to create an entity which protected the rights of composers and artists in the island, the government of Fulgencio Batista founded the Sociedad Nacional de Autores de Cuba (SNAC). The entity was responsible for the authorial rights and compensation of musical and theater artists and creators (Fajardo 2014, v2, 31).



In 1957, Lecuona visited Spain to attend the premier of his revista musical *Tropicana*, which included some of his most important songs including “Damisela encantadora,” “Siempre en mi corazón,” “Para Vigo me voy” (To Vigo I am Going), “Canto Siboney,” and other popular songs from his zarzuela *María la O* (Fajardo 2014, v2, 47).

1958 was a difficult year for Lecuona. One of his best friends and colleagues, Rita Montaner, passed away. Rita Montaner and Lecuona were both from the town of Guanabacoa and met at a very young age at the Conservatorio Peyrellade. The Cuban vedette, also nicknamed as Rita de Cuba, and La Única (The Only One), was described by Lecuona as “the greatest Cuban artist of all time” (Fajardo 2014, v2, 54).

In 1958, a final world tour was being prepared to commemorate Lecuona’s retirement from the stage. The world tour would have included presentations in the Scandinavian region, Japan, and Argentina but because of health problems, he was forced to cancel his projects. In Havana, Lecuona remained occupied by a series of concerts and made monetary contributions to areas affected by war (Fajardo 2014, v2, 73).

The changes resulting from the political takeover by Fidel Castro in 1959 had a deep impact on the personal and professional life of Lecuona. A group of composers and musicians accused the SNAC, of which Lecuona was the vice-president, of associating with the former Batista regime. Lecuona answered these allegations in his own words: “My music has given me enough to live, not only in Cuba but through the whole world, for the triumphs or failures I have had, have been on my account and my own risks...I have never had anything to do with the governments of Cuba.” (Fajardo 2014, v2, 83).

At first, he supported the Cuban Revolution of 1959, but soon his hope for a free Cuba faded. In 1960, amidst accusations and criticisms, he was forced to leave Cuba for good and moved to Miami where he vowed to never play the piano again until Cuba was freed from leftist or rightist governments. In 1963, Lecuona died of a heart attack while visiting the Spanish island of Tenerife. He carried his nationalistic pride all the way to the end. The most representative Cuban composer of the twentieth century wished for his remains to stay in New York until Cuba was freed. His body was buried in the Gate of Heaven Cemetery of Westchester. In his will he wrote:

I wish my burial take place in New York in the event that Fidel Castro or any other ruler of Cuba is a communist or represents any faction, group, or class that is governed, dominated, or inspired by strange doctrines from abroad. On the other hand, if Cuba is free at the time of my death, I wish to be buried there.<sup>14</sup>

## 6.2 The Piano Works of Ernesto Lecuona: The Afro-Cuban Piano Danzas

Ernesto Lecuona composed music for a variety of music styles. His musical influences reflect the composer's social background. Without question theater music was at the center of his output, although his piano danzas embody the essence of the composer. His piano danzas are intriguing, in part because of the diverse influences that the composer manifests. His ability to create from a vast pool of influences is astonishing.

He composed a set of Afro-Cuban piano danzas that include "La comparsa," "Danza de los ñañigos," "Danza Lucumí," "Danza negra," "...Y la negra bailaba!," and "La conga de media noche." It is not clear if these danzas were composed together although they have been unified and associated because they display Afro-Cuban elements.

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<sup>14</sup> Orlando Esteva González. Ernesto Lecuona contra Fidel Castro y otras curiosidades. <https://www.radiotelevisionmarti.com/a/ernesto-lecuona-contra-fidel-castro-y-otras-curiosidades/192403.html>

One of his most recognized piano pieces from this set of danzas is without question “La comparsa” composed at the age of fifteen. The *comparsa* is a street parade or carnival which has taken place in Cuba since the seventeenth century. It is a celebration of Cuban culture and a display of dance, music and singing. In the carnival, we find a blend of musical genres and musical instruments of African, European, and Asian descent.

The rhythmic accompaniment employed on the piece “La comparsa” is the distinctive *cinquillo* of the *danzón*. The left-hand rhythmic accompaniment seen in bars 1 and 2 (Ex. 36) is a variation of the Afro-Cuban structure of the *cinquillo*. A note in the score indicates the “imitation of tambor” under the left hand, which suggests that the accompaniment should be performed in a *marcato* manner in imitation of the percussive sounds of the drums. It pervades the left-hand accompaniment through the whole piece and is also a characteristic of the piano danzas of Cervantes. Lecuona indicated a *pianissimo* and “from far away” at the beginning of the piece. From the *pianissimo* the piece builds into a *fortissimo* representing the approach of the street parade. Towards the conclusion the piece fades away to represent the disappearance of the *comparsa* in the distance.

The form of the piece is the binary classical structure of the *contradanza* employed by his predecessors Samuel and Cervantes. As noted above, the *primera* section uses a rhythmic ostinato in the left hand. The harmonic movement and the tonic pedal help provide momentum leading to the climactic second section of the *segunda*. To depict the arrival of the parade, Lecuona modulates from minor to major, which was so representative of the *habanera*.

This popular piano piece became a staple of the music of Cuba. It is representative not only of the *afrocubanismo* movement of the early century but of the Cuban popular piano school. At its

base, the piece is the combination of the main influences which forged the musical culture of the island and its people.

Ex. 36. "La comparsa," mm. 1-41.

**Moderato**

From far away  
*ppp* *il basso sempre marcato* *pp*

Imitation of Tambor (Small Drum) (simile)

5

9

13

17

*p*

21 *cresc.*

25

29 *sf*

33 *cresc.*

37 *mf* *cresc.*

As noted above, “Danza de los ñañigos” and “Danza Lucumí” also belong to the group of Afro-Cuban danzas. Both pieces depict the sounds and the spectacle of the carnival. “Danza de los ñañigos” is an artistic depiction of the music and dance of the Afro-Cuban secret society of the

Abakuá, which was persecuted during colonial times and as a result became affiliated with independentist groups and consequently the society developed into a symbol of Cuban identity.

“Danza de los ñañigos” (Ex. 37) represents the annual event in which the ñañigos come to the carnival with their costumes to play music and dance. This danza features a representation of an Afro-Cuban rhythmic pattern (bars 1-2) which was later employed by Arsenio Rodríguez on his classic song “Bruca maniguá.” Arsenio referred to this rhythmic pattern as “canto congo” (Sublette 2004, 444). He builds to a forte strepitoso to represent the arrival of the procession, and the climax is portrayed by quick octaves in the high register of the piano accompanied by ninth chords in the left hand. The melodic line outlines the Eb minor pentatonic scale against the left-hand accompaniment (bars 5-12) and a tonic pedal, a similar process to that used in “La comparsa.” The rhythmic ostinato represents the movement of the dancers through the procession.

Ex. 37. “Danza de los ñañigos,” mm. 1-12.

**Ben Moderato**

*pp*

m.s. sopra

*> cantabile*

5

9

“Danza Lucumí” is dedicated to the Lucumi people, an Afro-Cuban ethnic group descendant of the Yorùbá people of the south-western and north central Nigeria. The piece uses a ternary ABA form. The introduction of the piece is a rhythmic ostinato which pervades the entire first section. In similar fashion to “La comparsa,” the ostinato accompaniment is a rhythmic variation of the cinquillo based on a harmonic tonic pedal (Ex. 38). The arrival and departure of the parade is portrayed by Lecuona by a gradual increase in sound and the subsequent decrease towards the end of the piece. The accompaniment of the middle section is the amphibrach, a variation of the tresillo of the habanera (Ex. 39). Along with “La comparsa,” “Danza Lucumí” intends to capture the sounds and spirit of the carnival.

Ex. 38. “Danza Lucumí,” mm. 1-28.

**Moderato**

The musical score for "Danza Lucumí" (mm. 1-28) is presented in three systems. The tempo is marked **Moderato**. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 2/4. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) introduction. The bass line features a rhythmic ostinato based on a cinquillo pattern, with fingerings 3 2 1 4 and 1 1 3 indicated. The treble line provides a harmonic tonic pedal. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *mf*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The piece concludes with a *simile* marking.

Ex. 39. “Danza Lucumí,” section B, mm. 52-55.

The musical score for Ex. 39, "Danza Lucumí," section B, mm. 52-55, is presented in a grand staff. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line with eighth notes, marked "8va" and "loco". The left hand (bass clef) plays a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes, marked "mf" and "cresc.". The score consists of four measures.

“Danza negra” belongs to a group of piano pieces which showcase direct influences of son montuno. The piece uses a ternary ABA form with a traditional symmetrical phrasing. The symmetrical base correlates with the two-measure arrangement of what we know as Cuban clave (see Clave on page 164). The two-measure rhythmic ostinato at the introduction suggests the 2-3 clave and it is used as the main structural basis of the entire composition. An even measure of primarily eighth notes is consistent with the two-side of the clave. It is followed by a syncopated measure of sixteenth, eighth and sixteenth, consistent with the three-side of the clave. The *ben marcato* articulation sign (Ex. 40) in bar 1 is a musical device used by the composer to characterize Afro-Cuban percussion instruments such as the cowbell, the timbales, and the tumbadoras or congas. The two off-beat accents of the anacrusis imitate the rhythmic accompaniment of the congas in the music of son.

The melodic gestures at the beginning are again similar to “La comparsa.” It begins with an eighth note pick up and it is constructed by concise motivic ideas. Section A again uses a tonic pedal/rhythmic ostinato to characterize the movement of the procession and to generate momentum towards the second section of the piece. Once again, the symbolic representation of the carnival procession is the main goal of the composer.



Ex. 40. "Danza Negra," mm. 1-20.

**Moderato**

*p* (ben marcato)

5

*p*

10

*cresc.* *cresc.*

16

“...Y la negra bailaba” is perhaps one of the most syncopated compositions of the Afro-Cuban set of piano pieces. The left-hand accompaniment anticipates the downbeat every two measures. This is a distinctive son bass riff which deemphasizes the downbeat. The clave is also implied in the melodic and harmonic context of the piece, and it is observable in the two-measure symmetrical arrangement of the accompaniment. An even measure is followed by an uneven one

conforming with the clave. The piece is also in ternary ABA structure. The harmonic context is based on a tonic-dominant alternation, a harmonic trait attributed to the music of son.

Ex. 41. "...Y la negra bailaba," mm. 1-12.

**Allegro Moderato**

The musical score for "Ex. 41. ...Y la negra bailaba," mm. 1-12, is presented in three systems. The tempo is marked "Allegro Moderato" and the dynamics are "f" (forte). The piece is in 2/4 time and the key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The notation includes a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Accents (>) are placed over several notes. The score is written for piano, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a brace on the left side.

Perhaps one of the most interesting of these piano pieces is "La conga de media noche" (Midnight Conga). This piece is one of the few moments in the music of Lecuona where he drifts away from the traditional harmonic and the melodic approach that characterized the music of Saumell and Cervantes. Lecuona uses the traditional binary form but creates contrast between the sections by modulating from G major to C major and by using variations of the tresillo of the habanera and the conga rhythmic pattern.

Ex. 42. "La conga de media noche," mm. 1-28.

*Allegro* *gva*

*pp poco marcato*

*pp*

*ppp*

*ppp*

*ppp*

*ppp*

Lecuona incorporates and combines three distinct musical elements here: impressionism, jazz, and Afro-Cuban rhythmic structures. The piece (written circa 1930) integrates melodic elements based on chromatic, pentatonic, and whole tone scales. Diminished, quartal chords and polychords decorate the harmonic layout of the piece.

The piece highlights the percussive qualities of the instrument and its possibilities to imitate the sounds of various types of Afro-Cuban percussion instruments. The introduction is based on harmonic polychords constructed from left hand dyads combined with right hand quartal voicings in the high register of the piano chosen to imitate the sound of the cowbells. The piece resumes with the habanera rhythm in a percussive pattern between right and left hand. This poly-rhythmic pattern is a piano interpretation of Afro-Cuban drumming and percussion instruments, particularly the double-headed Batá drums.

### The Piano Danzas of Ernesto Lecuona

Ernesto Lecuona composed a set of piano danzas in the style of Manuel Saumell. They include “No hables más!!” (Speak No More), “No puedo contigo” (I Cannot Make You Understand), “Ahí viene el chino” (Here Comes the Chinaman), “Por qué te vas” (Why Do You Go), “Lola está de fiesta” (Lola is Celebrating), and “En tres por cuatro” (In Three-Quarter Time). Most of these danzas are in ternary form except “No hables más” and in the 2/4 signature, the exceptions are “Ahí viene el chino” (4/4) and “En tres por cuatro” (3/4).

One of the main traits of these set of pieces is the typical left-hand ostinato accompaniment which pervades the entire composition. At times, Lecuona employs different types of rhythmic accompaniment to differentiate between the sections, as in the case of “No me hables más,” “No puedo contigo,” “Ahí viene el chino,” “Por qué te vas,” and “Lola esta de fiesta.” This is consistent

with the contrasting character of the sections that we evidenced in the piano contradanzas of Manuel Saumell and the danzas of Cervantes. In contrast with the works of Saumell and Cervantes, Lecuona uses an introduction, except in “En tres por cuatro” and in “No hables más!!.” The introductions are based on a left-hand rhythmic ostinato and varies from two measures to four measures long.

One of his most popular piano danzas is “En tres por cuatro.” This piece is in ternary form. It showcases a rhythmic ostinato that resembles the cinquillo pattern in a triple meter time signature. To create a triple-meter variation of the danzón, Lecuona skillfully subtracts two eighth notes from its rhythmic formation (See Ex. 43). This is a highly unusual treatment of the Afro-Cuban rhythmic element of the cinquillo. The ostinato accompaniment persists through the entire composition. There is a romantic element to the harmonic approach and melodic lines in the style of Chopin. The piece displays a refined melodic line harmonized in three and four-note chords. The idiosyncratic sound of Cuban piano music permeates the whole piece.

Ex. 43. “En tres por cuatro,” mm. 1-5.

The musical score for "En tres por cuatro" (mm. 1-5) is presented in two systems. The first system shows measures 1 through 4, and the second system shows measures 3 through 5. The piece is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The left hand features a rhythmic ostinato pattern, while the right hand plays a melodic line with complex chordal accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Allegro maestoso". Dynamics include a forte (*f*) marking in measure 1 and a crescendo (*cresc.*) starting in measure 3. Articulation includes accents and slurs throughout the piece.

## Nineteenth Century Cuban Dances

This is a set of ten piano pieces that Lecuona composed in the nineteenth century style. The ten pieces include: “Arabesque,” “Impromptu,” “La primera en la frente” (The First in Front), “A la antigua” (In the Old Style), “Interrumpida” (Uninterrupted), “La mulata” (The Black Girl), “Ella y yo” (Her and I), “La cardenense,” “Al fin te vi” (At Last I Saw You), and “Minstrels.”

Except for “Mintrels” and “A la antigua”, Lecuona adheres to the traditional binary form of the nineteenth century piano danzas. Like his predecessors, he also employs contrasting character between the sections. It is not merely coincidental that in five of these pieces, “A la antigua,” “Interrumpida,” “Ella y yo,” “La cardenensa,” and “Arabesque,” Lecuona uses the emblematic minor to major modulation of the habanera.

Both “Impromptu” and “Arabesque” are directly influenced by European Romanticism. The left-hand accompaniment of “Arabesque” suggests influences directly linked to the Romantic era and the compositional style of Chopin (Ex. 44). In this piece, Lecuona chooses the traditional binary form of the contradanza. In the *primera* section of “Arabesque,” the right-hand conveys a melodic line that is based on a combination of typical Cuban rhythmic structures. The melodic line alternates between the conga rhythmic motive and the cinquillo of the danzón. A symmetrical two-measure melodic phrase is maintained throughout this piece and a syncopated measure is followed by an even measure. Again, this is consistent with the Cuban clave ostinato, which permeated the music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of Cuba. The *segunda* section of the song reflects the minor to major modulation that became an ideal musical trait of so many composers of the time (Ex. 45). The melodic line of the *segunda* section is based on the Cuban national rhythm of the danzón.

Ex. 44. “Arabesque,” mm. 1-4.

Allegro non molto

*ff*

Ex. 45. “Arabesque,” *segunda*.

Tempo 1

*pp*

One of Lecuona’s most popular piano pieces is his danza “A la antigua” (In the Old Style) (Ex. 46). The *primera* and the *segunda* are clearly contrasted in the manner of the danzas of Saumell and Cervantes. The mood of the piece reflects the “cubanness” that permeates the music of Lecuona. The *primera* is a danzón in the minor key. In the left-hand Lecuona maintains the characteristic rhythmic formation of the danzón and its customary cinquillo (see bar 1) followed by a measure of four eighth notes (bar 2). Skillfully, he alternates the cinquillo as in a

conversational between the left hand and the right hand. The *segunda* is in the customary major key and uses the traditional two-measure rhythmic motive that alternates between a syncopated and an even measure. The melodic line is influenced by the works of Chopin.

Ex. 46. “A la antigua,” mm. 1 to 8.

Moderato

*p*

5

*f*

## The Spanish Suite

Lecuona’s *Spanish Suite* (dedicated to the land of his father) is a testament of the skill and flexibility of the composer. The composer assimilates to a complete different set of influences: Classicism, Romanticism, Impressionism, and the music of Spain. The pieces are dedicated to different regions of Andalucía, its music, people, and places. Andalucía is the community located on the south of the Iberian Peninsula. It is divided into eight provinces: Jaén, Cádiz, Almería, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva, Málaga, and its capital Seville. This set of six pieces is comprised of:



“Andalucía,” “Malagueña,” “Cordova,” “Alhambra,” “Ginaterías,” and “Gualdalquivir.” Although the set was not composed as a unit, their musical character clearly unifies them.

“Andalucía” (Ex. 47) was one of the first pieces that Lecuona composed. The piece achieved world recognition as a semi-classical piano piece. Lecuona prepares the melody by using a four-measure rhythmic ostinato in the left hand. He employs the ternary form ABA. The arpeggiated chords of the left hand resemble the sounds of the Spanish castanets and of the Spanish guitar. The contrasting B section builds from a *pianissimo* to a *fortissimo*, preparing the return of the main theme in a triple *forte*. The melody is then harmonized in four-note chords and octaves to enable the use of dynamics and to express the overall character and meaning of the piece.

Ex. 47. “Andalucía,” mm. 1-14.

**Allegro Vivace**

The musical score for "Andalucía" (Ex. 47) is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-6) shows a four-measure rhythmic ostinato in the left hand, consisting of eighth notes in a descending pattern. The right hand has a melody starting with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note, and then a series of eighth notes. The second system (measures 7-14) continues the ostinato in the left hand and the melody in the right hand, which includes a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth-note figure. The score is marked with a forte dynamic and includes various articulation and fingering instructions.

The most notable of his set of Spanish pieces is “Malagueña.” The title translates into “girl from Malaga.” The malagueña is also one of the traditional dances from Andalucía. Malagueñas

developed from a variety of forms of the traditional fandango dances, which were lively triple meter dances originating in Spain and Portugal. The Spanish guitar and other instruments formed the accompaniment of earlier types of fandangos. Melodic embellishments and microtones are emblematic features of the malagueña, as well as rhythmic freedom which is known as *cante libre*. Towards the second half of the nineteenth century the accompaniment instrumentation was reduced to only a guitar which used a strumming technique called “abandolao.”

“Malagueña” is divided into several contrasting sections with different tempos and moods. The character of this piece is defined by the clearly notated changes in tempo. It is in triple meter time signature and uses both recurring rhythmic accompaniment in some of the sections combined with another section in which there is no recognizable rhythmic accompaniment, *cante libre*. These sections are to be performed in a rubato manner. The overall harmonic structure of the piece is based on the alternation between three chords: C-sharp 7, D and E. The key signature is maybe just a matter of convenience. The structure is rather complex (See Ex. 48).

Ex. 48. “Malagueña,” structural divisions.

Section	Bars	Description
I	1-42 1-21 21-27 28-42 43-57	<i>Allegro moderato.</i> Theme 1 Arpeggiation of C# chord Theme 2 Theme 3
II	58-69 71-94 95-110 111-124	<i>Lento (cante libre)</i> <i>Moderato</i> <i>Piú mosso</i> <i>Lento</i>
III	125-132 133-141	<i>Vivace</i> Coda

The opening *Allegro moderato* is divided into three main themes which Lecuona reuses and reorganizes in the later sections. The first theme (Ex. 49) is a rhythmic syncopated stately dance that is supported by open fifths in the left hand. The melodic line is supported by a tonic pedal. The theme ends with a guitar-like arpeggiation of a descending C-sharp chord.

Ex. 49. “Malagueña,” first theme.

**Allegro moderato**

*p*

*cresc.*

The second theme (Ex. 50) is a Spanish influenced melodic gesture played by the left hand, accompanied by high register arpeggiated chords that resemble the Spanish guitar. Lecuona later reuses the second theme in the following *Lento* section.

Ex. 50. "Malagueña," second theme, mm. 28-35.

The musical score for Ex. 50, "Malagueña," second theme, mm. 28-35, is presented in three systems. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system is marked "8va" and "f a tempo". The right hand part consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern with slurs and fingering "5". The left hand part features a melodic line with slurs and fingering "5". The second and third systems continue this pattern with similar melodic and harmonic structures.

He concludes the first section with the third theme (Ex. 51), a faster triple-meter dance. Accelerando and crescendo signs provide momentum to end the section on a sforzando double forte.

Ex. 51. “Malagueña,” third theme, mm. 43-57.

The next section of the “Malagueña” is divided in four parts: *Lento (a la capriccio)*, *Moderato*, *Più mosso*, and the return of the *Lento* theme. The section begins with the *Lento*, (Ex. 52) a melodic line that is interrupted by ascending arpeggios that evoke the sounds of the guitar. The theme is meant to be performed in a rubato manner like the *cante libre*.

Ex. 52. "Malagueña," *Lento*, mm 58-65.

The musical score for Ex. 52, "Malagueña," *Lento*, mm 58-65, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 58-61, and the second system covers measures 62-65. The piece is in 3/4 time, key of D major, and tempo "Lento (a la capriccio)". The right hand (r.h.) plays a melodic line, and the left hand (l.h.) plays an arpeggiated accompaniment. The score begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and accents. The second system starts with a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic and accents. The score concludes with a fermata over the final notes of both hands.

The *Moderato* theme that follows brings a more lively and rhythmic character (Ex. 53). This theme is based on high register arpeggiated chords in the right hand as support for the melodic line. The melodic line outlines the C-sharp and the D chords that once again evokes the sounds of Spain.

The *Moderato* uses an *accelerando* and leads to the *Più mosso*, which is the most pianistically challenging because of the use of octaves and chords on both hands. The *Più mosso* then leads into the melodic line of the *Lento* theme, although this time it is harmonized with four note chords in triple *forte*. The arpeggiated ascending chords entertain the spaces between the melodic phrases.

Ex. 53. “Malagueña,” *Moderato*.

**Moderato**

The musical score for Ex. 53, "Malagueña," is in 3/4 time and D major. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a tempo marking of "Moderato". The melody starts with a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F#4) followed by quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C#5). The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. A dashed line above the treble staff indicates an octave range.

The *Vivace* section ends the piece bringing back the rhythmic third theme. This time the melodic line is played in octaves. A Coda ends the piece by reiterating the C-sharp chord in a rhythmic *fortissimo sforzando*.

“Ginaterías” is dedicated to the gitano (Romani) people. Gitanos are identified with the music of Andalusia and its culture because of the large Romani population present in the region. “Ginaterías” is in triple meter in the key of D minor and is structured in ternary ABA form (See Ex. 54). The triplet figure of the melody on measure one is suggestive of the sound of the castanets. The E-flat chord over a D and Bb in the base in the third measure suggests the Phrygian modal scale, which is generally associated with the music of Spain. The B section is built on three main chords D minor, E-flat, and F. Dynamically, it builds from a piano dynamic sign to a dramatic *fortissimo* announcing the arrival of the main theme of the piece.

Ex. 54. "Ginaterías," mm. 1-12.

The musical score for "Ginaterías" (Ex. 54) consists of two systems of music. The first system (measures 1-6) is marked "Presto" and "p" (piano). The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and slurs, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The second system (measures 7-12) continues the melodic and harmonic development, with a "cresc." (crescendo) marking in the third measure of the system. The score is in 3/4 time and uses a key signature of one flat.

"Alhambra" is a piano piece dedicated to the renowned fortress and palace located in the city of Granada in the Andalusia region (Ex. 55). The palace was built on the ruins of a Roman fortress in AD 889, and it was later rebuilt in the middle of the thirteenth century. After the Christian Reconquista of 1492, the Alhambra palace became the palace of the kings of Spain, Ferdinand II of Aragon and the Queen of Castile, Isabella. The piece is intended as a musical depiction of the Alhambra palace. The opening *Allegro Vivace* is playful and rhythmic.



Ex. 55. “Alhambra,” mm. 1-15.

**Allegro Vivace**

The musical score for "Alhambra" (mm. 1-15) is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 5, and the second system contains measures 6 through 10. The music is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked "Allegro Vivace" and the dynamic is "p". The right hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

The *Lento* of this piano piece features a Spanish influenced melodic line based on the chords B, C7 and D. This is a similar harmonic structure to the “Malagueña,” and “Andalucía.” Its theme is a musical illustration of the quiet and exotic atmosphere of the fortress. The *Lento* is followed by a lively *Allegro*. The *Allegro* that follows uses the same melodic line accompanied by strange chords in minor seconds. The lively and rhythmic *Vivace* returns to close the piece.

“Córdoba” is a piece that is also imbued with Spanish melodies and harmonic sounds (See Ex. 56). The form of the piece is also in ternary ABA which is the preferred form used by the composer on many of the pieces of his Spanish Suite, including “Andalucía,” “Alahambra,” and “Ginaterías.” Lecuona alternates between the sections with the minor and major tonalities as a form of contrast. The romantic character of the piece is evident on the descending chromatic harmony. It is also evident in the rubato manner which the piece is meant to be played, a distinctive performance practice of the era.

Ex. 56. "Córdoba," mm. 1- 19.

**Allegro Moderato**

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is D-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked "Allegro Moderato".

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the left hand plays a bass line with dotted half notes.
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):** Continues the rhythmic pattern. A crescendo (*cresc.*) is indicated in the right hand starting at measure 7.
- System 3 (Measures 9-14):** Features a ritardando (*rit.*) in the right hand starting at measure 9. The dynamic reaches fortissimo (*ff*) at measure 11, followed by an acceleration (*accel.*) in measure 12.
- System 4 (Measures 15-19):** Includes a rallentando (*rall.*) in the right hand at measure 15, a diminuendo (*dim.*) at measure 16, another rallentando (*rall.*) at measure 17, and ends at measure 19 with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction "a tempo".

"Gualdalquivir" is perhaps one of the least known pieces by Lecuona and one of the most technically challenging of the Spanish Suite. The piece is in the key of D-flat major. The piece contains leaps and sudden hand position changes. It is also one of the most harmonically elaborated pieces by the composer as Lecuona uses both melodic chromaticism and a variety of key centers.

Perhaps one of the most interesting melodic gestures occurs in measure 61 where Lecuona uses a chromatic melodic line over staccato left-hand notes as we can see in Ex. 57.

Ex. 57. “Gualdalquivir,” mm. 61-66.

The musical score for Ex. 57, "Gualdalquivir," measures 61-66, is presented in two systems. The first system shows measures 61 and 62. The right hand features a chromatic melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 62. The left hand plays staccato chords. The second system shows measures 63 and 64. The right hand continues the chromatic line, and the left hand plays staccato chords. The piece is marked *pp* (pianissimo).

### Other ‘Spanish’ works

Ernesto Lecuona composed and dedicated other piano pieces to the land of his father. They include “Aragón,” “Aragonesa,” “Granada,” and “Zambra gitana.” These pieces do not form part of his Spanish Suite, but they are also a representation of the music and culture of Spain.

“Aragón” is a waltz dedicated to the community located on the northeastern of Spain. “Aragonesa,” also in triple meter, probably refers to the folkloric dance genre from Aragón.

## Estampas Infantiles (Diary of a Child)

*Estampas infantiles* is a collection of piano pieces composed by Lecuona for children. The pieces were meant for pedagogical purposes and could be played by either children or by professional pianists. The collection comprises five pieces: “Buenos días” (Good Morning), “El baile de la muñeca” (The Puppet’s Dance), “Carousel” (The Merry-Go-Round), “Canción de luna” (The Moon Lights up), and “Bacanal de muñecos” (The Party of the Dolls).

“Buenos días” (Good Morning) has a playful and humoresque character. The initial melodic line is followed by lively staccato chords (Ex. 58). Continuous modulations add playfulness to the harmonic progression.

Ex. 58. “Buenos días,” mm. 1-18.

*Allegro Vivace*

*mf*

7

13

*L.h.*

*dim.*

“El baile de la muñeca” (The Puppet’s Dance) is a waltz that mimics the dancing of puppets (Ex. 59). Minor seconds support a simple melodic gesture.

Ex. 59. “El baile de la muñeca,” mm. 1-8.

Valse moderato

*p*

5

“Carousel” (The Merry-Go-Round), Lecuona captures the movement of the merry-go-round by using ascending and descending sixteen-notes. Again, the ability to conform to different characterizations and diverse stylistic traits is a significant staple of the composer.

Ex. 60. “Carousel,” mm. 1-4.

Allegro Molto

*mf*

*cresc.*

“Canción de luna” (The Moon Lights up) uses a simple ternary form. This melody is conceived over a tonic pedal. This harmonic device is often employed by Lecuona as we have seen on several pieces from his set of Afro-Cuban pieces and his Spanish set. “La comparsa” and “Ginaterías” are examples of the use of pedal harmony. The B section begins with the subdominant chord and descends diatonically. Lecuona builds from a piano in section A to a *mezzo forte* in section B and ends on a forte at the recapitulation.

Ex. 61. “Canción de luna,” mm. 1-6.

**Moderato**

“Bacanal de muñecos” (The Party of the Dolls) is the last piece of the set *Diary of a Child*. It is also in ternary ABA form. It is a simple but effective arrangement. The left hand provides the rhythmic structure of the piece and suggests the dancing of the dolls. The staccato in both hands represents the playful and festive character of the piece.

## Tres Miniaturas (Three Miniatures)

Lecuona also composed a set of piano pieces named *Tres Miniaturas* (Three Miniatures), three short pieces that include “Bell-Flower,” “Music Box,” and “Polichinela” (The String Puppet). These brief pieces are designed to illustrate an idea or thing. Each is conceived in three main sections.

“Bell-Flower” is in ABA form. Middle register chords are interspersed with broken marcato octave notes (Ex. 62 bars 1-2) throughout the song. The character of this piece is mellow and soft but features rich harmonic progressions which suggest influences from the North American jazz and popular music of the 1940s and 50s such as the ii-V chord progressions, augmented 5<sup>th</sup> dominant chords decorating the harmonic structure, and tonic chords with extensions of a 6<sup>th</sup>.

Ex. 62. “Bell-Flower,” mm. 1-8.

The musical score for "Bell-Flower" mm. 1-8 is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 1-4, and the second system covers measures 5-8. The piece is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The tempo is marked "Moderato". The score features a piano accompaniment with broken marcato octave notes in the bass line and chords in the right hand. Dynamics include *p*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *rit. e dim.*. The second system begins with a measure rest (5) and includes dynamics *a tempo*, *cresc.*, and *f cresc.*. The right hand part consists of chords and melodic lines, while the left hand part features broken octaves and chords.

His piano piece “Music Box” is also ABA form. It is composed in the high register to imitate the sounds of the music box. Both hands are written in the treble clef throughout the piece. The playful character of the piece is achieved with an *allegro* tempo and staccato chords in the left hand.

Ex. 63. “Music Box,” mm 1- 7.

The musical score for "Music Box" (Ex. 63) consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 1-3, and the second system covers measures 4-7. The piece is in 2/4 time, key of B-flat major, and marked *Allegro*. Both hands are written in the treble clef. The right hand plays a melodic line with staccato notes, while the left hand plays staccato chords. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *poco a poco cresc.* (poco a poco crescendo), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). An *8va* dynamic marking is present above the right hand in measure 4.

The last piece of this set is “Polichinela” (The String Puppet). It is a musical illustration of the dance of the string puppet, similar in character to “Music Box” (See Ex. 64). The piece is in a ternary ABA form. The *Allegro molto* tempo helps portray the lively nature of the piece. Staccato and marcato signs predominate throughout the entire composition.



Ex. 64. “Polichinela,” mm. 1- 8.

**Allegro Molto**

The musical score for Ex. 64, "Polichinela," mm. 1-8, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) is marked *mf* and *Allegro Molto*. The right hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, while the left hand plays block chords. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the pattern, with measure 8 featuring a *5va* dynamic marking and a change in the right hand's texture.

## Other Piano Pieces

Ernesto Lecuona also composed piano pieces with religious context. His pieces “Ante el Escorial” (In Front of the Escorial) and “San Francisco el Grande” (Saint Francis the Great) are categorized as religious works.

“Ante el Escorial” was dedicated and inspired by the Monasterio y Citio del Escorial in the Spanish city of Madrid. The Escorial is an impressive architecture where the kings of Spain used to reside. The building has been used as a monastery, basilica, school, hospital, library, museum and as the royal palace. During his countless trips to Spain, Lecuona must have visited the building. This piece is a musical description of the historic monastery. Lecuona grasps the grandiosity of the building by using parallel four note chords on both hands (Ex. 65). This gives the piece an orchestral character that reflect the impressionistic tendencies of the composer.

Ex. 65. "Ante el Escorial," mm. 1- 10.

**Ben moderato**

8<sup>va</sup>

*f*

8<sup>va</sup>

6

*rit. e dim.*

*p*

*a tempo*

*cresc. f*

The middle section of the piece is the *Moderato*. The section demonstrates neoromantic musical influences with flexible rhythms and lyrical melodic gestures. It is rich in texture and imitates the sounds of a piano concerto. During the middle section of the piece, Lecuona harmonizes the melody in four-note chords while the left hand displays virtuosic arpeggiated chords (Ex. 66). The section is interrupted by rapid descending parallel octaves. They function as an interlude to an *Allegro moderato* which is a melodic line embellished with broken arpeggiated chords.

Ex. 66. “Ante el Escorial,” *Moderato*, mm. 34-37.

Moderato

*cresc.*

OSSIA

*cresc. e poco a poco accel.*

*f*

*cresc.*

“San Francisco el Grande” is similar in character and content to “Ante el Escorial”. It is also a musical portrayal of a cathedral. The piece is evidence of the European influence especially of impressionism, which the composer was fond of. The somber and religious melodic line is interrupted by high register chords which are a depiction of church bells. He follows the section with parallel quartal chords also in representation of the calling of the church bells. The religious

content of this piece reveals the personal affiliation of Lecuona to his beliefs. The *Moderato* that follows evokes the sounds of Spain.

Ex. 67. "San Francisco el Grande," mm. 1-12.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (mm. 1-5) is marked "Lento ma non troppo" and features a dynamic of *f*. The second system (mm. 6-10) includes markings for *cresc.*, *accel.*, and *fff*. The third system (mm. 11-12) is marked "Più mosso" and features a dynamic of *fff*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The piece concludes with a *ten.* (tension) marking in the final measure.

The *Più lento-religioso* (Ex. 68) is a hymn like section that evokes the sounds of the ecclesiastical organ. The melodic line is intercalated with high register chords that resemble church bells.

Ex. 68. “San Francisco el Grande,” *Più lento-religioso*, mm. 37-50.

**Più lento (Religioso)**

The musical score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It is divided into two systems. The first system, measures 37-42, begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with high register chords marked *8va-* and *8va-1*. The left hand provides harmonic support. The dynamic *cresc.* (crescendo) is indicated. The second system, measures 43-50, continues the melodic line. Dynamics include *più forte*, *poco rit.* (poco ritardando), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *cresc.*, and *dim.* (diminuendo). The piece concludes with a high register chord marked *8va-*.

Lecuona closes the piece with a return to the *Moderato* section but this time he uses arpeggiated chords to accompany the Spanish melodic sound. The end of the piece is a restatement of the opening. The low register chord of the final four measures speaks of the grandiosity of the cathedral and the final high-register chord represents the bells of the church.

“Mazurka glissando” is piece that reveals the admiration that Lecuona had for the music of Chopin. The mazurka is the Polish triple meter dance that generally accentuates beats two and three of the measure. Chopin composed some 59 mazurkas between 1825 until his death. This piece reveals the deep influences of the Romantic period in the music of Lecuona. It is composed in the style of a piano etude and in ternary ABA form. It uses the traditional melodic rhythm that is distinctive of the mazurkas of Chopin, the dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth. Lecuona uses the rhythmic figure in the first beat of the measure followed by two offbeat quarter notes. Ascending and descending glissando are inserted between the melodic line (Ex. 69).

Ex. 69. “Mazurka glissando,” mm. 1-8.

**Tempo di Mazurka**

“Canto del guajiro” (Song of the Cuban Farmer) is a piece that captures the sounds of the countryside and its people (Ex. 70). The *guajira* is a musical genre that originated from the *Punto Guajiro* or *Punto Cubano*. This musical style was used in the Cuban zarzuela at the end of the nineteenth century and was later developed by Cuban composer Jorge Anckermann. It is a music

style that alternates between 3/4 and 6/8 time-signatures. Later in its development, the genre of the guajira became a binary dance as it interacted with Afro-Cuban musical genres, especially with son. The most famous guajira of this kind is “Guantanamera” (The Girl from Guantanamo).

This piece is a piano representation of the traditional triple meter form of the guajira. The acciaccatura notes imitate the sounds of the singing of birds and the spirit and character of Cuban rural areas. The melody is a high register line that imitate the sound of the Cuban tres. The melodic gesture used on measures 9 and 10 is a descending melodic sequence representative of the musical improvisations of singers and instrumentalists of the genre.

Ex. 70. “Canto del guajiro,” mm. 1-13.

The musical score for "Canto del guajiro" (mm. 1-13) is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-5) is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major, and marked "Allegretto". The piano accompaniment begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and includes a right-hand (*r.h.*) acciaccatura. The dynamics progress through *dim.* and *p*. The second system (measures 6-9) features a vocal line starting at measure 6, marked "8va", and a piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 10-13) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with a dynamic of *f* in measure 13.

The universality of the composer is found in the ability to characterize the different sounds of the music of his homeland. European and African musical elements are cleverly combined in many of his Afro-Cuban piano danzas. The European musical forms found in his Spanish Suite reveal the composer in a completely different setting. In many ways, Lecuona was able to speak to national and international audiences making him the most globally recognized figure of the history of Cuban music.

The music of Ernesto Lecuona reminds us about the origins of Cuban music and its main influences. It is widely accepted that the convergence of Spanish, African cultures, and others forged the musical character of the island. His Afro-Cuban piano pieces are one of the best examples of transculturation in Cuban music. The tresillo, the cinquillo, and the clave are all the essential elements in his music. At the same time, he was touched by European musical traditions. Those of the French impressionistic school as well as the Romantic era. Pieces such as “San Francisco el Grande” reminds us of his impressionistic inclinations. “Ante el Escorial” combines both Impressionism, and Romanticism, and “Mazurka glissando” echoes the music of Frédéric Chopin.

The Cuban piano school was solidified by the contributions of the composer who continued the Cuban piano school and took it to new heights. Through the music of Ernesto Lecuona, we can better acquire an understanding of the political and social forces that shaped the beginning of the twentieth century in the island and we can see the reflection of the character of the people.



## Chapter VII

### 7.1 The Orchesta Típica, the Charanga Francesa, and the Piano

The end of the eighteenth century witnessed the rise of the danzón as an authentic Cuban form. Its rise coincided with the wars of independence waged against Spain, and consequently danzón went on to become the national musical genre of the island and its people. It is widely accepted and well documented that the genre developed out of the contradanza and danza.

Danzón was originally performed by the Cuban orquesta típica. The típica consisted of a mixture of wind, string, and percussion instruments. One of the earliest orchestras of this kind was the Orquesta Flor de Cuba founded by Juan de Dios Alfonso (Ex. 71). The instrumentation was a combination of woodwinds and brass, and featured clarinet, bassoon, tuba, cornet, trombone, and ophicleide.<sup>15</sup> The string section consisted of violin and double bass. The percussion maintained the rhythmic cell of the cinquillo and consisted of guiro and timpani. The latter was later replaced by the timbales.<sup>16</sup>

The similarities between the orquesta típica and bands from New Orleans were remarkable but not surprising since both places had French and Spanish influences. The French marching bands were influential in the development of the traditional Cuban orquesta típica. (Santos 1982). Between 1905 and 1909, the Orquesta Típica of Pablo Valenzuela and other orchestras were recorded by North American companies Victor, Edison, and Columbia.

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<sup>15</sup> A French brass instrument like the tuba.

<sup>16</sup> Cuban drums that were developed from the timpani of European classical orchestras.

Ex. 71. Photo of Orquesta Típica Flor de Cuba 1868 (Source: Public Domain).



Around the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth the *charanga francesa* began to replace the *típica* in Cuba. The name *charanga “francesa”*, suggests that the ensemble had French origins, although it is generally believed that it was developed in Cuba. According to noted Cuban music writer and collector Díaz Ayala, the word *francesa* was used to suggest that the orchestra had a “refined sound”, and that the addition of the piano may have given the orchestra that French element (Sublette 2004). Antonio Arcaño, flutist and founder of one of Cuba’s most successful *charangas*, argues that it was the piano that gave the *charanga* its name:

“they called them charanga a la francesa...because before...it had no piano.” (Hernández 1986, 64).

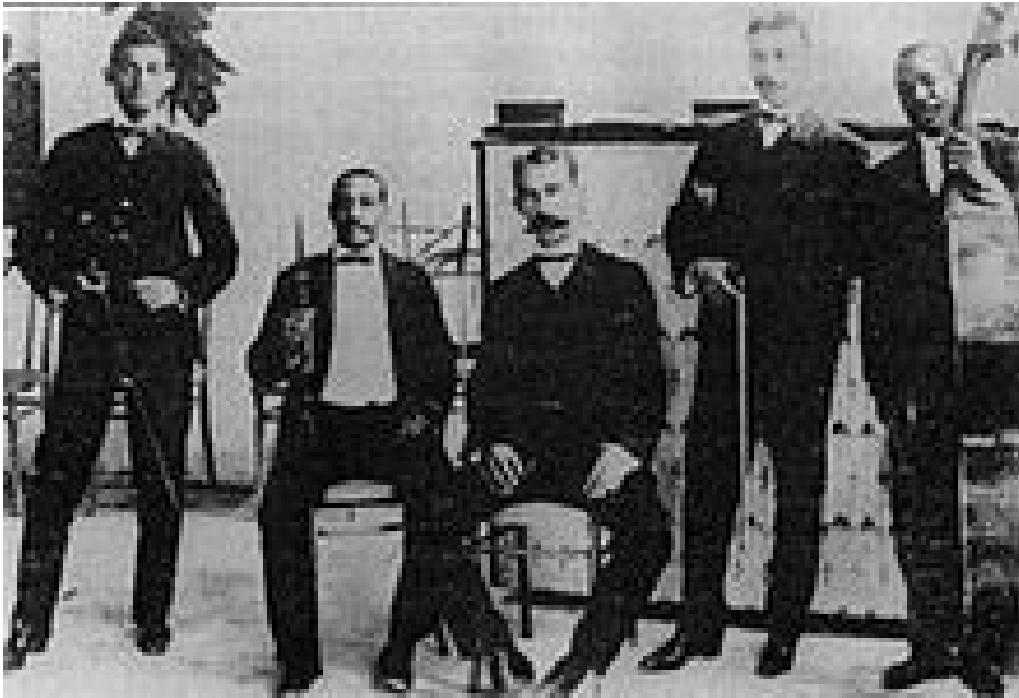
Musician and author Charley Gerard suggests that the format may have been introduced in Cuba by French refugees escaping the Haitian revolution during the 1790s and that their contributions to the origins of charanga should be considered: “Scholars agree that Spain and parts of West and Central Africa provided the most crucial musical influences in the development of Cuban popular and religious music. But in the case of charanga, the contributions of French and Haitian influences can not be ignored.” (Gerard 2001, 66).

As mentioned before, the charanga francesa became popular during the decade of the 1890s and slowly began to replace the orquesta típica. The típica, which featured horns, strings, and woodwinds, may have sounded well in open spaces but the charanga francesa had a softer and less strident format which may have helped with its proliferation. The charanga francesa began to use the flute and violins, along with the piano as the featured instruments of the ensemble. The first ensemble of this type to interpret a danzón appeared in Matanzas and was called Unión Harmónica. The Unión Harmónica was a quartet consisting of piano, flauta, violin and acoustic bass (Giro 2007). This type of small charanga was referred to as *bunga*. It was one of the first to integrate the piano in ensembles of Cuban popular music. The importance of this ensemble cannot be understated because the piano remains today a staple of popular music ensembles.

Pianist and composer, Antonio “Papaito” Torroella (1856-1934) played an important role in popularizing the charanga francesa ensemble in Havana. He is also the first to include the piano in the charanga ensemble (Orovio 2004). His orchestra was formed around 1898 was the first charanga ensemble in Havana (Ex. 72). It was made of two violins, flute, piano, bass, and a percussionist that alternated between the guiro and the timbales, also known as *pailas criollas*. His

group was also the first charanga to record danzones in 1906 for Edison's cylinders. Unfortunately, all these recordings have been lost.

Ex. 72. Photo of Orquesta de Antonio Papaito Torroella 1898 (Source: Public Domain).



Pianist and composer, Antonio María Romeu collaborated with Torroella at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Antonio Arcaño, Romeu first played the piano with a charanga with the orchestra of Torroella: “Romeu, somewhat nervously, was playing filigrees on his instrument and was totally taken by surprise when Papaito Torroella asked him to join the orchestra for the evening.” (Sublette 2004, 307).

In 1920, Antonio María Romeu went on to form his own Charanga Orchestra (Ex. 73). He was a prolific and successful composer of more than fifteen hundred danzones and made hundreds of recordings for Victor and Columbia.

Romeu was born in 1876 in Jibacoa, in the province Mayabeque, and died in Havana in 1955 (Orovio 2004). He began to study music with the priest Joaquín Martínez at the age of eight and continued as an autodidact. Romeu moved to Havana in 1899 where he found a job as pianist at the café La Diana located at the corner of Reina and Águila.

Ex. 73. Photo of Orquesta de Antonio María Romeu. Circa 1920s.



Some of his best known danzones include “La danza de los millones” (The Dance of the Millions), “El mago de las teclas” (The Wizard of the Keys), “Jibacoa,” “Marcheta,” “Alemán prepara tu cañon” (German Prepare your Canon), “El servicio obligatorio” (Mandatory Service), and many others. He also co-composed one of his most popular danzones “La flauta mágica” (The Magic Flute) with Alfredo Brito. Romeu also rearranged popular songs as danzones. They include Sindo Garay’s “Guarina,” and “Perla marina” (Sea Pearl), “Mercedes” by Manuel Corona, and other classics of the Cuban trova <sup>17</sup>(Orovio 2004).

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17 Trova is the popular musical genre that originated in the nineteenth century in Cuba.

Antonio María Romeu may have been the single most important figure in the popularization of the charanga ensembles in Cuban popular music. He is recognized as the first piano soloist in the history of Cuban popular dance music (Sublette 2004). His recording of “Tres lindas cubanas” (Three Beautiful Cuban Girls) in the 1920s featured one of the first piano solos in the history Cuban music and contributed to the propagation of the charanga ensemble: Ruth Witmer explains: “It was Romeu who vastly increased the popularity of the charanga by incorporating a piano solo into the estribillo section of his danzón and from then on the piano was essential to the instrumentation of the charanga.” (Witmer 2011, 156).

Romeu’s piano solo on “Tres lindas cubanas” can be seen below (Ex. 74). In this solo he employs a variety of rhythmic devices such syncopations typical of Cuban popular music genres. Especially important is the accentuation of the end of beat number two of the measure (e.g., bars 2 and 3). Like many of the great piano composers, Romeu also utilizes rhythmic motives such as the amphibrach, the tresillo, the cinquillo and its variations. Melodically and harmonically, Romeu follows a diatonic approach in his melodic lines. His piano solo is mainly founded on the conventional tonic, subdominant, and dominant harmonic structure with a secondary dominant at bar 40. Romeu also employs melodies harmonized in tenths (a typical Western harmonic device). We can observe melodies harmonized in thirds, sixths, thirds, or tenths in the vocal version of the habanera. This harmonic pattern later found its way to the genre of bolero and son montuno. This is part of the “classical” foundation which many composers were attracted to and determined the stylistic musical traits of the island.

Not only was the piano essential to the instrumentation of the charanga but from that point on, it was also essential to the instrumentation of most ensembles of Cuban popular music, except

for the *sextetos* and *septetos* of son in the 1920s. Later, the piano was added to ensembles of son, which became the conjunto de son.

Ex. 74. “Tres lindas cubanas.” Author transcription of Antonio María Romeu’s piano solo.<sup>18</sup>

**Danzón** ♩ = 90  
Play 8vs with both hands

1  
5  
9  
13  
17  
21  
25  
29  
33

<sup>18</sup> Orquesta Antonio María Romeu. 2012. El Mago de las Teclas. Tumbao Cuban Classics. TCD067.

This musical score is for guitar, spanning measures 37 to 64. It is written in a single system with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into eight systems, each containing two staves (treble and bass clef).  
- **Measures 37-40:** The first system features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth notes and chords. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present.  
- **Measures 41-44:** The second system continues the rhythmic complexity with various articulations like accents and slurs.  
- **Measures 45-48:** The third system includes a dynamic marking of *8vb* (8va) and features more intricate chordal textures.  
- **Measures 49-51:** The fourth system is characterized by a dense texture of triplets, indicated by a '3' over each group of notes.  
- **Measures 52-54:** The fifth system continues the triplet pattern, maintaining a high level of rhythmic activity.  
- **Measures 55-58:** The sixth system shows a continuation of the triplet-based texture with some melodic lines.  
- **Measures 59-63:** The seventh system features a mix of triplet patterns and more traditional melodic phrases.  
- **Measures 64:** The final system concludes with a series of chords and a final melodic flourish, marked with a dynamic of *mf* and an *8vb* marking.



## Chapter VIII

### 8.1 A Brief History of Son Montuno

*Son montuno*, or *son cubano*, is the most influential musical genre that came out of Cuba. The musical genre played an important role in the development of popular piano music in Cuba, especially in the formation of new forms of accompaniment such as the piano montuno. Son montuno rose to popularity towards the end of the nineteenth century in the eastern part of Cuba, between Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo. The exact date of origin of son is unknown but most probably began to develop around the middle of the eighteenth century (Daniel 1995). Son montuno drew influences from a vast pool of musical genres, they include the contradanza, danza danzón, and from Cuban rumba. All these genres had their own way of influencing and replenishing son in its form and instrumentation; however, it is considered a direct descendant of the earlier genre of *changüí* (along with *nengón* and *kiribá*).

It is widely acknowledged that *Changüí* is a direct ancestor of son. *Changüí* is a genre that emerged in the eastern part of the island at the beginning of the nineteenth century, specifically in the province of Guantanamo. As with many Cuban musical genres, it combined African rhythmic elements with Spanish song.

It is in *changüí* that the stylistic form of accompaniment known as *montuno* developed. On the song “Así es el changüí” (This is Changüí) the tres guitar provides an accompaniment based on a simple dominant-tonic chord progression (Ex. 75). One of its main characteristics is the highly syncopated rhythmic approach of the tresero<sup>19</sup> who is playing exclusively between the beats. The bongo player has a similar role to the tresero in *changüí* music, which is to provide improvisatory

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<sup>19</sup> Tresero is the name given to the musician who plays the tres.

rhythmic motives. The bass line in this excerpt is carried by the instrument of the marimbula and emphasizes the upbeat of each measure.

Ex. 75. “Así es el changüí.”<sup>20</sup> Author transcription.

The musical score is arranged in six staves. The top staff is for Voice, with lyrics: "Ay! Yo quiero bailar Va - mo'a guaracharlo". The second staff is for Coro, with lyrics: "Ay! con el Changüí Ay! con el Changüí". The third staff is for Tres guitar. The fourth staff is for Marimbula, with a bass clef and a 7-measure rest followed by a melodic line. The fifth staff is for Bongos, marked "freely", showing a rhythmic pattern of slashes. The sixth staff is for Maracas, showing a rhythmic pattern of vertical lines.

Early son montuno was characterized by a simple form based on a repeated refrain or chorus; this section was also known as montuno. This montuno section alternates with several verses which at times were vocal improvisations. The first instrumentation employed in *son* resembled that of the *changüí*. It included instruments of African and Spanish origins that were creolized in Cuba such as the *tres* guitar, the marimbula, the bongos, the cajon and a singer or singers. *Son*, however, can also be performed with only a guitar as accompaniment for a singer.

<sup>20</sup> Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo. 1995. *¡Ahora Sí! Llego el Changüí*. Discos Corason.

This adaptability and flexibility helped in the commercialization of the genre as it arrived in the larger cities during the big migration from rural to urban areas at the beginning of the twentieth century.

There is no question that *changüí* was a forerunner to son montuno. But it is important to recognize the impact that the contradanza, danza and danzón had on son and on the formation of many popular Cuban piano styles. How exactly they influenced son is still a topic for debate, and many historians and musicologists have tried to clarify this. We know that the Cuban contradanza was defined by the inception of the tango figure and we can also recognize that it is nothing else but a reinterpretation and simplification of the clave. So, we can safely acknowledge that the clave is already implicit in the Cuban contradanza.

Peter Manuel offers a compelling argument about the relationship between the contradanza and son. The use of rhythmic patterns associated with the clave is not the only characteristic that son borrowed from contradanza. It also borrowed aspects of form, melodic rhythmic motives, as well as the sectional contrasting nature of the contradanza. It is important to note that many of these attributes can be observed in the piano contradanzas of Saumell and Cervantes as well the popular contradanzas composed by many of their contemporaries.

The contradanza “Cambujá” composed and published by José Lino de Coca in 1857 contains many musical associations between contradanza and son (Ex. 76) Peter Manuel argues that “Cambujá” features the binary format, that was later implemented in son, in which an introductory section is followed by a lively one (Peter Manuel 2009). This popular contradanza is formed of the *primera* that serves as an introductory section for the part of the dance known as the promenade, and the *segunda* provides the dancers with a rhythmic ostinato. The *segunda* of this piece introduces the bass line of the habanera. It was common practice of the Cuban contradanza

to reiterate the *segunda* section to entertain the dancers. Son borrowed the same contrasting sectional arrangement from the Cuban contradanza.

Ex. 76. “Cambujá.”

Piano

*ff*

*p*

Ped

5

*ff*

Ped

10

8<sup>vb</sup>

16

1. *loco marcato*

2. *D.C.*

Ped

The harmonic foundation of *segunda* section of “Cambujá,” is a simple tonic and dominant ostinato. The second section can be compared to the coro and refrain section that son montuno is known for. Additionally, the rhythmic foundation of the melodic line seems to be in clave 2-3. The

segunda section introduces the anticipation of the bass line that characterizes son by accentuating the lowest note in the left hand, so the accent falls on the off beats rather than on the downbeats (Peter Manuel 2009).

Early son shows influences from its predecessor contradanza as seen before in “Cambujá.” But also, the Afro-Cuban genre of rumba and its derivatives: columbia, yambú, guaguancó, played a vital role in replenishing son with songs, melodic gestures, instrumentation, dance, and choreography characteristics, as well as in the formation of new authentic Cuban forms of piano accompaniment and improvisational techniques.

Son montuno came to Havana in part because of the relocation of both a portion of the rural population and the army to the western part of the country and subsequently underwent major transformations in its instrumentation and form. As a result, the possibilities of its commercialization grew exponentially with the inclusion of the trumpet, the congas (tumbadoras) and of course the piano. However, the piano was not available in rural areas where the genre first developed, and its instrumentation remained strongly associated with that of the changüí.

As son arrived in the major cities, the piano, along with the trumpet, were added to son ensembles. How the trumpet was added to son ensembles is up for debate, although it is believed that the strong ties with the culture of New Orleans might have influenced its instrumentation. W. C. Handy’s comments while visiting the island during with the U.S. occupation are informative about the early development of the genre: “These fascinated me because they were playing a strange native air, new and interesting to me. More than thirty years later I heard that same rhythm again. By then it had gained respectability in New York and had acquired a name: the Rumba.” (Acosta 2003, 7). Rumba, then, was the name given to son after its arrival to New York.

The increase in population and migration towards the bigger cities was evident not only in Cuba but throughout the Americas as people relocated to the bigger cities looking for better living standards. Turino explains: “Similar to the situation in the United States, many countries in Latin America underwent radical transformations beginning in the early twentieth century as people left their rural-agricultural ways of life and moved to cities in search of wage-based employment and better health and educational possibilities for their children.” (Turino 2008, 97). Turino also points to the growth and expansion of capitalist economies in Latin America as well as the advancement of nationalistic ideals as a stimulant of the relocation of populations towards the big cities. This socio-economic development was advantageous for the musical genre in Cuba and aided by technological developments in the recording music industry and supported by radio broadcasting, the popularity of son grew exponentially. The popularity of the genre began in 1918, coinciding with the first complete recording of son.

The passing of the Volstead Act in the United States, known as the prohibition of sale and alcohol, benefited the tourism industry in Cuba where the consumption of alcohol was still legal. As a result, Cuba witnessed the construction of casinos, hotels, and other entertainment venues. It was during the first term of Machado’s presidency that son achieved its peak in popularity. During its first years the music genre was an underground movement. Musicians who played son faced segregation and discrimination because it was performed mainly by rumberos of African descent. Many Afro-Cuban musicians were excluded from performing in public halls and private social clubs. However, son groups and musicians found work in brothels. These music performances of son provided musicians with an opportunity to improve their skills and their craft (Sublette 2004, 366).

Because of the gradual rise in popularity of *son*, José Urfé decided to add a *montuno* section to the final section of his danzón “El bombín de Barreto” (Barreto’s Hat) in his 1910 recording. The legendary danzón was recorded with the traditional charanga francesa ensemble, adding the piano to its instrumentation. The final montuno section of the song is based on a simple tonic-dominant harmonic pattern.

Others followed this musical idea of including the popular *montuno* section and as a result *danzonete* was born. The music of danzonete was a fusion of the musical influences of *son* with the danzón. Danzonete, however, eliminated the cinquillo rhythmic motive and added maracas and vocals to its instrumentation. Paulina Alvarez, nicknamed *La emperatriz of danzonete* (The empress of danzonete), rose to fame in 1929 with her recording of “Rompiendo la rutina” (Breaking with the Routine). Alvarez became one of the first female artists to emerge in the ambit of Cuban popular music.

Even though danzón is often considered the national dance because it represented the integration of African and Spanish musical elements, many Cubans consider *son* the national dance. *Son montuno* began to replace and transform the genre of the danzón, which up to that point was the most popular genre in the island. Danzón was a symbol of the old Spanish colonial times, while *son* was the expression of a new cosmopolitan society.

As the popularity of *son* reached its peak, the Sexteto Habanero rose to fame. The Habanero recorded for American companies who were becoming attracted to the development of the musical genre. The Habanero toured New York city and recorded in Camden, New Jersey for Victor and their records sold out in the Puerto Rican communities of New York.

In 1927 Cuban band leader, bassist, and composer Ignacio Piñero founded the Sexteto Nacional. Ignacio Piñero was a prolific composer of sones. His piece “Échale salsa” is the first song to use the word *salsa* in the context of son montuno. The great American pianist and composer George Gershwin befriended Piñero’s group in one of his many visits to Cuba. Gershwin was impressed by the works of the Cuban composer and used music elements of “Échale salsa” in composing his Cuban Overture (Orovio 2004, 165). Gershwin used melodic and rhythmic motives such as the cinquillo, bass lines using tresillo and tango figures, and the use of claves and maracas.

In the late 1920s the son group named *Trio Matamoros* emerged and gained recognition. The band was formed of two guitars and maracas, although sometimes the maracas were replaced by the instrument of the clave. Their records sold thousands of copies in the United States, Cuba, and Latin America (Sublette 2004). They toured extensively in Latin America, Europe, and the United States, and their songs “Son de la loma” (Son from the Mountains) and “Lágrimas negras” (Black Tears) became instant classics of the Latin American repertoire because of their lyrical melodies and cadential rhythms.

During the first half of the twentieth century numerous Cuban musicians visited or emigrated to the United States to work for American record companies. Those who relocated, brought with them their own musical forms and traditions to the U.S. Their efforts helped disseminate Cuban musical forms including the musical traditions of *son cubano*, the *guaracha*, the Cuban *bolero*, as well as the rhythmic concept known as clave.

In the 1930s the Gran Casino Orchestra of Havana had great success with their recording of the Cuban son “El manisero” (The Peanut Vendor), creating the world-wide rhumba craze. What became known as rhumba (with an h) was essentially Cuban son along with the *guaracha*, and the Cuban *bolero*. The son “El manicero” became so popular in the United States that it was recorded



by artists such as John Kirby, Louis Armstrong, and The California Ramblers. Countless versions of the song have been recorded around the world (Sublette 2004).

One member of the Gran Casino Orchestra was a young Cuban musician named Mario Bauzá. He was a clarinetist for the Havana Philharmonic orchestra but decided to move to New York in 1930. In New York he played with different jazz artists such as Chick Webb, where he learned how to improvise and phrase “like a black American musician” (Sublette 2004, 461). In 1938, Bauzá joined Cab Calloway’s band, and it is here where he meets Dizzy Gillespie. It was Bauzá who recommended Gillespie to Cab Calloway. During this time together, Dizzy became interested in Afro-Cuban percussion and rhythms. His experience with this band established Gillespie in the music scene and it is explained in Gillespie’s biography:

Gillespie was not out of work for long and through Klook (Kenny Clark), he joined Edgar Hayes, this time as a regular member of the band. Unfortunately, the money was not good enough and, assisted by Mario Bauzá, he got to try out with Cab Calloway. The circumstances were somewhat confused; without Calloway’s prior knowledge Gillespie depped for Bauzá in the band. He merely put on the uniform and sat in. He played well on that night, the leader liked what he heard and Gillespie was invited to join the band. It was a stay that was to last two-years and perhaps more than any other experience up to that time, established the trumpeter, not only as a completely self-confident performer but also as a man who really did have a reputation in the ‘business’! (McRae 1988, 20).

In 1940, Bauzá formed his own band which he called Machito and his Afro-Cubans. Bauzá, along with his brother-in-law Machito, formed one of the most influential Latin bands of all time. They were pioneers in cultivating and promoting Cuban music in New York. Machito and his Afro-Cubans were one of the first bands to add the Afro-Cuban percussion of congas, bongos, and timbales to the instrumentation of son, and these later became part of the standard instrumentation for salsa and Latin jazz bands in Cuba and New York.

Bauzá’s song “Tanga” is considered by many to be one of the first Latin jazz tunes ever composed. The tune fuses a complex set of influences in which the Cuban clave and Afro-Cuban rhythms are combined with jazz concepts. “Tanga” uses a two-measure ostinato featuring a piano guajeo that corresponds with the 2-3 clave (Ex. 77). The first measure coincides with the two-side of the clave, and it is followed by a syncopated measure that emphasizes the three-side of the clave.

Ex. 77. “Tanga,” piano guajeo. Author transcription.

The musical score for 'Tanga' piano guajeo is presented in four staves. The top staff is the Melody in G major (one flat), 4/4 time, featuring a melodic line with a syncopated rhythm. The second staff is the Claves, showing a 2-3 clave pattern. The third staff is the Piano, with a right-hand part playing chords and a left-hand part playing a rhythmic bass line. The bottom staff is the Bass, featuring a melodic line with a syncopated rhythm. Chord symbols C7 are placed above the piano and bass staves to indicate the harmonic structure.

Machito and Bauzá explored the harmonic possibilities of jazz combined with Afro-Cuban rhythmic structures. Bauzá is also considered an innovator in further developing the concept of 2-3 and 3-2 clave, in which the chord progression and the melodic line determines the direction of the clave. The role of the piano on this ensemble was similar to that of the ‘big band’ piano, which was to provide harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment.

While Bauzá, Chano, Machito and Mongo Santamaria are credited with the propagation of Cuban music styles in New York, in Cuba the figure of Arsenio Rodríguez changed the landscape

of Latin music during the 1940s and was highly influential in determining the role of the piano in the music of son. Rodríguez applied his knowledge of rumba and Afro-Cuban percussion to his band arrangements. Because the genre of rumba was segregated at the time, he was able to demonstrate his expertise in Afro-Cuban forms through the genre of son (Sublette 2004). His music innovations transformed the genre of son Cubano forever. He developed the *conjunto de son* ensemble by adding Afro-Cuban percussion instruments and mixing them with instrumentation derived from North American jazz bands. He is credited with being one of the first to add the piano, multiple trumpets, and the congas to the ensemble of son. Up to that time, son bands used a single trumpet and a percussion ensemble made of bongos, claves, and maracas. The *conjunto de son* (son ensemble) was born because of these transformations. It marked the beginning of the evolution of mambo music in Cuba, in which the horn instrumentation and melodic lines played an essential role. It is in the ensembles of Arsenio Rodríguez that the role of the piano is redefined during the late 1930s and 1940s.

Arsenio Rodríguez is also credited for cultivating the concept of the Cuban clave and the bass line riffs. These bass lines were significant in the development of different forms of piano accompaniment, specifically the piano montuno. During earlier decades, the bass line of early son consisted mainly of simple guajeos based on variations of the habanera, such as the quarter note followed by two eighth notes, as well as the tango figure and the tresillo. With the passing of time, the son bass line became more syncopated and complex. Arsenio was influential in adding a bass line that emphasized the and-of-two of each measure. He did not create the rhythmic device, but he was certainly one of the first to employ it in the genre of son.

In the next example (Ex. 78) we can observe the development of son bass lines. The latter is the primary rhythmic device still used today in salsa and other Latin jazz styles. During the

decade of the 1940s, it was becoming less important to the bass player to accentuate the down beat. Eventually the downbeat become obsolete and omitted entirely (Sublette 2004). The syncopations of the end-of -two coincides with the movement of the son dancers and it is explained by David García through the words of Cuban pianist Bebo Valdés.

Bebo Valdés pointed out that to dance to Arsenio’s son montuno style involved dancing “in contratiempo” (literally, “against the beat”)...The conjunto’s collective and consistent accentuation of those two important off beats gave son montuno texture its unique groove and hence, played a significant part in the dancer’s feeling the music and dancing to it, as Bebo Valdés noted, ‘in contratiempo’ (García 2006, 43).

Ex. 78. The evolution of the bass line.



The syncopated bass riff, which Valdés refers to as a “contratiempo”, is found on his 2000 recording of the Cuban classic song composed by Eliseo Grenet: “Lamento cubano” (Cuban Lament). The song is the first track of his CD, *El Arte del Sabor* (2001). In this recording the piano doubles the bass line pattern in the left hand. The bass line, played by Israel López “Cachao,” is a

two-measure ostinato and uses a syncopated bass pattern based on the tresillo but it is notated in quadruple time signature.

Ex. 79. "Lamento cubano," as played by Bebo Valdés. Author transcription.

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, featuring a syncopated bass line and a two-measure ostinato in the right hand. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into five systems, each with a measure number and a set of chords above the staff.

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):** Chords: Dm, Em7(b5), A7, Dm, Em7(b5), A7. Dynamics: *mp*.
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):** Chords: Dm, Em7(b5), A7, Dm, Em7(b5), A7. Dynamics: *cantabile*.
- System 3 (Measures 9-12):** Chords: Dm, Em7(b5), A7, Dm, Em7(b5), A7.
- System 4 (Measures 13-16):** Chords: Dm, Em7(b5), A7, Dm, Em7(b5), A7.
- System 5 (Measures 17-20):** Chords: Dm, Em7(b5), A7, Dm, Em7(b5), A7. Dynamics: *mf*.

The late 1930s saw the rise of mambo. Mambo is a descendant of son itself and its influences are felt even today in the field of Latin music. Mambo evolved out of the danzón and featured an improvisatory section with syncopated rhythms borrowed from son (Orovio 2004). As noted above, the *conjunto de son* contributed to the development of mambo music in Cuba by expanding the size of orchestras to become essentially big bands. In the 1940s, Pérez Prado incorporated elements of jazz in his horn arrangements and used contrapuntal lines and melodic ostinatos in the horn section. This polyphonic treatment of the orchestra may have been directly influenced by bands such as Bennie Moten's Kansas City Orchestra and developed into a form of musical expression within the context of mambo. Some of Pérez Prado's best-known pieces, "Mambo No. 5," and "Que rico el mambo," feature the recognizable characteristics of mambo.

Pianist and arranger René Hernández was a very important contributor to the development of mambo music first in Cuba and then in the U.S. His work for the orchestra of trumpeter Julio Cueva was pivotal in the formation of the sound that we recognize today as mambo. Hernández was one of the first to arrange horn lines for a jazz band instrumentation using contrapuntal texture and polyrhythms. During the 1940s Hernández moved to New York to work as pianist and arranger for the Orchestra of Machito with whom he collaborated for twenty years, from 1946 to 1966. Together, they promoted mambo music in the U.S. during the 1940s creating a new sound in the world of Latin music.

When we speak of mambo and son it is important to mention the influence of Benny Moré in the propagation of Cuban music styles in Cuba, Latin America, and the United States. He was the great Cuban singer who will be remembered because of his ability to interpret with excellence a wide range of Cuban musical genres. He had the unique ability to improvise vocal strophic

melodic lines in the genres of son, guaracha, guajira, cha cha chá and mambo, as well as sing a slow Cuban bolero with equal mastery.

It was Celia Cruz who consolidated Cuban musical forms in the United States and the most important figures in defining musical genres that originated in the island. She draws influences from rumba, son, guaracha, and mambo. In 1974, she joined Fania record label and recorded a successful LP named *Celia and Johnny* with Johnny Pacheco. The most important track was a Cuban styled rumba “Químbara.” The song brought the group world recognition and soon after she joined one of the most influential bands in Latin music: The Fania All-Stars, which had a deep impact in stablishing Cuban music forms and salsa in the United States.

## Chapter IX

### 9.1 The Clave

To better understand the development of Cuban piano forms, such as the montuno, we must consider the importance of the “clave” for the music of Cuba. The clave is a rhythmic pattern used in most Cuban musical genres. It is one of the primary examples of the musical synthesis of African and Spanish cultures. As mentioned before, this socio-cultural process was labeled by Fernando Ortiz as transculturation. (Ortiz 1995). David Peñalosa also explains his view on transculturation with respect to the Cuban clave:

During the nineteenth century, African and European music sensibilities blended, creating original Cuban hybrids. Cuban popular music became the conduit through which Sub-Saharan rhythmic elements were first codified within the context of European (Western) music theory. The first written music rhythmically based on clave was the *danzón*, which appeared in 1879. The contemporary concept of clave with its accompanying terminology reached its full development in Cuban music during the 1940s. Its application has since spread to folkloric music as well (Peñalosa 2009, 88).

While Peñalosa refers to the *danzón* as the first genre that is based on the clave, it should be noted that the clave was present implicitly in previous musical forms such as the *contradanza* and *danza* and it is safe to argue that the *contradanza*, *danza* and *danzón* were formative elements in the development of the music of son.

However, it was in the music genre of son where the *clave* became recognized worldwide. As Peñalosa notes (above), the concept and rhythmic pattern known as clave originated in sub-Saharan cultural traditions and joined with Spanish musical elements in Cuba. Even though it was a pervasive rhythmic motive in Cuban music, it was not explicitly displayed in early musical forms. The Spanish word *clave* literally translates into key or code, meaning the code that holds together



the rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic structure of a piece. These three musical dimensions are intertwined in the whole structure of a musical piece and the clave holds it together.

There are many variations and forms of what we have come to know as the Cuban clave, but the most examined are the son clave and the rumba clave (see Ex.80). Both the rumba and the son claves appear in Cuban popular music styles in simple and compound time signatures. The clave can either be notated in duple or in quadruple time signatures. Traditionally, the contradanza, danza and danzón and son were notated in duple form, although in contemporary music it is common practice to use quadruple time signature. Both formats are acceptable although it is beneficial to use a duple notation as we examine and compare early musical genres that were traditionally notated in duple time signatures.

Ex. 80. Son and rumba clave in simple and compound time signatures.

Son Clave

Rumba Clave

The image displays musical notation for two types of Cuban clave: Son Clave and Rumba Clave. Each is shown in two time signatures: simple (2/4) and compound (6/8). The Son Clave notation in 2/4 shows a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a quarter note, and a quarter note with a rest. In 6/8, it shows a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a quarter note, and a quarter note with a rest. The Rumba Clave notation in 2/4 shows a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a quarter note, and a quarter note with a rest. In 6/8, it shows a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a quarter note, and a quarter note with a rest.

The son clave is heard or implied in the music of son and later in the music of salsa and other Latin jazz styles. The son clave can be represented in either 3-2 or 2-3 formation. When the rhythm of the melodic phrase begins on the three side of the clave, it is said to be in 3-2 clave, and when it begins on the two side, it is a 2-3 clave. The direction of clave also plays an important role in the development of piano forms of accompaniment such as the montuno, which we will examine in the next section.

Ex. 81. Clave 3-2 and 2-3.



## 9.2 The Piano Montuno

One of the most important developments in the history of Cuban popular music was the inclusion of the piano to the ensembles of popular music at the end of the eighteenth century as we studied with the *charanga francesa*. Its role in popular music was expanded by Antonio María Romeu and later with the figure of Arsenio Rodríguez.

The song “El manicero” (The Peanut Vendor) is an eloquent example of one of the earliest forms of accompaniment in son. The Cuban son-pregón, as it was first considered because it is a symbolic representation of the calling of street vendors in Havana, was first recorded by Cuban vedette Rita Montaner and later became an international hit with the 1930 recording of Don

Aspiazú and the Havana Casino Orchestra for RCA Victor. The song is attributed to Moisés Simons and was composed with the rhythmic foundation of a son montuno.

The melodic line of “El manicero” was based on the cinquillo of the danzón, and it aligns with the standard 2-3 son clave (Ex. 82). The song was originally notated for piano and voice in the 2/4-time signature although in contemporary arrangements it appears in 4/4. The piano guajeo is one of the most notorious Cuban gestures in popular music. The first measure of the guajeo is an even eight note rhythmic motive that corresponds with the two side of the clave and it is immediately followed by a rhythmic motive that functions as an answer. The answer motive is the syncopated cinquillo which aligns with the three side of the clave.

In the left hand of the accompaniment, we can observe the traditional tresillo of the habanera with emphasis on the offbeats. The lowest notes of the left hand are deliberately notated with accents to highlight the syncopation. The harmonic progression is a simple tonic-dominant alternation typical of early son montuno. Harmonic progressions became more intricate with the development of the genre.

The piano guajeo of “El manicero” is an early example of piano notation in the music of son. During the decade of the 1930s a new form of accompaniment emerges in the music of son named the piano montuno. The piano montuno is the type of accompaniment that originated in the conjunto de son of Arsenio Rodriguez and it is one of the most important forms of accompaniment in today’s Latin jazz and salsa. The piano accompaniment form crossed over into other genres such as merengue, cumbia, and others (Fiol 2018). However, the pianistic style developed out of son montuno, the guaracha, cha cha chá, mambo, and it is directly linked to the piano solo improvisations of son.

Ex. 82. "El manicero."

A Rita Montaner

# El Manicero

SON PREGON

Palabras y Música de Moisés Simons

MARACAS

CLAVES

*ff*

8

Ma-ní

15

Ca-se-ri-ta no tea-cues-tes a dor-mir sin co-mer-teuncu-cu-ru-cho de ma-ní

The Spanish word *montuno* refers to all things that come from the mountains. However, the word has an array of meanings in the vernacular of Cuban popular music. Firstly, the word represents the form of accompaniment that is provided by the tres, the guitar and of course, the piano in the genre of son. The words, *tumbáo* and *guajeo* are also used to describe this type of accompaniment. The word *montuno* is also used to represent the repeated chorus and refrain section that is ubiquitous to many Cuban genres including son, mambo, cha cha chá, guaracha, and others. It is also used to represent the section in which the melodic line is performed in exact unison by the tres in the genre of *changüí* (Fiol 2018).

Early recording of montunos were performed by the tres, as is the case in the example of “A quella boca” (That Mouth) by the Sexteto Habanero. It is a four-measure, symmetrical rhythmic ostinato based on a simple tonic and dominant harmonic progression. The melodic line corresponds rhythmically with the 3-2 clave (as seen in Ex. 83). In this example we can see this rhythmic interlocking between the melodic line, the bass, and the clave in measure 1. This helps to create a more satisfactory rhythmic connection between the different parts. In this recording the tres accompaniment is much more flexible but also underlines and emphasizes certain aspects of the clave. An interesting and revealing aspect of this recording is the bass line’s use of the tresillo of the habanera. This was the most common form of bass guajeo used by son bands during the early period. More complex bass rhythmic ostinatos were added to the genre during the 1940s.

Ex. 83. “Aquella boca.” Author transcription of the chorus and refrain.

The musical score is presented in four staves: Chorus (voice), Tres, Clave, and Acoustic Bass. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The Chorus staff includes the lyrics: "Ma-ri - a yo te ví bai - lan - do — bai - lan - do con la puertaa - bier - ta". The Tres and Acoustic Bass staves include chord markings: C7, F, and F. The Clave staff shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The Refrain section follows, with the lyrics "Ma - ri - a yo te" and chord markings C7, F, and F.

As mentioned before, Arsenio Rodríguez was one of the leading figures in the development of the piano montuno as an authentic Cuban form of accompaniment. Before him, son ensembles relied mainly on the tres and guitar to provide the accompaniment. In 1937, he joined the band of Miguelito Valdés as arranger, composer, and musical assistant. The first recordings of the music of Rodríguez took place in the band of Valdés. Their six recordings were highly influential because they marked the beginning of the contemporary tradition of Cuban popular dance music (Sublette

2004). One of those recordings was realized in 1937 for Victor.<sup>21</sup> It was a bolero son composed by Valdés named “Dolor cobarde” (Timid Love) featuring the first ever piano montuno recording, an innovative piano solo by Anselmo Sacasas (Ex. 84). Sublette explains: “That distinctive Cuban piano style, known to the whole world, had appeared: pianists playing guajeos in octaves and arpeggios, ultimately based on what the sanzás had done back in the Congo, but using jazzy tensions in the harmonies.” (Sublette 2004, 446).

Sacasas’ piano solo must have been directly influenced by Arsenio and his involvement with the Casino de la Playa band. The piano solo imitates the guajeo of the tres by using percussive blocked and broken chords, ascending chromatic hemiolas and octaves underlying melodic motives. The idiosyncratic piano montuno mentioned above influenced many pianists who later collaborated with Arsenio Rodríguez.

Arsenio Rodríguez formed his own band in 1940 and went on to transform the music of son. He is not only responsible for adding the piano to the son ensemble, but also added the tumbadoras, and trumpets, thus creating the distinctive type of ensemble known as the conjunto de son. Even though he was not the first to add the piano to son ensembles, the actual role of the instrument was defined within the confines of his conjunto de son.

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<sup>21</sup> Orquesta Casino de la Playa, Miguel Valdés. 1937. *Dolor Cobarde*. Victor 75697-B.

Ex. 84. "Dolor cobarde." Author transcription of Anselmo Sacasas' piano solo.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff (measures 1-4) features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 4 and a  $G^b$  chord above measure 1 and a  $D^b7$  chord above measure 2. The second staff (measures 5-7) is marked *Piano Montuno* and contains a  $D^b7$  chord above measure 5. The third staff (measures 8-10) features a bass line with triplets of eighth notes and a  $D^b7$  chord above measure 8. The fourth staff (measures 11-14) continues the bass line with triplets and a  $D^b7$  chord above measure 11. The fifth staff (measures 15-18) features a bass line with a  $D^b7$  chord above measure 15. A dashed line with the word *8va* above it indicates an octave shift. The sixth staff (measures 19-22) features a bass line with triplets and a  $D^b7$  chord above measure 19. The seventh staff (measures 23-26) is marked *Piano Montuno* and contains a  $D^b7$  chord above measure 23.



The song “El pirulero no vuelve más” was the first single released by Arsenio’s band. It was a son pregón recorded in 1940.<sup>22</sup> The recording shows the distinctive the attributes and qualities of the traditional Cuban piano solo and the piano montuno (See Ex. 85). The piano solo by Lino Frías once again mimics the tres and percussion instruments by using rhythmic displacement and hemiolas. During the chorus or refrain, Lino Frías plays high register octaves in imitation of the cowbell. This pianist gesture is still in use today, especially in the Cuban piano vernacular.

Frías also makes use of ascending and descending chromatic melodies in his piano solo. While Saumell and Cervantes reflected musical elements of classicism and romanticism in their piano pieces, it is fascinating how the use of chromatic harmonies inflected the solos of many

<sup>22</sup> Arsenio Rodríguez. 1940. *El Pirulero no Vuelve más/ Yo tá namora*. Victor. 83314-A.

Cuban pianists during the twentieth century, specifically in the genre of son. It is safe to say that this is a direct consequence of the influences of ragtime and jazz on the music of Cuba. The hemiola between measures 36 to 39 is a common ragtime device similar to the one used by George Botsford in his “Black and White Rag.” From the 1920s onwards bands from New Orleans traveled frequently to Havana and the public was exposed to jazz as soon as it emerged in the United States (Sublette 2004).

It was during the solo section where Cuban pianists were able to explore the capacity of the piano. Because of the technical and percussive characteristics of the instrument, many Cuban pianists derived their own improvisational techniques by imitating percussion instruments and rhythmic motives such as clave and its derivatives as well as rhythmic patterns derived from the tumbadoras, bongos and cowbell in their solos. Some of these rhythmic patterns became standard forms of accompaniment in the genre of son, cha cha chá, mambo and later in salsa.

Frías was later replaced by Adolfo (“Panacea”) O’Reilly and the Rubén (“El Bonito”) González. González collaborated with Arsenio’s band for the following four years, and before leaving the band he recommended Luis (Lili) Martínez, who had a rather substantial role in the band as arranger and composer. Martínez was exposed to jazz in his hometown of Guantanamo, where there he lived close to the U.S. Naval base. As a result, he employed jazz musical influences in the arranging of the music of Arsenio (Sublette 2004).

Ex. 85. "El pirulero no vuelve más." Author transcription of Lino Frías' piano solo.

Son Pregón ♩ = 220

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of eight staves of music. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 220. The key signature is G major. The score includes various chords: G, D7, and G. The first four staves (measures 1-12) feature a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass line with eighth notes. The fifth staff (measures 13-16) introduces triplets and a 'loco' section. The sixth staff (measures 17-19) continues the 'loco' section with triplets. The seventh staff (measures 20-22) features a 'Both Hands' section with a melodic line and a bass line. The eighth staff (measures 23-26) concludes the piece with a melodic line and a bass line. The score is marked with '8va' and 'loco' to indicate octave transposition and a free-rhythm section, respectively.

37 G D7 G D7

35 G D7 Both Hands loco G D7

39 G D7 G D7

43 G D7 G D7

47 G D7 G Both Hands D7

51 G D7 G D7

55 G D7 G D7

59 Refrain G D7 G D7

During the decades of the 1940s and 1950s the role of the instrument was constantly changing in part due to continuous improvements in recording capabilities. In early recordings of son, the piano was practically absent from the overall hierarchy of sound. Rubén González, who played the piano for Arsenio Rodríguez's band, explains the role of the piano in the conjunto de son:

The piano was the accompaniment. You can hear the piano now because it's amplified, electronically, but not in those days, and the piano is an instrument with a gentle sound...In the conjunto, the piano and the tres complemented each other. I did the accompaniment and he, then, was doing the same ostinato, maintaining the rhythm. The guitar was doing what you would now call strumming; he wouldn't move from that because that was what gave the conjunto its sound, the movement thing. So the tres plucked, the guitar played a chord and the piano decorated over the top. When we got to the montuno the piano also was part of the tumbao as it is in salsa, over which the singer was singing. The tres did the same. Sometimes we played the same thing in unison. On occasions we made counterpoint (Hill 2008, 217).

Rubén González notes how the piano shared the accompaniment responsibilities with the guitar and the tres. This had a certain influence in the shaping of rhythmic structures as well as voicings and other stylistic qualities in the accompaniment. González refers to the piano as having a "gentle sound" and at some point, this might have influenced the types of voicings used. This is reflected in the use of double notes in the montuno and other types of traditional guajeos such as that of "Chanchullo." Many of these traits could have been caused because of the influence of percussion instruments as well as the limitations of the recording capabilities at the time.

The piano montuno, born out of the piano solo and the imitation of the tres, had an implicit improvisatory element as discussed with Anselmo Sacasas' solo. Even though the montuno was a type of accompaniment, it often provided introductory material and interludes between sections preceding the chorus and refrain. As a result, the role of the piano in the orchestra was expanded, giving the pianist more freedom for expression and creativity. In the 1950s, Benny Moré's *banda*

*gigante* (big band) expanded the role of the piano even further and the piano montuno was inserted into the orchestral arrangement. The distinctive Cuban piano montuno is showcased in example 86, “Castellano que bueno baila usted” (Castellano, How Well You Dance). In this legendary recording, the piano montuno appears as introductory material. It is a four-measure montuno that becomes an integral part of the orchestra arrangement. The harmonic progression is based on the traditional tonic, subdominant and dominant of rural son montuno. The piano is concerned with providing a rhythmic ostinato while underscoring the bass line by using left hand octaves and harmonic thirds to highlight the chordal changes. The traditional format of the montuno was enhanced by the possibilities of the piano which offered son montuno a more sophisticated sound.

Ex. 86. “Castellano que bueno baila usted.” Author transcription.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano montuno in 4/4 time. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The first system has four measures with chords labeled F, Bb, C, and Bb above the treble staff. The second system also has four measures with chords labeled F, Bb, C, and Bb above the treble staff. The bass line features a rhythmic ostinato of eighth notes, often moving in octaves, and uses harmonic thirds to emphasize the chord changes.

### 9.3 Other Forms of Piano Accompaniment

As we observed previously, the piano had a complementary role which it shared with the tres and the guitar. Its mimetic behavior in relationship to the tres and Afro-Cuban percussion instruments produced what is known as the piano montuno. Later, other forms of piano accompaniment were developed during the 1940s and the 1950s in popular piano music.

In 1949, the band of Julio Gutiérrez (1918-1990) recorded the song “Mambolandia” (Mambo Land) for RCA Victor. In this recording a new form of piano accompaniment was introduced by the pianist and arranger Pedro Nolasco Justin Rodríguez (also known as Peruchín). Even though Gutiérrez was himself a brilliant pianist, this track was recorded by Peruchín. Peruchín introduced a form of accompaniment that became quite popular in the vernacular of Cuban piano styles. It was based on a rhythmic hemiola produced by an imitation of Afro-Cuban percussion. Israel López “Cachao” recycled this piano guajeo in his descarga song “Chanchullo” released in 1957 with the band of Arcaño y sus Maravillas, and then it was later used by Tito Puente as the ostinato for his song “Oye como va” (see Ex. 87).

Peruchín, who was originally from Banes, Holguín, moved to Havana where he played with many renowned orchestras and musicians of the late 1940s. In the 1950s, he entered the Riverside Orchestra and during the next decade played and arranged for Benny Moré’s band and with Julio Gutiérrez (Orovio 2004). Leonardo Acosta describes Peruchín as one of the most important pianists of the era because of his role in integrating jazz influences with Afro-Cuban music forms:

The fusion styles that have rejuvenated popular music so much in recent years (Latin jazz, jazz-rock, salsa, Latin rock, bugaloo and so on) have their roots in the fusion that was taking place back in Havana in the 1940s between jazz and different genres of Cuban

music. Feeling is a crucial moment in this process, and involved in it we find, for example, three of the most important pianists in the history of jazz (particularly Latin jazz) in Cuba-Frank Emilio Flynn, Bebo Valdés and Peruchín Jústiz-who became involved in the fusion of jazz, son, danzón and mambo (Acosta 2003, 138).

Ex. 87. “Chanchullo.” Author transcription.

The musical notation for Ex. 87 is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three staves: Piano (treble and bass clefs) and Bass (bass clef). The Piano part consists of chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. The Bass part features a rhythmic line with eighth notes and accents. Chord changes are marked as Am7 and Am6.

In Julio Gutiérrez’ 1952 recording of “Mambo con bebop” (Columbia Records, 1953), the piano guajeo uses a variation on this rhythm. It also shows clear jazz influences, a clear indication of the inspirations of musicians at the time. Example 88 uses a dominant chord with jazz extensions and diminished parallel chords and high register octaves. The use of the high register of the piano allows it to be heard and not overshadowed by the orchestra.

Ex. 88. “Mambo con bebop,” jazz influences. Author transcription.

The musical notation for Ex. 88 is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb). It consists of two staves: Piano (treble and bass clefs). The Piano part consists of chords in both hands. The right hand has a melodic line with eighth notes and a final chord marked with an 8va (octave) symbol. The left hand has a bass line with chords and single notes.



In 1953 the new musical genre of cha cha chá evolved out of the danzón. From its beginnings the musical genre was deeply connected to the dancers and to the rhythmic structure of the genre. The onomatopoeic name of cha cha chá was given to describe the sound produced by the rubbing of the feet of the dancers with the floor. According to Ned Sublette, the genre is often referred to just as “cha cha” in North America, in part because of the recording “El loco cha cha” (Crazy Cha Cha) made by the orchestra of Cuban René Touzet, but in Cuba the genre is called cha cha chá, because the dance steps are: 1-2- cha-cha-chá. The song served as the inspiration for the Kingsmen’s hit “Louie, Louie” and the rhythm of cha cha chá infiltrated the music of North America and became an underlying element in rock and roll. Sublette explains:

In other words, to the familiar white-kids-copying-African-Americans rock and roll genesis story we add a twist: The African American that the white kids were copying was playing a cha cha chá. Rock writers have long known about the cha cha chá origin of what Marsh rightly calls ‘the world’s most famous rock’n’ roll song,’ but I think they have mostly missed the point: it wasn’t an exotic detail. It wasn’t something that was left behind when the song became rock and roll. It was central to what “Louie Louie” was. And “Louie” while a textbook example, is far from an isolated case. Without Cuban music, American music would be unrecognizable. Nor was the Cuban influence merely one of many equally significant flavors. Cuba exercised an important formative influence on music in the United States, or as we imperially call it, American music. But then I’ve come to think of Cuban music as the fundamental music of the new world (Sublette 2007).

Composer, violinist, and band leader Enrique Jorrín composed his two hit songs “Silver Star” and “La engañadora” (The Deceiver). Both tunes were recorded by the Orquesta América of singer Ninón Mondéjar. The two songs are considered cha cha chás even though they were released as danzón and as a mambo-rumba respectively for the Cuban label Panart (Sublette 2007). Other composers were also influential in the development of the musical genre in the 1950s. They include Rosendo Ruiz (“Los marcianos” and “Rico vacilón”), Richard Egües (“El bodeguero”), Félix

Reina (“Como bailan cha cha chá las mejicanas”) and Rafael Lay (“Cero codazos, cero cabezasos”).

The piano accompaniment of the cha cha chá was conceived by imitating the percussive sounds of the guiro and the cowbell. The Cuban classic “El bodeguero” (The Grocer), recorded by the Orchestra Aragón, features the basic piano guajeo of the cha cha chá (see Ex. 89). The right hand of the piano part imitates the cowbell by accentuating beats one and three of the measure, while the left plays on the off beats. The bass line of the sounds the rhythmic cell of the habanera. This form of piano accompaniment is still in use today in contemporary salsa, timba,<sup>23</sup> and other Latin music genres.

Ex. 89. “El bodeguero.” Author transcription.

The musical score for "El bodeguero" is presented in three staves. The top staff is the Chorus, written in treble clef with a key signature of three flats and a 4/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with lyrics: "Toma cho-co-la - te" and "Pa-ga lo que de - bes". The middle staff is the Piano part, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The right hand plays chords on beats 1 and 3, while the left hand plays chords on the off-beats (2 and 4). The bottom staff is the Bass part, written in bass clef, featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes. The entire score is enclosed in a double bar line at the end.

<sup>23</sup> Timba is a Cuban musical genre that combines influences of jazz, American pop, rock, R&B with Afro-Cuban folkloric forms.

In Cuba, pianist Frank Emilio Flynn (1921-2001) had an important role in defining Cuban jazz and in developing the role of the piano during the era of the 50s. His father was an American and his mother a Cuban. He partially lost his eyesight at birth but became completely blind during his late teens. Frank Emilio is considered one of the founders and promoters of the *filin* (feeling) movement of the 40s and 50s.<sup>24</sup> He co-founded the group *Loquibambia* in 1949 along with composer and guitarist José Antonio Méndez, one of the most recognized figures of *filin*. In 1951, he founded the group *Los Modernistas*.

Flynn was an important figure in the fusion of Afro-Cuban genres with jazz forms. In 1958, he co-founded the *Club Cubano de Jazz* and one of its main objectives was to promote the formation of small jazz ensembles of Cuban jazz and to bring American jazz musicians to perform in Cuba (Acosta 2003). The *Grupo Cubano de Música Moderna* was one of these ensembles and was later renamed *Quinteto Instrumental de Música Moderna* (Ratliff 2001). In 1959, Frank Emilio recorded the LP “*Grupo Cubano de Música Moderna*” for Panart”. This LP featured the famous recording of “*Gandinga, mondongo y sandunga.*”

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<sup>24</sup> Feeling was a musical movement that had its roots the Cuban bolero and the canción and was influenced by jazz, other American musical genres, and impressionism.

Ex. 90. "Gandinga, mondongo y sandunga," as played by Frank Emilio in the Cuban Documentary "Nosotros la Música" from 1964. Author transcription.

Piano

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system begins with a double bar line and repeat dots. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The second system features a more active treble staff with eighth-note patterns. The third system continues with similar rhythmic motifs. The fourth system shows a more complex treble staff with sixteenth-note runs. The fifth system is marked with an 8va (octave up) and features a prominent triplet pattern in the treble staff, with the number '3' written below the notes. The bass staff throughout the piece provides a steady accompaniment with chords and single notes.

“Gandinga, mondongo y sandunga” is conceived as a Cuban descarga.<sup>25</sup> It is based on a syncopated rhythmic hemiola, and a melodic line composed in an improvisatory manner. Frank Emilio skillfully connected the melodic line with the piano solo. The melodic line was performed in octaves and with a percussive feel commonly associated with Cuban piano. The harmonic and melodic structure of the piece was based on the D mixolydian modal scale, like Bauza’s “Tanga”.

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<sup>25</sup> A descarga, or jam session, was a musical genre that emerged during the decade of the 1950s and featured primarily Afro-Cuban rhythms combined with elements of jazz.

## Chapter X

### 10.1 The Impact of the Cuban Revolution on Music

After the Cuban revolution of 1959, musicians in Cuba became isolated from one of the largest markets in the world, and the most important for many of the Cuban musical genres. Fidel Castro's appropriation and nationalization of North American companies, including those of the recording industry, led to a fierce economic battle between the United States and the communist Cuban government. While the Cuban government nationalized American properties, the United States responded with economic sanctions. The effect of these political conflicts is still felt today in the music of Cuba. Promoters of Latin music borrowed Cuban genres, such as son and the guaracha, and renamed them as salsa, in part to avoid penalties and disputes with Cuban copyright companies. Initially the term "salsa" was used to describe a vast pool of Latin American musical genres, including cumbia, merengue, plena, bomba, as well as Cuban rhythms of son, guaracha, and mambo. However, during the 1970s the term came to represent only Cuban son, guaracha and mambo and excluded the other Latin American genres.

No one knows for sure where the term came from, but it was probably used first by legendary Cuban composer Ignacio Piñero on his son "Echale salsita" (Put Some Sauce) composed in the 1930s. Renowned composer, arranger and producer Johnny Pacheco was one of the most influential from New York and the first to coin the term "salsa" to characterize Cuban music forms. He explains in the documentary *Yo soy del son a la salsa* (I am from Son to Salsa):

Well, salsa is and always has been Cuban music. What happened was that we added New York influences on Cuban music. Arrangements were a bit more aggressive. But the name of salsa happened because we started touring Europe, foreign countries...in Japan...in Africa, where Spanish was not spoken, Castilian. And to try to not confuse people with

what is guaguancó, guaracha, son montuno and all that, we put tropical music under the same roof and called it salsa.

Nevertheless, son montuno and other Cuban genres had already become some of the most popular musical genres in the Latin American communities in the United States. Thanks to the many contributions of countless musicians from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela and other Latin American countries, the music remained alive during the second half of the twentieth century. The music of son synthesized with other musical genres such as bomba, plena, cumbia, North American jazz, and blues, resulting in the creation of new hybrids and musical developments such as boogaloo.

Son montuno, salsa, and Latin jazz became mainstream in the United States, and later in Latin America. Large communities of Latin American descent in the United States adopted son, its variations, and hybrids. In Cuba, son continued its own development and during the 1970s, 80s and 90s new genres such as *songo*<sup>26</sup> and *timba*<sup>27</sup> acquired new dimensions and new characteristics. It is in the genre of son, where Cuban popular piano had perhaps its best form of expression, but it is in the genre of timba where Cuban popular piano further developed through its fusion with hip hop, rap, jazz, and other musical movements.

The Cuban revolution of 1959 had a deep impact on piano music in the island, and that includes the development of the history of the Cuban piano school. The Cuban piano tradition that began with Edelmann, Saumell and Cervantes during the nineteenth century continued after 1959 with the implementation of drastic reforms in the educational system by the government.

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<sup>26</sup> Songo is a musical sub-genre of son montuno, mambo, and guaracha developed by Cuban legendary orchestra Los Van Van. Songo incorporates and synthesizes elements of Afro-Cuban rumba, North American pop, rock, and funk.

<sup>27</sup> Timba is also a sub-genre of son montuno and salsa. It draws influences from Afro-Cuban musical forms and from American genres such as jazz, funk, and rhythm and blues.

Institutions and music conservatories were now being run by the state and pedagogical standards were required and enacted. Music education became a priority, and it was divided in three stages or levels: elementary, middle, and higher. Each level of musical development (including the piano) was structured in a four-year program with scheduled exams and concerts.

Conservatories such as Paulita Concepción, the Guillermo Tomás conservatory in Guanabacoa, the Manuel Saumell and the Alejandro García Caturla focused on the elementary level of musical education. Some of these institutions focused not only on music but on the arts, some even taught dance and plastic arts. After strict and demanding exams young musicians continued their passage to middle levels of education and in Havana, they were sent to one of two institutions: the Amadeo Roldán conservatory or the Escuela Nacional de Artes. At the same time, as Cuba's government aligned with socialist European countries, Cuban-born pianists received scholarships to continue their education in the former Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries. Not only there were students visiting European countries but also there were European teachers who imparted master classes, and some even lived and stayed in Cuba for long periods of time.

The new government policies affected the views on all North American music and of jazz, which in turn had an important effect on the musical culture of Cuba. During the first years of the revolution, certain types of North American musical genres were viewed as representative of American values, with which Cuban government officials strongly disagreed. Jazz, pop, and rock music were directly targeted as products of capitalism.

Paradoxically, there was a strong jazz movement in Cuba during the 1960s and afterwards and a vast number of jazz bands were formed during those years. Almost every hotel and club



during that decade had a band that played jazz and other music styles. Groups of great significance to the history of jazz in Cuba were formed in the 1950s and 1960s, among them those of pianist Felipe Dulzaides, the Free American Jazz band conducted by American alto saxophonist Eddy Torriente and by pianist Mario Lagarde. The pianist Peruchín formed a variety of jazz ensembles, trios, quartets, and quintets. Leonardo Timor led a jazz band for most of the 1960s and many of its musicians would later join the Orquesta Cubana de Música Moderna (Acosta 2003).

During the same decade Jesus “Chucho” Valdés formed his first jazz group called Quinteto Instrumental de Música Moderna. Their recording of Chucho Valdés’ “Mambo influenciado” is significant because it shows the effects of jazz and bebop on the next generation of Cuban musicians (Ex. 91). Altered and diminished harmonies are part of the basic structure of this piece. The melodic line, however, features an array of syncopated notes consistent with Afro-Cuban rhythmic forms and of course with Bebop.

Ex. 91. “Mambo influenciado.”

The musical score for "Mambo influenciado" is presented in three staves of music. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The first staff contains the following chords: Dm7, Em7(b5), A7, Dm7, Am7(b5), and D7(b9). The second staff contains: Gm7, Em7(b5), A7, Dm7, Cm7, and F7(b9). The third staff contains: BbMaj, Em7(b5), A7(b5), Dm7, and A7(#9). The melody features syncopated rhythms, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and includes triplet markings (indicated by a '3' under a bracket) in the second and third staves. There are also accents (>) and slurs over various notes throughout the piece.

However, it was the band Irakere founded in 1973 that had the biggest influence on popular music. The group was directed by pianist Chucho Valdés and among its members were some of the most important jazz musicians in Cuba, including Paquito D’Rivera, Carlos Emilio Morales, Carlos del Puerto, Enrique Plá, Arturo Sandoval, Jorge Varona, Carlos Averoff, Oscar Valdés, and later the band was joined by trumpet players José Greco, Juan Manguía, and Jorge Varona, José Luis Cortez “El Tosco”, Germán Velasco, and Carlos Averoff, on woodwinds. Irakere combined elements of Afro-Cuban percussion with jazz, rock, and Brazilian rhythms. The band was highly influential in the creation of the genre of timba in the 1990s, which combined all those elements. Timba redefined the piano montuno.

## 10. 2 The Piano Montuno and Timba

The piano montuno was further developed by a new generation of Cuban pianists in the 1990s who explored the possibilities of the instrument within the framework of timba and developed the montuno further. Improvisatory elements from jazz and the traditional format of the accompaniment style were combined to create new shapes and musical traits. Many of these new trends have become staples of Latin jazz and contemporary salsa.

When asked to compare the role of the piano in timba and in salsa music, Gerardo Piloto answered: “I think in salsa the piano is more stable and guided, in timba, the piano has more freedom as in jazz. For example, in our arrangements I write almost all the tumbaos, but Marcus sometimes changes it because he feels it differently and to date, I have never had to ask him to return to the original tumbao I wrote. I think the timba pianist, if he has it running through his blood, will automatically do things that fit in.” (Giraldo Piloto Interview, Nov. 2000, timba.com). When Piloto describes a “more stable montuno”, he is referring to a more traditional approach

which maintains the conventional rhythmic intricacies of son montuno as opposed to the stylistic traits of the timba pianist, which are more dynamic, freer, and syncopated.

The first ‘official’ timba album, the LP *En la Calle* (On The Street), was released by N.G. la Banda in 1990. Along with Irakere and the band Los Van Van, N.G. la Banda were major contributors to the new style of timba. We also must credit Los Van Van for developing the genre of *songo*, which was the forerunner of timba. Timba was a musical genre that fused a variety of musical elements that include rock, jazz, rhythm and blues and funk with Afro-Cuban rhythms. It featured virtuosic bebop-influenced horn lines which were first introduced by Irakere. Timba also featured more complex bass and piano *guajeos* and band breakdowns derived from rumba. During these breakdowns, the bass and parts of the percussion section momentarily stop playing the rhythm, leaving just the piano montuno with the guiro. The bass and the percussion play “ponches” as well as fills and improvised rhythmic motives.<sup>28</sup>

The song “La expresiva” from the LP *En la Calle* is considered one of the earliest examples of the timba movement. The piano montuno here (Ex. 92), played by Rodolfo Argudín “Peruchín”<sup>29</sup> is an example of a timba piano montuno at the band break-down. Syncopations and irregular rhythmic groups derived from rumba predominate throughout the montuno. Peruchín himself describes his approach and influences:

I play all montunos with all my fingers, making the instrument sound with a more orchestral force, with the African polyrhythms. NG broke with the traditional tonic and dominant schemes. I used the piano in NG la Banda with a rhythmic and melodic sense, we played

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<sup>28</sup> Ponches is derived from the English word “punches”.

<sup>29</sup> Rodolfo Argudín “Peruchin” is the grandson of the renowned pianist Pedro Nolasco Justín Rodríguez, also known as “Peruchin”.

with the meter, but always respecting the “closed march” of Cuban music. All this combined with all the precision and professional grip with bassist Feliciano Arango.<sup>30</sup>

Ex. 92. “La expresiva,” chorus and refrain. Author transcription.

The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system contains the chorus and the beginning of the refrain. The second system contains the remainder of the refrain. The instruments are: Coro (Vocal), Piano (Piano), Bass (Bass), and Güiro (Güiro). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as chords (D6, A7), triplets, accents, and dynamic markings (sim.).

**System 1: Chorus**

Chords: D6, D6, A7, A7

Lyrics: De'l Ve da do Soy de'l Ve da do

**System 2: Refrain**

Chords: D6, D6, A7, A7

<sup>30</sup> Rodolfo Argudín Justiz “Peruchin” (afrocubaweb.com)

“La sandunguita,” (Ex. 93) recorded in 1994 by singer Issac Delgado, features another type of timba piano montuno in the introduction. It uses a typical dominant and tonic alternation that repeats a melodic motive harmonized in tenths. It begins with a traditional harmonic approach of thirds and tenths, followed by chords derived from jazz harmonies and extensions such as thirteens, and altered harmonies. The mixture of classical musical traits with North American jazz are once again the foundation of many of these forms of accompaniment.

Ex. 93. “La sandunguita.” Author transcription.

The musical score for Ex. 93, "La sandunguita," is presented in two systems. The first system consists of four measures with the following chords: C m6, G 7(b9), G 7, and C m. The second system consists of four measures with the following chords: C m6, G 7(b9), D b13, G 7alt, and A b7. The score is written for piano in 4/4 time, featuring a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Iván “Melón” González’ montuno introduction in “Deja que Roberto te toque” illustrates a slightly different approach using continuous eighth notes (Ex. 94). Here, the montuno is four measures long and is repeated to make an eight-measure montuno. The use of right-hand octaves is like that of “Castellano que bueno baila usted,” although it is performed on the high register of the piano. The left hand emphasizes the melodic line in unison, typical of most piano montunos of the timba era. Harmonically González uses chord jazz extensions and altered- dominant chords.

Ex. 94. “Deja que Roberto te toque.” Author transcription.

8<sup>va</sup>

D6 Em7 Aadd9(#5) D

D6 Em7 Aadd9(#5) D

Although many of these types of accompaniment forms evolved from the piano solos and improvisations of many Cuban pianists during the 1950s and 1960s, they have become part of the language of many contemporary pianists in the world of popular music in Cuba, Latin America, and the United States. The piano montuno and its derivatives, together with Cuban musical genres that include the guaracha, mambo, cha cha chá relocated to the United States. Many of these musical forms were preserved by countless gifted pianists such as Eddy Palmieri, Charlie Palmieri, Larry Harlow, Oscar Hernández, Sergio George, and many others. They continued the tradition while maintaining the traditional form of the Cuban guajeo.

## Chapter XI

### 11.1 Summary and Conclusions

The history of Cuban piano and its role in the development of Cuban musical nationalism begins in the early eighteenth century with Estevan de Salas y Castro, Juan París and Antonio Rafellin. Their musical works set the stage for pianist and composer Manuel Saumell and his piano contradanzas which, for the first time, reflected the confluence of cultures and people. Saumell's unfinished opera was also an expression of Cuban nationalism with its characters drawn from the diverse classes and countries of peoples found in Cuba at that time. Cervantes continued this trajectory of Cuban nationalistic expression with his piano danzas which were classical in form and romantic in character and inspired by the music of Chopin. Cervantes also included African musical elements that were already present on the music of the Saumell.

The European and African musical and rhythmic elements that Saumell and Cervantes combined in their piano compositions represent the roots of early Cuban piano music. European musical elements, including baroque, classical and romantic musical forms, along with African rhythmic elements were essential components of early folkloric Cuban music and dance and these composers combined all of these in their piano compositions. In doing so, they developed a musical form unique to the island of Cuba and created a formal schematic of fundamental structures and styles that remain and are recognized as Cuban music today. Rhythmic motives, including the habanera, the tresillo and the cinquillo and variations of these traits were found in the music of early piano composers and have endured with some limited modifications, variations, and ornamentation since the beginning. Saumell and Cervantes effectively sowed the seeds of the

Cuban piano school by combining these musical traits and establishing the piano as a beloved instrument and symbol of national pride.

Jean-Frédéric Edelman and Louis Moreau Gottschalk were also central figures in the early development of Cuban piano and its role as an expression of Cuban musical nationalism. Edelman launched the Cuban musical system and as such, is regarded as the father of the Cuban school of piano. He was a major influence on Cuban pianists Pablo Devernine and Fernando Aristi, who became known internationally as performers and later dedicated his life to educating Cuban pianists. Gottschalk travelled throughout Cuba absorbing the musical essence of the island and later disseminated its musical forms and styles.

The late nineteenth century and the early twentieth brought new figures that played a vital role in building a pedagogical foundation in the island. Three significant musicians in the development of the Cuban piano school were Carlos Alfredo Peyrellade (1840-1908), Hubert de Blanck (1856-1932), and Benjamín Orbón (1874-1944). The Dutch Hubert de Blanck was the founder of one of the first and most influential music conservatories in Cuba, the Hubert De Blank Conservatory of Music which opened its doors in 1885 and was later renamed the National Conservatory (Gell Fernández-Cueto 2008). When Hubert de Blanck was arrested and deported by the Spanish authorities for supporting the independence war, Carlos Alfredo Peyrellade took over his conservatory (Rijckaert 2013). Later Peyrellade opened two conservatories, one in Havana and another in the province of Camagüey.

The Asturian Benjamín Orbón was also an active piano teacher, composer, and performer. He was the founder of the Orbón Conservatory. These conservatories served as the most influential music institutions at the turn of the twentieth century. Countless Cuban musicians developed their craft on these establishments and among the most renowned are Alberto Falcón (who founded the



Alberto Falcón Conservatory), Ernestina Lecuona, Ernesto Lecuona, Margot Rojas (1903-1996), Dulce María Serret (1898-1989), and Maria Jones de Castro (Gell Fernández-Cueto 2008).

María Jones de Castro (1895-1963) was responsible for creating a repertoire for piano pedagogy based on Cuban music and founded the International Conservatory in 1925 with teachers such as Margot Rojas, Gonzalo Roig, Fernando Anckerman and others (Giro 2009). Her student Jorge Bolet expressed his admiration for Maria Jones de Castro on the preface of her own book *Scientific Laws applied to Piano Teaching* (1957): “In my opinion, the secret of this admirable book is found in the paragraph on page 100, in which the author emphasizes the fact that ‘the piano is played more with the mind than with the fingers’. That’s where all the technique and piano mechanics are wrapped up!”

Other key figures in the development of piano music in Cuba at the beginning of the century were Joaquin Nin Castellanos (1879-1949) and César Pérez Sentenat (1896-1973). Both had successful careers as performers and educators. Sentenat had a busy touring career and composed a series of piano pedagogy books which are still in use today in Cuba such as *El Jardín de Ismaelillo*, with easy piano pieces on Cuban melodies and rhythms, *La Pequeña Revanbaramba*, *Six Inventions for 2 voices of Johan Sebastien Bach for four hands*, and other numerous works for piano. His compositional style is defined as a nationalist musical expression of the Cuban countryside with Afro-Cuban and Spanish characteristics. Sentenat became professor and director of the Guillermo M. Tomas Conservatory of Music in Guanabacoa in 1961.

There is a long list of highly successful pianists and educators who pursued a successful performance career in Cuba before the revolution of 1959. Among them are Emma Badia, Rosario Franco, Ñola Sahig, Ester Ferrer, Luis Gonzales Rojas, Huberal Herrera, and Silvio Rodriguez

Cárdenas. Many of them became piano teachers themselves and had long and fruitful careers as educators raising piano pedagogy in Cuba to the highest standards.

Ernesto Lecuona, who began his studies at the Peyrellade Conservatory, is perhaps the single most important figure in the development of Cuban piano in the twentieth century. Lecuona's piano compositions combined the most important cultural influences present at the time and further contribute to the Cuban nationalistic musical movement. Lecuona, along with Saumell, Cervantes, were essential in establishing the piano as a central instrument in Cuban music and culture. They established the Cuban piano school and formed authentic musical hybrids by melding Western classical musical elements with African rhythmic elements of music. Together, they defined Cuban nationalism through music and later it would become an expression of *cubanía*.

As the popularity of the piano and its unique Cuban melodies and rhythms grew, the instrument became essential to the popular musical ensemble *charanga francesa*, which replaced the *orquesta típica cubana* at the end of the eighteenth century. Pianist and composer Antonio María Romeu played a vital role in making the piano an essential part of the genre of the *danzón* and of popular music. Romeu played the first recorded piano solo in the history of Cuban popular music, and in doing so, laid the foundation for the Cuban-styled piano solo.

Arsenio Rodríguez added the piano to his *conjunto de son* and reinvented and expanded the role of the instrument in popular music. As the role of the piano flourished in the *conjunto de son*, the piano the *montuno* was created, and would become one of the main forms of accompaniment of a variety of Latin musical genres, including Latin jazz, salsa, and timba. Many prominent pianists collaborated with Arsenio Rodríguez including Anselmo Sacasas, who was the first ever to record a piano *montuno* as part of his solo on "Dolor cobarde." Other major contributors to the development of the Cuban piano style are Lino Frías, Adolfo O'Reilly, Rubén

González, Bebo Valdés and Lili Martínez, the latter of which made significant contributions to the musical genre of mambo.

In the late 40s and 50s the figures of Peruchín, Julio Gutiérrez and José Curbelo were also important to the evolution of Cuban piano styles by combining Afro-Cuban forms with jazz chordal extensions and bebop melodic lines. This represents an important development because the influences of North American jazz, bebop and blues became part of mainstream piano forms and defining influences on the music of Cuba to this day.

Ironically jazz remained prevalent following the 1959 Cuban revolution and it continued to be an essential form of expression for Cuban musicians. Even so, it was Afro-Cuban musical forms combined with jazz, pop and rock that suffused Cuban popular music, as evident by the music of Orquesta Cubana de Música Moderna, the Grupo de Experimentación Sonora (Group of Sound Experimentation), Irakere and Los Van Van. This fusion of diverse musical elements began with Mario Bauzá during the 1940s and continued during the 1950s and 1960s, would also determine the characteristics of new Cuban popular genres such as timba and Latin jazz styles.

Emilio Flynn and Chucho Valdés' achievements and artistry during the 1960s and 1970s were important for the continued evolution of popular piano music and provided foundation for the next generation of Cuban pianists that followed them. They include Hilario Durán, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Emiliano Salvador, and Hernán López Nuza, who along with many others, cemented the role of the piano in popular culture.

There is a long list of pianists, pedagogues, and musicologists who continued the piano tradition after the 1959. It includes Jorge Gómez, Esther Ferrer, Labraña, Silvio Rodríguez Cárdenas, Cecilio Tiele, Frank Fernandez, Karelia Escalante, César López, Ninowska Fernández-

Britto, Alicia Perea, Hortensia Upmann, Danae Ulacia, María Teresa Pita, Mercedes Estévez, Andrea Mesa, Bárbara Díaz Alea, Silvia Echevarría, Hilda Melis, Andrés Alén, Teresita Irañeta, Viera Ulaskievich, Isabel Clavera, María Caridad Valdés, Rita María Vega, Mirian Valdés, Mirian Cruz, Rosalía Capote, María Dolores Novás, Ulises Hernández, Víctor Rodríguez, Jorge Luis Prats, Roberto Urbay, Ileana Bautista, Teresa Junco, Margot Dias Dorticos, Angela Quintana, María Matilde Alea, and many more.

Some pianists left Cuba at the beginning of the Cuban revolution and had outstanding careers and performers and educators. They include Horacio Gutiérrez (Orovio 2004), Santiago Rodríguez,<sup>31</sup> Ivette Hernández,<sup>32</sup> and Zeyda Ruga Susuki<sup>33</sup> who served as associate professor and head of the chamber music department at the Laval University in Quebec. It is also important mention Zenaida Manfugáz, who split her career between Cuba, Spain, and the United States. Manfugáz is considered one of the best pianists in Cuban history and is an inspiration to many young pianists and musicians. Manfugáz admired Martin Luther King and his idea of “no violence”. She represented many Cuban musicians who have left the country in search of a better life. In her own words: “Quieran o no quieran, yo pertenezco a la cultura cubana” (Like it or not, I belong to Cuban culture).<sup>34</sup>

This cultural development continues today, and further research will shed light on many aspects of Cuban piano such as the role of the instrument in the current environment, as well as

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<sup>31</sup> Santiago Rodríguez. <http://santiagorodriguez.net/Biography.html>

<sup>32</sup> Ivette Hernández. Historias de Guantánamo. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMFHZ8t2C3g>

<sup>33</sup> Zeyda Susuki,. The Canadian Encyclopedia. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/zeyda-susuki-emc>

<sup>34</sup> Zenaida Manfugáz. [www.ellugareno.com/2010/11/zenaida-manfugas-manos-de-luz-sobre-el.html](http://www.ellugareno.com/2010/11/zenaida-manfugas-manos-de-luz-sobre-el.html)

the external influences on the music of Cuban pianists living abroad. My goal has been to ascertain the key influences that have shaped popular piano music as well as to determine the main ingredients of Cuban music. My research identified the cultural, economic, and social forces that have shaped the culture and the character of the people of Cuba and in turn Cuban music. Cuban music is inextricably entwined with its history of immigration, relocation, and multi-cultural exchange, a history spanning more than five centuries.

Cuban piano has a promising future with its strong tradition and pool of talented Cuban pianists on the island and abroad today. Many modern Cuban pianists actively contribute to the evolution and global dissemination of the Cuban school of piano. Many have emigrated to other countries, and in doing so enriched musical cultures around the globe. It is worth noting that these ex-patriate pianists and composers retain their musical identity as true representative of the culture and styles of Cuban music. Cuban pianists that contributed to the dissemination of popular musical forms around the world include Gabriel Hernández, Pucho López, Tony Pérez, Miguel de Armas, Aldo López-Gavilán, Orlando “Cachaito” López, Roberto Carcassés, César López, and Tirso Duarte. In turn these brilliant pianists have paved the way for yet another generation of Cuban pianists, including Iván “Melón” Lewis, David Virelles, Rolando Luna, Harold López-Nusa, Roberto Fonseca, Alfredo Rodríguez, Luis Guerra, Osmani Paredes and others.

This study has outlined the history and development of the piano as a vehicle which transported Cuban popular music across the generations and the world. This evolution has been a consistent application and development of the physical and sensual elements as represented by a musical expression that is directly linked to the corporal movements and bodily expression of the dance and folk rhythms most naturally expressed in the habanera rhythms of the tango. The European artistic roots, styles, and traditional performance techniques of the piano were never

fully abandoned or betrayed by the Cuban pianists and composers but remained as the essential underpinnings which supported the application and blending of numerous folkloric elements selected and adapted from a diverse range of cultures and traditions. The multi-ethnic personality of Cuban music has remained a cultural constant, an expression of the people themselves, and a national healing balm across centuries of immigration, regime change, revolution, war, and political isolation. It is worth considering that despite political situational changes, power shifts, and policy reversals the music has developed and existed in its own sphere - unaffected by the transitory nature of governments and national leaders. Politics change and ruling parties come and go but the music continues to groove!

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