



Cayambis Institute for Latin American Studies in Music
Latin American Classical Notes — Hosted by John L. Walker
Program 013 : August 21, 2021

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Alberto Ginastera (ARG, 1945): Duo for flute and oboe. Ginastera composed this three-movement duet for flutist Carelton Sprague Smith and oboist Lois Wann while visiting the US in 1945. Two years later, the two musicians premiered the work at the New York Public Library. Writing about the performance in the *New York Herald*, Virgil Thomson said, “this is the kind of music that makes one believe in the New World. Certainly no such sweetness is coming out of Europe these days, as you may well imagine.” The subtitles of its three movements are Sonata, Pastoral and Fuga.

- Anna Noakes, flute / John Anderson, oboe. “Ginastera Chamber Music,” ASV.

Julián Orbón (CUB, 1953): Tres versiones sinfónicas, I, Pavana. Orbón’s international outlook made him one of the most outstanding Cuban composers of his generation. His earlier music reveals a straightforward but intense expression, and a rhythmic forcefulness. But with his works composed after 1950, the earlier Spanish influence in his music gradually became less evident. Béhague, says, for example, that he seemed to have been “searching at that time for a more personal idiom, harmonically more tense and less committed to tonality.” A good example of this can be found in his *Tres versiones sinfónicas*.

- Simón Bolívar S. O. of Venezuela / Eduardo Mata. “Music of Latin American Masters,” Dorian.

Rodolfo Halffter (MEX, 1954): Tres piezas para orquesta de cuerdas. Born in Spain in 1900, in 1939, this composer settled in Mexico. The music of this period can be characterized by its harmonic and rhythmic complexity, as well as by his insight into tone-color. But, as a teacher of composition, by the early 1950s he had begun to foster twelve-tone and other serial procedures. However, his own approach to these methods is quite loose. A good example of this can be heard in his *Tres piezas*, which can be characterized by repetitions of melodic ideas, rhythmic patterns and harmonies.

- Orquesta de la UNAM / Eduardo Mata. “Unknown title,” RCA Red Seal.

Claudio Santoro (BRA, 1960): Canto de amor e paz. Santoro was a student of Koellreutter, who introduced him to twelve-tone techniques. However, in 1948, under the influence of Socialist realism, he began a transitional process that would lead to a musical style more clearly characteristic of nationalism. During the 1950s he toured the Soviet Union and eastern bloc countries performing and recording several of his most recent compositions, including *Canto de amor e paz*. This tendency, though, was short-lived. By the early 1960s, his music had shifted back towards serialism.

- O. S. do Teatro Nacional Cláudio Santoro / Sérgio Kuhlmann. “Brasília ano 35,” Sony.

Juan Carlos Paz (ARG, 1961): Invención. The most radical composer of his generation, Paz’s opposition to programmatic musical concepts, his militant promotion of Schönberg’s techniques, and his consistent campaign against musical nationalism made him a unique pioneer of cutting-edge music in Latin America. Commissioned by the University of Tucumán, *Invención* is based on a tone-row that consists of four groups of three notes, and is organized in such a way so that the second half is the inversion of the first.

- Ensemble Aventure. “Juan Carlos Paz,” Wergo.

Carlos Chávez (MEX, 1961): *Soli No. II, I, Preludio*. This work, commissioned in 1961 by the Second Inter-American Music Festival, held in Washington that same year, was premiered on April 23 by the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet. The work is based on a principle of non-repetition, that is, Chávez avoids the elements of symmetry and recapitulation normally associated with serialism. The performance received three brief reviews. The critic for the *Washington Post* said that “the music has immense spirit and a versatility of ideas of compelling interest.” The five sections of this piece are intended to be played without pause.

- Southwest Chamber Music. “Complete Works of Carlos Chávez, vol. 2,” Cambria.

Roque Cordero (PAN, 1962): *Violin Concerto, I*. Cordero is a particularly important Caribbean composer. After advanced studies here in the U.S., he returned to Panama, where he contributed substantially to the development of musical organizations in that country. His violin concerto is considered to be a truly virtuoso work, not only for the violinist but also for the orchestra. It’s based on a twelve-tone set that opens with a major seventh, which is similar to a number of his earlier compositions.

- Sanford Allen / Detroit S. O. / Paul Freeman. “Black Composers Series, no. 4,” Columbia.

Mesías Maiguashca (ECU, 1971): *Ayayayayay*. I wrote an article in 2016 about the development of musical nationalism in Ecuador. In it, I concluded that unlike the indigenism of the early part of the 20th century, in the decades after WW II a number of Ecuador’s composers had found a clearer path by which to express musical nationalism in that country. But along the way, I talked about this piece, because it’s an outlier in a catalog that mostly reveals the strong influence of Karlheinz Stockhausen. Using an approach known as “musique concrete,” yes, you’ll hear bits and pieces of Ecuador’s national anthem, and the voices of street vendors, but for me, these elements don’t make this anything other than a universalist work.

- [Electronics]. “Mesías Maiguashca,” Producciones mañana.

Mario Lavista (MEX, 1982): *Marsias*. In this piece, the composer explores the interaction of an oboe and a set of eight tuned crystal goblets played by six musicians. The tuned goblets provide a harmonic environment based on perfect fifths, that is, intervals of perfect consonance traditionally associated with the divine. The fifths, however, are linked by tritones, which is in representation of *diabolus in musica* (the devil in music). At times, the oboe blends with the harmonic environment, and at times it’s in contradiction with it. But throughout, the harmonic backdrop works as a kind of bubble inside of which the oboe freely roams.

- Carmen Thierry. “Oboemia: Música mexicana para oboe solo,” Conaculta.