



**Cayambis Institute for Latin American Studies in Music**  
**Latin American Classical Notes — Hosted by John L. Walker**  
**Program 39 : April 3, 2022**

**Julián Orbón (CUB, 1953): *Tres versiones sinfónicas, III, “Xylophone.”*** 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 Symphony Orchestra / Eduardo Mata. “Music of Latin American Masters,” Dorian.

**Oscar Lorenzo Fernández (BRA, 1930): *Reisado do Pastoreio, III, “Batuque.”*** In addition to his compositions, Fernández contributed to musical folklorism in Brazil as a conductor not only of his own works, but particularly those of Villa-Lobos. The syncopation of rural origin that is featured in this movement dates back to Catholic popular festivals, especially Portuguese ones, that became mixed with religious traditions of African origin.

• São Paulo Symphony Orchestra / Roberto Minczuk. “Dansas brasileiras,” BIS Records.

**Arturo Márquez (MEX, 1996): *Danzón no. 4.*** After formal training in France that was leading Márquez toward *avant-garde* music, the composer made the deliberate choice to return to traditional harmony, counterpoint and orchestration. Thus, during the early 1990s he began a series of *danzones*, based on a form that reveals its early origins as having been one of the social dances popular among the ruling classes during the Colonial period.

• Camerata de las Américas / Joel Sachs. “Conga-Line in Hell,” Dorian.

**Ricardo Castillo (GUA, 1944): *Estelas de Tikal.*** Tikal is the ruin of an ancient city in what is now northern Guatemala. At the base of Tikal’s North Acropolis stands a row of stelae, each of which depicts a sumptuously bedecked king. In this composition, Castillo uses different themes which come from Mam and Quiché folklore and were written down by his brother Jesús, with added themes of his own invention.

• Moscow Symphony Orchestra / Antonio de Almeida “Guatemala,” Marco Polo.

**Heitor Villa-Lobos (BRA, 1940): *Mandu Çarará.*** Mandu Çarará is the god of dance. In this work, Villa-Lobos establishes a contrast between the style of a sullen adult choir, which represents the Curupira, a mythological creature of Brazilian folklore, and the lightness of a frisky children’s choir, which sings a Nheengatu text—the language of some 3000 people that live in northwestern Brazil—that has a strongly onomatopoeic character. Frank Coleman described the work as “startling,” and that it “impresses by its boldness and vigor,” after it was performed at Tanglewood in 1949. In addition, in his review he provided a useful description that will help guide us through this work: “The chorus sings to syllables imitating Brazilian tongues, and even bark on occasion. The only word they pronounce is the dancer’s name, Mandu-çarará, intoned like a chant as the final triumphal dance begins.”

• Orquesta Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo / Isaac Karabtchevsky. “Heitor Villa-Lobos,” Naxos.

**Silvestre Revueltas (MEX, 1932): *Cuauhnáhuac.*** The title of this work, derived from a Nahuatl word that means “near the forest,” was the name given by the Tlahuica people to the capital city of their province. Although the work is similar to the primitivist folk-like style of early Stravinsky, its opening section reveals a blend of Stravinskyian and impressionist elements. Though simple in form, each of its component sections is quite complex.

• Orquesta Sinfónica de la Ciudad de México / Enrique Bátiz. “Música mexicana, vol. 3,” ASV.

**Theodoro Valcárcel (PER, 1940), *Concierto indio, I*, “Allegro festivo.”** Valcárcel studied at the Milan Conservatory, and in Barcelona was a pupil of Felipe Pedrell. Returning to Peru in 1920, eight years later he won a national prize in composition. He composed a number of folk songs, two ballets, a violin concerto, a variety of orchestral works and several chamber pieces.

- Württembergische P. R. / G. Castagna .“Fiesta criolla,” Chandos.

**Carlos Chávez (MEX, 1936): *Sinfonía india*.** This composition represents Chávez’s other approach to indigenism, a way which is different than that in *Xochipilli*. Although it includes literal quotations of indigenous melodies as its thematic material, his simultaneous use of different metric subdivisions of the basic pulse is characteristic of *mestizo*, rather than ancient indigenous music.

- Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México / Enrique Bátiz, “Carlos Chávez : Three Symphonies,” ASV.

**Miguel del Aguila (URU, 1994): *Conga-Line in Hell*.** Here’s the composer explaining how this work came to be: “It began in my imagination as the visual image of an endless line of dead people dancing through the fire of hell. I gradually started hearing the music, and Dante’s Paolo and Francesca de Rimini story soon became part of the scene. This inferno is humorous, sarcastic, grotesque and at times also terrifying. I rely mainly on the dramatic and expressive qualities of rhythm to convey the evil forces that govern my imaginary hell. As thematic material I primarily use claves as they are used in Latin American music [as] a sort of ‘rhythmic tonality’ to which harmony and melody music conform.”

- Camerata de las Américas / Joel Sachs. “Conga-Line in Hell,” Dorian.

**Alberto Ginastera (ARG, 1941): *Four Dances from “Estancia”*.** This is an orchestral suite from a one-act ballet that references *gaucho* literature, rural folk dances and urban concert music. The title, which means “ranch,” tells the story of a city boy in love with a rancher’s daughter. We’ll be listening to four dances from the ballet, “Los trabajadores agrícolas,” “Danza del trigo,” “Los peones de hacienda,” and the final dance, “Malambo.”

- Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra / Gustavo Dudamel. “Fiesta,” Deutsche Grammophon.

**Antonio Estévez (VEN, 1942): *Mediodía en el llano*.** Estévez discarded the outer two movements of what had been a three-movement suite, saying, “even though this movement seems to me the suite’s most arid part, it is also the most Venezuelan.” Shaded in impressionism, the piece coalesces into a contemplative elegy to the fundamental landscape of Venezuela.

- Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra / Eduardo Mata. “Music of Latin American Masters,” Dorian.

**Julián Aguirre (ARG, 1920): “Caminito.”** By around this same time, Aguirre had begun to write a number of songs for voice and piano that are collectively known as “*Canciones argentinas*.” In these songs, along with a number of his other small-scale instrumental pieces, the essence of his music is revealed, that is, the blending of European and American elements, which, according to scholars, “constitute[s] the true fountainhead of musical nationalism in Argentina.”

- David Guzman / Natalia Katyukova. “Latin-American Songs,” CD Baby.