



Cayambis Institute for Latin American Studies in Music
Latin American Classical Notes — Hosted by John L. Walker
Program 045, May 22, 2022

Manuel Ponce (MEX, 1917): *Chapultepec: Symphonic Sketches, IV, “Canto y danza.”* Ponce, the “father of Mexican music,” is the most performed Mexican composer worldwide. The symphonic *Chapultepec* was his first large-scale orchestral work and was also the first Mexican orchestral work written in a style that is similar to French impressionism. Each of its four movements bears a suggestive subtitle.

- Orquesta Sinfónica de San Luis Potosí / J. Miramontes Zapata. “Orchestral Music, vol. 1,” Toccata Classics.

Manuel Ponce (MEX, 1923): *Sonata mexicana, I, “Bailecito del Revozo.”* This work became one of the first guitar sonatas composed in the 20th century.

- Andrés Segovia, guitar. “Mexicana,” DG.

Manuel Ponce (MEX, 1919): *Scherzino maya.* Alternating binary and ternary rhythms, the meter and character of this work for piano are reminiscent of the *jarana*, a regional *son* from the Yucatán peninsula in the south-east of the country.

- Héctor Rojas, piano. “Manuel Ponce : Obra completa para piano,” Tempus Clásico.

Manuel Ponce (MEX, 1932): *String Quartet, I.* In 1925, Ponce set out for an extended European trip. Writing about this period, musicologist Robert Stevenson notes that from about this time Ponce’s musical style began to become “immeasurably more contrapuntal and his rhythms tauter.”

- Cuarteto Latinoamericano. “Manuel M. Ponce : Música para instrumentos de arco,” Urtext.

Manuel Ponce (MEX, 1929): *Suite sinfónica, IV.* This four-movement suite on themes from Albéniz’s opera, *Merlín*, was the second musical task that Ponce undertook for the Albéniz family. In it, Ponce succeeds in concentrating the musical and dramatic discourse of a complete opera in under eighteen minutes, without the need for words or singers, thus demonstrating his mastery of thematic integration.

- Orquesta Sinfónica de San Luis Potosí / J. Miramontes Zapata. “Orchestral Music, vol. 1,” Toccata Classics.

Manuel Ponce (MEX, 1947): *Instantáneas mexicanas, I, “Canto de la Malinche.”* This cycle of Mexican snapshots reflects both aspects of pre-Conquest history and the cultural diversity of the composer’s own time. Its six sections are subtitled, “Canto de la Malinche,” “Música indígena,” “Canción popular,” “Baile del bajío,” “Danza I,” and “Danza II.”

- Orquesta Sinfónica de San Luis Potosí / J. Miramontes Zapata. “Orchestral Music, vol. 1,” Toccata Classics.

Manuel Ponce (MEX, 1912): *Estampas nocturnas, “La noche.”* These nocturnal engravings for string orchestra were originally composed for solo piano. When taken together, they display all the virtues of effective writing for strings, such as balance, contrast and transparency, while at the same time revealing a clear relationship to the string serenades of the late 19th century. The first movement begins by evoking the mysterious atmosphere of night.

- Orquesta Sinfónica de San Luis Potosí / J. Miramontes Zapata. “Orchestral Music, vol. 1,” Toccata Classics..

Manuel Ponce (MEX, 1923): *Sonata mexicana, III, “Intermedio tapatío.”* This movement evokes a well-known popular tune, “*Vamos a tomar atole*” (Let’s drink *atole*) from the “*Jarabe Tapatío*,” which is commonly known as the Mexican Hat Dance.

- Andrés Segovia “Mexicana,” Decca.

Oscar Lorenzo Fernández (BRA, 1947): *Sonata breve*. This was Fernández's last work before his untimely death during the following year. It's a dense work that reveals a composer in full maturity, and with its bold harmonies and vigorous style it points towards new perspectives of a future production that unfortunately would not come to fruition.

- Leonor de Macedo Costa, piano. "Lorenzo Fernández, vol. 2," Radio MEC.

Oscar Lorenzo Fernández (BRA, 1947): *Symphony No. 2, "O Caçador de Esmeraldas," IV*. This a work of programmatic character, that one could even characterize as a symphonic poem in the form of a symphony, having as its source of inspiration the epic poem of the same name by Olavo Bilac, whose initial verses of each part of the poem are inscribed in the score.

- Orquesta Sinfônica Brasileira / Alceo Bocchino. "Lorenzo Fernández, vol. 2," Radio MEC.

Oscar Lorenzo Fernández (BRA, 1927): *String Quartet, I*. Composed in 1927, the first of Fernández's two quartets combines strong lyricism and a rather daring harmonic language in an atmosphere impregnated with Brazilianness, particularly present in the rhythmic accents of the first movement.

- Quarteto de Cordas da Radio MEC. "Lorenzo Fernández, vol. 1," Radio MEC.

Oscar Lorenzo Fernández (BRA, 1926): *Suite, op. 37 (complete)*. Each of this work's four movements is subtitled, there's "Twilight in the Jungle," "Sacy-Peréré," "Song of the Dawn," and "Morning Gaiety." The "Saci perêre" is a legendary one-legged red-capped little Afro-Brazilian boy who comes out at night to cause mischief. He announces his presence with a weird, supernatural whistle that cannot be localized by human beings. In this piece, the perpetual background noises of the jungle are occasionally heard in repeated figurations, especially in the upper winds.

- Quinteto Numen de Buenos Aires. "Latin American Composers," Testigo.

Oscar Lorenzo Fernández (BRA, 1933): *Sete canções, "Canção ao Luar"*. Master of the Brazilian art-song, Fernández contributed decisively to the definitive consolidation of the formal and expressive characteristics of Brazilian song, through a numerous and diversified production.

- Maria de Lourdes Cruz Lopes, soprano / Gerardo Parente, piano. "Lorenzo Fernández, vol. 2," Radio MEC

Oscar Lorenzo Fernández (BRA, 1920): *Miragem*. This work was composed during the first of Fernández's three periods of composition, during which one can see either the influence of French impressionism or the use of bitonalism. In neither case, however, does Fernández incorporate Brazilian thematic material into his music. This, of course, would change in 1922, when he adopted a strong nationalistic tendency by using folkloric themes.

- Miguel Proença, piano. "Obra integral para piano," Biscoito Classico.

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.

- Boston Pops Orchestra / Keith Lockhart. "The Latin Album," BMG.