

Flute Music by Latin American Women Composers:  
A Performance Guide of the Works of Awilda Villarini, Adina Izarra, Gabriela Ortiz and  
Angélica Negrón

By  
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Musical Arts.

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### **Abstract**

The Latin American flute repertoire is vast, but there are only a few composers that are consistently included internationally in conservatory curriculae and concert programs. Instead, most music performed in concert and symphony halls across the world was composed by European male composers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Like other women composers around the globe, Latin American women composers are conspicuously absent from concert programs, and their works are seldom heard in public.

Latin America has a rich history of art music, which varies from region to region and country to country. There are many Latin-American countries and classical music arrived at different times and circumstances. The European classical music tradition was transplanted to the Americas with the arrival of the Spaniards in 1492. During the colonial period, from 1492 to early 19<sup>th</sup> century, church was the most important music center. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the wake of the Independence movements, nationalism became the main musical movement in Latin America. Many composers in Latin America incorporated elements of ancient native cultures and created a new aesthetic.

In early twentieth century, as is true of composers in Europe and the United States, composers in Latin America developed an array of musical styles and techniques beyond nationalism. Many were trained in their native countries, Europe and, eventually, in the United States. Late twentieth-century and contemporary composers continue to write in what has come to be called neo-nationalistic style.

Women musicians have been present and active in Latin America from the colonial times to the present, as performers, educators, theorists, composers, conductors and producers yet the

history of these women remains untold. However, the history of women musicians in Latin America is in the process of being written by researchers from Latin America and Spain. A growing number of scholars have conducted symposiums, seminars and workshops and are creating research groups on this subject.

The works for flute by Awilda Villarini, Adina Izarra, Gabriela Ortíz and Angélica Negrón are important contributions to the instrument's repertoire. Awilda Villarini (Puerto Rico) is an established composer with a long career, Gabriela Ortíz (Mexico) and Adina Izarra (Venezuela) are well-known composers in their mid-careers and Angélica Negrón (Puerto Rico) is a blossoming composer in the early stages of her career.

Women composers from Latin America have taken a fascinating journey from convents and churches to the concert hall. Some contemporary composers are internationally recognized and consistently performed, while many are yet to be discovered. There are a great number of excellent female composers from the region with diverse experiences and styles. Any musician attempting to perform music by Latin American composers would benefit from learning about the region's musical movements and styles. Studying the cultural and musical context helps in the interpretation of the composer's unique musical path and creative focus.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>3</b>
A Brief Introduction to Latin American Art Music	
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>15</b>
Women in Music in Latin America	
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>22</b>
Awilda Villarini	
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>29</b>
Adina Izarra	
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>38</b>
Gabriela Ortíz	
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>47</b>
Angélica Negrón	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>59</b>

## Introduction

The purpose of this research is to provide a performance guide of the works for flute and piccolo by four Latin American women composers who have made important contributions to flute repertoire. The Latin American flute repertoire is vast, but there are only a few composers that are consistently included internationally in conservatory curriculae and concert programs. Instead, most music performed in concert and symphony halls across the world was composed by European male composers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Like other women composers around the globe, Latin American women composers are conspicuously absent from concert programs, and their works are seldom heard in public. There is still much research to be done to uncover the history and accomplishments of women musicians from Latin America, musicians who have been doubly marginalized for geographic and gender reasons.<sup>1</sup> Some women composers from Latin American countries have challenged this barrier, but as a whole, Latin American women composers remain underrepresented.

For this paper, I have chosen composers who were born in Latin American countries and did at least part of their training in a Latin American country. Awilda Villarini (Puerto Rico) is an established composer with a long career, Gabriela Ortíz (Mexico) and Adina Izarra (Venezuela) are well-known composers in their mid-careers and Angélica Negrón (Puerto Rico) is a blossoming composer in the early stages of her career. As part of this research, I have

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<sup>1</sup> Carmen Cecilia Piñero Gil, "Compositoras Iberoamericanas," in *Música y Mujeres: Género y Poder*, ed. Marisa Manchado Torres. Cuadernos Inacabados 29 (Madrid: Edition Peterers, 1995), 160.

conducted interviews with the composers. The interviews provided important information about their creative process, musical style, training, biographical information, and experience as women artists. The interviews supplemented the information obtained from traditional sources.

The first section is an introduction to art music in Latin America followed by a summary of the history and research resources about female musicians and composers of the region. Subsequently, the next four sections will discuss the composers' careers and style and include a brief analysis of one aspect of one of the composer's compositions followed by a brief conclusion.

## Chapter 1

### A Brief History of Latin American Art Music

Latin America has a rich history of art music, which varies from region to region and country to country. There are many Latin-American countries and classical music arrived at each location at different times and circumstances. For that reason, I will discuss the history of art music in a general way with emphasis on the countries of the composers that will be discussed in this document (Mexico, Puerto Rico and Venezuela). I will discuss the arrival of this tradition in the early stages of the Spanish colonization and important musical movements that developed in each region.

The European classical music tradition was transplanted to the Americas with the arrival of the Spaniards in 1492. The Spaniards used conquest methods that proved to be effective in the Mozarabic expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>2</sup> As with the Arabs, they took over and destroyed significant religious sites and built Christian churches and civic buildings in the same place.<sup>3</sup> They used religion as a justification of the conquest and assimilation of the indigenous cultures.<sup>4</sup> The first bishoprics were established around 1511 in Hispaniola and Puerto Rico.<sup>5</sup> Within an expanse of forty years, the Catholic Church and its intrinsic musical tradition was firmly in place in centers across Central America and the Caribbean. Eventually, with the southern expansion of the empire, new centers emerged in Bogotá, Quito and Lima.

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<sup>2</sup> Susan Thomas, "Music, Conquest and Colonialism," in *Musics of Latin America*, ed. Robin Moore (New York: Norton and Company, 2012), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979), 1.

The Catholic Church and the Spanish Kingdom worked together to colonize the Americas and around mid-sixteenth century, there were twenty-seven bishoprics and five archbishoprics in the New World. At this time, no division existed between Church and State, and clergy members responded to the Spanish crown and the Pope. The first religious orders to arrive in the Caribbean and Central America were the Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians. Jesuits, Benedictines, Carmelites, Mercederians and Capuchins arrived as the empire expanded to South America and built important missions.<sup>6</sup>

In the sixteenth century, colonizers established missionary music education in order to evangelize, commemorate specific events, establish a connection with the homeland and help control the native work force. Mexico provides an excellent example of how this process unfolded in the sixteenth century. The Mexica, or Aztec, were very musical people and used music for their celebrations, ceremonies, rites, dancing, and sacrifices, war, to praise important officials and to keep historical accounts. There is evidence of music schools in Texcoco, Tlalpam and near present-day Mexico City. Lacking a written musical notation, they memorized songs for many of the 260 days in their religious calendar. Music was a logical meeting place for indigenous and Western culture.<sup>7</sup>

Music also proved to be one of the most effective tools of conversion.<sup>8</sup> Flemish Friars Pedro de Gante and Juan de Haro established missionary music education that helped evangelize the Aztecs. De Gante, who worked in New Spain from 1523-1572, learned the Nahuatl language

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<sup>6</sup> Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Thomas, "Music, Conquest and Colonialism," in *Musics of Latin America*, ed. Robin Moore (New York: Norton and Company, 2012), 32.

<sup>8</sup> María Gembero Ustárruz, "El Compositor Hernando Franco (1532-85) antes de su llegada a México: Trayectoria profesional en Portugal, Santo Domingo, Cuba y Guatemala," *Latin American Music Review/Revista de Música Latinoamericana* Vol XXVI, issue II (Autumn-Winter 2005), p. 282.

and started a missionary school at the San José de los Naturales Church in Mexico in 1527. In this school, the Indians learned plainchant, polyphony, musical dictation, musical instruments and instrument construction following the European choir school's model. The mission schools were so successful that there were a high number of Indian musicians in Mexico, so many in fact, that in 1561 King Philip II ordered the church authorities to reduce the number of Indian musicians working in churches.<sup>9</sup>

The cathedral musical organization in the sixteenth century was not concerned with the training of Indian musicians. The principal positions, chapel master and organist, were filled by European musicians, although churches relied on Indian singers and instrumentalists for the choir and small ensembles. In Mexico City, two years after the cathedral's foundation, an Indian choir performed at Sunday services.<sup>10</sup> For example, there are accounts of Indian musicians on payrolls as early as 1543. By 1576, there were more than one thousand choirs in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean.<sup>11</sup>

Mexico City became the administrative capital of the Spanish Empire from 1521, known then as the Viceroyalty of the New Spain, eventually comprising Central America, part of the present western United States, and the Caribbean. According to Latin American scholar Robert Stevenson, it was the most important European cultural center in North America before the

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<sup>9</sup> Gérard Behage, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Emilio Ros-Fábregas, "Imagine all the people...: polyphonic flowers in the hands and voices of Indians in Sixteenth-Century Mexico," *Early Music* Vol. 40, No. 2, May 2012: 177-189, <http://www.jstor.org/www2.lib.ku.edu/stable/23327726>.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Thomas, "Music, Conquest and Colonialism", in *Musics of Latin America*, ed. Robin Moore (New York: Norton and Company, 2012), 36. Juan de Torquemada, "Libro XVII" in *Tercera parte de los Veynte I un libros rituales* (Madrid: Rodríguez, 1723), 213-214.

nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> The Mexico City Cathedral of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Mary into Heaven was founded in 1528. Other important musical centers were the Cathedral of Santa María La Menor in Santo Domingo, established in 1514, Santiago de Cuba Cathedral, established in 1522, Puebla Cathedral (1531); Lima Cathedral (1543); Bogotá Cathedral (1546); Sucre Cathedral (1553); Quito Cathedral (1562); and San Juan Cathedral (c. 1590).<sup>13</sup>

Choral music performed at these cathedrals consisted of plainchant and polyphony. Library collections in Latin America included the works of the European Renaissance masters such as Cristóbal de Morales, Palestrina, Orlandus Lassus, Pedro Guerrero and Victoria. Instrumental music performed in churches included organ music with Spanish and locally-made instruments as well as harps. Shawms, sackbuts, flutes and viols were occasionally used in churches as part of mass music until the Council of Trent (1545-1563) banned them. Shawms and sackbuts were mostly used for outdoor religious processions.

One of the first important chapel masters in New Spain was Hernando Franco, chapel master of the Mexico City Cathedral from 1575-1585. He previously had worked as chapel master in Santo Domingo, Cuba and Guatemala.<sup>14</sup> During his tenure, the musical life of the cathedral flourished and was compared to that of cathedrals in Spain. He was also a prolific composer. One of the most important collections of pieces, the *Códice Franco*, contains sixteen magnificats.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Stevenson, "Mexico City Cathedral Music: 1600-1750," *The Americas* vol. 21, no. 2, October 1964, 111.

<sup>13</sup> Rita Goldberg, "Nuevos Datos sobre la Historia de la Música en Puerto Rico: Pedro Núñez de Ortega, Arcabucero y Maestro de Capilla," *Latin American Music Review/Revista de Música Latinoamericana* Vol. XVIII, issue I (Spring-Summer 1997), 59.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 273-317.

<sup>15</sup> Steven Barwick, *The Franco Codex of the Cathedral of Mexico, transcription and commentary* (Illinois, Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), 7.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mission music reached Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina and Brazil. The training included the formation of small orchestras and choirs.<sup>16</sup> In an account by Jesuit José Cardiel, he mentions that every town in Paraguay had thirty to forty musicians including tenors, altos, contraltos and instrumentalists. The instrumentalists included four to six violinists, six to eight bassoonists, two to three trumpet players, three to four harpists and one or two organists.<sup>17</sup>

Although there are historical accounts of Indigenous composers from the sixteenth century, some initial accounts emerged in the seventeenth century. Andrés Martínez, a Zapotec from Oaxaca, wrote a Latin Mass in 1636. Juan Mathías, also a Zapotec from Oaxaca, became Chapel Master of Oaxaca in 1655.

The first Creole composers (born in the Americas to Spanish parents) were Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (1590-1664) Chapel Master of Puebla Cathedral; Juan Herrera (ca. 1670-1738) Chapel Master of Bogotá Cathedral from 1703-1738; Francisco López Capillas, Chapel Master of Mexico City Cathedral from 1654-1674; Juan de Araujo Chapel Master of Lima and Sucre Cathedrals from 1648-1712; and Antonio de Salazar chapel master of Mexico City Cathedral from 1688 to 1715.

Most music composed in Latin America in the late Renaissance polyphonic style until approximately 1750. At this time, Italian composers, such as the Jesuit Italian Domenico Zipoli and Roque Ceruti in Perú, arrived in the Americas in early eighteenth century bringing music by Italian composers and composing music in Italian Baroque style.<sup>18</sup> Villancicos, solo cantatas,

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<sup>16</sup> Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 4.

duets and arias had basso continuo and separate instrumental parts.<sup>19</sup> In the Mexico City Cathedral, while the Baroque style was very popular, polyphony continued to flourish in sacred settings. Most composers favored a more conservative Baroque liturgical style including polyphonic genres, magnificats and motets.<sup>20</sup> Eventually, composer Antonio de Salazar started writing in the Italian Baroque style. Salazar wrote polychoral motets and set some of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's *villancicos* to music.<sup>21</sup>

An important genre for eighteenth century Latin American composers was the *villancico*. It was then a free-style, solemn semi-religious or liturgical song in polyphonic style. *Villancicos* could be in Spanish, Portuguese or Native languages. Originating in medieval Spain, the villancico featured great flexibility, which allowed for the incorporation of folk themes and rhythms. There were two major types, *negros-negrillos* or *guineos*, imitating or parodying African languages and accents usually in 6/8, and *mestizo e indio* in *Náhuatl* and *Talxcala* languages. One important composer was Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz wrote many of the *villancico*'s texts and possibly music.

Dramatic music in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries included both sacred and secular genres. Sacred dramas included *autos*, *coloquios* and *entremés* with *autos sacramentales* preferred by the Franciscans and dealing with the Eucharist.<sup>22</sup> The first real dramatic theater works with music were plays using librettos by Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca in late seventeenth century. Eventually, *zarzuelas*, Spanish national opera, were introduced. These plays

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Teresa Bowers, "The Golden Age of Choral Music in the Cathedrals of Colonial Mexico," *The Choral Journal* Vol. 40, no. 9 (April 2000), 9-13.

<sup>21</sup> Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 60.

took place in the viceregal palace at first and then the Teatro Coliseo in Mexico City. The Coliseo opened in 1670 and lasted until 1722, when a fire destroyed it. In 1735 a larger theater, the Coliseo Nuevo, inaugurated with Ignacio Jerusalem, Mexico Cathedral's chapel master, as its orchestra director.

*La Purpura de la Rosa* was the first opera produced in Latin America. Like most operas heard in the New World, this opera featured music by a European composer: Spanish composer Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco. It premiered in 1701 in Lima. An important exception, however, was an opera commissioned in 1711 by the Mexican viceroy. He named composer Manuel de Sumaya (1678-1755) to write a new opera, and the result, *La Partenope*, premiered in 1711. This was the first opera written by a New World composer, although its libretto was by Italian poet Silvio Stampiglia.<sup>23</sup>

Solo instrumental music was also performed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There are a few examples remaining, including an organ tablature from 1620, and a cittern instruction book by Sebastián de Aguirre from mid-seventeenth century. The *Método de Citara* includes dances such as the *pavana*, *passacalle*, *gallarda*, *branle*, *panamá*, zarabanda, and minuet. It also includes an African dance called *portorrico de los negros* (a Creole dance developed in Puerto Rico) and an Indian dance known as *tocotín*.<sup>24</sup> Another example of instrumental music is an instrumental version of a *corrido*, a type of Mexican folk song in bar form.<sup>25</sup> A *Tablatura de Vihuela* from around 1740 includes around fifty types of Spanish dances

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<sup>23</sup> Susan Thomas, "Music, Conquest and Colonialism", in *Musics of Latin America*, ed. Robin Moore (New York: Norton and Company, 2012), 64.

<sup>24</sup> María Cadilla de Martínez, "La Histórica Danza de Puerto Rico en el Siglo XVI y sus Evoluciones," *Revista Musical Chilena* Vol. VI, issue XXVII, January 1950, 76-77.

<sup>25</sup> Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979), 61.

such as the *jota*, *fandango*, *folias*, *sarabanda*, *paspied*, *rigaudon*, *tarantela*, *seguidillas* and African dances such as the *cumbees*.<sup>26</sup> Popular dance music was part of the entertainment of the upper classes in many countries in Latin America.

The development of the *contradanza* in the Spanish Caribbean is an important example of the transformation of European dances as they reached the Americas. This dance originated in England, became popular in France, and eventually reached Spain and its colonies. In Cuba, it was further transformed with the addition of African-derived syncopations and repeated rhythmic ostinatos such as the *habanera* rhythm.<sup>27</sup> The *contradanza* was the precursor of many Latin American couple dances such as the Puerto Rican *danza*, the *danzón* and the *merengue*.<sup>28</sup>

By the time of the decline of the colonial system in the nineteenth century, new forms had developed throughout the region. The emergence of new forms coincided with the development of independence movements across the continent that called for nationalistic artistic expressions.<sup>29</sup> Many Latin American musicians were trained in Europe but searched for a local musical aesthetic. Some started to include local dances in their compositions as a way of inserting a national voice into their style. For example, composers Tomás León, Melesio Morales and Julio Ituarte in Mexico included the *jarabe* and *huapando* dances in their compositions as in Ituarte's *Ecos de México*<sup>30</sup>. Classically trained composers like Ignacio Cervantes from Cuba

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Susan Thomas, "Music, Conquest and Colonialism", in *Musics of Latin America*, ed. Robin Moore (New York: Norton and Company, 2012), 69.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 70.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Brill, *Music of Latin America and the Caribbean* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2011), 46.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 47.

(trained at the Paris Conservatory) started writing in local salon dances style as in his *Danzas Cubanas*.<sup>31</sup>

In Puerto Rico, the development of the Puerto Rican *danza* is an example of this trend with the works by Manuel Gregorio Tavarez (also trained at the Paris Conservatory) and his student Juan Morell Campos, a very prolific danza composer. Piano virtuosos Teresa Carreño in Venezuela, Ana Otero in Puerto Rico and Ricardo Castro (1864-1907) in Mexico all studied in Europe and traveled extensively, performing at major theaters such as the Salle Pleyel and Salle Erard. Ricardo Castro was also a prolific composer and premiered his Cello Concerto in Paris in 1903.<sup>32</sup> Latin American composer-pianists also wrote European romantic-style salon piano music across the continent.

At this time, opera houses, theaters and conservatories emerged in many countries. The first conservatories in Cuba were the Academia de Música founded in 1814 and the Academia de Música Santa Cecilia founded in 1816. In 1866, the Mexican Philharmonic Society founded a Conservatory that became the National Conservatory of Music in 1877.<sup>33</sup> The conservatories trained new composers and performers who enriched the Latin American art music scene.

In addition to the production of local opera, there is also a long history of Italian opera performances in the Americas, particularly in Mexico and the Caribbean. Important opera houses were built in every major city in the early nineteenth century. Big opera tours from Europe stopped regularly in major cities including San Juan, Havana, Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro along with the North American cities of New York, New Orleans and Atlanta.<sup>34</sup> By this time,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Béhague, *Music in Latin America*, 101.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 97.

there were Philharmonic societies in many countries and most instrumentalists who performed in these operas were local musicians.

In 1831, in Mexico, the Teatro Principal established an annual season of Italian opera, and by mid-century, local composers had developed careers as Italian opera composers. Some of these composers were Luis Baca (1826-1855), Cenobio Paniagua (1821-1882) and Melesio Morales (1838-1875).<sup>35</sup> In Cuba, some important opera composers of this time were Laureano Fuentes Matos (1825-1898) composer of *La Hija del Jefté* and several zarzuelas, and Gaspar Villate (1851-1912), who studied in Paris and had three of his operas premiered in Paris, The Hague and Madrid. Villate also cultivated the *contradanza* genre.<sup>36</sup> Brazil became an important center of Italian opera and zarzuelas with Antonio Carlos Gómez being the most important opera composer. His most important work was the opera *Il Guarany* premiered at La Scala in Milan in 1870.<sup>37</sup>

Nationalism was, and still is, an important movement in Latin American beginning in the late nineteenth century. A cultural movement known as the “Aztec Renaissance” emerged with the intention to create a new aesthetic based on Aztec and ancient civilizations. In México, early proponents were Manuel Ponce, José Rolón and Candelario Huízar, who incorporated mestizo and Indian themes and quotations into their compositions.<sup>38</sup> The movement became strong musically when Carlos Chávez started using musical, historical, and cultural elements of the Aztecs in his compositions. He created music based on Aztec and modern Native groups such as

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<sup>34</sup> Mark Brill, *Music of Latin America and the Caribbean* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2011), 50.

<sup>35</sup> Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979), 98.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 102.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>38</sup> Gerard Béhague, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979), 126.

the Yaquis and the Seris as in his *Sinfonia India*<sup>39</sup> He also used native instruments including the *huéhetl* and the *teponaztli* along with orchestral instruments. He consciously rebelled against European musical instruction, which, according to him, “makes believe that music is Bach or Beethoven. In that way, it will destroy in our youth any native strength, killing any natural expression that is part of this race and country.”<sup>40</sup>

Composers of the Aztec Renaissance movement also include José Pablo Moncayo, Blas Galindo and Silvestre Revueltas. Revueltas’s *Sensemaya*, based on Indian and Afro-Cuban rhythms is one of the most important and influential pieces of this period. Using research to incorporate elements of ancient native cultures and create a new aesthetic was and still is very influential in the Americas and Europe.

The nationalistic movement took different shape in different countries. In Brazil, it took hold in the 1890’s with composers such as Alexandre Levy, Alberto Neponuceno and Camargo Guarnieri. Heitor Villa-Lobos created a new style by synthesizing national songs, *sambas*, *modinhas*, *choros*, with European forms and harmonies. His nine *Bachianas Brasileiras* were a reflection of this new aesthetic.<sup>41</sup> Some other important nationalistic composers were Alberto Ginastera in Argentina; Guillermo Uribe Holguín in Colombia; Rosa Mercedes Ayarza de Morales in Perú; Amadeo Roldán; Alejandro Caturla and Ernesto Lecuona in Cuba; and Juan Francisco García in the Dominican Republic with his *Sinfonia Quisqueyana*.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>40</sup> Gilbert Chase, *Introducción a la Música Americana Contemporánea* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Nova, 1958), 123.

<sup>41</sup> Mark Brill, *Music of Latin America and the Caribbean* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2011), 56-57.

<sup>42</sup> Bernarda Jorge. *La Música Dominicana: Siglos XIX y XX* (Santo Domingo: Publicaciones de la Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, 1982), 103.

As is true of composers in Europe and the United States, composers in Latin America developed an array of musical styles and techniques beyond nationalism.<sup>43</sup> Many were trained in their native countries, Europe and, eventually, the United States. Some important representatives of Latin American modernism are Antonio Estevez in Venezuela, Carlos Guastavino in Argentina with his art songs, Mario Lavista and Julian Carrillo in Mexico, Alfredo del Mónaco in Venezuela, Rafael Aponte Ledée and Awilda Villarini in Puerto Rico, and the group *Renovación Musical* in Cuba (led by José Ardevol), among many others.<sup>44</sup> New styles were microtonal, alleatory, dodecaphonism and electronic music among others.

Late twentieth-century and contemporary composers continue to write in what has come to be called the neo-nationalistic style. Examples include Arturo Márquez in Mexico with pieces such as *Danzón*, Ernesto Cordero in Puerto Rico with pieces such as *Concierto Antillano* and *Concierto Borikén*. Astor Piazzolla created the New Tango with elements of tango, jazz and classical music, another example of this trend.<sup>45</sup>

Music has been a way for composers to assert themselves as Latin American and, at the same time, to be part of compositional movements in the Western world. This musical dilemma of nationalism versus universalism has been a constant throughout the twentieth century on the contemporary Latin American musical scene.

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<sup>43</sup> Mark Brill, *Music of Latin America and the Caribbean* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2011), p. 58.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 2

### Women in Music in Latin America

Women musicians have been present and active in Latin America from the colonial times to the present, as performers, educators, theorists, composers, conductors and producers yet the history of these women remains untold. However, the history of women musicians in Latin America is in the process of being written by researchers across from Latin America and Spain. A growing number of scholars have conducted symposiums, seminars and workshops and are creating research groups on this subject. There are composers' associations to promote women composers work and uncover lost repertoires dating from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Women and genre symposiums in Latin America include lectures and discussion panels about women in music. For example, researchers from the Comahue Neuquén National University presented their work at the *Primeras Jornadas Patagónicas de Estudios de las Mujeres y el Género* held in 2008 and organized the *Red Universitaria Patagónica de Estudios de Mujeres y Relaciones de Género*.<sup>46</sup> Alicia Valdés's *Diccionario de Mujeres Notables en la Música Cubana* [Dictionary of Cuban Female Musicians], Carmen Cecilia Piñero-Gil's compilation of a comprehensive list of female composers of Latin America and the book *Women in Music in Colombia* by Carmen Millán de Benavides and Alejandra Quintana Martínez are examples of scholars conducting new research.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Carmen Cecilia Piñero Gil, "Latinoamérica y el Feminismo en Música: Caminos Recorridos," in *Mujer VS Música: Itinerancias, Incertidumbres y Lunas*, ed. Rosa Iniesta Masmano (Valencia, Spain: Rivera Editores, 2011), 59. Composers and musicians associations in Latin America and Spain have been active starting with the Santa Cecilia Music Association in the 1930s in Argentina. In recent times, COMUARTE (Women in Arts Collective) holds a yearly international encounter in Mexico while the *Encontro Internacional de Mulheres Compositoras* has been held in Brazil since 1993.

As suggested by the compilation of a comprehensive list of women composers of Ibero-America by Carmen Cecilia Piñero-Gil, there were women composers in Latin America as early as the sixteenth century and the countries with the greatest number of documented female composers are Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Cuba. The history of women musicians in Latin America starts with the figure of Theodora Genes (1530-after 1598), a free black woman from the Dominican Republic who worked in orchestras in Santiago de Cuba. She composed popular music that became part of the oral tradition of Cuba and is still performed today.<sup>48</sup> Genes and her sister Michaela performed with the Santiago de Cuba Cathedral Orchestra around 1580.<sup>49</sup>

Another important literary and musical figure was Mexican, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651-1695).<sup>50</sup> Sor Juana was a music theorist and teacher. There is little evidence about Sor Juan being a composer, but with her theoretical preparation, it was quite possible.<sup>51</sup> It is not surprising that women received music instruction in the New Spain since women were musically trained in convents in Spain. In Spanish and Latin American monasteries, musically-trained nuns directed the Office chants. Many of them received training at home before entering the convent,

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<sup>47</sup> In the last decade, more information has been found about female contributions to music in Latin America thanks to the efforts of scholars and researchers including Carmen Cecilia Piñero-Gil, Alicia Valdés, Carmen Milán de Benavides, Alejandra Martínez, Esperanza Pulido, Susan Campos Fonseca and Romina Dizillio among many others.

<sup>48</sup> Alicia Valdés, “Caracterización de Mujeres Notables en la Música Colonial Cubana,” in *Música y Mujeres: Género y Poder*, ed. Marisa Manchado Torres, Cuadernos Inacabados 29 (Madrid: Edition Peters, 1995), 63. Alicia Valdés, *Diccionario de Mujeres Notables en la Música Cubana* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2005), 176.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>50</sup> Carmen Cecilia Piñero Gil, “Compositoras Iberoamericanas,” in *Música y Mujeres: Género y Poder*, ed. Marisa Manchado Torres. Cuadernos Inacabados 29 (Madrid: Edition Peterers, 1995), 162.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* Esperanza Pulido, *La Mujer Mexicana en la Música* (Mexico: Ediciones de la Revista Bellas Artes, 1958) 51-60.

since being proficient in music would allow entrance without paying a dowry.<sup>52</sup> There were many organists among these women. In 1737, at the Carmelite Convent in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the nuns elected a *cantor* and a *sorchantre*. An organ was installed in 1804 with María del Rosario Dávila and María Monserrate Morales doubling as organists and cantors.<sup>53</sup> The convent hired José Campeche as music professor around 1801.<sup>54</sup>

Although some women received musical instruction at home or in convent in the eighteenth century, it was in the nineteenth century that women composers and instrumentalists emerged in great numbers. For women of the elite, learning music was an important asset for those women to be married into well-to-do families. Women were expected to entertain in musical salons, and a few went on to become professional singers and instrumentalists. This is the case of four Latin American virtuoso pianists and composers: Ana Otero (1861-1905) from Puerto Rico, Teresa Carreño (1853-1917) from Venezuela, Teresa Tanco de Herrera (1859-1946) from Colombia and Cecilia Aritzi (1856-1930) from Cuba. The daughter of a Spanish military band musician, Otero was a conductor, composer and virtuoso pianist educated in Puerto Rico and Paris. She studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Antoine Marmontel who organized a concert for her at Salle Pleyel in Paris. Otero toured Europe, the United States and South America and established the first music school for girls in San Juan. One of the most important classical pianists of the century, Carreño toured Europe, Cuba, Venezuela, Australia and New Zealand.<sup>55</sup> Tanco de Herrera was a virtuoso pianist, composer and conductor who wrote

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<sup>52</sup> Matilde Ollarte Martínez, “Las Monjas Músicas en Los Conventos Españoles del Barroco. Una Aproximación Etnohistórica,” *Revista de Folklore*, Fundación Joaquín Díaz issue 146, 1993.

<sup>53</sup> Arturo V. Dávila, “José Campeche, Maestro de Música,” *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* Vol. III, issue 8, July-September 1960, 14-16.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

zarzuelas, orchestral, choral and piano works. Like Ana Otero, she studied with Marmontel at the Paris Conservatoire and debuted in Sale Pleyel with raving reviews.<sup>56</sup> Aritzi started composing when she was eight years old and her works include mostly chamber and piano works. She was also an important teacher.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the nineteenth century produced the first famous Latin American singers such as Mexican composer and producer Angela Peralta (1845-1882). Peralta was a promoter of Italian and Mexican Opera, toured Europe and published an album of nineteen pieces.

Many Latin American countries opened national conservatories between mid to late nineteenth century generally admitting women. The establishment of national musical educational centers resulted in women having greater access to the study music. For example, women in Mexico started attending the National Conservatory from its opening in 1866.<sup>58</sup>

Data about Cuban women musicians provides an overall view of women as professional musicians in Latin America from 1899 to 1953. In the *Diccionario de Mujeres Notables en la Música Cubana*, Alicia Valdés includes interesting data from the Cuban census. In the census of 1899, there were 46 professional women musicians, 51 in 1907, 71 in 1919, 1080 in 1943 and 745 in 1953. These figures correspond to 7.3 % of all musicians in 1899, 6.7% in 1907, 8.2% in

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<sup>55</sup> Miguel Castillo Didier, “Clara Schumann, Teresa Carreño, Rosita Renard: La Condición de Mujer en sus Carreras Musicales,” *Revista Musical Chilena* Vol LXIV, issue 213, 2010, 44-52.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Susana Friedmann, “Tanco Cordovez de Herrera, Teresa,” in *The Norton Grove Dictionary of Women Musicians*, ed. Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), 455, and Carmen Millán de Benavides and Alejandra Quintana Martínez eds. *Mujeres en la Música en Colombia: el Género de los Géneros*. Colección Culturas Musicales en Colombia, Vol. 2. (Bogotá: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2012), 233-238.

<sup>57</sup> Alicia Valdés, *Diccionario de Mujeres Notables en la Música Cubana* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2005), 58.

<sup>58</sup> Esperanza Pulido. *La Mujer Mexicana en la Música*. Mexico: Ediciones de la Revista Bellas Artes, 1958, 88.

1919, 37.1% in 1943 and 25.4% in 1953.<sup>59</sup> These figures attest to the gradual inclusion of Cuban women as professional musicians. We could reasonably believe this applies to other Latin American countries although the percentages may vary slightly.

Latin American women composers gradually joined their male counterparts in the musical movements of their time. Many women composers wrote in romantic and nationalistic styles. Examples of this style include Mercedes Ayarza de Morales from Perú who also researched Peruvian folkloric music, Maria Luisa Sepúlveda (1898-1950) who was the first woman to graduate in composition in Chile and Cecilia Torr  (1889-1962) from Argentina. However, not everyone followed the nationalistic path. For example, Uruguayan composer Carmen Barradas (1888-1963) created her own system of notation based on graphic signs.<sup>60</sup>

Latin American composers started integrating the new techniques of the avant-garde and other musical movements of the twentieth century. Important female figures of early twentieth century include Dinor  de Carvalho (1904-1980) from Brazil, Isabel Aretz born in Argentina and established in Venezuela, Susana Baron Superville from Argentina and Gisela Hern ndez from Cuba. Carvalho was the first female composer admitted to the Academia Brasileira de Musica, Susana Baron was part of the *Agrupaci n Nueva M sica* Movement in Argentina and Gisela Hern ndez was part of the *Renovaci n* group in Cuba.

Some figures of mid-twentieth century are Modesta Bor (1926) from Venezuela, Alicia Urreta (1930/31-1986) from Mexico and Jacqueline Nova (1935/38-1975) from Colombia who was one of the first Latin American composers with an international career.<sup>61</sup> Modesta Bor

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<sup>59</sup> Alicia Vald s, *Diccionario de Mujeres Notables en la M sica Cubana* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2005), 395-402.

<sup>60</sup> Carmen Cecilia Pi ero Gil, "Compositoras Iberoamericanas," in *M sica y Mujeres: G nero y Poder*, ed. Marisa Manchado Torres. Cuadernos Inacabados 29 (Madrid: Edition Peterers, 1995), 166.

wrote important works for orchestra while Alicia Urreta was an important promoter of contemporary music.<sup>62</sup> Jacqueline Nova studied at *Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales* directed by Alberto Ginastera. She wrote electronic and aleatoric music.<sup>63</sup>

Tanía León, born in 1943, is an extraordinary composer, conductor and artist who defies any labels.<sup>64</sup> Her music has been performed by orchestras around the world such as Gewaundhausorchester, L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the China National Symphony, and the NDR Orchestra.<sup>65</sup> After graduating from the Peyrellade's Conservatorio de Música in Havana, she migrated to the United States where she developed a career as musical director of musicals and established a long-term association with Harlem Dance Theater.<sup>66</sup> Her music combines jazz harmonies, Afro-Cuban rhythmic elements and modern techniques in a unique way.<sup>67</sup>

We will continue exploring the paths of women composers in Latin America by examining the musical lives of four living composers. The composers to be studied as part of this project are part of this magnificent development of women composers of Latin America. Awilda Villarini belongs to Tania León's generation, but her style and influences are quite different. Adina Izarra is part of a later generation and has a solid international career as scholar and

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 170-171.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 172. J. Michel Edwards. "Tania León." In Oxford Music Online. Accessed March 4, 2015. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/42484?q>

<sup>65</sup> "Tania León," in *Tanialeon.com*. Accessed January 23, 2015. <http://www.tanialeon.com/>

<sup>66</sup> Karin Pendle ed. *Women and Music: A History Second Edition*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, 372.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

composer. Gabriela Ortiz is one of the most well-known Latin American composers internationally while Angélica Ortiz belongs to a new generation of composers making their way into the classical contemporary musical scene.

## Chapter 3

### Awilda Villarini- Variaciones sobre el Canto del Coquí for flute alone

Puerto Rican composer and pianist Awilda Villarini has performed in Europe and the Americas. Her performances in major concert venues, such as Salle Gaveau in Paris, Wigmore Hall in London, Brahms Saal in Vienna and Carnegie Hall in New York City, have received rave reviews from *The New York Times*, *London Times*, *Zurcher Nachrichten* and the *Washington Post* among others.<sup>68</sup> Her catalogue includes works for orchestra, large chamber ensemble, a piano concerto, a piano sonata, a piano suite, chamber music pieces, music for theater, pieces for solo instruments, choral and vocal works, electronic music and popular music. Villarini also contributed important musical research about the Puerto Rican Danza in her Ph. D. dissertation.

Villarini's musical education started in Puerto Rico at an early age. She learned her first musical notes with her mother, who had some piano skills.<sup>69</sup> "My mother, a history teacher, played the organ at church," says Villarini.<sup>70</sup> Very soon she started studying with a private piano teacher in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico. The family later moved to Caguas, where Villarini studied at Provi Jimenez Academy. At age nine, she started improvising and composing pieces in the style of the academic works she was learning. When she was eleven years old, she entered the Figueroa Music Academy to study with Carmelina Figueroa. Figueroa was part of an important musical family of Puerto Rico. The Figueras studied at the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris

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<sup>68</sup> "Awilda Villarini," in New York Women Composers, accessed July 6, 2015, [http://www.newyorkwomencomposers.org/profiles.php4?zdm\\_id=VIL01](http://www.newyorkwomencomposers.org/profiles.php4?zdm_id=VIL01)  
Donal Henahan, "Music: Debuts in Review," *The New York Times*, Sunday, September 16, 1979.

<sup>69</sup> Awilda Villarini in phone interview with the author, May 22, 2015.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

with Alfred Cortot, and they went on to perform in concert venues in France and Europe. Carmelina Figueroa worked with Madame Blancard and graduated with a Diplôme d'Exécution and Diplôme d'Enseignement. With Figueroa's encouragement, Villarini made her debut recital and composed her first classical style sonata at age 14. She continued writing music and exploring drawing and poetry. Musical composition was a natural process for her, and she wrote the music for her school's hymn. Villarini was accepted as a scholarship piano student at Peabody Conservatory at age 16. Although she wanted to focus her studies at Peabody in composition, she lacked the necessary training to pursue it and worked instead at a Bachelors in Piano later pursuing a Master of Music Degree in Piano Performance and graduating in 1974. After Peabody, scholarships from the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture allowed Villarini to study piano in Paris and the Vienna Hochschule. She studied with Walter Panhofer in both Vienna and Juilliard.

Back in the United States, Villarini received a Ford Foundation scholarship and pursued a DMA in piano performance at NYU, graduating in 1979. After her debut recital at Carnegie Hall, Villarini toured France, England, Austria, Belgium and Switzerland. She was the 1985 winner of the Artist International Piano Award.

Villarini was forced to take a break from piano performance after a permanent back injury caused by a botched surgery. She turned to composition again and worked on a Master of Music in Composition at New York University, graduating in 1997. At NYU, Villarini worked with composer Giampaolo Bracali (1941-2006) on voice, instrumental, and piano works. After recovering from her injury, Villarini recorded two CDs, *Dancing in Latin America* I in 2004 and II in 2013 featuring her music and works by Latin American composers. Her piece, *Three Preludes for Piano* was included in the CD *Exchange Latin America* while her Flute Sonata

(with the composer at performing the piano) and *Variaciones sobre el Canto del Coquí* were included in the CD *Flauta Boricua/Puerto Rican Flute*. Villarini has been commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Louis Vogeistein Foundation Música para Instituciones and the Instituto of Puerto Rican Culture. She taught at New York University and City University of New York.

Villarini describes her musical style as free and eclectic. The music of her first phase was mostly inspired by Puerto Rican folk music and Latin American rhythms. Some of the pieces of this period are *Suite Portoricenses*, Piano Sonata and *Cinquillo Dramático*. In her Piano Sonata, Villarini used material from Pre-Colombian Incan Music. Villarini's second phase is characterized by pieces in modern European in style such as the Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Cello and two String Quartets. For her most recent works, she has been mostly interested in writing in a free atonal language inspired by the music of Ligeti, Stockhausen, Lutoslawski and Bartók.

Villarini often writes for flute, piano and voice. Her works with flute include the *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (1987), *Visiones for Woodwind Quintet* (1992), and Trio for Flute, Clarinet and Bassoon and the *Variaciones sobre el Canto del Coquí* for flute alone.

The *Variaciones sobre el Canto del Coquí* is an intense four-minute piece on the coquí frog call. The coquí, *eleutherodactylus coqui*, is a small brown frog from Puerto Rico. It is an endemic tree frog whose song sounds like a birdcall. This song, performed by choirs of male coquíes, can be heard from dusk to dawn. Puerto Ricans consider the coquí night concerts part of their nationalistic pride. Traditionally, the coquí call has been musicalized as a major octave in Puerto Rican art music pieces. In the *Danza El Coquí*, composer José Ignacio Quintón (1881-1925), depicts the coquí call as a series of octaves repeated throughout the piece. In Villarini's

*Variaciones* the coquí call is represented by a major octave and a major seventh. This musical gesture is the unifying element of the piece, which consists of an introduction-theme section and three variations. Another unifying element is the use of ascending and descending semitones. In general, her melodies are constructed of small gestures in mostly three bar phrases. Villarini's markings are very precise and helpful for the performer. At the same time, the piece is challenging in terms of rhythmic figures, changing meters.

The introduction starts a low D  $\flat$  4 tremolo that is succeeded by a pentatonic scale in crescendo. The scale arrives at a high C6 with note bending. [Ex. 3.1] At this point we have the first octave reference to the coquí, from B5 to B6. [Ex. 3.2] Villarini also introduces the first semitone from high B to B $\flat$  in mm. 6-7. [Ex. 3.2] The use of the *frullato* technique in this section is noteworthy.

Example 3.1. Awilda Villarini, *Variaciones sobre el Canto del Coquí*, mm. 1-2.

Example 3.2. Villarini, *Variaciones*, mm. 3-7.

The first variation is marked *agitato* and starts at m. 15. [Example 3.3] This is a longer section with many tempo and dynamics changes that require dedicated study in order to achieve

the necessary accuracy to create the desired effect. The coquí call appears after rapid passages in B  $\flat$ , B and C. The whole section feels like a non-stop, breathless improvisation.

Example 3.3. Villarini, *Variaciones*, mm. 15-20.

The second variation marked *adagio*, starts at m. 44. The section from m. 44 to m. 53 contrast greatly from the previous section because of its legato. [Ex. 3.4] The rhythmic modulation from a duple meter to a triple meter creates a quick shift in mood from an expressive long phrase to a dance like light melody. [Ex. 3.4] There are clear examples of the shift in semitone gesture as we can see in mm. 45, 48 and 50 from F $\sharp$  to F $\natural$  and m. 51 from E $\flat$  to E $\natural$ .

[Ex. 3.4]

Example 3.4. Villarini, *Variaciones*, mm. 44-51.

The section progressively accelerates, crescendos and moves to a strenuous and fortissimo rapid notes passage ending on a high B5. [Ex. 3.5.] The rhythm becomes more complex as the passage progresses. Villarini's markings are very precise and the use of successive legato and detached articulations creates contrast. [Ex. 3.5]

*poco a poco cresc. e accel.*

60 *pp* *mf* *p* *f*

63 *ff* *fff*

64 *p* *f* *ff*

Allegro ♩ = 144

Example 3.5. Villarini, *Variaciones*, mm. 60-70.

The last variation, *Allegro*, starts with the coquí motive in slurred eighth notes. The music should be performed with a steady and precise beat and continuous crescendo until the end. [Ex. 3.6] Clear articulations are essential to create an effect of virtuosity and agility.

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The first staff, beginning at measure 83, shows a melodic line with various ornaments including trills and triplets. The second staff, beginning at measure 87, features a rhythmic pattern of triplets, followed by a dynamic shift to *ff* and then *fff*, with a 'Flutt.' marking above a trill.

Example 3.6. Villarini, *Variaciones*, mm. 83-91.

As we can see in Villarini's *Variaciones sobre el Canto del Coquí*, the composer conveys her message in a clear and articulate manner. She uses the flute's technical capabilities and sonority to create a piece full of rhythmic energy, dynamic contrasts and melodic interest.

## Chapter 4

### **Adina Izarra: Pitangus Sulphuratus for flute and piano**

Inspired by the sound of birds, traditional and early music, Venezuelan composer Adina Izarra was born in Caracas in 1959. She pursued a career as a pianist and graduated from the National Conservatory in piano performance. While at the conservatory she worked with renowned composer Alfredo Del Mónaco. Del Mónaco introduced her to twentieth-century repertoire and analysis. Having felt the desire to compose from a young age, Izarra decided to dedicate herself completely to composition after completing her piano degree.

She received Grand Mariscal de Ayacucho and British Council scholarships to study in England at York University, where she worked with Vic Hoyland earning her Ph. D. in 1988. During her doctoral studies, she worked on electronic music with professor Richard Orton. It was in England where she started creating her own style, which focused on a combination of strong rhythmic elements with electronic music. “The English are very practical and we were constantly collaborating with other fellow students. Having those opportunities allowed us to experiment with new ideas.”<sup>71</sup> She was also working as a teaching assistant and attending rehearsals of new music.

Izarra returned to Venezuela and worked with the collective group *Ensamble Nova Música*. She was the National Composition Award Winner, in 1984, 1985 and 1990. Since 1988, Izarra has been a faculty member of the Simón Bolívar University where she is presently Director of the Graduate Digital Musical Laboratory.<sup>72</sup> The University has supported her in composing and publishing her music. Izarra also works on academic research and is editor of the

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<sup>71</sup> Skype interview May 12, 2015

<sup>72</sup> LaFi Publishers, Ltd. 2012, Plymouth Meeting, PA.

current issue of the magazine of the *Centro Mexicano para las Artes Sonoras* in Morelia, Mexico. From 1998-1999 she was visiting professor at the Music Department of City University of London.

Izarra's music has received numerous awards. In 1993, her CD *A Dos* was awarded the Premio Ronda to the best CD of the year. The original music for the play *Troyans* by Euripides received the Caracas Municipal Theater Prize.

A promoter of new music, Izarra has represented Venezuela around the world. Her music has been performed at the Women Composers Festival in Sao Paulo, Brazil (1995) and National Flute Convention in New York City (1996). Izarra has also represented her country in festivals in Korea (1997), Rumania (1999) and Ljubljana (2003). She has been member of the executive committee of the International Society for Contemporary Music and is member of the Society of Latin American Composers of Art Music.

Izarra's music includes electronic, theater, orchestral, solo instrumental and chamber music works. According to the composer, her music is not atonal and has been greatly influenced by early music. Her music has an interesting and challenging rhythmic complexity. The use of dissonance and tonal ambiguity are important aspects of her musical style. She had a nationalistic phase where she experimented with folkloric elements of Venezuelan music. Around 1986-1987, Izarra was often inspired by birdcalls. Many of her works for flute are from around this time. Her recent work with electronics differs from her previous work in that she has been mixing electronics with live instruments and using sampled bird sounds. Her latest concert production, sponsored by Telefónica in February 2015, was a mix of electronic, traditional and baroque music. She has been writing for early music instruments such as the theorbo in eclectic

ensembles that mix early music with electronics and Venezuelan traditional instruments like the Venezuelan *cuatro*. Recent works also include video art and an opera.

Izarra prefers to write with a specific performer or group in mind. Important commissions include works for famous Venezuelan flutist Luis Julio Toro, harpist Marisela Gonzalez, clarinetist Luis Rossi, flutist Manuela Wiesler, Uppsala Chamber Orchestra, and many others.<sup>73</sup>

In her works for flute, Izarra displays her great understanding of the instrument's sound and technical capabilities including many extended techniques. Her list of works includes chamber, solo and solo and electronics pieces for C flute, piccolo and bass flutes.

Works with flute:

- Plumismo for piccolo (1986)
- Querequieres for two piccolos or piccolo and oboe (1989)
- Margarita for soprano, guitar and flute (1989)
- Margarita for mezzo, flute, oboe, harp, keyboards and double bass (1989)
- Reverón for flute, oboe, and double bass (1989)
- A Dos for flute and guitar (1991)
- Luvina for bass flute and a lot of reverb (1992)
- El Amolador for flute alone (1992)
- Carrizos for solo flute (1994)
- Oratorio Profano for soprano, baritone, flute (or oboe), harp, guitar y percussion (1997)
- Tres Cortos for flute and guitar (1998)
- Pitangus Sulphuratus Flute and strings (1987), New version (2007) with written cadenza.
- Sistemas Volátiles (2011) for piccolo flute and live electronics

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<sup>73</sup> "Adina Izarra en Música, " *Música en Clave*. Accessed July 13, 2015. <http://www.musicaenclave.com/adina-izarra/>

--A 5 for five piccolos

### **Pitangus Sulfuratus**

Izarra describes her flute Concerto Pitangus Sulfuratus as a piece that features the gestures of the Great Kiskadee bird and incorporates Venezuelan folkloric elements transformed by contemporary techniques. The first version dates from 1987, during a period in which she wrote many pieces inspired by birds. The Industrial Bank of Venezuela commissioned the concerto for flutist Luis Julio Toro. Izarra worked together with Toro to create the work, and Toro went on to perform it many times.<sup>74</sup> Soloist Manuela Wiesler performed it in Oslo, Norway at the International Society of Contemporary Music World Music Days.<sup>75</sup> Wiesler went on to record it for BIS Gramophone of Sweden. A new version was premiered in 2007, dedicated to flutist Sharon Bezaly. Bezaly commissioned a written cadenza to play instead of the otherwise improvised middle cadenza. Bezaly also recorded it with the Australian Chamber Orchestra for BIS records. The concerto has been performed in Venezuela, México, East Europe, Norway and Argentina.

The piece is in one movement with different sections and atmospheres.<sup>76</sup> The main sections are: *Tarde de Marzo* (An Afternoon in March), *Merengue*, and *Hamaca* (Hammock). The musical language is tonal, although there is an extensive use of dissonance in most sections. The concerto is in arch form that has a cadenza in the middle. The concerto has a tonal center on B ♭ modal ambiguity between major and minor. Another important aspect of her style is the

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<sup>74</sup> Adina Izarra skype interview with the author on May 12, 2015.

<sup>75</sup> “Adina Izarra,” *Colegio de Compositores Latinoamericanos de Música de Arte*, accessed May 5, 2015. <http://colegiocompositores-la.org>.

<sup>76</sup> Adina Izarra, *Pitangus Sulphuratus* (Plymouth Meeting, PA: Lafi Publishers, Ltd., 2012)

recurrent use of major and minor second dissonances. Phrase structure is varied with many melodies being in four bar phrases. One of the distinct style aspects of the piece is complex rhythmic changes based on the Venezuelan *merengue*.

The concerto starts with an off-stage written cadenza based on the Great Kiskadee's birdcall. The ascending line reflects the high-pitched sound of the bird. This motif is present throughout the piece. In this passage, the composer introduces flutter tonguing and multiphonics.

[Example 4.1]

The image shows a musical score for a flute cadenza. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 176. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of several phrases of ascending eighth notes, each marked with a '7' above the staff, indicating a seven-note scale. The first two phrases are marked with *sfz* (sforzando) and the third with *ff* (fortissimo). A bracket above the third phrase is labeled "'cristofue'" (the bird call). The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. There are also some performance markings like 'v' and 'p' at the end.

Example 4.1. Adina Izarra, *Pitangus Sulfuratus*, introduction mm. 1-2.

In the following passage, the composer uses quarter tones (produced by covering half of a tone hole) and jet-whistles (produced blowing strongly through the empty flute tube) extended techniques. Izarra also ask the performer to kiss the embouchure making an interesting effect.

[Example 4.2]

① *Repetir de acuerdo al largo del escenario.*  
*Repeat according to the length of the stage*

② *Kissing the embouchure,*  
*no pitch*

*accel. (el aire hacia arriba)*  
*Blowing upwards*

*a tempo, staccato*

*congelado*  
*freeze during*  
*rest*

③ *Blowing the*  
*empty flute tube*

*sfz mf*

Example 4.2. Izarra, *Pitangus*, introduction mm. 7-15.

After the cadential introduction, Izarra creates an improvisatory atmosphere with constant references to the birdcall. Constant meter changes serve to create the ethereal feeling by removing any connection with a specific pattern. [Example 4.3]

6 *poco*

10 *ad lib.*  
*cresc.* *ff* *ff*

12 *Crís - to, Crís - to - fué, to - fué.*  
*cresc molto*

14 *sub. ppp* *un poco cresc*

• = 116

Example 4.3. Izarra, *Pitangus*, mm. 6-15.

In the second part of the concerto the composer introduces the Venezuelan *merengue*. This rhythm is usually written in 5/8 but sometimes appears 2/4 in 6/8. The Venezuelan or Caracas's *merengue* is a dance form with a mix of Afro-Caribbean and European elements. It is one of the most important Venezuelan dances along with the *joropo* and Venezuelan waltz. The composer is not transcribing a Venezuelan *merengue* but rather using the typical accentuation and unstable feeling of the 5/8 dances through the use of the pizzicato. It becomes even more unstable as it modulates rhythmically to 11/16. [Examples 4.4 and 4.5] In this dance sections it is very important to bring out the rhythmic groupings and accents.

Izarra uses the interval of a fifth in the bass line which is typical of Latin America folk music. [Example 4.4 m. 41]. An example of the composer's use of modal ambiguity between major and minor is the clash between the  $d^{\sharp}$  in the piano reduction left hand and the flute part in m. 42. The composer creates an inner dissonance by using the interval of a major second between the bass line and the upper voice. [Example 4.4, mm. 42-44]

The musical score for Example 4.4, Izarra, *Pitangus*, mm. 40-44, is presented in a system with two staves: Flute (Fl.) and Piano (Pno). The time signature is 5/8, and the tempo is marked 'MERENGUE' with a quarter note equal to 80. The key signature is E major. The score begins at measure 40. The Flute part has a melodic line with accents and dynamic markings of *mp*, *sfz*, and *mf*. The Piano part features a bass line with a fifth interval and dynamic markings of *mp* and *f*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 4.4. Izarra, *Pitangus*, mm. 40-44.

Example 4.5. Izarra, *Pitangus*, mm. 65-67.

Izarra also use the interval of a minor second to create dissonances in mm. 65 and 66.

The third section *Hamaca* [Example 4.6] is a slow *cantabile* with long phrases of different lengths that require a lot of breath support from the performer. At the same time, the orchestra part is full of embellishments in fifths in the upper strings (piano reduction left hand).

[Example 4.6]

Example 4.6. Izarra, *Pitangus*, mm. 127-131.

An improvised or written cadence leads to the last section of the piece alternating between fast and slow sections ending in a very fast *merengue* section. [Example 4.7]

199 *Ad libitum*  
Fl. *cresc.* *accel...* *ff* *sempre*  
Pno *fff* *ff*  
rucameao apurao  
rubato and hurried  
staccato

Example 4.7. Izarra, *Pitangus*, mm. 199-201.

Adina Izarra has created an idiomatic piece that encompasses a Venezuelan and Latin American aesthetic with her unique mix of Venezuelan merengue gestures accompanied by contemporary techniques and dissonances. In my opinion, Izarra's *Pitangus Sulphuratus* is a piece that showcases the flute's expressive and technical capabilities and this concerto should be part of the standard flute repertoire. Furthermore, it should be a required piece in conservatories in Latin America and abroad.

## Chapter 5

### Gabriela Ortiz: Huítztl for Solo Piccolo

One of the foremost Mexican composers, Gabriela Ortiz is emerging as an internationally recognized composer with performances of her music around the globe. Based in Mexico, Ortiz's music is profound and deeply personal yet full of spontaneity. She was born in 1964 into a musical family. Her parents were folk musicians of the famous Los Folkloristas ensemble that promoted Mexican and Latin American music. Ortiz first piano teacher was Maria Antonieta Loazano . From 1985-1987, Gabriela continued her piano studies at the *Vida y Movimiento* School with José Kahan. Ortiz from and went on to study with Mario Lavista at Mexico's National Conservatory from 1985 to 1990. Lavista was one of Mexico's pioneer composers of the Aztec renaissance. She also worked with Federico Ibarra at the National University of Mexico graduating with honors in 1990.

A multiple award winner, her first composition prize was the Alicia Urreta Competition Prize from the National Institute of the Arts in Mexico in 1988. She later won a British Council scholarship to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London with Robert Saxton. The *Universidad Autónoma de México* awarded her a scholarship to pursue a Ph.D. at the City University of London with composer Simon Emmerson from 1991 to 1995.

In 1993, Ortiz became part of the *Sistema Nacional de Creadores del Fonca*, a program to support the career of Mexican artists. In 1994, she wrote the music for the dance piece *Errant Manoeuvres* performed by Emma Diamond Dance Company at the Merce Cunningham Studio in

New York City. She also wrote the music score for the award winning film *Frontierland* in 1995.<sup>77</sup>

Gabriela Ortiz won the Mozart Award for Theater and Music in 1997. Other awards include the Civitella Ranieri Artistic Residency, Fulbright Fellowship, the Distinción Universidad Nacional, First Prize of the Silvestre Revueltas National Chamber Music Competition with the piece, commissioned by the Kronos Quartet, *Altar de Muertos*, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Inroads Commission, Banff Center for the Arts Residency among many others.

Her first Latin Grammy nomination was for her work *Elegía* in 2013, which the group Southwest Chamber Music included in their CD “Aroma Foliado.” In 2014, the Guggenheim Foundation and the Organization of the American States commissioned her to write a video opera with visual artist and filmmaker Rubén Ortiz Torres. The opera *Únicamente la Verdad* and is about events in the USA-Mexican border. It was performed at the Compañía Nacional de Opera in 2010 and the Long Beach Opera in March 2013. *Únicamente la Verdad* was nominated for the 2014 Latin Grammy as best classical contemporary composition.

Other recent commissions include *Altar de Piedra* for three percussion players, timpani and orchestra for the Los Angeles Philharmonic with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Kroumata percussion ensemble and *Zócalo-Bastilla* for violin, percussion, and orchestra premiered by violinist Pierre Amoyal, percussionist Ricardo Gallardo and OFUNAM Philharmonic.

A prolific composer, Ortiz has written for most musical genres and instruments. Some of the ensembles and soloists that have performed her music are Malmo Symphony Orchestra, Tambuco Percussion Quartet, BBC Scottish Symphony, Percussions, Claviers de Lyon, Amadinda Percussion Ensemble, the Hungarian Philharmonic Orchestra, Sara Leonard,

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<sup>77</sup> “Gabriela Ortiz, composer” in [gabrielortiz.com](http://www.gabrielortiz.com). Accessed May 10, 2015. <http://www.gabrielortiz.com>.

Alejandro Escuer, Trio Neos, La Camerata Chamber Players, Cuarteto Latinoamericano, Kronos Quartet and soprano Dawn Upshaw.

Recently, on July 8, 2015, the Los Angeles International Contemporary Music Festival featured concert of her music at the Redcat in Walt Disney Concert Hall.<sup>78</sup> She currently travels extensively to collaborate with musicians and conductors in the performance of her works and teaches at the National University of Mexico (UNAM).

Ortiz's musical language includes the use of folk elements, jazz, traditional and avant-garde techniques in a very personal way. She writes in many styles and combinations and one of the most important elements of her style is rhythm. Many of her pieces, like *Concierto Candela* for percussion, are rhythmically complex with strong accents. Her music for flute is diverse but the unifying element is a strong sense of rhythmic energy. In her flute works, Ortiz demonstrates a profound knowledge of the instruments expressive and technical possibilities.

Gabriela Ortiz's list of flute works that range from flute trios to chamber works and concertos.

Flute Works:

-- *Apariciones* for wind quintet and string quartet (1990)

-- *Elegía* for 4 sopranos, flute, violin, viola, cello, double bass, two percussions, timpani, piano/celesta and harp (1991)

-- *En Pares* for 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, 2 trumpets, 2 horns, 2 percussionists, 2 violins, 2 cellos, double bass and harp (1992)

--Huítztl piccolo versión (1993)

-- *Elegía* –orchestra version for four sopranos, solo flute, 2 percussionists, piano/celesta, harp

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<sup>78</sup> <http://www.redcat.org/event/2015-la-international-new-music-festival>

and string orchestra (1993)

--5 pa' 2 for guitar and flute (1995)

-- *Zócalo-Tropical* (1998) for flute, percussion and orchestra (transcription Alejandro Escuer) –  
Performed by flutist Luis Julio Toro, percussionist Ricardo Gallardo and Orquesta Simón  
Bolivar.

-- *Denibée-Yucañana* for flute, double bass and percussion (1999)

-- *Puzzle-Tocas* for wind quintet (2000)

-- Alien Studies for flute, clarinet, violin, cello and double bass (2001)

-- La Montaña de los Signos for three flutes (2003)

-- *Códigos Secretos* for flute and electroacoustic sounds (2004)

--El Agila Bicéfala for flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano (2005)

-- Río Bravo 2 for mezzo soprano, flauta and six crystal cups (2009)

--De ánimos y quebrantos for flute, percussion, violin, viola, and cello (2009)

--Vitrales de Ambar for flute, clarinet, horn, percussion, piano, violin, viola and cello (2009)

--Vanix for flute/piccolo, clarinet, horn, percussion, harp, piano, violin, viola, cello and double  
bass (2009)

-- Sinfonía coral *Luz de lava*, commissioned by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México  
for its centennial celebration (2010)

-- *Luz de Lava* for soprano, flute, choir and orchestra (2010)

-- Tres Toritos for Three Flutes (2011)

--Ríos for Five percussionists, flute/piccolo, alto saxophone and cello (2011)

-- Tres Haikus for Mezzo Soprano, Flute and Cello (2012)

-- Opera--Ana y su Sobra (2012)-chamber opera for flute, violin, piano, soprano, tenor, soprano and mezzo soprano<sup>79</sup>

### ***Huitzl***

This solo piccolo piece was originally composed for the virtuoso Mexican recorder player Horacio Franco in 1989.<sup>80</sup> This is a non-stop, technically demanding *tour de force* that would challenge any piccoloist. *Huitzl* means hummingbird in the *Náhuatl* language (an indigenous language of the Aztecs in Mexico).<sup>81</sup> The piece was transcribed to accommodate to the piccolo's range. The piece was written while Ortiz was a student in Mexico. It is mostly tonal and uses very few extended techniques of the flute. Later works include many more extended techniques and more rhythmic complexity.

*Huitztl* is a piece with a free form in four unrelated sections. There is a recurrent use of the fermata. This is probably to imitate the movement of the hummingbird. The piece is full of rhythmic energy with changing meters and tempos giving the impression of an improvisation on the movement of the hummingbird. The motion of the piece alternates between fast and slow with a long *accelerato* all the way to the end. The harmonic language is mostly tonal with strong chromaticism. The tonal focus is on E but there is no functional harmony due to the lack of triads and cadential gestures.

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<sup>79</sup> "Gabriela Ortiz," in [gabrielaortiz.com](http://www.gabrielaortiz.com), accessed July 3, 2015. <http://www.gabrielaortiz.com>.

<sup>80</sup> José Antonio Alcaráz, "Harina de Otro Costal/ Gabriela Ortiz," *Reforma*. Mexico City, 17 November 2000, 5.

<sup>81</sup> *Britannica Academic*, s. v. "Nahuatl," in *Britannica Online*, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/401799/Nahuatl>.

The composer uses some extended techniques such as the glissandi, microtones and blowing strongly to create sounds that imitate the bird. The phrase structure is irregular.

*The opening is a fast paced succession of notes full of chromaticism and accents. The appoggiaturas add a sense of freedom and fluidity to the otherwise detached articulation.*

[Example 5.1]

Marco, energico para piccolo Gabriela Ortiz

$\text{♩} = 138$

*f*

*p* *mf*

*cresc.* *ff*

*poco rit.* *A tempo*

*f* *p* *f*

Example 5.1. Gabriela Ortiz, *Huitztl*

Fast passages are often interrupted by pauses of different lengths adding to the unstable rhythmic sense of the piece. [Ex. 5.2]

Example 5.2. Gabriela Ortíz, *Huitzil*

The next section, *Allegro* has special markings to make a bird-like effect by tapping the fingering on the key while blowing abruptly with air.<sup>82</sup> [Ex. 5.3 and 5.4]

Example 5.3. Gabriela Ortíz, *Huitzil*

Example 5.4. Gabriela Ortíz, *Huitzil*

A contrasting section, the *Lento* with the use of microtonal sounds and chromaticism.

<sup>82</sup> Gabriela Ortíz, *Huitzil* score symbols explanations, 1989.

[Ex. 5.5] At this point, the composer uses alternative fingerings and glissandos. Glissandos can be made on the piccolo by moving the instrument's embouchure up and down and using chromatic scales.

Example 5.5. Gabriela Ortíz, *Huitzil*

As mentioned before, the piece uses multiple time signatures. An example of this is in the last section. The piece moves from 4/4 to 15/16- 7/8- 6/8-10/8-19/16-9/16 and 13/16. The subdivision is basically the same but the accentuation changes. This section has short phrases that are fully articulated and accented. [Ex. 5.6 and 5.7]

Example 5.6. Gabriela Ortíz, *Huitzil*

Example 5.7. Gabriela Ortíz, *Huitzil*

The tempo modulations in this final section are part of the composer's effective use of rhythm.

At the end the piece ends with fortissimo coda using strong tonguing and blowing. [Ex. 5.8]

Example 5.8. Gabriela Ortiz, *Huitzil*

*Huitzil* is a very idiomatic piece for the piccolo and uses the instrument's full range. It is a very effective piece with proper use of the dynamics and rhythmic accuracy. It is important to pace the energy to arrive at a strong climax at the end. In this piece, Ortiz shows her rhythmic creativity, which is a central element of her style.

## Chapter 6

### Angélica Negrón: Quimbombó for flute, violin, cello and percussion

Born in 1981 in Puerto Rico, Angélica Negrón was selected by Q2 and NPR listeners as part of “The Mix: 100 Composers Under 40”. Negrón has developed a thriving career as a composer with commissions from Choral Chameleon, Janus Trio, pianist David Friend, toy pianist Phyllis Chen, MTA Festival, Cadillac Moon Ensemble and the American Composers Orchestra.<sup>83</sup> She curated concerts for Composers Now Festival at the Museo del Barrio in New York, MATA Interval Series and Pregones Theatre. Her music has been performed by TRANSIT Ensemble, Cantori NY, Face the Music, Iktus Percussion Quartet, NYU Symphony Orchestra and the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra.

Negrón entered the Puerto Rico Conservatory’s Preparatory School to study violin when she was eight years old. She pursued an undergraduate degree at the Puerto Rico Conservatory, where she studied violin performance. At the same time, she was pursuing a Communications degree at the University of Puerto Rico, specializing in cinema. While at the university, she met other musicians and started her first pop band, which was comprised of a string quartet, a singer, and electronics. Her earliest compositions were for this group.<sup>84</sup> In her own words, “doing competitions and listening to other violinists was not my thing so I started learning other instruments and writing music for my band *Sinestesia* because it had a string quintet, voice and

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<sup>83</sup> “Angélica Negrón.” *Angélica Negrón: When Silence Collapses*. Accessed January 26, 2015. URL: <http://www.angelicanegron.com/>

<sup>84</sup> Angelica Negrón skype interview with the author, June 19, 2015.

electronics. The first piece I composed was for a German silent movie called *The Cabinet of Dr. Calligari*.”<sup>85</sup>

After this experience in 1999, she felt drawn more and more to composition. Negrón was also playing with the band *Balún* in the underground electronic scene of cosmopolitan San Juan. The band was influenced by Bjork and the Kronos Quartet. Bjork’s use of strings inspired her own work with both bands. She was doing this on her own until “one of the band members of *Sinestesia* encouraged me to study composition.” I did not know it was possible to study composition since we never performed music by living composers male or female in student orchestras.”<sup>86</sup> Discovering composition led her to change her major in her junior year from violin performance to composition at Puerto Rico Conservatory to study with Alfonso Fuentes.

She kept her conservatory and pop music worlds apart until 2003, when “*Balún* did an audiovisual recital with arrangements of four songs for strings, percussion and woodwinds along with electronics. “This was the first time I tried combining the two worlds and though it was a really special and satisfying experience, it just didn't sink in at the moment that not only could I bring my ‘classical’ world into *Balún* but that the same was true in reverse.”<sup>87</sup>

Negrón moved to New York to work on a master’s degree with Pedro da Silva at New York University. She took some time off after that and was able to compose in a less academic

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Angelica Negrón skype interview with the author, June 19, 2015.

<sup>87</sup> *Angélica Negrón: The (Un)Natural Course*, Interview for Janus Trio’s Blog August 2013  
<http://www.janustrio.org/#!angelica-negron/c1mu4>

and more “inner driven” way according to her.<sup>88</sup> She was accepted at City University of New York to work with Tania León and is now working on her dissertation. She has received grants from Meet the Composer (MetLife Creative Connections Program), the Foundation for Contemporary Arts (Emergency Grants) and the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, among others.

While continuing her research, Negrón works with children on her project *Acoplados* and is a teaching artist for the New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers and The Little Orchestra Society’s Musical Connections Program. Good Child Music publishes her music. Her newest orchestral work, commissioned by The American Composers Orchestra, will be premiered at the SONiC Festival in New York in October 2015.<sup>89</sup>

Negrón’s musical style is reflective of her interest in pop and electronic music as well as her roots in Puerto Rico. Although she was born and raised in Carolina, Puerto Rico surrounded by *salsa* and *reggaeton*, she approaches composition from an inner perspective, detached from her external sound reality. She felt saturated by these sounds and her early works lack any distinct folkloric/Puerto Rican element.<sup>90</sup> Negrón defines her musical style as having influences from experimental pop and electronic music. She enjoys incorporating pre-recorded sounds that she manipulates in her mixed pieces (an instrument plus electronics) and pure electronic pieces.

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<sup>88</sup> Angelica Negrón skype interview with the author, June 19, 2015.

<sup>89</sup> Michael Cooper, “SONiC Festival Featuring Young Composers is Returning to New York” The New York Times, July 15, 2015 [http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/sonic-festival-featuring-young-composers-is-returning-to-new-york/?\\_r=0](http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/sonic-festival-featuring-young-composers-is-returning-to-new-york/?_r=0)

<sup>90</sup> *Angélica Negrón: The (Un)Natural Course*, Interview for Janus Trio’s Blog August 2013 <http://www.janustrio.org/#!angelica-negrón/c1mu4>

Low-fidelity sounds are of particular interest to her, and she translates this sound quality in her acoustic works as well. Her low-fi project *Arturo en el Barco* has released albums with Observatory Records in Austria and Carte Postale Records in Belgium and was part of the Latin Electronic Music Festival in Chicago in 2009. Another strong influence in her work is minimalistic music.<sup>91</sup> Negrón incorporates minimalistic figures in many of her works, especially the ones with toy instruments such as in her piece *Bubblegum Grass Peppermint Field*. She enjoys the sounds of toys because “there is always something off, something different, some kind of noise.”<sup>92</sup> In her acoustic works, she mixes classical instruments with new instruments such as the gamelan *elektrika* that she also included in her piece *Bubblegum Grass Peppermint Field*. The gamelan *elektrika* is an electronic gamelan created by Alex Rigopulus with whom Angélica has collaborated. Negrón frequently collaborates with the experimental theater company from Puerto Rico *Y No Había Luz* writing music for their plays, which often incorporate puppets, masks and unusual objects. One of their new projects is a puppet opera. Negrón has also written music for documentaries, films, theater and modern dance and is now collaborating with filmmaker Cecilia Aldarondo in her new film *Memories of a Penitent Heart*.

Negrón has begun incorporating Afro-Caribbean rhythms perhaps due to a nostalgic feeling and Tania León’s influence. The chamber music piece *Quimbombó* is an experiment in which the composer presents distant memories and deconstructs rhythms and gestures from the Afro-Caribbean *Bomba* (a dance form) of Puerto Rico. This piece relates to Cuban composer Tania León’s encouragement to compose a piece that would reflect her Caribbean heritage.

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<sup>91</sup> Angelica Negrón skype interview with the author, June 19, 2015.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

### ***Quimbombó***

Commissioned by the Cadillac Moon Ensemble, *Quimbombó* is one of the few works in Negrón's catalog inspired by Puerto Rican music. The name *Quimbombó* means stewed okra, an African dish. The piece is a chamber music work with flute, percussion, violin and cello.

One of the most notable elements in this piece is rhythm. The rhythms of this piece are often syncopated and complex. Negrón's idea was to create a piece of dance music that could not be danced. The rhythm is there but without its natural accentuation. The percussion part includes congas, vibraphone, and claves. All the instrumental lines in the ensemble are conceived as percussion parts with pitches and the musicians are required to sing. Voice crossing is frequent among the parts in most sections. This procedure makes for interesting timbral combinations that give the repeated passages variety.

The piece is in a rondo form with three main sections. The thematic material is organized as ABCBCAB. The first section (A) focus is on rhythm and rhythmic accuracy is key to an effective performance. All the instruments of the ensemble are used as percussion instruments according to the composer. The most important element is rhythm. For example, in m. 1, the flute starts with a quintuple followed by an eighth note on the bass drum and a pizzicato on the strings. [Example 6.1]

Angélica Negrón  
2010

**Deciso** ♩ = 84

Flute

Percussion

Violin

Cello

Example 6.1. Section A, Angélica Negrón, *Quimbombó*, mm. 1-3.

In section B, the composer adds spoken syllables in order to enhance the rhythm. The flute part also has tongue-rams that make the performance of this section more complicated.

[Example 6.2]

Fl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vc.

Example 6.2. Section B, Negrón, *Quimbombó*, mm. 22-23.

On measure 30 in the percussion part, the congas are playing a displaced *sicá bomba* rhythm.<sup>93</sup> At the same time, the violin plays a variation of the basic conga pattern. [Example 6.3]

Example 6.3. Negrón, *Quimbombó*, mm. 30-31.

Negrón introduces bomba melodies on the flute part and the violin part in the next section (C). [Example 6.4] The players sing the melody with syllables. These are short melodies grouped into four-bar phrases with syncopated rhythms. [Example 6.5]

Example 6.4. Negrón, *Quimbombó*, mm. 34-36.

<sup>93</sup> Salvador E. Ferreras, “Solo Drumming in the Puerto Rican Bomba: An Analysis of Musical Processes and Improvisational Strategies,” (Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, The University of British Columbia, 2005), 108.

The image shows a musical score for measures 37-38. It consists of four staves: Flute (Fl.), Percussion (Perc.), Violin (Vln.), and Voice (Vc.). The Flute and Violin parts share a melody with lyrics 'a o o a a o o a'. The Percussion part features a rhythmic pattern with triplets. The Voice part is a bass line with sustained notes.

**Example 6.5.** Negrón, *Quimbombó*, mm. 37-38.

Negrón took the melody from a *bomba* gathering video taken in Piñones, Puerto Rico.<sup>94</sup> A *bomba* gathering is a dance event with a live percussion and voice ensemble. As part of this music style, solo dancers use specific gestures that are linked to specific rhythms and the main drummer follows the solo dancer's gestures to perform specific rhythmic patterns. These rhythms are part of the Afro-Puerto Rican tradition derived from African West Coast music. Negrón incorporates this music in two ways. First, the purpose of writing vocal parts of all instrumental musicians in the piece was to emulate the *bomba* style in which the drummers also sing. The sound should be open and naturally unsophisticated. Second, in m. 46 (section C), Negrón borrowed the *bomba* melody and embedded it in the vibraphone and violin parts.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

**Con Moto, Playful** ♩ = 92

Fl. *p* T.R. T.R. T.R.

Perc. *mp* Vibraphone

Vln. *mp*

Vc.

Example 6.6. Section B1, Negrón, *Quimbombó*, mm. 46-47.

Negrón's teacher, Tania León challenged her to include Afro-Caribbean rhythms. This was the first time that Negrón used minimalistic techniques combined with Afro-Caribbean musical gestures as in mm. 46-47. [Example 6.6] Minimalistic techniques had been part of Negrón's style and according to her: "I felt for the first time that I could write in this style and still be myself. This part is less abstract and more consistent and clear."<sup>95</sup> In this section, there is a hidden melody in the vibraphone part which is doubled by the violin. The minimalistic patterns tend to be of three bars with minimal changes to create a sense of surprise. At the same time, in the flute part, Negrón incorporated accentuated notes with tongue rests.

All the elements are repeated and exchanged among the instruments when sections A and B repeat. The cello eventually takes over the percussive part tapping on the instrument. [Example 6.7] The piece ends decreasing in intensity by removing instruments and adding rests. It is a tribute to her primary teachers' Afro-Caribbean style and reflects her admiration for their natural and honest use of folkloric materials.

<sup>95</sup> Angelica Negrón skype interview with the author, June 19, 2015.

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Flute (Fl.), Percussion (Perc.), Violin (Vln.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The score is for measures 128-131. The Flute part has a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p* at the end. The Percussion part has a rhythmic pattern with a dynamic marking of *p* at the end. The Violin part is mostly silent with a few notes at the end. The Violoncello part has a rhythmic pattern with a dynamic marking of *p* at the end.

**Example 6.7.** Negrón, *Quimbombó*, mm. 128-131.

Composer Angélica Negrón has created an innovative chamber music work. Negrón was truly successful combining bomba rhythms with minimalistic procedures while incorporating spoken voice and singing. Disjunctive elements work together in an efficient way to create a new rhythmic and sound experience for the listener.

## Conclusion

Women composers from Latin America have taken a fascinating journey from convents and churches to the concert hall. Some contemporary composers are internationally recognized and consistently performed, while many are yet to be discovered. There are a great number of excellent female composers from the region with diverse experiences and styles. Any musician attempting to perform music by Latin American composers would benefit from learning about the region's musical movements and styles. Studying the cultural and musical context helps in the interpretation of the composer's unique musical path and creative focus.

Many researchers have written great books and articles about women composers from Latin America, but there is still a need for histories that bring together the stories and accomplishments of these composers as a group.<sup>96</sup> It is important to address the reasons, including inequality, that have prevented this music from reaching concert halls. Moreover, further research into the historical percentages of women professional musicians in the continent could help us understand the state of female composers, conductors, professors, theorists and instrumentalists in the region. Additional studies could assess the number of female musicians that enter music schools and conservatories, and how many of them work professionally. Other important factors to research about are general support to composers and gender discrimination in different countries.

Orchestras and audiences around the world are comprised of a good number of women and music by women should be performed on a regular basis. As musicians and teachers, it is important to learn about female composers from Latin America, a treasure yet to be included regularly in our performances. In addition, learning about the role of women as composers and

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<sup>96</sup> Carmen Cecilia Piñero Gil, "Compositoras Iberoamericanas," in *Música y Mujeres: Género y Poder*, ed. Marisa Manchado Torres. Cuadernos Inacabados 29 (Madrid: Edition Peterers, 1995), 162.

instrumentalists and including this information in music history books would make a difference in encouraging the new generation of Latin American and other female musicians around the world to pursue music in all areas.

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