

Repurposing Borrowed Materials in Contemporary Composition:
Abstraction, Masking and Revelation

A Portfolio of Compositions
and Textual Commentary

by

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Abstract

This portfolio of compositions, along with its commentaries, consists of six pieces for varied instrumentation as well as their analysis in relation to musical borrowing and masking. Masking, which is the central topic of this thesis, is explored in each one my pieces as a means of repurposing borrowed materials. When exploring the repurposing of materials, I research and expand upon the use of various techniques from composers of diverse backgrounds, as well as artists from other disciplines such as cinematography. This is done as a means of synthesising their ideas with my own, expanding the possibilities that borrowed materials have within the formal construction of a musical composition.

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Introduction - 'I was hoping you would write something for us which sounded a bit more Puerto Rican': Points of Departure

A few years ago, as a student in the city of Cesena in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy, I attended the premiere of a piece of mine entitled *Tiento II*. Given that the theme of the festival in which I was programmed was contemporary Caribbean composers, I was performed alongside some well-known colleagues from Cuba, Dominican Republic, and my native Puerto Rico. After the concert, I was approached by the conductor and director of the festival who congratulated me for my work and briefly discussed some of the other pieces that were performed. Before we parted ways, he told me, in quite an indiscreet manner: 'I'm not going to lie, I was hoping you would write something for us which sounded a bit more Puerto Rican.'

At that moment, I was not sure of what to make of his comment or how to react to it. Twenty-four-year-old John was confused by the entire situation, and seven years later, as I sit down in front of my computer screen and write this, I think I still am. The state of confusion caused by this reaction towards the expected outcomes of my creative work, became the basic premise that generated these commentaries and portfolio of compositions.

As a composer, what drives me to create is both challenge and process. By challenge, I am referring to the act of facing obstacles within a specific piece, obstacles which at times can be conceptual, technical, or both. In the case of the pieces presented within this portfolio and discussed in these commentaries, the challenge which I consciously accepted after the comments by the conductor on the day of my premiere, was that of consciously incorporating borrowed folk materials from my native Puerto Rico within my work, something I had not done previously. This challenge of incorporation came with the focus of applying my own compositional strategies, as learned from my former teachers, as a means of being in conversation with borrowed materials, including Puerto Rican folk music.

While to the reader it may at times seem strange that the conductor's statement might have generated the driving force for the creation of the works written for this doctorate, it was, nevertheless, for me, a critical moment of self-questioning which made me re-evaluate the ways in which borrowed materials were being treated within contemporary music and the expectations others had of composers based solely on the criteria of their geographical location. I wanted to prove someone wrong, and in so doing it opened this whole train of research that this doctorate has embodied.

Regarding process, my biggest fulfilment as a composer comes from the act of crafting a piece. Craft, or the ability to consciously manipulate the internal structures of musical material to achieve a desired result, has become a conscious part of my creative process since my initial studies in composition in Italy. Within the Italian school of composition, imitation and analysis take a big role in the initial years of formation of a composer. We were trained to solve problems in the style of many past composers and then encouraged to use those solutions within our own musical ideas. This is why the idea of borrowing felt so close to my own musical interests when starting this doctorate. The final goal of all the pieces created had the same focus as any compositional exercise within the Italian school: how can I make these materials work for me?

This being said, the reader will find that even though in the initial chapters I saw borrowed materials from Puerto Rican folklore merely as raw material (moulded through the various compositional techniques learned from my Italian teachers and mentors), as the portfolio progressed, my focus and style as a composer changed – and I found myself engaging in a deeper manner with these raw materials borrowed from Puerto Rican folk music.

When speaking of raw material, the reader must understand that I am in no way or form trying to minimise the cultural or historic past of a certain musical idea. Instead, as someone who is passionate about craft and creative procedures, I am simply trying to momentarily

separate an idea from its point of origin. This separation, in turn, helps me bring all my attention to the details that are found within it, details such as shape, harmonic outline, and intervallic contour. I begin seeing a borrowed musical idea almost as a carpenter sees a piece of wood – an element which has been removed from its point of origin, and now, after studying its structure and construction, is ready to be re-shaped into something new.

While initially the recognition or identification of these elements was not unwelcome, it was crucial to the construction of my pieces. But in final portion of this doctorate, other methods of incorporation led me to new directions in my musical language. This revelation came as a consequence of exploring these materials through other creative acts such as improvisation, exercises which had as a result the creation of a dialogue between my own musical interests and Puerto Rican folk music. With time, the ideas of challenge and craft became linked to a new concept – musical honesty.

By honesty, I am referring to the conscious act of not carrying the weight of your musical forebears and teachers on your shoulders, and simply exploring music freely, using all your learned tools as a means of transmitting your personal interests in a manner which is in harmony with your expressive interest at that given moment in time. This expressive interest gave, as a result, the exploration of opposites in my own music: it was as a means of ‘freeing’ myself from the weight of the teachings of my mentors. Through each chapter, the reader will perceive this exploration and change through gradual shifts that go from the exploration of Italian modernist serialism and atonality to tonality and modality, as well as from highly rhythmic structures to slowness and stasis. This honesty, as the reader will see throughout the various chapters of this textual commentary, revealed to me that I as composer am allowed, just as borrowed materials, to change.

Puerto Rico: the creation of a cultural identity

As someone whose roots are based in Caribbean culture, a tradition which is based upon the phenomena of *hybridization*¹ due to its long and withstanding relationship to colonialism, the concept of identity has been a complex topic within the development of my music. Here below, I detail a brief account of the entanglements of politics and culture that lie behind my own experience.

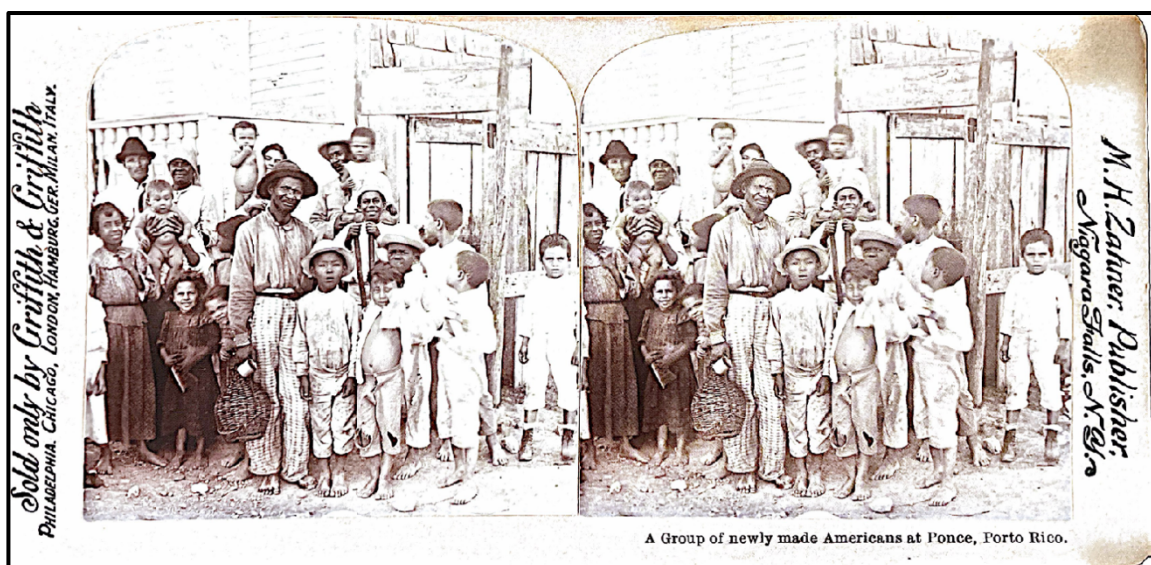
For many years, the idea of being Puerto Rican in the world of humanities and arts was centred on the acknowledgment of being multi-cultural human beings with influences from Spanish, *Taino*, and African roots — all these cultural traditions being a direct consequence of the arrival of Spanish *conquistadors* in 1493 and their enslavement of Africans, as well as the *Tainos*, who originally inhabited the island which they called *Borikén*.

After centuries of Spanish rule, Puerto Rico was sold to the United States alongside the Philippines and Guam in 1898 with the signing of the *Treaty of Paris*, adding yet another level of intricacy to the concept of cultural identity to a country whose people were now not only being submitted to a new language, but also new political complexities such as status and citizenship. During the first thirty years of North American rule in Puerto Rico, it can be perceived through caricatures and photographic documentation, that the perception which foreigners had of Puerto Rico was very much determined by the United States. Historian Hilda Blanch-Miranda establishes in her book “*Discover Puerto Rico, U.S.A*”: *Propaganda, Cultura y marca país, 1929-1941*, that the vision promoted by the United States regarding Puerto Rico was based on ideas such as: ‘the new colony, exoticism or imperialist discourse; Puerto Rico

¹In *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, Nestor García Canclini defines hybridization as the ‘*socio cultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices.*’
García Canclini, Néstor. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), xxv. (Italics in the original)

as a centre of scientific investigation; and Puerto Rico as a product of well-meaning imperialism.²

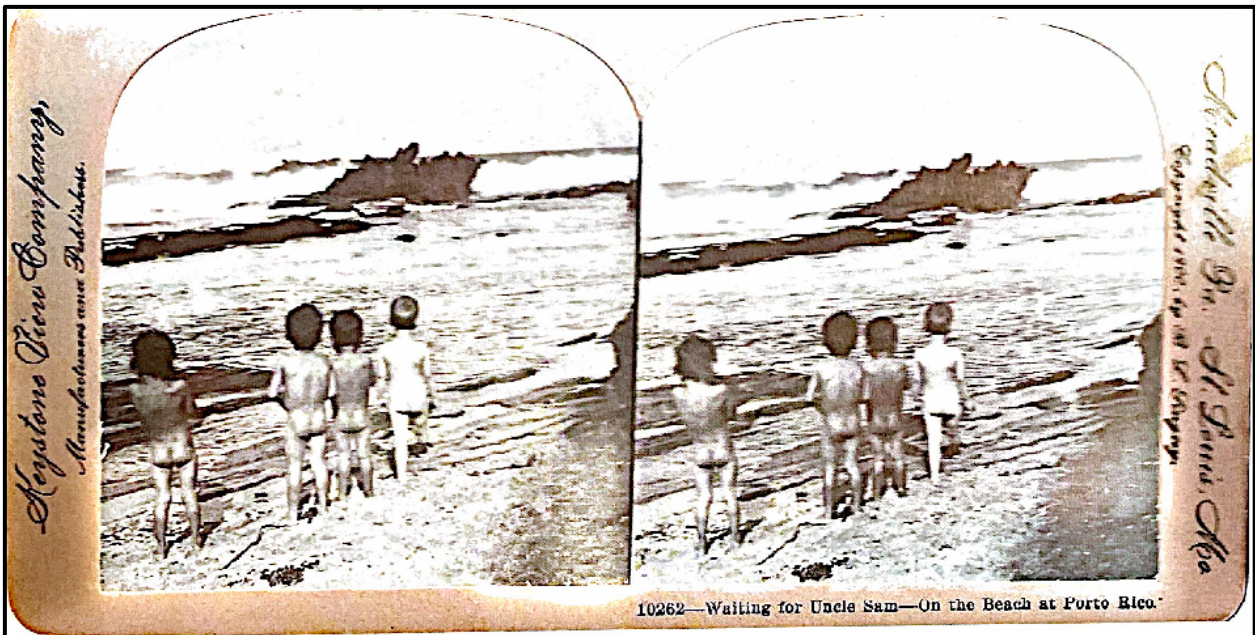
Given the United States's lack of planning towards the structuring of Puerto Rico's identity and cultural development, the image that was given of the island to the outside world was one filled with misconceptions. As can be seen in the pictures archived and published by Blanch-Miranda, the perception established by the United States made it seem like they had arrived at country with no culture, and no structural model for work and government related issues. It was, therefore, seen as a territory without an identity which was now being saved and educated by the Americans (Photographs 1 and 2).



Photograph 1 – *A group of newly made Americans at Ponce, Porto Rico*³

² Blanch-Miranda, Hilda, “Discover Puerto Rico, U.S.A”: Propaganda, Cultura y marca país, 1929-1941 (Puerto Rico: Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín, 2021), 40.

³ Ibid, 43 Originally published by M.H. Zahner, c. 1900. Found at Library of Congress, Washington D.C. <https://www.loc.gov/item/96520125/>.



10.262 Wait empuerri Onkel Sam. Iñi Oñelade non Porto Rico.
 In attesa di Uncle Sam — Sulla spiaggia a Porto Rico.
 Attendants l'Onkel Sam — Sur la plage à Porto Rico.
 Aguardando al Tío Samuel — En la playa en Puerto Rico.
 Ventende for "Uncle Sam" — Paa stranden i Porto Rico.
 I väntan på Onkel Sam — vid stranden i Porto Rico.

Childhood of whatever nationality or condition is an interesting and amusing study; and on the Porto Rican soil, where all tropical verdure thrives with great luxuriance under the sun's warm rays, the colored children multiply and flourish without much attention or care, and are seen swarming about in all their native simplicity and innocence. Whether scrambling up the trunk of the cocoanut palm for a drink of the liquid from the nut, or playing on the beach where they watch Uncle Sam's stately ships come to anchor, thronging about the city gates, or playing around the rude cabin doorway, they live the same free, Topsy-like life. But under the new regime, among these little natives are we to look for the future citizens and statesmen of the island, and one of the first duties of the United States will be to establish some sort of a system of compulsory education that shall raise the people from their present state of woeful ignorance and provide better things for the coming generation.

Photograph 2 – *Waiting for Uncle Sam* (Personal Collection of Hilda Blanch-Miranda)⁴

⁴ Ibid, 41.

Consequently, as the political tensions in the country grew, various political parties were created, each with a unique vision of what Puerto Rico's future should look like. Among the political parties founded within the second half of the twentieth century was the *Partido Popular Democrático* (Popular Democratic Party). This party was developed by Luis Muñoz Marín, first elected governor of Puerto Rico in 1949, whose vision was centred on the Associated Free State (*Estado Libre Asociado*) of Puerto Rico with the United States. Muñoz Marín, who 'defined Puerto Rico as a 'Hispanic country composed of good American citizens,' visualised Puerto Rico's contribution and service as a 'cultural frontier' which generated a 'transition of understanding and good will between the Americas'.⁵ His mission as a politician was therefore not to lead Puerto Rico towards cultural and economic self-sufficiency, but to use the United States's 'exotic' vision of the island as a means of promoting an intricate and unique culture. The island was therefore perceived by Muñoz Marín as a selling point, using it to attract investors and military personnel who wanted to establish themselves in Puerto Rico. It proved to be a more economical alternative in terms of labour costs in relation to other territories occupied by the United States, as well as a strategic location for the military due to its proximity with the mainland.⁶

After Muñoz Marín's election, the idea of free association became linked to the concept of culture and identity. As historian Catherine Marsh Kennedy states in her book *Negociaciones Culturales: Los intelectuales y el proyecto pedagógico del estado muñocista* (*Cultural Negotiations: Intellectuals and the pedagogical project of the Muñozista state*): 'the cultural

⁵ Marsh Kenney, Catherine, *Negociaciones Culturales: Los intelectuales y el Proyecto pedagógico del estado muñocista*, (Puerto Rico: Ediciones Callejón, 2008), 65. [Translated by John Rivera Pico]

⁶ Díaz Quiñones, Arcadio, *La memoria rota*, (Puerto Rico: Ediciones Huracán, 2003), 20. [Translated by John Rivera Pico]

Regarding these matters, Puerto Rican scholar Arcadio Díaz Quiñones mentions in his book *La memoria rota* that the vision promoted by various politicians of this period was centred on the acknowledgement of the supposed generosity of the United States through the 'Money of the soldiers recruited in the Nation to defend liberty. Money of the exportations of rum and other articles from Puerto Rico to satiate the thirst of markets deprived by international conflicts. Money of the Government of the United States that would broaden its military defence installations in Puerto Rico.'

politics of the *Estado Libre Asociado* that would arise from the project of the *Partido Popular* under the government of Luis Muñoz Marín, intended to create the basis which would conceive the idea of what it is to be Puerto Rican, while [trying] to be detached from the [colonial] status [of the island]. The lack of sovereignty required all possible strategies to build a new concept of what should be understood by Puerto Rican culture.’⁷

Muñoz Marín’s initiative of fabricating Puerto Rican culture within a colonial setting began with the foundation of various programs such as the *DivEdCo* in 1949 (Division for the Education of the Community), the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture in 1955, and the Casals Festival in 1956. The function of these institutions was primarily to generate a series of works in various artistic disciplines such as cinema, theatre, visual arts, and music that had a pedagogical approach towards the idea of nationalism. This initiative was proposed and executed by Muñoz Marín as a means of generating a connection between the cultural tradition of the rural and urban areas in the country, while also visualizing the preservation of ‘Puerto Rican culture almost as a reward for the continued political subordination to the mandates of the congress and the capital gains of North American companies.’⁸

In researching the outcome of concert music throughout the various terms of Muñoz Marín’s government, the works of Héctor Campos Parsi have stood out as a helpful exemplum in understanding the way Puerto Rican musical culture has developed. Campos Parsi, who worked directly for Muñoz Marín’s *DivEdCo* programme, was an important figure in the development of a ‘nationalist school’ of composition throughout the second half of the twentieth century. His approach to the issues of national identity and the implementation of folk materials within musical works led him to develop, alongside other composers, a group known as *Acción Musical* (Musical Action). With this group, Campos Parsi and his colleagues attempted to

⁷ Ibid, 18 - 19.

⁸ Ibid, 22.

incorporate folklore within their works ‘through the recontextualization and reconstruction of Puerto Rican popular rhythms, melodies, and sonorities on behalf of ‘universal’ concert forms for listening.’⁹ This can be observed in works of Campos Parsi from this period such as his art songs, which search for a means of connecting the previously stated relationship between the rural and the urban by incorporating melodic and rhythmic patterns from folk music such as the *Puerto Rican danza*, seen in Ex.1.¹⁰

a María Justina de Aldrey

Tres poemas de Corretjer

I. Ese rumor del Balbas

Juan Antonio Corretjer (1908-1985) Héctor Campos Parsi (1922-1998)

Andante poco allegro ♩ = 72

Ex.1 - Campos Parsi’s *Ese rumor del Balbas*¹¹

We might well conclude that Campos Parsi’s (and those like him) ‘incorporation’ of folk elements was successful. His contribution and mindset towards Puerto Rican music and culture, as well as his legacy after the establishment of a Puerto Rican ‘nationalist’ school of composition can still be perceived to this day. Even after more than half a century has passed

⁹ Edgardo Díaz Díaz, "Puerto Rican Affirmation and Denial of Musical Nationalism: The Cases of Campos Parsi and Aponte Ledée", *Latin American Music Review*, 17.1 (Spring – Summer, 1996), 1-20. <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/780335>> [Accessed 8 March 2021].

¹⁰ Apart from the score examples provided, I have included this YouTube link to a Puerto Rican danza titled *Impromptu*. The rhythmic sequence used by Campos Parsi can be perceived in the accompaniment of *Impromptu* from 0:30 onwards, right after the introduction. “Impromptu”. YouTube, uploaded by Maestro Ladi-Topic, 11-01-2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7Xcx1YNus4>

¹¹ Campos Parsi, Héctor. *Ese rumor del Balbas*. Puerto Rico: ICP, 1953.

since the government of Muñoz Marín and his creation of an ideal Puerto Rican culture, we can still observe the remnants of Muñoz Marín's and Campos Parsi's work in our concert halls every year with the continuous programming of composers that follow the traditions established by these individuals. The tradition encouraged by Muñoz Marín and Campos Parsi, as well as his colleagues within *Acción Musical*, created the music that would become the sound of Muñoz Marín's DivEdCo programme, and consequently that of Puerto Rican concert music.

Indeed, this tradition continues strongly to this day with composers such as Sonia Ivette Morales Matos, Roberto Sierra, and Ernesto Cordero. While Sierra and Cordero have become known for their incorporation of rhythmic and melodic patterns found in *salsa montunos*, evidenced in works such as Sierra's *Sinfonía No. 3 'La Salsa'*¹² and Cordero's *Salsa en Piñones*¹³, Morales has centred on the use of traditional Puerto Rican instruments such as the Puerto Rican *cuatro* and their role within new formats such as the symphony orchestra. This can be appreciated in Morales's piece *Paisajes*¹⁴, which uses traditional rhythms and melodic gestures found in genres typical of the island's rural music, such as the *mapeyé* and *seis chorreao*.

And yet, for me, though many of these composers show a great level of craftsmanship within their works, I feel that the ongoing mentality generated during the first half of the twentieth century by both locals and foreigners towards the island is not simply an 'innocent' creation,

¹² 'Sinfonía No. 3 – "La Salsa"', YouTube, uploaded by Past_Notes3, 23-06-2016, <https://youtu.be/lgjBdCaWsvA?si=qjZ4l6btG3W-0ZB0&t=18>

The first movement of this symphony show Sierra's use of *salsa montuno*. This can be perceived from 0:18, onwards.

¹³ 'Dúo Copla plays Salsa en Piñones by Ernesto Cordero', YouTube, uploaded by Dúo Copla, 19-06-2023, <https://youtu.be/G2neEph9qUs?si=iXD7XgHBDJQvITJZ&t=28>

The third movement of this guitar duet show Cordero's use of *salsa montuno*. This can be perceived from 0:28, onwards.

¹⁴ 'Paisajes, concerto for Puerto Rican cuatro and orchestra by Sonia Ivette Morales Matos', YouTube, uploaded by Sonia Morales-Matos. 15-10-2018, https://youtu.be/qfGzXH1dKIw?si=fBY7UpHR_7LRw3Ny&t=743

The final movement of this work for *Puerto Rican cuatro* and orchestra show Morales's use of *aguinaldos* and *seis chorreao*. This can be perceived from 0:28, onwards.

but a ‘fabrication’. It is based on elaborate assumptions as to how Puerto Rican music and its composers should sound based solely on the criteria of heritage and geographical location — the result being expressions such as the ones stated by the American conductor on the day of my premiere, which comes out the vision of an individual whose knowledge of Puerto Rico’s folklore and culture comes only from superficial sources, the equivalent of seeing a *Discover Puerto Rico* advertisement campaign for a holiday in 1939 such as the one presented in Photograph 3.

As can be seen through the events and figures discussed in this first part of the introduction, the creation of what it is to ‘sound Puerto Rican’ is a direct consequence of a series of political and social events that encouraged a vision that is, still to this day, touristic and superficial in relation to the actual culture found within the island. When this phenomenon is studied alongside the output of the artists and composers of both past and present, that were impacted by these events, we can see that part of their works are rooted in this Muñozean vision of Puerto Rican culture — a vision which doesn’t necessarily seek to transform the elements of the vernacular, but rather visualises the explicit use of recognizable cultural elements as a way of becoming more approachable to local audiences and as a means of branding themselves and their music. It is a musical representation which encourages *the other* to once again, just like in the times of Muñoz Marín and Campos Parsi, ‘*discover Puerto Rico, U.S.A*’ — a perspective which is not compatible with my reality and artistic interests as a Puerto Rican.



Photograph 3 – *Your 1939 holiday*¹⁵

Masking: my approach to borrowed materials

When investigating the idea of using borrowed materials and folk music, my initial research led me to figures such as Igor Stravinsky, whose writings about Russian music and its influence on musical forebears, touch upon this topic. After reading some of Stravinsky’s writings, such as his *Poetics of Music*, I perceived that, very much like myself, he was searching for ways to ‘help clear up a misapprehension of long-standing to correct certain distortions of perspective’ regarding Russian music.¹⁶ In the sixth lesson of his *Poetics*, entitled *The Avatars of Russian*

¹⁵ Blanch-Miranda, “Discover Puerto Rico, U.S.A”, 399.

The advertisement on the left reads as follows: ‘See them dance the *plena* just once—and you, too, will seek the sapphire sea and the verdant mountains of Puerto Rico. Here is the gallantry of Old Spain...tropic ardour tempered, like the Puerto Rican sun, by the trade wind’s freshness...a happy folk history four centuries long. Join the dance and the golf, tennis, deep-sea fishing...the welcome is sincere. See your travel agent for convenient sailings from New York, Baltimore, Gulf Ports—for direct air service. Or write to the Government of Puerto Rico, Institute of Tourism, 630 Fifth Ave., New York.’

¹⁶ Stravinsky, Igor, *Poetics of Music: In the Form of Six Lessons*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 93. [Translated by Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl]

Music, he begins by asking the question: ‘why do we hear Russian music spoken of in terms of its Russianness rather than simply in terms of music?’¹⁷ When reading this question, I felt a very close relationship to it due its affinity to the statements and ideas presented at the beginning of this introduction in relation to Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican music, and the expectations of others. Given that one of my main goals is to make others see Puerto Rico’s folklore as something more than an advertisement for exoticism, I took Stravinsky’s idea of looking at borrowed materials ‘simply in terms of music’ and analysing the potential an idea had when seen as pure raw material that dialogues with my own influences and interests. This line of thought also drew parallels with how Stravinsky speaks of the methods used by past Russian composers such as Mikhail Glinka when incorporating folk materials into his own pieces.

When speaking of Glinka’s approach to borrowed materials, Stravinsky states that in works such as *A Life for the Czar*, ‘Glinka [does not obey] the dictates of custom. He does not think of laying the groundwork of a vast enterprise for export purposes: he takes the popular *motif* as raw material and treats it quite instinctively according to the usage of the Italian music then in vogue.’¹⁸ The approach taken by Glinka, which borrows raw material from Russian folklore and filters it through the techniques and procedures used by Italian composers of his time, was a similar path to what I wanted to do with borrowed materials, including those derived from my native Puerto Rico. This application towards borrowed materials which reconfigures, repurposes, and reroutes a specific idea, became my motto when incorporating borrowed material within my music — a technique which I called masking.

The idea of masking or using a mask has been present in many cultures around the world. A mask can be perceived both as an artifact which helps an individual conceal their face and

¹⁷ Ibid, 93

¹⁸ Ibid, 94.

not be recognised, as well as an object of transformation, momentarily turning its bearer into someone or something else. My approach to music composition, especially when centred on the use of borrowed materials such as folk music, focuses on both ideas.

Like Glinka, and his relationship between Russian folklore and Italian lyricism, these borrowed materials now become new musical fragments in search of transformation and unity which interact with other concepts that are not necessarily related to my place of origin. In contrast to the use of literal quotation or explicit representation of folklore used by the previously discussed Puerto Rican composers of early and late twentieth century, my approach to borrowed materials and folk music can be perceived, therefore, as a way of manipulating the vernacular through transformational processes filtered through various degrees of masking. Such degrees oscillate between complete abstraction and the literal isolation and unveiling of a specific musical idea. Each degree will be explained in the following outline of each chapter.

Outline of chapters

In the first chapter, the two main composers who have been in their diverse ways models for me as to how to develop and negotiate my path between the abstract and the figurative, are Serbian guitarist and composer Dusan Bogdanovic, and Italian modernist Franco Donatoni. In what follows, I will first explore the ideas presented by Bogdanovic, whose structured vision of creative processes outlined my initial steps for abstracting materials and structuring my pieces. Donatoni, meanwhile, has been the central model for me as to how to transform materials. In his hands the transformation of often already abstract starting points led him towards his goal of a music devoid of expressivity and affection. That has not been mine as such. But it has, nevertheless, been profoundly important in working out the potential for borrowed materials.

These ideas are approached in the pieces discussed in the first chapter by exploring a high degree of masking, or the visualisation of structure and transformation through the distortion and rearrangement of borrowed folk materials such as rhythm. The results are pieces whose construction is centred on numerical and gestural relationships, eliminating the possibility of recognition of the original folk material. It is important to remember that my goal is not necessarily to lead the listener into recognizing the materials used within specific piece, but to show the reader the potential of these ideas when seen as the tools within my craft.

The second chapter will focus on my initial exploration of non-musical disciplines such as cinema, especially the techniques and ideas presented in films by Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu. Throughout this second portion of the commentaries, the evolution of my interests as a composer can be perceived through a gradual growth of concerns in other areas, with my own very particular expressive agendas such as reduction, long duration, and stillness. These techniques are used as a way of isolating certain moments within my music, moments that are based on concepts such as that of the ‘still shot’ used by Ozu. Consequently, this generates a second level of masking within my pieces, one which differs from my approach to the previous chapter by isolating fragments which come from partial quotations of various borrowed folk melodies taken from a popular Puerto Rican genre known as *plena*.

While the first chapter focuses on the idea of duration and rhythm as the main source of borrowed material, the second and third chapters are centred on the intervallic and melodic components found within these borrowed tunes, now seen as basic compositional tools. Here, the techniques of masking come forward by not only taking them out of their original context and interweaving them with other melodic materials, but also by making them structural pillars, or focal points within a general structure. These pillars, through repetition and recontextualization, provide new functions within each piece. These newly generated functions

mask the borrowed tune by transforming its original role, giving it the possibility of unprecedented points of connection.

The third chapter focuses, yet again, on the use of borrowed *plenas* as the foundation for the works discussed in this final portion of the commentaries. While this chapter continues to explore the use of ideas presented in chapter two such as stasis, the approach to masking differs due to its application as a macrostructural generator. In contrast to the isolation of melodic fragments as a gateway to new points of connection, these tunes are seen as a structural outline for the architecture of an entire work or a particular section. I continue, here, to explore these elements through the lens of cinema and the techniques discussed by director Paul Schrader in relation to the genre commonly known as slow cinema.

A significant part of the reason for taking this approach is to separate my work from that of past Puerto Rican composers, whose music follows a tradition which is directly linked to the creation of, as I see it, a misleading perspective of what Puerto Rican music is and should be. While they might see the utilization of folklore and musical quotation as a system of devotion for the preservation of a popular culture, I see their approach as an advertisement, a selling point towards the exoticism generated around Puerto Rican music. The idea of taking pre-established structures from popular musical genres and rearranging them for different concert music formats did not, and does not, convince me as a creative way of using these materials. At times, these pieces feel more like transcriptions and arrangements than carefully crafted pieces. In contrast, my approach to borrowing materials, including those rooted in Puerto Rican music, follows the mindset previously stated by Stravinsky in his *Poetics*, where I don't want my country's music to be thought of in terms of Puertoricanness, but simply in terms of music. This provides the composer with the possibility of, when using any borrowed material, putting aside all labels and expectations towards specific musical genres, giving raw material a new opportunity to transform and flourish into something new.

Chapter 1 - Donatoni, Bogdanovic, and the *Clave*: a search for complexity and masking within form and borrowed folklore

As composers, one of the main problems we face is the creation of forms and material. At the start of every piece, we are confronted with a blank page and, at times, no pre-conceived outline. It is during moments like these that we ask ourselves: what can we do? Historically, composers of the common practice period found ways of structuring their ideas by at times using dance forms and procedurally outlined structures such as sonata forms, canons, and fugues. Similarly, in the context of Puerto Rican concert music, as shown in the musical examples mentioned in the introduction, composers of the 20th and 21st Century have also used structures and materials based on folk genres such as *salsa*, *Puerto Rican Danza*, and rhythms such as the *clave*, as their main material for the structuring of a particular piece.

As a someone who in his initial years of formation in Italy was trained to imitate and follow the outlines of past composers in his own compositions, I was faced with the creative dilemma of how to approach my own interests and individual voice when I wished to write music which didn't necessarily use these pre-conceived forms from the past. In terms of Puerto Rican concert music, the challenge was to incorporate borrowed folk materials without resorting, as many of my musical forebears did, to the use of literal quotation of borrowed ideas. I instead, as stated in the introduction, was, and am, in search of other methods of transformation and construction.

My approach to borrowing Puerto Rican music puts aside all labels and expectation towards specific musical genres, giving raw material an opportunity to transform and flourish into something new. To find ways of working with these materials, I first began to explore the music of composers who also incorporated folk elements within their works. This first portion of the

chapter focuses on the initial steps taken within this journey, which began with the influences taken from my own instrument and its composers- the guitar.

Being a guitarist, many of my initial encounters with contemporary composers was through the repertoire that I played in my instrument. This is why during these initial stages of development as a composer, the writings and music of various guitarist-composers, especially the Serbian Dusan Bogdanovic, who is known in the guitar world for the use of Balkan folklore in his compositions, served as a point of departure (Fig.1). Apart from his writings on musical form, Bogdanovic’s music also served as an inspiration, generating an interest in introducing folk materials within my works, this allowed me to begin visualising the possibilities of channelling my cultural individuality as a Puerto Rican through concepts like polyrhythms and odd metred patterns, elements which are very much present in our culture. For him, ‘the exclusive use of older structures [...] relies on the lulling of power of the collective unconscious and does not acknowledge the individual’s uniqueness and history, without which the birth of a new multilayered, multi perspectival world remains an abstraction.’¹⁹



Fig. 1 – Fragment of *Sitni Vez* by Dusan Bogdanovic, p. 9²⁰

¹⁹ Bogdanovic, Dusan, *Ex Ovo: A Guide for Perplexed Composers and Improvisers*, (Canada: Doberman Yppan, 2006), 31.

²⁰ Dusan Bogdanovic, *Six Balkan Miniatures (Movement VI – Sitni Vez)* (San Francisco GSP Publishing, 1991) 9.

This idea of altering a raw material as a means of seeking its potential for becoming something else, ‘chimed’ with my sense of what I wanted (and want) to do with my own vernacular materials. My interests in not only making music that reflects on the cultural aspect of Puerto Rican folklore, but which also finds a way of engaging with my goal of masking and generating an expressive distortion of these Afro-Caribbean traditions, and, in the words of Bogdanovic, making a synthesis of ‘various influences that crystallise into unique synthetic products. To successfully synthesise new cultural realities, we first have to fully assimilate the depth of their particular systems of reference and then to acknowledge the structural pivots that lie in the intersections of their very being.’²¹

Bogdanovic’s views on musical structures also presented the possibility of organising my musical ideas in more detailed and methodical manner. In his book *Ex Ovo: A Guide for Perplexed Composers and Improvisers*, he presents a table of structural hierarchy which became the starting point for organizing my thoughts and approach to musical form and materials²² (Fig.2).

If we approach each of these parameters individually, we can see that their relationship can be analysed, as if looking through a microscope, through an analogy of cells, organs, and body. The first one, cells, being an analogy of microstructures which have an independent identity and whose role in the musical work is not yet defined. Their relationship with other elements generates new points of connection which then produce organs, or axis structures, that can be visualised as the combination of microstructures which now have a specific role and identity within a musical work. They are the internal workings of a musical section which when

In his *Six Balkan Miniatures*, Bogdanovic, following the in the footsteps of composers such as Bartok, makes use of various patterns such as *aksak* rhythms. In the final movement of his *Six Balkan Miniature*, titled *Sitni Vez (Tiny-knit Dance)*, we can appreciate Bogdanovic’s use of these semiquaver-based odd-metred patterns by constantly shifting between metres of 10/16, 11/16 and 13/16, showing his approach to *aksak* rhythms and the influence of Balkan *folklore* within his guitar writing.

²¹ Bogdanovic, *Ex Ovo*, 70.

²² *Ibid*, 85.

entwined with other sections make up a body or macrostructure, the general perceived form of a work. When applied to borrowed materials, this table allows us to look at melodic or rhythmic fragments not as a complete idea, but as individual pitches, durations, harmonies, etc., that have a potential for transformation.

Parameter	Microstructure	Structure (Axis)	Macrostructure
Rhythm	Cell	Rhythmic Motif	Rhythmic Phrase
Melody	Pitch/Interval	Melodic Motif	Melodic Phrase
Harmony	Chord	Progression	Overall Harmonic Scheme
Counterpoint	Pitch/Interval	Superposed Melodies	Contrapuntal Forms
Polyrhythm	Vertical Indeterminate Pitch	Superposed Rhythmic Patterns	Polyrhythmic Cycle
Polymeter		Superposed Metric Patterns	Polymetric Cycle

Fig.2 - Bogdanovic's Table of Structural Hierarchy

Apart from these structural guidelines for the gradual transformation of micro, axis, and macrostructures within a composition, Bogdanovic also presents us with a typological tree which outlines the possibilities of transformation of a musical material (Fig.3). While the ideas discussed in the table of structural hierarchy presented me with ways of viewing the potential growth of a material, going from its microstructure to its macrostructure, the typological tree also gave me various points of departure for varying folk materials through procedures such as splitting, merging, and extending. Even though these procedures might seem simple at a first glance, they unlock a series of unexpected results which became a fundamental part of my compositional process of masking, which begins with borrowed materials, such as pitches or rhythms.

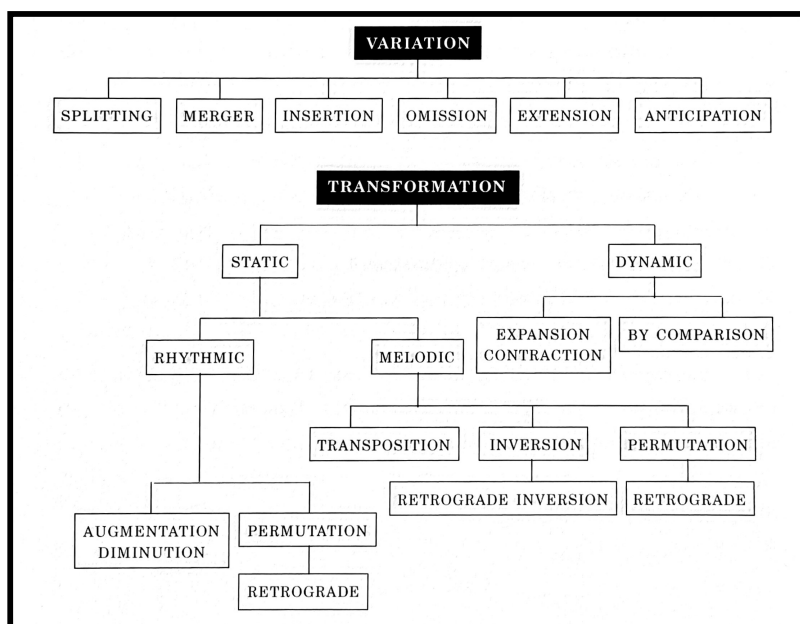


Fig.3 - Bogdanovic's Typological Tree²³

When thinking of the implementation of these ideas within the context of borrowing folk materials, whether rhythmic or melodic, we can perceive a greater potential of a motif by applying said procedures. A motif can be statically transformed by implementing procedures such as augmentation, diminution, transposition, inversion and permutation, as well as being dynamically transformed by adding or subtracting certain portions of the motif and gradually adding elements foreign to the original material. These elements can go from the addition of durational values to the aggregation of notes that are not part of the original melodic sequence, masking the original borrowed motif.

When combined with concepts such as the ones presented in Fig.2, they become tools for reconfiguring, repurposing, and rerouting borrowed materials without resorting to literal quotation. As I see it, with these tools, a composer has, at least on a micro level, a series of new motivic elements based on borrowed ideas. In contrast to quotation, where motivic elements have simply been transported from one medium to another, masking, results in a series

²³ Bogdanovic, *Ex Ov.* 81.

of materials which have been expanded upon much further. Throughout this portfolio, the idea of static and dynamic transformation, as well as ideas borrowed from Bogdanovic's table of structural hierarchy, are used as tools for the rearrangement, reorganisation, and masking of folk materials.

Further, and for me, fundamentally, when I presented these diagrams and ideas to some of my mentors, their immediate reaction was to mention the works and writings of one of their teachers, the Italian modernist Franco Donatoni. Surprisingly or not, I found a strong parallel in the way Donatoni's ideas generated a dialogue with Bogdanovic's views of structural hierarchy, by seeing materials and their transformation through a constant process of variation and creation of parameters. Modernist abstraction and folk vernacular found a startling and creative meeting point in the way that material is treated, and this conjunction is what I have explored in all kinds of ways and is at the heart of my works in this doctorate.

Indeed on closer examination of the sources of Donatoni's own journey, I was curious to find that Donatoni himself found early inspiration in the music of another folk-involved composer, Bartok, discussing his music, in an early article, in terms of elements such as: '(1) cellular exposition and organism growth; (2) growth without development, conservation of the fragment; (3) juxtaposition of organisms; mutation, not evolution; (4) stasis of pulsation, continuity of tone'²⁴; (5) development of articulation; the fusion of pulsation with the material and an instrumental idea.²⁵ All the more did this discovery confirm for me my subsequent way of proceeding.

²⁴ Bradley D. Decker, "Preserving the Fragment: Franco Donatoni's Late Chamber Music", *Perspectives Of New Music*, 46.2 (2008), pp 159 – 181. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25652392?seq=1> [Accessed 29 January 2021].

²⁵ The fifth element which is mentioned in this list does not appear on Bradley Decker's article or in Donatoni's *Il Sigaro di Armando*. I have added it due to its importance within Donatoni's music and because of its recurrence in discussions with former students of his such as: Luca Cori, Juan Trigos, and Michael Zev Gordon. I first used the concept in an unpublished short essay written for a Benjamin Britten seminar titled *Fragmentation as a means of unification: Disassembling Britten's Nocturnal through the deterritorialization of Elizabethan-Era music*.

When analysing Donatoni's Bartok-influenced ideas, we can find examples of what he discusses in terms of structuring musical material in works such as Bartok's *String Quartet No.4*.²⁶ In the first movement of this string quartet, Bartok makes use of different gestures which gradually expand and contract as a way of developing a musical event. Between bs.135-145, we can analyse the fragment by dividing it into two contrasting motifs: a gradually contracting scale pattern which focuses on the use of contrary motion in the upper and lower voices, always played *forte*; and a slower moving homophonic gesture that slowly expands upwards and is always played *piano* (Figs.4,5). These figures show the gradual growth of motivic cells, the constant conservation of a melodic and rhythmic fragment, and the development of articulation which is constant in each individually developing motif. In my works, I also employ this type of idea, which I see as another means of masking, by having blocks of borrowed materials that simultaneously develop and transform at different paces.

The discovery of these resources also drew parallels with various concepts from both Bogdanovic and Donatoni. Firstly, the expansion and contraction of a material through a process of addition and subtraction was synonymous with the description of dynamic transformation presented by Bogdanovic. This can be seen in the example of Bartok, where we see melodic lines which gradually contract within specific bars. The bars are also surrounded by contrasting materials that are undergoing their own process of dynamic transformation. Secondly, the same idea of gradual transformation converses with Donatoni's own approach to musical form which combines procedures that he called *rilettura* and panels — ideas related to the gradual transformation and variation of a material within a specific time frame, very much in the line of Bartok. These concepts became tools for the visualisation of potential for transformation and masking of a borrowed material and will be discussed further after these examples.

²⁶ Decker, "Preserving the Fragment: Franco Donatoni's Late Chamber Music", 161.

Fig.4 – Fragment from Bartok’s *String Quartet No. 4*, bs.134-139²⁷

Fig.5 – Continuation of fragment from Bartok’s *String Quartet No. 4*, bs.140-146²⁸

²⁷ Bartok, Bela, *String Quartet No.4*, 1st movement, bs.134-146. Vienna: Universal Edition, 1929.

²⁸ Ibid, 161. (Figs.4 and 5 originally appear on B. Decker’s previously quoted article. These are now analysed and expanded upon in relation to my own music)

An example of Donatoni's use of *rilettura* is discussed in useful detail in Michael Gorodecki's article entitled *Who's Pulling the Strings?* In this article, Gorodecki analyses the piece *Nidi*, for solo piccolo, as follows (Fig.6):

Donatoni's solo instrumental pieces exemplify particularly well the relationship between materials and techniques, and especially how they involve the sense of line. [...] The start of each of the first five sections of the first movement is presented in a layered format [...], which reveals certain procedures: (1) the general principle of *rilettura* whereby the previous section of music is reread and varied either through new articulation, a new element added, an existing element taken away, or multiplied; (2) manipulation of duration through a mixture of symmetry and asymmetry (e.g. in the opening section the main notes are always in groupings of quavers, thus 2-1-1-2-1-1 etc., while the intervening rests are irregular, in semiquavers, 6-2-5-2-4-7-2-8-3-1-3-6-5-1-7-2-8-3-1-1; (3) the progressive 'filling in' of space with sound; (4) the specific extension of interval groups to new pitches e.g.: (5) the grace notes which deflect sense of pulse, regularity and accent; (6) the progressive replacement of one pitch polarization with another; and (7) the new characters created by pitch rearticulation, e.g. the grace notes of section 4 transformed into the 'real' notes of section 5.²⁹

The image shows five staves of musical notation for Donatoni's *Nidi*, each representing a different section. The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The sections are labeled with measure numbers and dynamics:

- Section 1: Measure 112, dynamics *ppp* and *<*.
- Section 2: Measure 123, dynamics *p*, *ppp*, and *<*. Includes a grace note marked (4).
- Section 3: Measure 134, dynamics *pp*, *p*, *ppp*, *p*, *pp*, and *p*.
- Section 4: Measure 145, dynamics *pp*, *f*, *pp*, *p*, and *pp*.
- Section 5: Measure 156, dynamics *p*. Includes a grace note marked (flutt.).

Fig.6 – Gorodecki's analysis of fragments from Donatoni's *Nidi*, p.249

²⁹ Michael Gorodecki, "Who's Pulling the Strings? Michael Gorodecki introduces the Music of Franco Donatoni", *The Musical Times*, Vol. 134, No 1803, (May 1993), 249.

As we can see in Gorodecki's analysis, many of Donatoni's ideas resonate with Bogdanovic's views on both static and dynamic transformation. For Donatoni, both states of transformation dialogue simultaneously within his pieces. In *Nidi*, we can perceive this through the use of pitches which remain static and the gradual addition of elements. This is Donatoni's own approach to masking ideas, surrounding fixed materials or ideas with other elements are in constant variance. This idea of balancing stability and variance are ones that I also pursue in various pieces throughout this portfolio. In the pieces presented alongside these commentaries, the reader and listener will perceive the use of melodies and rhythmic sequences related to folklore that remain constant but are then gradually filtered through constant procedures of addition and subtraction. Cutting away, adding, or superimposing materials within the context of borrowed materials became a standard procedure when writing these pieces and pursuing the idea of masking.

Equally as important when speaking about Donatoni's music, is the idea of the panel, which was previously mentioned but not discussed in detail. Panels helped Donatoni develop his thoughts on how pieces are 'framed' on the large scale. Donatoni's term for his large-scale sections are 'panels' and his forms 'panel forms'. 'Panel forms' are structures which expand upon Stockhausen's idea of 'moment-form'³⁰ through the application of a spiral movement. 'The spiral is due to the combination of continuous re-readings [i.e. *rilettura*] of past materials (circular sense) with the implementation of perpetual variation that constantly changes the fundamental parameters or the application of these materials (angular variation)'.³¹

³⁰'Moment-form', partially theorised in *Kontakte* and applied as of *Moment*, is a form in which each moment is individual, independent from the other, and it can, in some way, refer only to itself, without necessarily being a consequence of whatever precedes it, and without anticipating that which may follow afterwards. It is a form which is based over an idea of time which focuses only on the present, it eternalises the instant. [These instants may be centred on concepts such as duration, timbre, and sounds]. (L. Cori and J.P. Medina. 'Franco Donatoni: un retrato a través de las ideas'. p.31)

³¹ Luca Cori and Juan Pablo Medina, 'Franco Donatoni: un retrato a través de las ideas', *Pauta*, Vol. 23. No. 96 (2005), pp 31- 32. (Translated by John Rivera Pico).

But though, undoubtedly the notion of transforming and masking material is central to all of this, what I have found most stimulating for my own music here, is another concept, the idea of ‘framing’, and visualizing the panel as a ‘frame’. Unlike visual mediums such as painting and photography, in which the structure of a work is limited by its borders, music develops in an environment without a pre-established frame. But this is why, in my opinion, Donatoni is framing an idea within a space, so that it has borders. This, in turn, forces the composer to work within structural constraints. It is Donatoni’s way of generating what we would call in tonal music, a musical period. It serves the same function of establishing a smaller scale structure within a work; it forces the composer to reach a certain goal within a specific timeframe. Only now, instead of working with a pre-established antecedent and consequent gestures such as cadences to the dominant or musical phrases, we are creating those parameters ourselves. The composer generates the space in which the limits of his musical action will take place and, in this way, creates a series of events that complement a macrostructure. The blank page becomes a substitute for a canvas.

In relation to my use of folk materials, these concepts generated the following steps whenever exploring the possibilities of transformation and masking of a borrowed folk material for the first time: (1) masking of a borrowed material, whether rhythmic or melodic, through static transformation (i.e. augmentation, diminution, transposition, inversion, and permutation); (2) masking of a borrowed material through the addition of durational values and/or aggregation of notes that are not part of the original melodic or rhythmic sequence; (3) masking of borrowed materials through the framing of fragments, as in Bartok’s music, where portions of a material are dynamically transformed gradually between contrasting gestures; (4) masking of borrowed materials through panels, as in Donatoni’s music, where an idea is continuously transformed within a specific section through a precise set of procedures that

involve both dynamic and static transformation (i.e. elements are added, subtracted, multiplied, or varied within each section).

All these ideas, small and large, have been, then, crucial to my development, as I see it, of my compositional ‘toolkit’. They have helped me visualise materials in ways in which I could broaden my perspective of what a musical fragment or motif was and how it could be expanded, as well as masked. And while Bogdanovic was my starting point for ideas of transformation, Donatoni took it to the next level in terms of how to manipulate and transform materials, profoundly changing my views on the original purpose and meaning of a borrowed material, helping me focus on what it could become. The works below each illustrate different ways I have developed my own ways of proceeding.

1.1 Mosaico Abierto IV - for solo piano

Mosaico Abierto IV is constructed from the idea of micro panel forms in a mosaic format, a structural concept in which the material and its fragmentation allow for the development of each individual gesture and motif within a bar, as well as many of its own combinations. Building on the approaches to material by composers like Bartok, Bogdanovic, and Donatoni, in my own way, I decided that the sounds that are transformed in this work have their origins in a very precise intervallic sequence of eight notes that is combined, transposed and fragmented in different ways throughout the piece. The intervallic relationship that exists between the notes in this sequence are: tritone, perfect fourth, major second, perfect fourth, major sixth, minor ninth, tritone, and major second (relationship between first and last note) as shown in Fig.7.



Fig.7 - Intervallic sequence for *Mosaico Abierto IV*

The piece is divided into three parts to be played without interruption and also explores my take on the central Donatonian principle of *rilettura* and panels, which, as mentioned before, consist in re-reading and varying the material through the use of new articulations and the addition, subtraction, or multiplication of all its elements while also isolating these gestures in specific bars.³² The main components of these material are also organised in various symmetric and asymmetric sequences that use the rhythmic figure of the semiquaver, within the frame of diverse odd- metred patterns, as its basis to create a sensation of constant variance within the pulsation and rhythmic drive of the piece itself.³³

The rhythmic patterns used in *Mosaico Abierto IV* are borrowed from the Afro-Caribbean *clave*: a rhythmic sequence found in Puerto Rican music. The *clave* consists of five beats that are divided into patterns of three and two (Fig.8). To avoid the literal use of this sequence and mask it, I have chosen to focus on the numerical relationship of the patterns and used these as the fundamental rhythmic material from which I develop my own claves as the rhythmic basis for this piece.

My reasons for not choosing to use this sequence as given is precisely an example of my idea of masking and looking at borrowed ideas simply in terms of raw material. I don't want the *clave* to appear simply as a reproduction of an Afro-Caribbean gesture, given that its deconstruction and masking provides many more possibilities than its literal use. It is through this type of re-assembling of ideas that I wish to search for ways to transform a concept through a process of exchange of territories and an interplay between dynamic and static transformation. While the *clave* might maintain a relationship of patterns that alternate between three and two, the figures are shifted, rotated, augmented and diminished using a variety of metres based on the semiquaver, masking its original sequence.

³² Gorodecki, M, "Who's Pulling the Strings?", 249

³³ Ibid.

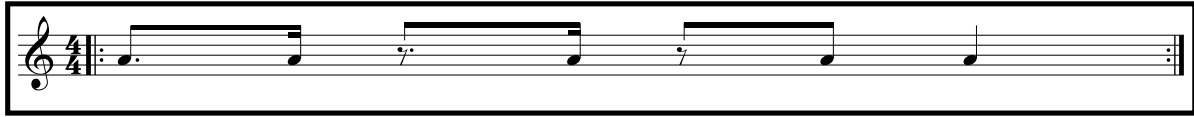


Fig.8 - Clave pattern³⁴

In the first movement of *Mosaico Abierto IV*, the re-assembling of the *clave* can be observed in the initial bars, where a 11/16 metre is divided into semiquaver fragments of three and two. This first section, following Bartok's idea in his *String Quartet No. 4*, also focuses on the simultaneous development of two ideas: a *pianissimo* contrapuntal texture in a high register and the *forte* repetition of the last resonant note followed by chords in the lower register. These ideas are separated by bars of rests which contain only resonance.³⁵

In contrast to Bartok, the materials presented in this first movement that are built upon the gestures of the *clave* are surrounded by 'empty' bars. These bars, while not containing any played pitch material, are also in a state of development, given that the resonance within them carries the remnants of the melodic figures contained in the odd-metred bars. These 'empty' bars are also constantly alternating between simple metres (4/4 and 2/4), and their variance is presented not only in the change of metre, but also in the change of resonant notes contained within them. This variance of irregularity and regularity between bars, as well as, played sound and resonance, is another way of interpreting not only the potential of a masked rhythmic pattern, but also the effect of its remnants and its absence.

In b.1 we can perceive the use of the intervallic sequence in multiple ways. The chords in the left hand are produced by rearranging the notes of the eight-note sequence. The melodic

³⁴ Even though the use of Balkan rhythms, as used by Bogdanovic in Fig.1, was not part of my approach when writing this piece, the fact that both the *aksak* rhythms and the Afro-Caribbean *clave* shared similar structures sparked an interest when approaching my own compositions. We can also see here how close the use of 'near-repetitions' are, structurally speaking, to what I do with more abstract material.

³⁵ While these moments of resonance were initially explored as a means of masking *clave* patterns within my music, they eventually became a point of departure for my exploration of stasis, cuts and isolation. These topics will be expanded upon further in the next chapter.

lines are formed by isolating certain intervallic leaps such as the tritone and major second in the top melodic line (G - Db - B), and the tritone, perfect fourth, major second, and minor second in the bottom lines (F# - C - F - Eb - Ab - Db - B - F - Bb - A - E). The chords from b.3 are formed out of the rearrangement of the two initial left-hand chords, which are then respectively transposed a tritone apart from lowest note of each chord (Fig.9). This rearrangement and transposition of chordal gestures is done throughout this first part in various intervallic distances.

The image shows a musical score for 'Parte 1' by John Rivera Pico. It features two staves: Piano (top) and guitar (bottom). The piano part starts with a tempo of quarter note = 90 and a dynamic of *pp*. The guitar part is divided into two sections: '1. Corda' and '3. Corde'. The score includes various time signatures: 11/16, 4/4, 6/16, and 2/4. Dynamics range from *pp* to *f*. A chord symbol (Db) is indicated above the piano staff. The score is enclosed in a black border.

Fig.9 - bs.1-4 of *Mosaico Abierto IV*

As these procedures and gestures constantly mutate throughout the piece, the 11/16 bars are gradually transformed through a process of rotation, b.1 containing a sequence of 3+3+2+3, b.5, 3+2+3+3, b.10, 2+3+3+3, and so on (Fig.10). This approach to masking through irregularity and constant variance within the *clave* pattern, is employed within the piece with the goal of achieving a partial recognition of the original pattern though a perceptual representation of these Afro-Caribbean gestures and the ‘sound character’ they are referencing.³⁶ It is, as I see it, simultaneously from the folk and totally beyond it.

³⁶ Björn Heile. "'Transcending Quotation': Cross-Cultural Musical Representation in Mauricio Kagel's 'Die Stücke der Windrose für Salonorchester'". *Music Analysis*, Vol. 134, No. 1 (March 2004). pp. 57-85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3700429>. [Accessed 10 February 2021]

The image shows a musical score for piano, divided into three systems of measures. The first system (measures 5-8) starts with a treble clef and a 11/16 time signature. The second system (measures 9-12) starts with a bass clef and a 2/4 time signature. The third system (measures 13-15) starts with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The score features various time signatures: 11/16, 4/4, 6/16, 5/16, 3/4, and 2/4. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo) and *f* (forte). There are also accents (^) and performance instructions: "1. Corda" and "3. Corde". Measure numbers 5, 9, and 13 are marked at the beginning of their respective systems.

Fig.10 - Rotation of clave pattern (bs.5-15)

To maintain a continuous transformation of the ideas that were previously presented in the first bars of the piece, various fragments of these ideas are isolated and further developed in this first section. The first transformation is the gradual ornamentation of the isolated resonance notes by slowly adding grace notes to fill in the gaps between each note, such as in b.24, where the note C is ornamented by a sequence of grace notes in fourths. These groups of notes originate from the treble notes in the 11/16 bars in bs.1-5, using the once highest (G – Db – B – Ab) as the lowest note in each of the grace note groups in fourths (Fig.11).

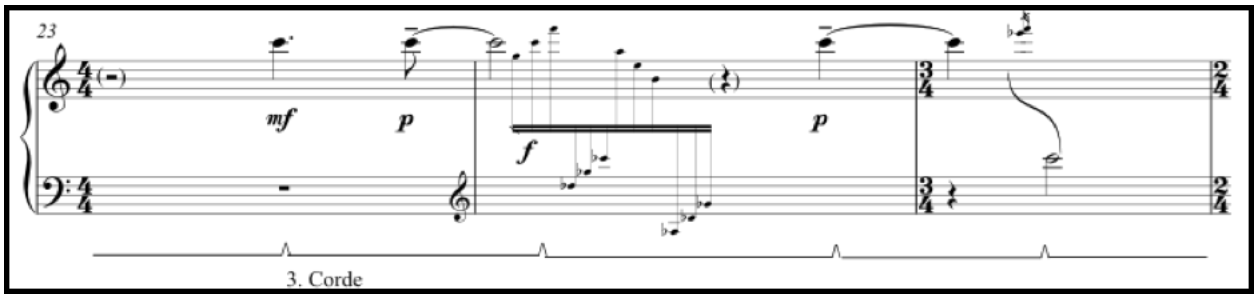


Fig.11 – Note C ornamented with grace notes (bs.23-25)

Another transformation and masking of my own material within *Mosaico Abierto IV*, is the disassembling of the first three-semiquaver grouping in the first bar. This fragment is reread and transformed by the gradual addition of minor thirds, the inversion of the major sixth interval presented in the initial intervallic sequence (Fig.12). This transformation, which is both dynamic and static due to the use of expansion and permutation, leads to the isolation of the minor third interval as a structural marker, which further develops into a new section predominantly formed from this intervallic relationship and the rotation of the semiquaver sequence.



Fig.12 - Addition of minor thirds

The second movement of *Mosaico Abierto IV* continues the development of gestures presented in the first movement. The chords, which are initially formed out of the superimposed four-note chords that are presented between bs.33–40, are the base material for this section, as well as the notes presented in the resonance gestures at the beginning of the piece (E – Ab – F – F#). This isolating of the vertical components of previous materials is done to continue the transformation of the micro-panels that were presented in *Parte I*. This provides the opportunity to generate an entire movement, or macrostructure, from elements that had previously only been perceived as micro or axis structures, while also masking the original relationships from the *clave* pattern through procedures such as augmentation. Throughout this second movement, the augmentation of values within the *clave* patterns was also explored through the addition of the three and two sequences values found within the *clave*. This can be perceived in Fig.13 with figures such as semibreves (2+2) and semibreves tied to crotchets (3+2) (Fig.13).

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 220-228. The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It features a complex texture with multiple layers of chords and melodic lines. Dynamic markings include ppp, pp, f, and pp. The bottom of the score is labeled '3. Corde' and '1. Corda'.

Fig.13 - Augmentation of clave sequence based on three and two

The third movement of *Mosaico Abierto IV* consists of the development of dance-like figures, much like an irregular toccata due to the constant change between 12/16 bars and odd-metred measures such as those in 7/16, and the cellular transformation of the initial pitch sequence. The transformation of my pitch material, here, is based on another significant foundational technique in my work: Stravinsky's system of serial rotations (Fig.14). Even though Stravinsky's musical procedures, in comparison to Donatoni and Bogdanovic, were not as much of an initial guiding force as were his writings on Russian folklore, for the kind of transformative approach I am describing here, nevertheless he has become for me a significant point of reference, not least because of the poised balance he creates between pitch centres and 'fixed' materials on the one hand and serialist transformations on the other.³⁷

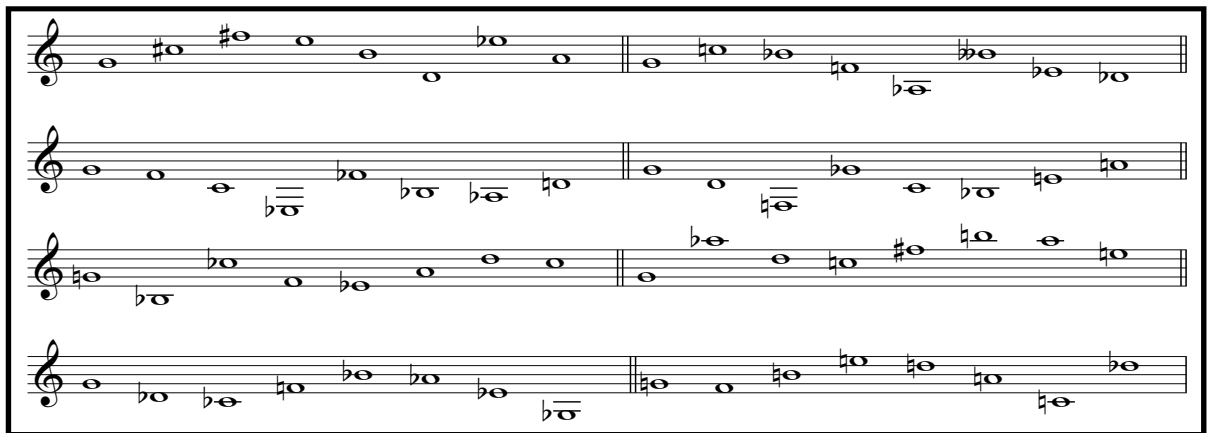


Fig.14 - Pitch sequence and rotations

³⁷ When referring to poise within my own music, I am referring to the balance created between materials that are borrowed or fixed, their clarity within a work, as well as their repurposing within my own pieces with other materials that are not necessarily folk related. This will become even more prominent in future chapter with the use of ideas borrowed from tradition such as dominant chords and modal motifs that are combined with atonal materials.

My reason for using Stravinsky's system of rotations has to do with the immediate potential this system has for generating a sequence of related intervallic distances. It is a means of masking pitch material through a process of static transformation, which simultaneously varies a material through transposition and permutation, but maintains a note which is constant and part of the original sequence.³⁸

The initial bars reveal the main motivic elements that make up *Parte 3*: repeated notes, octave displacement of intervallic gestures such as the minor ninth, and the sustaining of the perfect fourth sequence (Fig.15). The idea of rotation, which is central to the construction of this last movement, can be perceived in bs.282, 284, 285, which show the gradual procedure of displacement and rotation that simultaneously occur with the pitch sequences composed of twelve notes. In b.282, the first row of the eight-note sequence is visible, followed by the first four notes of the row next to it in fig.14. This pattern is transformed in b.284 by rotating the three-note semiquaver groupings in each bar and raising the first, second, and third note of each respective group an octave, while the fourth group of semiquavers stays the same. This procedure creates a sensation of gradual expansion of the piano registers and allows for a constant sensation of rhythmic drive and transformation within the movement which is constructed upon the masking of the *clave* and its sequences of three and two.

In this third movement, I also pursue transformation of the resonant notes from the initial bars in *Parte 1*, which also appear in the upper voice, accompanying the eight and four-note chords in *Parte 2*. In b.414 of *Parte 3*, we suddenly arrive at a contrasting texture by interrupting the sensation of dance and forward momentum that had been developed up to this moment (bs.414-445) (Fig.16). Within this new section, which can be viewed as an interstice based on previous sonorities, is grounded in a low E pedal note, the note F# is eliminated from

³⁸ It may also be noted that Stravinsky, in his own way, is also a prominent figure of the 20th century in relation to folk materials being transformed into modernist abstraction.

the E, Ab, F, F# sequence. This approach of interrupting a specific musical event with ideas founded in previous movements is my own take on *rilettura* as used by Donatoni in works such as *Nidi*, where a constant return to repeated pitch materials gives the work a sense of unity and coherence. While Donatoni focuses on the immediate transformation of a material from panel to panel, I use this concept to show the possibility of a material from one movement, transforming within the context of another movement.

Parte 3

The image shows a musical score for 'Parte 3' in piano. It consists of two systems of music. The first system begins at measure 280 with a tempo marking of quarter note = 80. The music is written for piano with a treble and bass clef. The time signature changes from 9/16 to 12/16. Dynamics include *pp*, *f*, *sfz*, and *f*. The second system begins at measure 283 with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a 'Ped.' marking. The time signature changes from 7/16 to 12/16. Dynamics include *f*.

Fig.15 – Initial bars of *Parte 3*

While on the topic of transformation through repetition of ideas, it is important to point out that one of my main contrasts to Donatoni is the use of isolated repeat bars, an idea which is usually not found in his music. When studying his works, I have concluded that the absence of repeat bars within Donatoni's music is probably because, visually and structurally, repeat bars generate too much of a centre and interrupts the linear aspect of transformation, as seen in *Nidi*. Repeat bars also make the performer 'go back' and process an idea again, while Donatoni is always focused on 'going forward'. However, for me, the idea of going back to things is equally as important as it is to constantly transform them.

1.2 Tiento V - for flute, oboe, violin, and violoncello

Tiento V alludes to early music and the form of the same name that was used by 15th Century Spanish composers. According to specialists in the genre, the term *tiento* is ‘derived from the Spanish verb *tentar*, meaning “to test” or “to try out,” and originally denoted a technical piece that allowed the player to tune or become accustomed to his or her instrument, testing the instrument as well as the player’s own dexterity and ability.’³⁹

My approach to this piece was very much linked to the idea of ‘testing out’ the possibilities within musical structures that were inspired by the mindset of Donatoni, particularly his approach to the previously explained concept of panel forms. The piece can be observed as a series of panels, each one having a contrasting character and timbre, but based on transformations of the same rhythmic and pitch material. In a similar fashion to *Mosaico Abierto IV*, the rhythmic components in *Tiento V* have their roots in the rearrangement of semiquaver patterns that are grouped in combinations of twos and threes, following the same principle of masking the sequence of the *clave*. The pitch material development is an example of my adoption of Stravinskian rotation, while also rearranging these intervallic sequences into scale patterns (Figs.16,17).

The piece’s structure is constructed in a series of blocks which are identified at the beginning of each section with the following descriptions: *scherzo*, *danza*, *corale*, and *momento fermo*. These descriptive titles explicitly reveal how I build upon baroque forms, while incorporating masked sequences of the *clave*, as well as exploring the previously stated approach of repeating panels, in which each section is altered in some way when it reappears at another point in the piece, searching for ways to transform the original material by altering various components

³⁹Heather Lynn Paisar, “The Origins, History, and Development of the Tiento de medio registro from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century” (Phd diss., University of Kansas, 2015), 11, <https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/24827>. [Accessed 12 May 2023]

such as gesture, pitch material, rhythmic patterns, and the overall timbres provided by the combination of instruments. These forms of the past are equivalent to folk materials which I now transform, in my own way.

The figure displays eight staves of musical notation, each representing a different rotation of the pitch material for *Tiento V*. The notes are connected by horizontal lines, and interval labels are placed above the lines to indicate the relationship between adjacent notes. The labels include P4 (Perfect Fourth), m2 (minor Second), m3 (minor Third), TT (Tritone), and M2 (Major Second). The first staff includes a note for the first and last notes labeled M2↑.

Staff 1: P4 ↑, m2 ↑, m3 ↓, m2 ↓, m2 ↓, TT ↓, m3 ↑, M2 ↑ (first and last notes)

Staff 2: m2 ↑, m3 ↓, m2 ↓, m2 ↓, TT ↓, m3 ↑, M2 ↑, P4 ↑

Staff 3: m3 ↓, m2 ↓, m2 ↓, TT ↓, m3 ↑, M2 ↑, P4 ↑, m2 ↑

Staff 4: m2 ↓, m2 ↓, TT ↓, m3 ↑, M2 ↑, P4 ↑, m2 ↑, m3 ↓

Staff 5: m2 ↓, TT ↓, m3 ↑, M2 ↑, P4 ↑, m2 ↑, m3 ↓, m2 ↓

Staff 6: TT ↓, m3 ↑, M2 ↑, P4 ↑, m2 ↑, m3 ↓, m2 ↓, m2 ↓

Staff 7: m3 ↑, M2 ↑, P4 ↑, m2 ↑, m3 ↓, m2 ↓, m2 ↓, TT ↓

Staff 8: M2 ↑, P4 ↑, m2 ↑, m3 ↓, m2 ↓, m2 ↓, TT ↓, m3 ↑

Fig.16 – Pitch material for *Tiento V* and its rotations

Fig.17 – Scale sequences for *Tiento V*

In the examples that follow, the areas labelled in red outline the various pitch sequences that are used throughout each bar or instrumental fragment. Some of these fragments are accompanied by a series of numbers which identify the specific pitch rows that are used in each passage. The entire piece was then composed, with a serialist mindset, given that the totality of the materials used within each panel focuses the use of specific rows and their simultaneous combination or the isolation of specific intervallic leaps that are part of the original pitch sequence and their respective inversions. Meanwhile, regarding, the rhythmic components and their use within this work, I focused not only the various combinations of metres made up of variants of twos and threes to generate a distorted or masked *clave*, but also visualised the use

of rests as a means of dividing certain fragments that make up the ‘negative space’ produced by these sequences.

The first panel presented in *Tiento V* is labelled *Scherzo 1* and focuses on the use of very forward driven rhythmic patterns that are made up of odd-metred bars. The initial tutti gesture used in this first *scherzo* presents the materials in a polyrhythmic manner, note this can be seen in the grouping of the scales used in bar one which are grouped in tuplets of eight, seven, six, and five notes. The passing notes, which are made up of the minor seconds presented in the scales formed through the rearrangement of the initial material, serve as an added component to the general harmony of each sequence, an idea which will be developed further throughout the entire piece. This approach to melodic gesture allows the material used within specific sections to not only focus on a specific sequence, but also generate small variations that are rooted in the intervallic relationships found within the material itself, making the transformations dynamic in character, given their gradual expansion and contraction, while maintaining a static approach to the general pitch relationships in each fragment (Fig.18).

The second panel, labelled *Danza*, is presented in the compound metre of 9/16. The use of this metre is due to the relationship with other dance forms of the past, such as giges, but in the case of the *danzas* in *Tiento V*, the constant drive produced by this metre is fragmented with rests. In a similar approach to *Scherzo 1*, this section presents rests divided into split groupings of twos and threes (masking the clave in negative space) which are labelled in the next figure with circles and the abbreviation ‘sq’ (semiquavers) and show the various combinations of semiquaver additions in the pattern. Another exploration of transformation of material within this second section is the presentation of grace notes in the flute and oboe that are taken from the original pitch sequence, labelled as ‘1’ (Fig.19).

♩ = 90 (♩ = ♩ sempre)

Scherzo 1, sempre leggero John Rivera Pico

The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Violin, and Violoncello. The second system includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Violin, and Violoncello. The score features various dynamics (p, f, p.n.), articulation marks, and fingerings. Red boxes highlight specific notes in measures 8, 7, and 6 across different instruments.

Fig.18 – Initial bars of *Tiento V*

Tiento V

Danza 1. Silenzioso, ma sempre avanti

Corale 1. Lo stesso tempo

Fig.19 - *Danza 1*

In contrast to the previous texture presented in the *Danza*, the following panel focuses on a four-voice texture that explores the use of double-stops in the strings to generate a chorale. The idea of creating a chorale out of these materials is to firstly, continue building upon my relationship between tradition and contemporary music with the use of traditional forms; secondly, a continuation of exploration of the idea of slow-moving materials, such as in the second section of *Mosaico Abierto IV*⁴⁰; and thirdly, its referencing of Donatoni's music by isolating the chorale within a panel, which repeats itself through different points in the piece with gradual variations.

In this first chorale, the intervallic components used in the chord progressions are taken from the pitch sequences labelled in Fig.16. In a similar fashion to the previous sections, these chorales make use of the pitches in a vertical fashion while using notes from outside the original pitch sequence as passing note, marked as 'p.n.' (Fig.20).

⁴⁰ Without being completely aware of it, the idea of stillness was becoming an important part of my music. My natural inclination towards this concept presented an immediate contrast to Donatoni, whose music was always driven by a sense of constant pulsation. As I continue discussing the pieces within this portfolio, the reader will see my gradual transformation towards stillness, as well as reduction, which gain protagonism in the final chapter.

Fig.20 – *Corale 1*

After *Corale 1*, we are suddenly faced with a second *Scherzo* that expands upon the material and textures used in the initial measures of the piece. In this second transformation of the panel, we can observe a return to more dense contrapuntal textures that simultaneously present various pitch sequences in each family of instruments. While the flute is carrying the main melodic material presented between bs.21-25, the oboe is ornamenting and supporting this melodic contour by harmonising with minor thirds or major sixths the moments in which both the flute and the oboe play simultaneous notes. The flute is constantly changing between fragments of various pitch sequences while the oboe maintains itself primarily using material from the first pitch sequence (A-D-Eb-C-B-Bb-E-G), the notes that are not from this sequence are produced from the intervallic relationships of thirds and sixths that are triggered by simultaneous instrumental gestures. The two other instruments, violin and violoncello, are presenting gestures reminiscent of the material presented in *Scherzo 1* and *Danza 1*. These short homophonic textures with gradually expanding and contracting passing notes, search for an exchange between ideas from both sound worlds (Fig.21).

The image shows a musical score for 'Scherzo 2' in 4/4 time. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 21 and 22, and the second system covers measures 23 and 24. The instruments are Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Violin (Vln.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The Flute part has two red boxes: one around measures 21-22 labeled '1' and another around measures 23-24 labeled '5'. The Oboe part has a red box around measures 23-24 labeled '5'. The Violin and Violoncello parts have several red boxes: Vln. has boxes around measures 21-22 (labeled '1'), 23-24 (labeled '1'), and 25-26 (labeled '2'); Vc. has boxes around measures 21-22 (labeled '1'), 23-24 (labeled '1'), and 25-26 (labeled '2'). Dynamic markings include *f*, *p*, and *mf*. The score is titled 'Scherzo 2' at the top left.

Fig.21 – Initial bars of *Scherzo 2*

While the general structure of *Tiento V* maintains a constant apparition of transformed panels that are related through material and gesture, the dynamic transformation of these fragments is of equal importance for the outline of the piece. This is especially evident in moments such as the sudden apparition of the *Danza 2*, which immediately follows the previously analysed *Scherzo 2*. In this second *danza*, the transformation of the materials can be observed through the elimination of instrumental families such as the strings, as well as the expansion of rhythmic figures used within the panels. Instead of maintaining a constant use of semiquavers like in *Danza 1*, this *danza* activates new rhythmic figures such as triplets and demisemiquavers within the outlined panel. While the first *danza* explores the materials in a vertical manner, this second appearance visualises the pitch material in a horizontal manner with the simultaneous engagement with various pitch-row fragments. (Fig.22)

Danza 2, frammentata. Apparendo improvvisamente

The image shows a musical score for 'Danza 2, frammentata. Apparendo improvvisamente'. It features two staves: Flute (Fl.) and Oboe (Ob.). The Flute staff has circled notes with numbers 1, 3, 4, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4. The Oboe staff has circled notes with numbers 1, 5, 4, 3, 1, 2. The Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vc.) staves are empty. Dynamics markings include f, mp, and p. The score is marked with a 3/8 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Fig.22 – Danza 2

After the culmination of the third *Scherzo*, the piece focuses on the constant alternation between two contrasting panels — the *Danza* and newly emerging *Momenti Fermi* (Fig.23). While the *Danzas* maintain a relationship with the pitches and gestures presented in *Danza 1*, the various *Momenti Fermi* or still moments, search for an even greater level of isolation between the intervallic relationships of the first three notes in the original pitch sequence, this time presenting the same notes as in the first row (A-D-Eb). The notes in all the *Momenti Fermi* are gradually presented in unison between the instruments, reaching the full apparition between bs.87-89 before being interrupted by a final *Danza*. In effect I am using a technique derived from Donatonian motion to lead to immobility (Fig.24).

The final section of *Tiento V*, labelled *Scherzo di tutto*, is initially preceded by the third *Corale* in the piece, this one maintaining a five-bar structure but now including the addition of both the flute and the oboe, two instruments that had previously been absent in all the previous *Corale* sections. The idea within the *Scherzo di tutto* was to generate a final mosaic constructed of fragments from the previous panels, generating a dynamic transformation which is made up of the combination of already presented materials within a new context. In contrast to Donatoni, who searches for the potential of transformation of specific materials within a specific frame, I, here, look further and generate a macro structure which is made up of fragments from previously presented panels. Frames, within frames, within frames (Fig.25).

Tiento V 9

Momento fermo 3

87 *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Notes 1, 2 and 3
(pitch sequence 1)

Danza 6

90 *f* *f* *f* *f* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

Fig.23 – Alternation between *Danza* fragments and *Momenti Fermi* 1 and 2

Danza 3 **Momento fermo 1**

77 *f* *p* *f* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Danza Interruption *f* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Note 1
(pitch sequence 1)

Danza 4 **Momento fermo 2**

81 *f* *p* *f* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Danza Interruption *f* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Notes 1 and 2
(pitch sequence 1)

Fig.24 – Final *Momento Fermo* and *Danza*

Corale 3

94

Fl. *pp*

Ob. *pp*

Vln. *pp* sul tasto

Vc. *pp* sul tasto

Scherzo di tutto, sempre leggero

99

Fl. *f*

Ob. *f*

Vln. ord. *f*

Vc. ord. *f*

Fig.25 – Corale 3 and Scherzo di tutto

Chapter 2 - Film theory and *Time-Image* form: towards the isolation, transformation, and the masking or repurposing of ideas

Sometimes within our creative journey as researchers and composers, we realise that things aren't exactly working out as expected. Looking back at my early pieces, my approach to composition up to this point, given my training in Italy, was mostly based on the concept of mimicking - or the idea of understanding your creative voice as only the shadow of past composers. As a young composer, I was convinced, due to the power of (teaching) tradition and technique, such as the methods taught in Italian music schools, that the creative mindsets of figures such as Donatoni and Bogdanovic would be sufficient to help me achieve structures — based on gesture, fragmentation, and procedure — as the basic building blocks of my own musical language. Yet, over time I found that these technical constraints, while being useful for generating an internal coherence between material and structure, proved to be quite restraining when trying to incorporate other musical elements found in Puerto Rican folklore such as modality, quotation, and musical borrowing.

This feeling of constraint was mainly produced by the tensions generated between the rigid and inexpressive approach to material influenced by Donatoni, and my interest in portraying the modal and melodic aspects of my country's folk materials. I wanted to find ways of getting closer to the sound world generated by folk materials and not only using duration and its masking as the sole component within my music. In so doing, this has led to my own, personal way of doing things; building on Donatoni, adding my individual frames of reference which continue to incorporate the idea of masking.

Thus, having explored the relationship I found between Donatoni's panels and visual arts, I subsequently searched for other visual mediums that dealt with structures, framing, and transformation. My concern regarding these matters led me to learn more about cinema, a medium which, indeed, deals with similar structural concerns to music. Some of the first texts

that caught my attention, were the books *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2* by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. Within Deleuze's *Cinema 2* we encounter concepts related to structure, framing, and isolation such as the *time-image*, which he mentions as being constantly present in the works of Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu. According to Deleuze, one of the clearest examples of the *time-image* can be found in Ozu's famous *vase scene* from *Late Spring*.⁴¹ He states in the first chapter of *Cinema 2* that:

The vase in *Late Spring* is interposed between the daughter's half smile and the beginning of her tears. There is becoming, change, passage. But the form of what changes does not itself change, does not pass on. This is time, time itself, 'a little time in its pure state': a direct time-image, which gives what changes the unchanging form in which the change is produced.

[...] The still life is time, for everything that changes is in time, but time does not itself change, it could itself change only in another time, indefinitely. At the point where the cinematographic image most directly confronts the photo, it also becomes most radically distinct from it. Ozu's still lifes endure, have a duration, over ten seconds of the vase: this duration of the vase is precisely the representation of that which endures, through the succession of changing states.⁴²

Just like Donatoni, we can see here that both Deleuze and Ozu find interest in the idea of the moment, appreciating a specific event within time and the ruptures it generates within a structure. This approach to structure also draws parallels with ideas from Bogdanovic's parameters by visualising and reinterpreting static and dynamic transformation through the lens of cinematic shots. While a static shot preserves the elements within a specific take, very much like the preservation of motivic elements, a dynamic shot is constantly searching for change and transformation, expanding and contracting upon a series of motifs within a specific moment in a piece. In my music, then, I also take approaches to time to be a basic means of 'masking' ideas.

⁴¹ Yasujiro Ozu, "Late Spring (1949) HD Full Length Movie - Directed by Yasujiro Ozu (Banshun), Free Film Heritage, 17 February 2022, movie, 1:27:00 to 1:28:49, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XU-iOxf4vI0>

⁴² Deleuze, Gilles., *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 17.

Masking may also have to do with the interruption of action or the ‘cut’, and again such cuts reveal a relationship between Donatoni’s panels and Ozu’s static shots. These cuts are a tool for structuring a series of ideas as well as a means of giving the audience time to think about the reference points it has broken down and the new relationships it has established. Musically speaking, we can interpret the *time-image*, as well as panels, as a ‘sonic oasis’, a refuge in which an idea that can be both closely or distantly related to musical events presented previously or awaiting to be discovered within a musical structure. Structurally, they serve a point of connection as well as isolation for musical fragments that can be treated as images. In my way of doing things, musical ideas, originally framed within a specific space, are now given new functions and possibilities of connection through masking and reframing.

While this chapter continues to explore the previously discussed idea of masking folk materials, which is the central aspect of this thesis, it is also to be seen as a link between this chapter and the next one, given the relation between elements of stasis provided by the previously discussed cinematographic concept which will continue to be expanded upon in the next chapter.

2.1 *Donde* - for eleven instrumentalists

In the Spanish language, the word *donde* has a variety of connotations. It is a peculiar word which can have multiple meanings when slightly altered using an accent. *Dónde*, with an acute o, is always used within an interrogative context; it asks the question of where. On the other hand, *donde* with no accent is a statement of place- a space constructed or determined, for example, by geographic points. In all the pieces discussed in this chapter the idea of *donde*, without an accent, is the point of departure for my use of borrowed materials, which are now being treated as images in search of new points of connection. Fragments which were once

framed within a space, centred around a specific musical idea, now converse with themselves as well as various other materials.

In the case of this first *Donde*, I make use of three main borrowed musical ideas, a fragment from the Puerto Rican *plena Santa María* (Fig.26), as well as two short motifs from Michael Zev Gordon's *Roseland* (Fig.27) and *Tuscan Dreams* (Fig.28). My reason for using musical fragments from Michael's works was rooted in a series of musical challenges that he gave me throughout my years as his student. This game between teacher and student became the basis of four of the pieces presented in this portfolio. The challenge always consisted of taking ideas borrowed from other composers of both past and present and creating full pieces out of these materials. These challenges always had as a goal the application of masking ideas within the various musical parameters and non-musical concepts that I was exploring at a given point in time — in this case, the idea of *time-images* and still shot cinematography.



Fig.26 – Puerto Rican *plena Santa María*

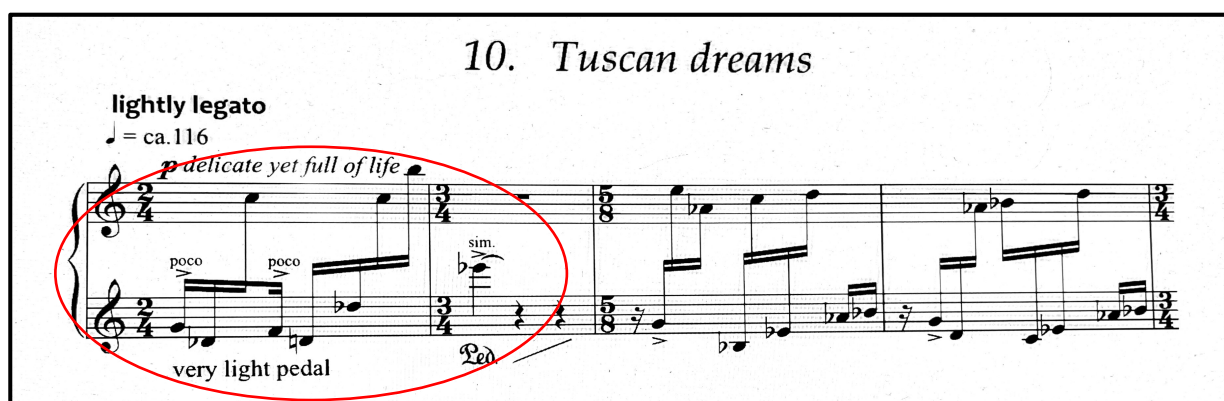


Fig.27 – Fragment from Michael Zev Gordon's *Tuscan Dreams*, for piano



Fig.28 – Fragment from Michael Zev Gordon’s *Roseland*, for cello and piano

The general structure of the piece can be divided in four main sections, each exploring a specific fragment and its expansion, as well as the combination of various fragments. The generation of new points of connection with these fragments was done in each section through four main approaches of masking: (1) The expansion and isolation of the fragment from the *plena* (i.e. still shot); (2) the revisualisation of a note or group of notes within the tune as a resource for generating a point of tension (i.e. dominant chords); (3) expansion and distortion of a fragment through close chromatic relationships around the notes of the original tune; (4) the interweaving of the *plena* with fragments from Gordon’s motifs from *Roseland* and *Tuscan Dreams*.

The initial section of *Donde*, between bs.1-28, shows the use of these resource by firstly presenting a fragment the melodic contour of the *plena Santa María* as a bass line played by the harp, as well as generating a distortion of the diatonicism created the original tune by using chromatic notes that are not present in the original tune throughout the ensemble (Figs.29-32). The slow linear texture maintained throughout bs.1-22 is suddenly interrupted by Gordon’s *Tuscan Dreams* fragment, which is transposed up a whole tone and now accompanied by a chord which uses the note A as the basis for an A7b5 dominant sonority (Fig.33). More on the topic of dominant chords and their function within my music will be discussed later.

(use semi-hard vibraphone sticks for both T. Tom-toms and B. Drum)

Tom-toms

Percussion

Bass Drum

f *l.v.* *mp* *f* *f*

Harp

f *l.v.* *f* *f*

$\text{♩} = 72$

Fig.29 – *Santa María* bass line in harp (bs.1-8)

Tom-t.

Vibraphone (semi-hard sticks) *Delicate, still*

B. D. (use vib. sticks) *p < f*

Vibraphone *mf*

mf *mp* *p < f* *mf*

let vibrate, do not lift pedal!

Delicate, still

Hp.

f *f* *mp*

Fig.30 – Continuation of *Santa María* bass line in harp (bs.9-15)

Fig.31 – Distortion of notes through addition of non-related notes (bs.1-8)⁴³

Fig.32 – Distortion of notes from original motif (bs.9-12)

⁴³ Notes from the original E-D-D-C-A motif are circled in red while the notes not related to *Santa María* are highlighted in blue squares.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Tom-t., Vib., and Hp. The Tom-t. part is mostly silent, with a final measure marked with an 'X'. The Vib. part starts with a melodic line in 4/4 time, marked with dynamics *pp*, *pp*, *mf*, and *sfz*. A tempo change is indicated by a quarter note followed by "= 116 Suddenly appearing!". The Vib. part then enters a "Senza Misura" section, marked "Delicate, still" and "pp l.v.". A blue square highlights a chord in the Vib. part, and a red circle highlights a note in the same part. The Hp. part consists of sustained chords, with a dynamic of *f* and a final measure marked "pp l.v.". The score is in 4/4 time and ends with a double bar line.

Fig.33 – Presentation of *Tuscan Dreams* fragment and A7b5 chord (bs. 22-27)⁴⁴

Immediately after the presentation of Gordon's *Tuscan Dreams* fragment, we are confronted in the score with the first moment labelled as *senza misura* within the piece. Throughout the entirety of *Donde* we can find four instances in which we don't have a specific metre, framed within repeat bars. These can be found, in order of appearance, between bs.26-27, 30-31, 132-133, and 140-141. These moments, which generate a sense of sudden stasis, are my musical interpretation of Ozu's still shots or *time-images*. In the case of Ozu, his still shots work as both an interruption of previous action, as well as a bridge between the following take, which in the case of the previously mentioned *vase scene* is a continuation of the interaction between two characters. My take on this idea is to not only interrupt action and bring focus on a reduced and intimate sonority, but to also build a bridge between the fragments of both *Santa Maria* and *Tuscan Dreams* by composing these still moments with fragments from both borrowed ideas.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ In this chord, the use of the note Db instead of a C# was done to not alter the harp pedalling between this and the following chord. In the examples related to the still moments (bs.26,27), which are labelled in the score as *senza misura*, the notes related to Gordon's' fragments will be outlined with a blue square, while those from *Santa Maria* will be in red circles.

⁴⁵ Regarding cuts, isolation, and stillness, my aim, as a composer, is to bring moments of centralised and focused action into the piece. This action, in turn, can become a portal or bridge, for the interaction of similar or contrasting materials in relation to these centralised sounds, which, given their isolation, have distanced themselves from any previous musical action, giving way to the possibility of moving towards other areas chosen by a composer.

In the case of the first still moment in the piece, we can perceive that the first note (F) is taken from the last note in Gordon's transposed *Tuscan Dreams*, and the following note (E), comes from the first note in *Santa Maria*. Consistently throughout the piece, these still moments, are conceived following the principle of masking through the combination of fragments from two different sources — while the *plena* notes are presented in order of appearance, the ones from *Tuscan Dreams* are never chosen in a specific order.

If we look closer at the accompaniment of the harp in these still moments, we can see that the clustered notes, when rearranged, also form a dominant chord, in this case, an F7 with its extensions. Throughout the piece, this is a constant procedure, given that in these still moments, the initial note establishes the root of the dominant chord, which is usually presented in a clustered voicing. This can also be perceived in still moments two (bs.30-31) and three (b.132-133), where the notes G and C#, establish the root for both dominant chords used, G7 and C#7, respectively (Fig.34,35).

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Tom-t., Vib., and Hp. The score is divided into two systems. The first system is marked with a tempo of ♩ = 116 and the instruction "Suddenly reappearing!". The Vib. part has dynamic markings *f subito* and *sfz*. The Hp. part has a dynamic marking *p*. The second system is marked "Senza Misura" and has a tempo of ♩ = 72. The Vib. part has dynamic markings *p* and *mf*. The Hp. part has dynamic markings *p* and *mf*. A red circle highlights a cluster of notes in the Vib. part, and a blue box highlights a cluster of notes in the Hp. part. The text "Once again, delicate and still" is written above the Vib. part in the second system.

Fig.34 – Still moment two

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Tom-t., B. D., and Hp. The B. D. staff is the primary focus, with several notes circled in red and blue. The score includes dynamics such as *fp*, *f*, *p*, and *mf*. There are also markings for 'Senza Misura' and 'Yet again, delicate and still'. The tempo is indicated as $\text{♩} = 72$. The Hp. staff shows a *ff* dynamic and some rests.

Fig.35 – Still moment three

The exploration of the dominant chord (and function) — it being such a fundamental ‘signal’ in Western music — has come to play a significant role in my process of masking borrowed materials. The constant interplay between tension and release, as well as the colours produced by its sonority, has served as a core structural component in ‘common practice’ tonality — but its resonance today lingers and its uses still multiply.

My reason for incorporating dominant chords within my music has to do with the parallels I perceive between its tonal functions and masking. As I see it, dominant chords also search for a repurposing, reconfiguring, and rerouting within music of the ‘common practice’ period, given that these chords are used as a means of preparing and guiding the listener towards new points of connection through tension and resolution. In addition, when visualised as applied dominants, they can also mask the original key of piece by giving protagonism to sonorities that are not part of the home key.

In my music, I see it having a ‘combined’ function of not only being a means of establishing a tension in search of a centre or resolution but also, because of its ‘force’ as able to be clearly heard as borrowed material whose role and function can be reshaped, even when only using it

within a single note, as shown in the previous example. This approach masks the original function of a specific sonority and transforms it into an idea with new possibilities of function.

While some of my dominant chords do not have a tonal function, as in bs.26-27, in other moments such as bs.30-32, we can observe the harp moving from a G7 (with added 11 and 13) to an Am7 chord with a #11, evoking the sonority produced by a deceptive cadence (Fig.36). The A minor sonority is reinforced by rest of the notes produced by the rest of the ensemble which gradually alters the sonority with the addition of non-related chromatic notes.

Other examples of masking within the piece can be observed between bs.36-39, where fragments of all the motifs are used simultaneously. While most of the fragments are augmented in durational values, the *Santa María* fragment, marked in parentheses in the following example, maintains its original rhythms (Figs.37,38). Another use of masking within this same fragment is the change of harmonic function produced by superimposing of all these materials. If we take a closer look bs.36-39, we can see that the vibraphone is playing all the main melodic material simultaneously. These bars, when organised according to the pitch content generated by using all fragments, gains new harmonic possibilities of when visualised in manners such as shown in Fig.39. The harmonic sequence is expanded between bs.40-45 and reaches its point of rest or cadence in this final bar with an A major chord with and added 11.

The sense of resolution that is felt at the end of this section is due to the progression presented between bs.40-45. The final A major chord is preceded by sonorities that due to their use of the tritone (A-D#) highly resemble a B7b5 chord (with added 9 and 11) which is rootless. The final movement of a D natural passing note approaching the A major chord reinforces this sonority by giving the illusion of arriving to a picardy third. While not part of the four *senza misura* moment within the piece, the repetition of a slow-paced movement within these bars

also refers to the idea of reduction and isolation found within cinematic still shots inspired by Ozu's cinematography.

As mentioned previously, in footnote 45, the use of these moments of isolation are structural within my works, this is due the feeling of centralised sound they produce, which, given their isolation and duration, have distanced themselves from previous musical action, giving way to the possibility of moving towards other areas chosen by a composer. Their importance will become even more evident in the next chapter.

The image shows a musical score for a section titled "Donde Senza Misura". The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 28 with a tempo of 116 and a "Suddenly reappearing!" instruction. The second system starts at measure 5 with a tempo of 72. The harp part shows a deceptive cadence relationship between chords. Performance instructions include "f subito", "pp", "p", "mf", "p", "con sord", and "do not play on repeat!".

Fig.36 – Deceptive cadence relationship between chords found in the harp⁴⁶

⁴⁶ In this example the second chord (Am7 with added 9, #11, and 13) does not contain its third in the harp. Instead, the note C can be found in both the vibraphone and the flute.

Tom-t.

Vib.

mf

f

From the plena 'Santa María' () = inner voice

The musical score for Figure 37 consists of two staves. The top staff is for Tom-toms (Tom-t.) and the bottom staff is for Vibraphone (Vib.). The Vib. staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a *Ped.* (pedal) marking. The score is divided into two sections: the first section is marked *mf* and the second section is marked *f*. The *f* section includes a note: *From the plena 'Santa María' () = inner voice*. The Vib. staff contains complex rhythmic patterns and chords, while the Tom-t. staff is mostly silent.

Fig.37 – Vibraphone solo with fragments from all motifs played simultaneously

Santa María (augmented)

Santa María (original motif)

Tuscan Dreams (augmented)

Roseland (augmented)

The musical score for Figure 38 is a piano score with four staves. The top staff is labeled *Santa María (augmented)* and contains whole notes. The second staff is labeled *Santa María (original motif)* and contains a melodic line. The third staff is labeled *Tuscan Dreams (augmented)* and contains a melodic line with some chromaticism. The bottom staff is labeled *Roseland (augmented)* and contains a simple bass line. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures.

Fig.38 – Example of fragments used in vibraphone solo

Condensation of harmonic materials (bs.36 - 45) (P.N.)

Pitch content in scale sequence and their harmonic outlines

Harmonic simplification (bs. 36 - 45) (P.N.)

b. 36	b. 37	b. 38	b. 40	b. 42	b. 44	b. 45
Amin	AMaj/min	G7	B7b5 (add9) (no root)	AMaj(add 11)	B7b5 (add9) (no root)	AMaj(add 11)

Fig.39 – Simplification of harmonic texture and outline of harmonic functions

The final borrowed fragment used within *Donde* is presented in the fourth and final section, between bs.142-174. Before reaching this fourth part, we are presented once again with a vibraphone solo which resembles the previously discussed solo between bs.36-39, but now, without the inner voice which quotes the *Santa María plena*. The notes which refer to this tune are now presented in the end, after the texture is reduced to a single melodic line that leads to the final *senza misura* bars or still moments (Fig.40). The idea behind the revealing or unmasking of the *Santa María* motif is my take on working backwards through ideas taken from Donatoni's approach to transformation as his previously mentioned technique of *rilettura*. Whereas Donatoni at times works with a motif through a process of constant transformation and addition of materials (such as in *Nidi*), I propose here the possibility of doing it backwards, whereby the material is not gradually gaining complexity, but gradually reduced and simplified.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Tom-t. (Tom-tom) and Vib. (Vibraphone). The Tom-t. part is mostly silent, with a few notes in the final measure. The Vib. part is the main focus, starting with a *mp* dynamic and moving through *p* and *pp* dynamics. The score is divided into two systems by a double bar line. The first system contains measures 140-141, and the second system contains measures 142-143. The Vib. part in the second system features a *p* dynamic and a final still moment. The score includes dynamic markings (*mp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*) and phrasing slurs. The Tom-t. part has a few notes in the final measure, marked with an 'X'.

Fig.40 – Reduction of texture and presentation of final still moment

It is important to note that the material in bs.140-141, explores the notes which come from *Santa María*, and notes that come not from *Tuscan Dreams* but from *Roseland*, the second fragment used from Gordon. This final still moment functions not only as a continuation of a series of ruptures established in the beginning and ending of the piece, but also as a bridge towards the gradual presentation of the *Roseland* fragment. This bridge is created through the revisualisation of tonal function from both borrowed fragments, as seen in Fig.40. The use of notes from *Santa María* (C-A) and *Roseland* (B-G#) generates a tonic to dominant relationship which is anticipated in bs.140,141 and resolves in b.142 with an A major/minor *tutti* chord. This approach functions simultaneously as a ‘bridge’ into tonality and a masking/unmasking of past materials such as the *Roseland* fragment, which had previously only been presented as part of a structure based on the superimposition of motifs. The gradual apparition and unmasking of the *Roseland* fragment can be perceived between bs.145-156 through the progressive expansion of the motif (Fig.41).

Throughout this final portion of the piece, my use of *Roseland* focuses on the expansion and unmasking of this motif and its repurposing as a dominant chord. The dominant sonority is also reinforced by the slow linear counterpoint that accompanies and surrounds these sonorities (Fig.42). This expansion of the E dominant chord reaches its resolution at the end of the piece with a return to the A major/minor sonority in b.144.

2.2 *Donde II* – for soprano and five instrumentalists

In contrast to other works in this thesis, *Donde II*, does not use any materials from Puerto Rican folklore. Instead, this piece was viewed as what I would call a *laboratory piece*. Laboratory pieces are works within my catalogue that separate themselves from my usual materials. They have been of great importance within my development as a composer, given that they present an opportunity for freedom of experimentation. Within these pieces, I try to focus on the development of a precise goal, viewed almost as a personal challenge. In the case of *Donde II*, the goal was to continue exploring the potential of interaction between musical materials and cinematographic concepts such as the cut and the isolation of an idea, which allows a material to be reconfigured and rerouted after these moments of stasis. This was also complemented by growing interest in areas such as reduction, stillness, and repurposing of materials. As a result of this *laboratory piece*, the idea of reduction and focus on very precise materials also became the point of departure of the works to be discussed later in the third chapter, where these ideas are further developed by techniques used in slow cinema.

Donde II takes its basic material from the initial bars of Alexander Scriabin's *Vers la Flamme*, as well as his well-known mystic chord from which it is constructed (Figs.43,44). The borrowed materials are also visualised as sonic images which are taken out of both *Vers la Flamme* and the mystic chord. Both materials are treated and masked in a variety of manners such as fragmentation, superimposition of materials, isolation of intervallic components, and repurposing of tonal functions.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The main reason for using Scriabin's sonorities as the foundation for my work has to do with the fact that his materials cannot be traced back to folk origins, and therefore do not have any point of reference with Russian culture, as is the case of other composers such as Stravinsky. This allows for the sonorities borrowed from his music to be seen, ever more, as seen as raw material.



Fig.43 - A. Scriabin's *Vers la Flamme* (bs.1-3)⁴⁹

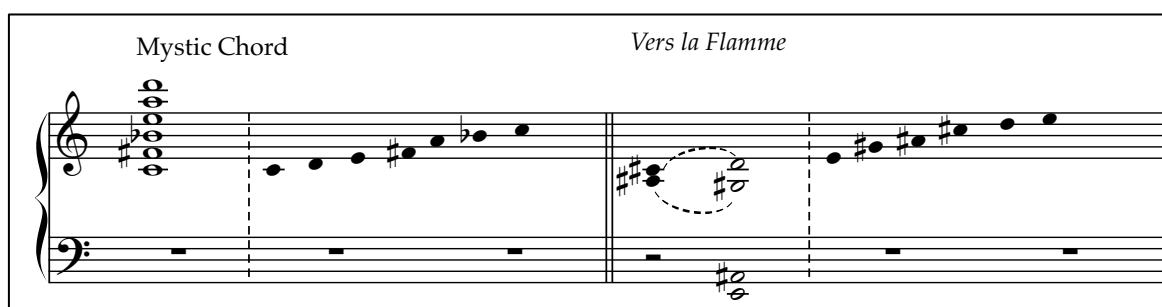


Fig.44 – Materials used in *Donde II* borrowed from Scriabin

The aphoristic text – another example of my focussing on reduction – was taken from *Voces* by Argentine-Italian author Antonio Porchia: *Una cosa, hasta no ser toda, es ruido, y toda, es silencio* (One thing, until it is not all, is noise, and all, is silence). Reduction within this piece, as well as the ones to be presented in the next chapter, allowed me to provide clarity when presenting the borrowed materials I am using. In relation to masking, clarity might seem, at a first glance, as a contrary approach to the idea of distortion, but what clarity, within the context of masking, aims to do is preserve the essence of a raw material. Essence, or the foundational components found within a borrowed ideas such as melodic contour, intervallic configuration, and durational characteristic.

The first sections of *Donde II* (bs.1-67) focus on the first two parts of the aphorism: ‘Una cosa, hasta no ser toda’, and present Scriabin’s materials in various ways. An initial approach

⁴⁹ Scriabin, Alexander, *Vers la flamme*, Op.72, (Moscow: P. Jurgenson), 1914, 2.

can be perceived through the polyrhythmic figures which appear at the beginning of the piece (b.1) and at the end of the first section (b.39,40,42), these being made up of the combination of intervallic components that make up both Scriabin fragments which are superimposed and played simultaneously. Another approach is through long linear melodic lines that are also made up of these intervallic distances (Fig.45).⁵⁰

Between these bars we also find the presentation of a fragment from *Vers la Flamme*, a musical image that is isolated and used as a bridge between the initial bars of a short introduction and the first apparition of the soprano. This bridge or connection between the borrowed fragments and the following material is done through maintaining a rhythmic sequence in the left hand of the piano, which conserves the character of the original, as well as using unison doubling as a resource for linking a note from the Scriabin fragment with a note from the vocal line (bs.11-13) (Fig.46). This first intervention of the voice centres on the idea of 'Una cosa' (one thing) which is itself reflected using unison as a means of generating texture and colour, a resource which is present in various parts of the piece.⁵¹

⁵⁰ The main purpose for superimposing intervallic distances from the original material, as well as combining it with the use of melodic lines derived from the same source, is to do with the previously stated approach to clarity. Although the material has been rearranged, the components that make up my musical ideas can always be traced back to its original source — Scriabin's chord.

⁵¹ When using the term 'generate' in relation to texture and colour, I am directly referring to the use of materials found within the original source as the main component in providing both harmonic and melodic texture within the piece.

Very much as in *Donde I*, in *Donde II* we can also find my interpretation of Ozu's still shots or static moments. In this piece, the idea of the *time-image*, or moment in which all action temporarily stops, giving all attention to a single idea, is presented in three points throughout the piece, the first one being between bs.43-52, which are composed out of the first three notes of the mode formed by the mystic chord (C-D-E-F#-A-Bb) and played by the piano, clarinet and glockenspiel. This entrance of the clarinet is framed between 4/4 bars in gradually increasing bar lengths (3/8, 5/8, 7/8), producing points of irregularity in between the very regular 4/4 bars (Fig.47). The act of stopping, within my music, is directly linked to the previously mentioned idea of the cut. This cut serves a point of interruption of action regarding a previous section, but also as a point of connection, as well as isolation, for musical fragments that can be treated as fragmented 'images', giving the audience time to focus on very specific sonorities derived from the original material.

Another transformation of Scriabin's materials is presented between bs.74-97, where the chord is verticalized throughout the ensemble and visualised as another percussion instrument, using the ensemble as *una cosa* (one thing), employing parallel motion as both a harmonic and gestural element within the piece. While the percussionist's material focuses on the sonorities produced by the combination of the materials found in both *Vers la Flamme* fragment and the mystic chord, we can see that the piano's material centres on two tritones, which serve as triggers that activate pitch aggregates in both the flute and cello. The flute being a major ninth above one of the notes in the right hand of the piano, and the cello playing a fourth above or below the lowest note in the left hand of the piano (Fig.48). These combinations of colours accompany a clarinet solo based on the mode produced by the mystic chord and its various transpositions.

After this constant process of superimposition of materials and expansion through aggregates reaches its closure in b.97, we are again presented with the arrival of a second still moment. In this second appearance, the static events now use three different sets of notes: the first one being C, D, E, the second one transposing this sonority a major third (E-F#-G#), and the final one using the three remaining notes from the original mystic chord mode (F#-A-Bb). On the one hand we find within these sections a Donatonian process of expansion through the aggregation of sonorities in relation to the original material, on the other we find moments of stillness that bring us back to the original sonority based on Scriabin's material. This oscillation between both ideas, causes us to re-evaluate and listen anew each time we are confronted with different variations of these materials. (Fig.49)

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Donde II", measures 43-52. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts from top to bottom: S. Solo, Fl., Cl., B. D., Glock., Pno., and Vc. The music is in 4/4 time. Key features include:

- S. Solo:** A single note with a fermata at the beginning of the section.
- Fl. and Cl.:** Both start with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Clarinet part includes markings for *pp*, *simile*, and *pp* with a hairpin. Both parts have a "Wait for conductor's cue" instruction and a *lungo* marking.
- B. D.:** A single note with a fermata.
- Glock.:** Starts with a *lungo* marking and a *ff* dynamic. It includes a "Wait for conductor's cue" instruction and a "To Vib." marking.
- Pno.:** Starts with a *lungo* marking and a *ff* dynamic. It includes a "Wait for conductor's cue" instruction and a *pp* dynamic marking.
- Vc.:** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic.

Fig.47 – First still moment in *Donde II* (bs.43-52)

Donde II

14

78

S. Solo

Fl.

Cl.

Tom-t.

Vib.

Pno.

Vc.

ppp mf ppp p mf pp f p 6 f

p mf p

p mf p

p mf p

p mf p

p mf p

p mf p

Fig.48 – Transformation of materials between bs.78-84

Donde II

17

98 $\text{♩} = 60$

S. Solo

Fl.

Cl.

Tom-t.

Glock.

Pno.

Vc.

pp

simile

Glockenspiel
Wait for conductor's cue

To Vib.
lungo

f

ff l.v.

lungo

Wait for conductor's cue

$\text{♩} = 60$

Fig.49 – Second still moment in *Donde II* (bs.98-107)

Other transformations in *Donde II* focus on the portion of the text that says *es ruido* (is noise). This portion of the text is treated both syllabically and melismatically in different parts of the piece. In b.68, for example, we can see that the voice is left without instrumental accompaniment, singing the notes F#, C, and Bb, three notes found in the mystic chord (Fig.50). This syllabic approach contrasts from the melismatic gestures used towards the same text between bs.108-146 and is accompanied by a dense *tutti* section as well as a solo on the tom toms (Fig.51).

Other points of discussion between bs.115-146 are the use of the piano as the primary generator of material. The main harmonic components in this third section are based on the combination of the previous tritone harmonies and the full six note mystic chord. The vocal line contains material from this sonority and occasionally ornaments it with gesture such as

mordents and glissandi. Throughout this section we can perceive the percussionist and voice freely embellish the general texture, while the flute, clarinet, and cello join the piano as one percussive instrument. This demonstrates, through my compositional techniques, how the material contained within a section proliferates from a single point of origin, as well as presenting the various sonorous results that can be obtained from a single melodic or harmonic source. An analysis of the material presented in this section and its relation to the mystic chord can be seen in Fig.52.

12
66
S. Solo *f* *lungo* *molto libero* *mp* ♩ = 90
es - rui - do
Fl. *mp* *f* *lungo* Wait for conductor's cue *ppp* *n* *f* *p* Wait for conductor's cue
Cl. *mp* *f* *lungo* Wait for conductor's cue *ppp* *n* *f* *p* Wait for conductor's cue

Fig.50 – Isolation of vocal material

115 19
S. Solo *mp* *f*
E (s)
Fl. Wait for conductor's cue *f* *pp* *f* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*
Cl. Wait for conductor's cue *f* *pp* *f* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*
Tom-t. Wait for conductor's cue change to hard sticks *fp* *f* *mp* *f* *p* *f* *mp* *f*
Vib.

Fig.51 – Presentation of *es ruido* within section three

The musical score illustrates the transformation of the Mystic Chord across three measures:

- Measure b. 115:**
 - Fl. Cl.: Initial Mystic Chord.
 - Pno.: Doubling of notes in the piano.
 - Vc.: Doubling of notes in the piano + addition of D pedal.
- Measure b. 116:**
 - Fl. Cl.: Fragment of Mystic mode based on major seconds and minor thirds.
 - Pno.: Redistribution of Mystic Chord (pno.); Isolation of tritone in superimposed dyads.
 - Vc.: Doubling of notes in the piano + addition of D pedal.
- Measure b. 117:**
 - Fl. Cl.: Repetition of material in b.115 with addition of upper or lower neighbouring notes.
 - Pno.: Doubling of notes in the piano.
 - Vc.: Doubling of notes in the piano + addition of D pedal.

Fig.52 –Relation and distribution of materials (bs.115-117)

As *Donde II* approached its end, I thought of the possibility of the last transformation of the material to approach the mystic chord sonority, specifically the arrangement of notes used within *Vers la Flamme* in a tonal manner as another technique of masking, rearranging the notes from the chord (E-G#-A#-C#-D) into an E7 sonority. To establish the necessary tension to approach this tonal relationship, I generated a section based on a predominant chord function, specifically a French augmented sixth chord which is played as a clarinet solo starting in b.148 (Fig.53).

This French sixth passage serves various purposes, the first one being a bridge between the tonal and the atonal, and the second being a lowering of density from the previous section which was very active and rhythmic. This section also brings back a clear use of unison, specifically with the note F, which functions as one of the leading tones to the E7 chord, which can be appreciated between bs.183-184 with the return of the voice (Fig.54). The leading tones (F-D#) resolve in b.190 with the voice, clarinet, and cello, playing and sustaining the note E. The tonal transformation of the mystic chord is finally reached in b.192 in the piano, with the

E7 chord gaining a secondary dominant function and afterwards resolving to D, with various extension, in bs.200-206 (Fig.55). As in *Donde*, the use of extensions is employed as another means of masking within the tonal context, adding chromatic elements foreign to the base harmonies.

148 $\text{♩} = 60$ 29

S. Solo

Fl.

Cl. *Wait for conductor's cue very delicate, like an echo*

p *pp* *mf* *pp*

Fig.53 – Outline of French Sixth chord played by the clarinet (bs.148-153)

184 *mp molto delicato*

S. Solo Y

Fl. *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

Cl. *pp* *mf*

T. - t. Tam-tam *ppp* *p*

f *p* To T-T

Unison as point of connection with vocal line

Fig.54 – Use of the note F as point of connection with vocal line (bs.181-185)

The figure displays a musical score with two systems. The first system is divided into four measures. The first measure is labeled 'French Sixth/ mystic chord' and 'Base material between bs. 148-189'. The second measure is labeled 'Point of resolution in (b.190)'. The third measure is labeled 'E7 (V/V) (Piano part)' and 'E7 (V/V)' with 'b.192' and 'b.194' below it. The fourth measure is labeled 'Em (ii)' with 'b.196' below it. The second system is divided into three measures. The first measure is labeled 'Aalt (V) - no root' with 'b.198' below it. The second measure is labeled 'Dmaj7(I)' with 'b.200' below it. The third measure is labeled 'D(I)' with 'bs.202-206' below it. Chord symbols are shown in brackets below the notes in the piano part.

Fig.55 – Harmonic reduction in the final sections of *Donde II* (bs.148-206)⁵²

In terms of the totality of the work, as well as regarding the use of elements such as tonality, resolution, and stillness within *Donde II*, this section provides an example of what masking, or the idea of repurposing, reconfiguring, and rerouting, can do within a work made from borrowed materials. This can be seen in the repurposing and reconfiguring of a borrowed sonority (Scriabin's chord/E7) that is arrived at through a process of repetition and stillness (French Sixth). Stillness or the isolation and repetition of an idea, which due to its expansion and prolongation in relation to other sections of the work, has been recentred on a material which can now be rerouted, in this case as a bridge towards tonality, giving a sense of resolution to the general structure of the work.

However, just as in the previous sections, this final part is interrupted by a series of gestures resembling the polyrhythmic gestures presented in the beginning of the piece, this time leading to a final static event, a final still moment with no clear continuation (Fig.56). This final turn

⁵² The primary notes of each harmonic change are marked in brackets. This harmonic progression is based on the material played by the piano. During this section, I also make use of Gordon's *Roseland* motif in the piano as a way of establishing a connection between the two *Donde*'s.

epitomises my idea of a *time-image*, as something with its own autonomous identity, but also always containing a possibility for new relationships to be formed.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Donde II", spanning measures 208 to 37. The score includes parts for S. Solo, Fl., Cl., T.-t., Vib., Pno., and Vc. The Vib. part features a Glockenspiel section starting at measure 208 with a *p* dynamic, followed by a *ff* section marked "lungo" and "l.v.", and a *pp* section marked "Wait for conductor's cue" and "at least 3x" with "l.v. al niente". The Pno. part also has a *p* section, a *ff* section marked "lungo" and "l.v.", and a *pp* section marked "Wait for conductor's cue" and "at least 3x" with "l.v. al niente". The S. Solo, Fl., Cl., T.-t., and Vc. parts consist of sustained notes or rests. At the bottom right, the text reads: "Una cosa, hasta no ser toda, es ruido, y toda, es silencio. -Antonio Porchia, Voces".

Fig.56 – Final bars of *Donde II*

Chapter 3 - Folklore: Slowed Down and Unveiled

As I progressed through my years of research, I noticed how my interest in masking borrowed materials began to branch out into diverse areas such as slowness, stillness, and clarity. As the aesthetics of modernist complexity gradually became less prominent in my works, due to its rigid system of transformation and closing off of other interests of mine such as modality, the figure of Donatoni stopped having the role of protagonist he had within my musical aesthetics. This, in turn, made room for ideas from composers and artists who explored slowness and stillness within their artistic disciplines. The role of these concepts came as a revelation and were evermore present during my third year of study. They have become a central part of how I currently perceive musical structures and their function within borrowed musical materials and masking.

This revelation and stylistic shift, which can be perceived by the reader in the pieces presented in this chapter, came, as I see it, as a result of various lived experiences during my time in England. Firstly, as can be perceived by the dates of pieces presented in chapter one, I was composing these initial works during the time of the COVID 19 pandemic, an event which had a great impact on my notion of time. As a foreign student composing under strict curfews and government restrictions, I spent most days alone in a small room accompanied by my guitar and keyboard. When playing these instruments, at times unsure of what time or day it was, I began to play and reexplore single notes and harmonies for extended periods of time, taking the time to hear the peculiarities and intricacies of each individual note and reevaluating how these moments of confinement had changed my perspective on what duration was for me.

Naturally, these gestures and ideas gradually became more prominent in my music and triggered my curiosity to find more artists and composers, both contemporary and non-contemporary, that also engaged with these ideas of stillness and prolonged sounds. One of the

figures that stood out during this period was Morton Feldman, a composer whose pieces converse with ideas that have been of importance to me throughout my creative process such as the construction of musical form through procedures and gestures, as well as repeated and prolonged sonorities.

My immediate attraction to Feldman's music and craft was due to the parallels it drew with the procedures practiced by Donatoni. His expansive structures of slowly transforming materials, felt, at times, as panels in slow motion. This attention to detail within piece, perceived through his very precise control of parameters such as pitch, gesture, and duration within slow paced forms, generated subsequent ways of proceeding within the works presented in this final chapter.

Among the works of Feldman that heavily influenced my compositional output during this final year of study was his piece for solo violin entitled *For Aaron Copland*. In contrast to works of his final decade, *For Aaron Copland* distinguishes itself from his usual body of work through its pitch material, composed of the white notes in the keyboard, giving the piece a modal feel that contrasts from his usual highly chromatic material.

For me, this isolation of diatonic pitch material within a work served as inspiration for the approach I wanted to take in these later pieces. This is especially evident in works to be discussed such as *Paesaeggio Pensiero*, which seeks to mainly isolate the modal sonorities borrowed from the *plena* entitled *El Temporal*. These works show how a 'process based' composer, such as myself, approaches modal sonorities and expressivity. Within these pieces modality was seen as a means of contrasting to Donatoni and Italian modernism, going back to tradition and modality as a new means of going forward. During this time, my method for freeing myself from the Italian modernist aesthetics learned from Donatoni was done through the exploration of opposites – moving from rhythmic and chromatic to slow and modal music.

As a result, this approach made me explore and re-engage with expressive resources from the past such as consonance and dissonance, tension and release, momentum and rest, through materials and procedures rooted in tradition.

Throughout this chapter I also continue to visualise the function of borrowed materials through stillness and isolated moments, as discussed previously in relation to the works of Ozu. This exploration also led to the works of other directors which engage with film in a similar fashion such as Andrey Tarkovsky – a director known for his use of episodic cinematography and long takes, techniques which can be experienced in films such as *The Mirror*. My interest in engaging with the ideas of Tarkovsky within the works discussed in this chapter was mainly centred on the structural construction and assembling of a piece. In Tarkovsky's movies, this was done through the filming of each section as an individual idea and afterwards arranging and re-arranging each event, searching for all the possible combinations the form had to offer as a means of reaching the desired expressive results within the totality of the work.

In my music, at a micro level, I took a similar approach in my pre-compositional process by rearranging the borrowed melodic material to find new combinations of pitch sequences. This approach was also implemented within axis structures (i.e. structured motifs) and macro structures (i.e. longer sections) by printing them out and pasting them on my walls. This process helped me visualise structures not only within the framing of a single event, but also within the new possibilities that appeared at a macro level through the simple gesture of moving and assembling musical blocks.

When assembling the pieces to be discussed in this chapter, I also followed Tarkovsky's recommendations from his book *Sculpting in Time*. In these reflections on cinema, he emphasises that 'assembly, editing, disturbs the passage of time, interrupts it and simultaneously gives it something new. The distortion of time can be a means of giving it

rhythmical expression'.⁵³ Musically speaking, I employ this perception of time by looking at rhythm within my creative processes in new ways, focusing not only on the sometimes obvious and audible beats and progressive melodic contour of a borrowed material, but centring more so on the durational relationship between two events and the ways in which we can manipulate that transitional space in order to flow in-between highly contrasting ideas or moments. In the case of my music, this can be perceived through the expansion of a *plena* tune, to be discussed in *Siniy II*, for orchestra – a piece which explores the slowed down and interrupted melodic contour contained within various bars of a *plena* as a macro structure. This approach led to a sonic focus on stretched out borrowed modal sonorities.

3.1 Slowing Down

After writing my previous pieces, exploring Ozu's films, and further studying his techniques of still shot cinematography, I found myself delving deeper into the world of art films as well as its directors and theorists, especially those who created films labelled under the term slow cinema. Given that film directors work within the structural constraint of self-generated and self-outlined frames, very much like Donatoni and myself, the idea of incorporating their filmmaking techniques within my own pieces proved to be a natural way of proceeding. To familiarise myself with the techniques used by directors, I studied the writings of director Paul Schrader, whose book *Transcendental Style in Film*, describes concepts that are synonymous with my ways of visualizing the role of slowness in my music, such as the long take:

[The long take] is the sine qua non of slow cinema. [...] these are for the most part static frames, sometimes abetted by languorous pans or dolly movements.

[...]

But a long take need not be of Olympian length to serve its purpose. It just needs to be longer than expected. A static shot of someone, say, making coffee would dramatically require ten to fifteen seconds of screen time. If that shot is held for thirty seconds, it has another effect.

⁵³ Tarkovsky, Andrey. *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*. Translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021), 121.

Held for three minutes, quite another. Thirty seconds, however, are sufficient to create a dissonance between time and narrative, between the narrative time requirements of a particular shot and the actual time allowed to the shot.⁵⁴

The idea that resonated the most with my musical approach of wanting to mask through slowness, was that of ‘dissonance between time and narrative’. When thinking of a borrowed musical fragment, narrative, to me, is synonymous, with the expected sequential outcome of a specific tune (i.e. direct quotation). In relation to masking and slowness, I translated this idea of the ‘dissonance between time and narrative’ directly within my works by playing with the duration of events in each of my pieces and masking the original expected narrative structure produced by the borrowed material. Masking could be approached through the presentation of a material that could be sustained or expanded for a longer amount of time to generate that ‘dissonance between time and narrative’.⁵⁵

The second technique adapted from Schrader is the wide angle, which he defines as ‘a tableau, whether exterior or interior, [which] offers multiple points of interest. [...] The frame doesn’t direct the viewer’s gaze; it frees it to wander.’⁵⁶ My approach to this technique has been defined by the instrumental combinations for which I wrote the two pieces to be discussed this chapter. In both pieces, I generated a melodic landscape which isolated a certain musical idea related to the main tune, ornamenting and surrounding it with other contrapuntal musical actions. This gives the listener the opportunity to focus on a main idea, based on a slowed down and masked portion of the material, while at the same time wander freely through other sounds derived from these borrowed materials.

⁵⁴ *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer*. Berkeley (University of California Press), 1972. 11 - 12.

⁵⁵ Within the context of my borrowed Puerto Rican materials, this is approached in each one of my pieces through the isolation and durational expansion of intervallic gestures or specific melodic contours associated with a specific portion of the borrowed idea.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 12.

The third technique, which is directly related to Ozu's still shots, is that of the static frame. In this technique, the camera is 'locked-off', which freezes a certain frame for the amount of time determined by the director.⁵⁷ For me, this moment of stasis presented the opportunity to create a section in a piece which allowed the listener to have the opportunity to focus on just one idea.⁵⁸

In slow cinema, one of the most important techniques is that of the cut or offset edits, which was previously presented in chapter two as a complementary gesture to Ozu's static shot but is now being expanded further upon through the writings of Schrader. Schrader's explains to us that:

When edits occur, they are frequently offset in time—either too early or too late. In normal cutting, a splice is made “on action.” If someone leaves a room, the cut is made as the person leaves; if someone enters, it is made as the person enters. In slow cinema the cut is made *after* the character leaves—sometimes much after. I first noticed this tendency in the films of Bresson and Ozu. It threw off the viewer's rhythm—the cut was too “early” or too “late”. In this way, the filmmaker reorients time.⁵⁹

This approach of making unexpected cuts to reorient time is yet another way of fragmenting a structure or narrative created throughout the development of a musical idea. In previous pieces I experimented with similar strategies to musical form based on rupture, given the influence of Donatoni and his immediate change of gesture in-between panels, as well as the works of Ozu and his interruption of action and narrative with the use of still shots. But now, I was interested in seeing how this rupturing of an idea could be combined with other cinematic concepts, such as long takes and its relationship to slowness, as well as further implementing them within my masking procedures.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Decker, "Preserving the Fragment: Franco Donatoni's Late Chamber Music"

⁵⁸ In contrast to the long take, which could have various ideas flowing simultaneously, my approach to the static frame was much more literal, following Ozu's guidelines, giving the listener the opportunity and time the find newness, as well as clarity, by centring musical action on just one sound or gesture.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

In these pieces, I continued visualizing musical fragments as ‘images’, as in previous chapters. Given that my main interest is to explore the potential of borrowed materials within a musical structure, I continued translating the idea of ‘image’, to that of borrowed materials, visualising the melodies taken from the *plenas* as ‘images’, each containing within them a particular set of intervallic and durational aspects characteristic of this genre. My approach to these tunes was based on taking the characteristic elements a particular ‘image’, and reexploring them through slowness and stillness as a means of pushing the listener away from the original experience, generating that ‘dissonance between time and narrative’.

To paraphrase Schrader, ‘instead of creating a [sound] world in which the [listener] needs only to surrender, [I wanted to compose] a [piece] which the [listener] must contemplate — or reject out of hand’.⁶⁰ This provides the opportunity to generate a variety of simultaneous sonic experiences. On the one hand we have the sound world that I have created out of my structural interests, on the other, there is the ‘[listener’s] meditations’ on that piece or musical section within the composition.⁶¹

In the two pieces in this chapter, I present how slowness, or the search for a distortion or ‘dissonance between time and narrative’, provides fertile ground for the use of borrowed *plena* tunes. In turn, these tunes become part of the macrostructure of an entire work, using slowness, as well as stasis, to present or isolate a single repeated idea. Both slowness and stasis are treated with clarity, or the use of reduction and focus as a means preserving the essence of raw materials. In the case of the *plenas* masked in this third chapter, I focus on the modal, melodic and intervallic qualities of these tunes.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Original quotation reads as follows: ‘[...], instead if creating a film world in which the viewer needs only to surrender, creates a world which the spectator must contemplate—or reject out of hand.’

⁶¹ Ibid, 19. Original quotation reads as follows: ‘spectator’s meditations’.

Masking, within this concept of aural perception, presents the opportunity to go beyond the original material, letting the listener create new points of connection within the context of borrowed materials.

Given the modal aspects of these borrowed ideas, the reader will find a sudden shift in my musical aesthetics, moving from my influences of Italian modernism towards modality. These pieces, while centred on the use of modality, maintain their focus on my original goals towards masking materials. Masking, within these pieces will continue to search for a repurposing, reconfiguring, and rerouting of the original borrowed idea.

3.2 *Paessagio-Pensiero* - for solo guitar

My initial reaction to these cinematographic concepts stated above resulted in a piece for solo classical guitar titled *Paesaggio-Pensiero*. Being a guitarist myself, one of the main goals while writing this piece was to also make it into an etude, which would therefore focus on a specific technique and sonorities, in the case of *Paesaggio-Pensiero*, that technique was natural harmonics. Almost all the material from *Paessagio-Pensiero* comes out of bs.1-4 of a *plena* titled *El Temporal* (Fig.57).

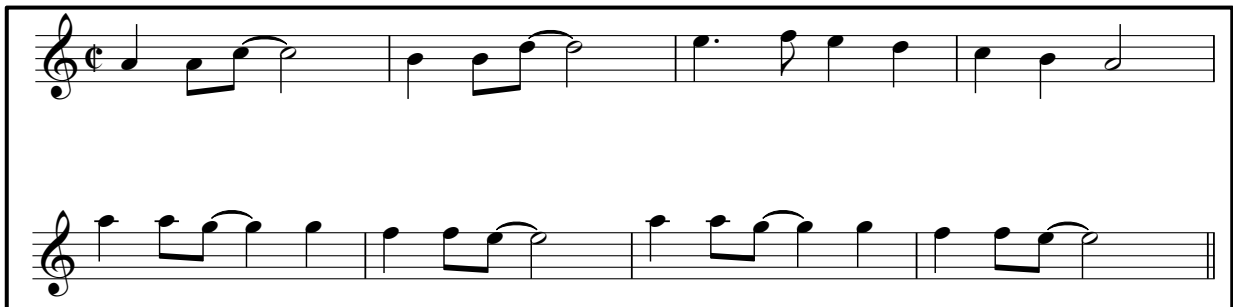


Fig.57 - Original tune from *El Temporal*

Given that this piece focuses on the use of natural harmonics, I also expanded upon the material by adding pitches that were part of the natural harmonics found in the guitar. This is why, to the six notes found in bs.1-4 (A-B-C-D-E-F) I added the notes G and F#. ⁶² This addition

⁶² The note G, while found the fifth bar of the tune, is not used as part of the melodic outline used within this piece, which is made up the first four bars.

of notes masks the notion of the original mode of the piece (A Aeolian) by adding the note F# which gives the sensation of the material moving between Aeolian and Dorian modes (Fig.58).

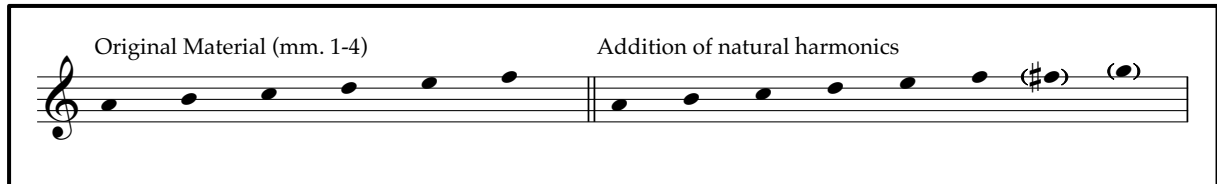


Fig.58 - Materials from first four bars and addition of natural harmonics

Regarding the approach of slow cinematic techniques as a means of structural construction and development, I combined the previously mentioned strategies within each section to isolate certain ideas within different points of the piece. Given the limited intervallic material used throughout the entirety of the piece, each section was thought of as a long take which masks sonorities from the original *plena* using repetition and durational expansion. In certain sections, repeat bars, very much like in *Mosaico Abierto IV*, are used as tools of intervallic isolation or static framing that repeat a certain gesture.

In other parts of the piece, I also focus on the concept of the wide angle. Given that my interest was to combine the original borrowed tunes with alternate contrapuntal textures that allowed the listener to freely wander between sound worlds, I centred on generating a texture that combined the main materials presented throughout the piece with fragmented melodic outlines from *El Temporal*. Examples of these ideas will be discussed further in this portion of the commentaries as I go into the details that make up the structure of this piece.

The initial section, marked as *Lento, molto sospeso*, is a nod to Erik Satie's music, and searches for ways to evoke similar ethereal and atmospheric soundscapes like those found in the *Gymnopédies*. The piece, at times, seeks to evoke the ternary feel of the *Gymnopédie* by

writing '*Tempo di Gymnopédie*' over certain passages that use 'short-long' relationships in their values, like that of dances in triple metre such as sarabandes and waltzes.

My reason for incorporating Satie, his gestures, and referencing the pacing in his *Gymnopédies*, was due to the relationship between dance, slowness, and clarity, that I perceive within his works. The use of triple metre within Satie's *Gymnopédies* can be perceived as evoking a dance tradition of works in triple-metre such as sarabandes and waltzes, but also moving beyond them by making music that is not intended for dance purposes, but more so for that of creating an ambience through repetition, clarity, and slowness.⁶³ This evolution of dance forms within a non-folk scenario, resonates with how I approach my own materials, evoking ideas from folk sources of the past and reengaging with them within my own music, which incorporates folklore, but also moves far beyond it.

The first relationship of *Paesaggio-Pensiero* with *El Temporal* is the use of the note A (the first note in the *plena*) as a central pitch throughout the duration of the piece. Given that *El Temporal* also begins its first two measures with the intervallic relationship of two consecutive ascending minor thirds (A-C and B-D), I decided to make use of those sonorities and make them a prominent part of the first section. Other components that make up the sonorities in this initial section are chords made up of the various combinations of the notes found in *El Temporal*, plus the occasional addition of the notes F# and G. All these ideas can be appreciated

⁶³ Davies, Mary Elizabeth, *Erik Satie*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), 33-34.

in the first page of the piece, where I have circled in red the minor thirds related to the first two bars of *El Temporal* (Fig.59).

Omaggio a Luigi Ghirri e Erik Satie
Paesaggio-Pensiero
 per chitarra sola

John Rivera Pico

Lento, molto sospeso

Chitarra

f *p* molto calmo *sempre l.v. tutto il più possibile* *mf* *p*

f *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

p *f* *mf* *p* *f* *mf* *p*

mf *p* *mf* *p* *sempre l.v.*

f *mf* *p* *f* *p* *f*

p *mf* *p* *p*

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Fig.59 – First page of *Paesaggio Pensiero*

As previously mentioned, the use of the isolated A-C and B-D minor thirds, marked in red circles in the previous image, serve not only as isolators of the intervallic relationships between the first two bars of *El Temporal*, but work also as moments of stasis between the ideas presented in this first section. This type of gesture interrupts the narrative and relationship between the vertical representation of the materials (chords) and the horizontal movement of the melodic material which comes to a fuller development and transformation in the second section.

The second part of the piece, labelled *Più mosso, ma senza fretta*, works as a music box, giving a feeling of perpetual motion in an imagined dance, circulating around notes that emerge from the four bars that are used from *El Temporal*. This imagined dance in perpetual motion is yet another representation of my views regarding folklore and its treatment, following my interpretation of Satie's slowed down sarabandes or waltzes. This can be perceived through my use of perpetual motion and irregularly distributed accents between real pitches and harmonics, giving the sensation of a distorted *clave*. In the first system of this second section, the focus of the pitches has continued to be centred on the previously presented ideas from concluding gestures in the first section, these being C, D, E, F, A, and B, the original notes in the *plena* (Fig.60).

Più mosso, ma senza fretta *le note ord. sempre un po in rilievo e sostenute*

p *sempre l.v. tutto il più possibile*

Fig.60 - First two systems of the second section

When looking at the score, we can see that the second system in section two starts adding notes which are foreign from the original borrowed material (F# and G). From the third system onwards, the procedure that outlines the musical event in the uppermost voice is based on the original tune and gradually ascends from the note A to F, before once again descending to the same A in which it began. While this upper voice is played entirely in ordinary notes, the accompaniment is done in natural harmonics. This is my way of representing a wide angle within the possibilities that the guitar had to offer, creating a two-part structure in which the polyphonic qualities of both the main thematic material and its accompaniment create a sound world of multiple contrapuntal possibilities. In the following figures, the melodic contour from *El Temporal* is circled in red. (Figs.61,62)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for guitar. The top system features a melodic line in the upper voice with notes circled in red. The notes are A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A. The melodic contour is circled in red. The accompaniment consists of natural harmonics. The dynamic markings are *p*, *f*, *sempre cresc.*, and *sempre dim.*. The bottom system also features a melodic line in the upper voice with notes circled in red. The notes are A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A. The melodic contour is circled in red. The accompaniment consists of natural harmonics. The dynamic markings are *f*, *p*, *sempre cresc.*, and *sempre dim.*. Fingering numbers (1-5) are indicated for both systems.

Fig.61 - Beginning of melodic contour in upper voice

Paesaggio-Pensiero

3

The musical score consists of six staves of music. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is written in a single melodic line. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 in circles above the notes. Dynamics are marked with *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). Articulation includes accents and slurs. The score includes various musical notations such as repeat signs, triplets (3x), and quintuplets (5x). The first staff starts with a *f* dynamic and includes the instruction *sempre cresc.* followed by *f* and then *sempre dim.*. The second staff starts with *p*, moves to *f*, and ends with *p*. The third staff starts with *f* and ends with *p*. The fourth staff starts with *f* and ends with *p*, including the instruction *sempre dim.*. The fifth and sixth staves start with *p* and end with *p*.

Fig.62 - Continuation of melodic contour and its descent in upper voice

The third part of *Paessagio Pensiero* can be perceived as a recapitulation which establishes a dialogue between the gestures found in previous sections. While the central part of the piece worked towards the distortion of the melodic line found in the first four bars of *El Temporal*, the third part uses it like a coda or closing section (Figs.63,64). For the first time in the entire piece, the intervallic relationships and melodic sequence is the same as the original tune, giving the entire piece a sense of closure as well as arrival. In a way, all the pieces of the puzzle which were once scattered and unorganised have now found their centre and taken shape.⁶⁴

The image shows a musical score for the final section of *Paessagio Pensiero*. The score is written on a single staff in treble clef. It begins with the tempo and mood markings: **Nuovamente lento, molto sospeso** and *come una memoria...*. The first measure starts with a piano (**pp**) dynamic and the instruction *lontano, lasciando molto spazio*. The melody consists of a series of notes with various fingerings (circled numbers 1-6) and articulation marks. The dynamics fluctuate, including **mf poco**, **f**, **pp**, **mf poco**, and **pp**. There are also markings for *arm. art.* and *delicatiss.*. The score includes repeat signs and a **4x** marking. The final section features a **mf** dynamic with *sempre dim.* and *n* markings, leading to a **f** dynamic with *subito*. The final two measures of the theme are circled in red.

Fig.63 - Final section of *Paessagio Pensiero* - (Theme outlined in red)

⁶⁴ This is yet another take on my previously discussed approach of *rilettura* done backwards, where the material is gradually unmasked and revealed.

Fig.64 - Continuation of final section of *Paessagio Pensiero* - (Theme outlined in red)

3.3 Siniy II - for orchestra

I approached *Siniy II*, structurally, in a similar fashion to *Paessagio-Pensiero*. The piece also makes use of the intervallic relationships and melodic contour of a *plena*, entitled *Isidora*, as its main source of material. In contrast to *Paessagio-Pensiero*, *Siniy II* uses the entire melody as a way of defining the structure of the entire piece.

In previous works my approach was centred on either heavily masking or momentarily presenting a glimpse of the folk or even borrowed materials used within a piece, I was now focused on the possibility of identifying and concentrating on what could be the nucleus of an idea. Similarly to *Paessagio-Pensiero*, the clearest path towards presenting this nucleus was by concentrating on the intervallic essence of these tunes as a means of generating its internal structures. The general structure of *Siniy II* can be divided in nine parts, each of which seeks to isolate and mask the melodic components that make up a specific set of bars from the original *Isidora* tune (Fig.65).



Fig.65 - Original *Isidora* tune

In the first part of the piece (bs.1-46), and in other places, all melodic content derives from the intervallic relationships that are found in the first two bars of the original tune, these being D, C, G, A, Bb, and G. Although this section does not initially present the notes in their original order of appearance, it masks the relationship between these notes by playing with the different combinations that are derived from the various inversions that can be made up from these two bars.

The initial bars of *Siniy II* present the reconfigured masked material, which will become a recurring motif throughout the entire piece. The melodic line played by the clarinets presents the notes D, A, Bb, and G, which are related to the original tune through the inversion of various intervals (Fig.66). The D and the A arise from the inversion of the relationship between the first notes from the first beat of bs.1 and 2 in the original tune (D-G), I now switch the relationship from a descending perfect fifth to an ascending perfect fifth (D-A). The Bb and the G come from the direct gesture taken out of the last two notes in b.2, which are the same. The phrase finishes with an A which works as an enclosure between the two aforementioned

neighbouring notes. This approach to melodic transformation continues to generate a sense of masking through an interplay between the original material and the melodic transformation that can be acquired from the various combinations within it.

Fig.66 - *Siniy II* (bs.1-6)

After the presentation of the initial motivic material, the melodic line is interrupted by a chord which is composed mostly out of the notes from the first two bars, with the exception that the note C is substituted for the note E, as can be observed in the top note of the chord (Fig.67). While this chord appears isolated within the context of the first bars of this piece, its expansion will be presented further on when the sonority keeps on transforming between bs.57-64. This idea of sudden presentation can be traced back to the concept of the offset edit in slow cinema, where cuts are used as a means of rupturing the cinematic flow. In this case, the linear aspect of the material is interrupted by a chordal gesture, masked through the verticalisation of material, which fades away into a once again linear texture.

In bs.20-30 we see the interruption of the motivic development using a low D in unison with the low brass, bassoons, and low strings, which then returns to similar melodic gestures in the clarinet, now presenting new intervallic distances in the melodic contour such as the minor seventh, the inverted relationship between the first two notes (D and C) in *Isidora* (Fig.68).

Fig.67- *Siniy II* chord in b. 7 (percussion and celesta)

Fig.68 - Beginning of melodic expansion using ascending a minor 7th interval

After this motivic development, we can perceive the interruption of the linear texture with a sequence of chords in b.31. These harmonies, which go from bs.31-37, refer to the chord presented in b.7, now with a different voicing and the substitution of the previously mentioned E note with the note C, creating a pedal with a rising top voice which goes from A to D (Fig.69).⁶⁵

⁶⁵ This procedure shows the possibility of masking a borrowed melodic contour through its verticalization.

Fig.69 - Harmonic reduction of chorale progression (bs.31-37)

The end of this choral progression then arrives to the first appearance of the melodic contour in the first two bars of *Isidora*, now masked using augmented values and with the slight variation of the addition of a Bb before the ending of the phrase (bs.38-46). This can be perceived the following figure which shows a reduction of the general melodic and harmonic contour in this section. Throughout this portion of part one, we can also perceive my use of sonorities that recall those of Arvo Pärt's *tintinnabuli* procedures by accompanying the melodic fragment with a G minor arpeggio, which alludes to the G Dorian sonority produced by the original tune (Fig.70).⁶⁶

In this portion of the piece, I used the feeling of modal stasis as a means of generating sections within the work that give the listener time to explore portions of melodic contours and harmonies that are derived from the original *plena* (i.e. G Dorian). The next figure also shows my interpretation of the wide angle within this piece, or the creation of melodic landscapes which isolate a musical idea related to the main tune through complementary textures within the orchestral medium. Given that, the orchestra provides the possibility of creating various

⁶⁶ My reason for using these ideas borrowed from Pärt is due to his focus on reduction and clarity, two ideas which I previously mentioned as prominent in these works. This can be perceived in Pärt's music through a great economy of materials which are mostly built out of familiar sonorities such as diatonic triads and scales. These triads and scales are then organised through specific procedures which generate a two-part counterpoint which results in a melodic line, based on a specific scale, always accompanied by a note of a diatonic triad (*tintinnabuli voice*), usually in a minor mode. This idea of reduction and clarity through triadic and modal isolation also translated well with what I wanted to do in certain moments of my music, especially those instances which, in relation to cinematography, were viewed as wide angles, focusing on an idea from the original borrowed material (i.e. melodic outline or intervallic distance with a series of complementary sonorities that surround it (i.e. triads).

simultaneous layers with different instrumental families, the *tintinnabuli* approach to these sections allows for the isolation of the melodic and harmonic contour within the percussion and celesta, but also provides a wider sonic landscape in which the listener can explore the resonance of these sonorities by doubling them at unison and making them stand out through the use of varying dynamic levels (Fig.71).

This musical score shows three staves: Vibraphone (Vib.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), and Celesta (Cel.). The Vibraphone and Glockenspiel parts play a series of chords in a 4/4 time signature, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Celesta part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a steady pulse. The notation includes various chord voicings and rests.

Fig.70 – Presentation of augmented *Isidora* fragment (bs.37-41)

This musical score features four staves: Vibraphone (Vib.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), Celesta (Cel.), and Violins (Vln. I and Vln. II). The upper three staves (Vib., Glock., and Cel.) continue with the chordal and rhythmic material from Fig. 70. The Violin parts (Vln. I and Vln. II) play a melodic line characterized by rapid sixteenth-note passages. The dynamics for the violins are marked with *pp* (pianissimo) and *f* (forte), with slurs indicating phrasing across measures.

Fig.71 - *Tintinnabuli*-like gestures and instrumental resonance in bs.42-46

The second part in *Siniy II* (bs.47-65) initially works as a transition between the use of the melodic fragments from bs.1-2 of *Isidora* and bs.3-4. This section begins with restatement of the transformed melodic contour from the first two bars of *Isidora*, now with varied durations and exploring imitative counterpoint (Fig.72). Afterwards we are presented with an abrupt change in metre which is marked 9/16, which is yet another approach of masking the same melodic material from *Isidora*'s initial four bars (Fig.73).⁶⁷ These melodic lines are interrupted by clustered tutti gestures that are derived from a re-voicing and reduction of the original chord (b.7), which is then expanded through common voice leading transformations and resources such as leaving common notes and moving voices by close neighbouring note relationships (Figs.74,75). While this section seems to come to a sudden end in b.65, generating the sensation of an abrupt cut, it then reappears at a later point in the piece, specifically part eight, in which these materials are expanded.

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Siniy II', measures 47-50. The score is arranged in six staves, each representing a different instrument: Flute 1 & 2 (Fl. 1, 2), Oboe 1 & 2 (Ob. 1, 2), Clarinet 1 & 2 (Cl. 1, 2), Bassoon 1 & 2 (Bsn. 1, 2), Horn 1 & 2 (Hrn. 1, 2), and Trumpet 1 & 2 (Tpt. 1, 2). The time signature is 9/16. The score begins with a dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) and a first ending bracket. The melodic material is restated in imitative counterpoint, with dynamics alternating between *f* (forte) and *pp*. The score ends at measure 50, with a final dynamic marking of *pp*.

Fig.72 - Restatement of transformed *Isidora* in imitative counterpoint (bs.47-50)

⁶⁷ When taking a closer look at the intervallic relationships found within the 9/16 bars, it can be perceived that all the notes from b.1-4 in *Isidora* (D-E-F-G-A-Bb-C) are used as the main melodic material. This yet another way of masking through the rearrangement of melodic outline and durations.

The musical score for Siniy II, page 11, features a complex orchestration with multiple parts for each instrument family. The score is divided into five measures, with a measure number '60' appearing above the first measure of the Flute 1 & 2 part. The dynamics are carefully marked throughout, including *f* (forte), *fp* (fortissimo piano), and *simile* (simile). The parts include:

- Fl. 1, 2: Flute parts with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*.
- Ob. 1, 2: Oboe parts with dynamic markings *fp* and *simile*.
- Cl. 1, 2: Clarinet parts with dynamic markings *fp* and *simile*.
- Bsn. 1, 2: Bassoon parts with dynamic markings *fp* and *simile*.
- Hn. 1, 2: Horn parts with dynamic markings *fp* and *simile*.
- Tpt. 1, 2: Trumpet parts with dynamic markings *fp* and *simile*.
- Tbn.: Trombone part with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*.
- Tba.: Tuba part with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*.
- Timp.: Timpani part with dynamic markings *f* and *p*.
- Vib.: Vibraphone part with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*.
- Glock.: Glockenspiel part with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*.
- Cel.: Cymbals part with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*.
- Vln. I, II: Violin parts with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*, and a *div.* (divisi) marking.
- Vla.: Viola part with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*, and a *div.* marking.
- Vc.: Violoncello part with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*.
- Cb.: Contrabass part with dynamic markings *f* and *simile*, and an *arco* marking.

Fig.74 - Clustered tutti gestures in part 2

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chord derived from original material in b. 7 2. A, and E are omitted 3. Note C is added 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C, Bb, and G are left as common notes 2. Ab appears from rising movement from G 3. Eb appears from rising movement from D 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. G, Ab, and Bb are left as common notes 2. Db appears from rising movement from C 3. G also appears from rising movement from Eb 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Descending motion from G produces contrary motion on all other voices 2. Gb appears from rising movement from Db 3. Cb and Db appear from rising movement from Ab and Bb
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Fig.75 - Example of clustered voice leading in celesta (bs.56-58)

As part two comes to an end, we are suddenly presented with a Bb7 chord that leads us into part three. Compositionally speaking, the purpose of this section, which repeats itself towards the end of the piece, is to show how from a G Dorian centred sonority from the original borrowed material, such as the chord presented in b.7, and repurposed in b.57, we can create a atonal harmonic sequence, that leads us into a tonal function, creating a balance between atonality and tonality. This transition between the atonal and the tonal was achieved by leaving common tones and using enharmonic equivalence between the Bb7 chord and the clustered chord preceding it (G# becoming Ab), as well as using contrary motion between both sonorities as a means of reaching target notes of the Bb dominant chord as seen in Fig.76.

Stepping back and looking at how far I have travelled since my initial years as a doctoral student, I can perceive how my search for balance between modality, tonality, and atonality, has been a way of separating myself from the aesthetics of Italian Modernism. At the same time, my way of treating these materials, visualising them as intervallic distances and durations transformed through specific procedures, are still rooted in Donatonian tradition. These procedures now expand upon Donatoni's vision of musical craft, generating new possibilities of transformation and masking through their interaction with elements from tradition such as dominant chords and modes.

The image shows a page of a musical score for 'Siniy II'. The page number '12' is in the top left corner. The score is for measures 62-65. The instruments listed are Fl. 1, 2; Ob. 1, 2; Cl. 1, 2; Bsn. 1, 2; Hn. 1, 2; Tpt. 1, 2; Tbn. 1, 2; and Timp. The dynamic markings are *f*, *p*, and *f*. The score is titled 'Siniy II' and has a page number '12' in the top left corner.

Fig.76 - Bb7 chord at the end of part two (bs.62-65)

As a continuation of the exploration regarding dominant chords, these sonorities continue to be present in this piece, now also as a tool for modulation. Modulation, in the context of masking and modality within this piece, seeks to also make possible the presentation of portions of the borrowed *plenias* through various modal centres. Through this process, we can mask a specific fragment by separating it from its original harmonic contour and provide new spaces of development within a different modal context. This is why, at the beginning of the third section of the piece (bs.66-95) we are immediately presented with a fragment of the masked *Isidora* motif in the initial bars of *Siniy II*, which has now used the previously mentioned Bb7 to modulate to Eb Dorian (Fig.77).

From bs.96-103, we arrive at what I consider to be yet another interpretation of a cinematic static frame. This fourth part of the piece explores the idea of unison for eight full bars and seeks to yet again reduce a general texture to only one sound and explore the diverse

possibilities that instrumental colours have to offer within a single note. This event also invites the listener to explore and find new aural relationships within the confinements of unison. In the case of this static frame, I focus on the note Eb, which in the context of this portion of the piece centres on a pitch presented after the resolution from Bb7 to Eb Dorian, bringing protagonism the sonority, as if being on the tonic for a prolonged period of time (Fig.78).

The image shows a page of a musical score titled "Sinfy II" on page 13. The score is for a symphony and includes parts for various instruments: Flute I & II, Oboe I & II, Clarinet I & II, Bassoon I & II, Horn I & II, Trumpet I & II, Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Vibraphone, Glockenspiel, Cymbals, Violin I & II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score is in 4/4 time and features a restatement of an ascending fifth motif in Eb. The motif is marked "a 2 senza sord." and includes dynamic markings such as ppp, p, f, and pp. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with staves for each instrument.

Fig.77 – Restatement of ascending fifth motif, now in Eb

Siniy II 17

The image shows a page of a musical score for the brass and woodwinds section of a piece titled "Siniy II". The page number is 17. The score is for measures 96-103. The instruments listed are Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Clarinet 1 & 2, Bassoon 1 & 2, Horn 1 & 2, Trumpet 1 & 2, Trombone, and Tuba. The music is in unison. The dynamics are marked as piano (p) and forte (f). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system containing measures 96-100 and the second system containing measures 101-103. The instruments are arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon) are in the upper staves, and the brass (Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba) are in the lower staves. The music is in unison, meaning all instruments play the same notes. The dynamics are marked as piano (p) and forte (f). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system containing measures 96-100 and the second system containing measures 101-103. The instruments are arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon) are in the upper staves, and the brass (Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba) are in the lower staves. The music is in unison, meaning all instruments play the same notes. The dynamics are marked as piano (p) and forte (f). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Fig.78 - Brass and woodwinds section in unison (bs.96-103)

This static frame leads us into fifth part of *Siniy II*, a portion of the piece focused on the gradual apparition of the melodic material presented in bs.5-6 of the original *Isidora* tune. In b.104 we find our previous static frame interrupted by the entrance of the horns with the notes G and Bb, evoking an Eb major sonority which is rapidly changed to minor using chromatic contrary motion in the lower voice (Fig.79). This gives the melodic material a feeling of modal exchange and tonal ambiguity by playing with major and minor sonorities, a gesture which will then be used as a transitioning device to modulate into the melodic contour which will evoke bs.5-6 of *Isidora*, now presented in Db aeolian.

The gradual appearance of the material from *Isidora* begins in b.110 and is also outlined by the horns (Fig.80). This process of unmasking the tune completes itself in b.123, with the melody being doubled in unison and octaves by the bassoons and the violins (Fig.81). The melody is now played a half step down from the original, in Db, and initially presents the

The image shows a page of a musical score for part five, spanning measures 117 to 125. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with staves for Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Clarinet 1 & 2, Bassoon 1 & 2, Horn 1 & 2, Trumpet 1 & 2, Trombone, and Tuba. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex texture of static notes with varying dynamics. A red oval highlights the Horn 1 & 2 part in the fifth measure, which contains a melodic line that is identified as augmented thematic material.

Fig.81 - Appearance of augmented thematic material in part five (bs.117-125)

As motivic material from *Isidora* is slowly eliminated between bs.126-132, the general texture is once again cut by an unexpected second static frame, which is, as before, centred on the note Eb. In contrast to the previous static frame presented in part four (bs.96-103), the texture of this section is not only composed of static notes with varying dynamic levels, but also transformed using different rhythmic patterns within each instrumental group (Fig.82). This reappearance of a past material brings the attention of the listener back to a previous pitch centre, and away from the Db centred sonorities presented in the past section. The main reason for doing this is to provide a new point of reference regarding the reappearance of the Bb7 chord, which will appear further on in b.174. This gives a feeling of tonic to dominant relationship between bs.133-174, that is finalised with the expansion of the materials were previously presented in bs.54-64, which, as before, leads to a Bb7 chord (Fig.83)

The musical score for Siny II, measures 133-140, is presented in a standard orchestral layout. The score is in 4/4 time and features a variety of instruments. The woodwind section includes Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Clarinet 1 & 2, and Bassoon 1 & 2. The brass section includes Horn 1 & 2, Trumpet 1 & 2, Trombone, and Tuba. The percussion section includes Timpani, Vibraphone, Glockenspiel, and Celesta. The string section includes Violin I & II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score is characterized by dynamic markings such as *p*, *f*, *pp*, and *fpp*, and includes performance instructions like "a 2" and "tutti senza sord.".

Fig.82 - Part six - second static frame in Eb (bs.133-140)

28 Siniy II

Fl. 1, 2 175 *take time!*

Ob. 1, 2 *f* *p* *f* *ppp* *take time!*

Cl. 1, 2 *f* *p* *f* *ppp* *take time!*

Bsn. 1, 2 *f* *p* *f* *ppp* *take time!*

Hn. 1, 2 *f* *p* *f* *ppp* *take time!*

Tpt. 1, 2 *f* *p* *f* *ppp* *take time!*

Tbn. *f* *p* *f* *ppp* *take time!*

Tba. *f* *p* *f* *ppp* *take time!*

Fig.83 - Final bars leading to Bb7 in part 8 (bs.171-175)

Apart from being the development of a previously presented idea, part eight (bs.141-174) also makes use of repeat bars. More than simply repeating or stating an idea twice, the repeat bars isolate certain gesture which suddenly change, providing a sensation of abrupt cuts or offset edits between two contrasting materials within a short space of time. Even though the section is only constructed with two contrasting ideas (transposed and fragmented portions of the 9/16 bars as well as the clustered tutti chords), the repeat bars and the alternation between both materials help play with the expectations of the listener, expanding the process by which we once again arrive to the Bb7 chord in b.174.

After the pause at the end of part eight, we are presented with the final apparition of a *tintinnabuli*-like texture in the closing section of *Siniy II*. This section begins with fragments which evoke the intervallic gestures previously presented in the piece, afterwards focusing on the presentation and transformation of the thematic material from *Isidora*'s, in Eb Dorian. The

use of these materials, which can be seen between bs.186-194, are transformed through the removal of certain notes and the augmentation of values. As in the previous *tintinnabuli*-like section, the melody is accompanied by notes from Bb minor, outlined in the upper voice of the celesta and percussion. The presentation of this material completes outline of the entire melodic components found within *Isidora*. (Figs.84,85)

This piece shows how the melodic components within a borrowed tune can be repurposed, reconfigured, and rerouted through various procedures of masking that are linked to techniques of structural construction found within slow cinema. Every section is seen as a long take, which explores a specific melodic contour, augmented in its duration and disrupting its original narrative through a process fragmentation. Within these long takes, or sections, we can find moments which allude to the wide angle or musically speaking, the presentation of a musical space in which components that make up a main idea are amplified through contrapuntal gestures as well as orchestrating through techniques of unison. Unison, or the focusing of a single sound during a specific period of time, was also used as a means of generating moments of stasis, giving the listener an opportunity to focus on one sound derived from the structural relationships developed throughout the piece. All these elements were also complemented by moments offset edits, or cuts, which, like in film, interrupted a specific action and gave way to the possibility of moving to ideas which were afterwards expanded upon. In turn, this mode of working and visualizing borrowed materials gave me the opportunity to synthesize both my Puerto Rican folklore and ideas from other artistic disciplines such as cinema.

Musical score for three instruments: Vibraphone (Vib.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), and Celesta (Cel.). The score covers bars 176 to 185. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is marked *p* (piano). The Vibraphone part features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Glockenspiel part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. The Celesta part has a similar melodic line to the Vibraphone.

Fig.84 - *Siniy II* (bs.176-185)

Musical score for three instruments: Vibraphone (Vib.), Glockenspiel (Glock.), and Celesta (Cel.). The score covers bars 186 to 194, representing the final bars of the piece. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is marked *rall. molto* (rallentando molto). The Vibraphone part features a melodic line with slurs and accents, ending with a fermata. The Glockenspiel part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs, ending with a fermata. The Celesta part has a similar melodic line to the Vibraphone, ending with a fermata. The instruction *l.v. al niente* (loquendo niente) is present at the end of each part.

Fig.85 - Final bars of *Siniy II* (bs.186-194)

Conclusion

With these commentaries, my goal has been to give the reader a broader perspective of my creative journey throughout my three years of doctoral studies. What began in my first year of study as a continuation and mimicking of experiences as a student in Italy, gradually transformed into a discovery of new interests and modes of working. My transition from visualising music in a modernist Italian manner, to regaining interest in reincorporating elements of tradition within my works such as modality, was driven by my search for a personal approach regarding the treatment of borrowed materials within my own music.

This re-engagement with modal sonorities was also complemented by my interaction with other composers of my generation based in the U.K. One of these composers was my own secondary supervisor, Ryan Latimer, whose innovative use of conventional materials, intrigued me greatly and resulted in my re-exploration of modes and dominant chords, as can be seen in chapters two and three. Another musician who influenced me due to his passion for improvisation and collaboration was the Iranian composer Milad Mardakheh. With him, I began to explore improvisation within the context of folk instruments and electronic music, an experience which led to projects such as our EP entitled *Instincts and Archetype* - a collaborative project which explores free improvisation with classical guitar, setar, and electronics.⁶⁸

Currently, my work still focuses, in a way, on ideas such borrowing and masking. Among my ongoing projects is a collaborative work with Puerto Rican writer and photographer Eduardo Lalo and sculptor Edna Román. With Lalo and Román, my artistic journey has taken an unexpected shift, moving from the usual concert halls to museums, our most recent collaborative work being *Rastros* – a multidisciplinary exhibition which explores the decaying

⁶⁸ Mardakheh, Milad K. and John Rivera Pico. *Instincts and Archetypes*. Bandcamp. Released July 23, 2023. Accessed February 9, 2025. <https://mardakhehmusic.bandcamp.com/track/instincts-and-archetypes>.

structure of the *Central Aguirre*, an abandoned sugar mill in the southern region of Puerto Rico.⁶⁹

Within this project I have put into practice various skills and practices acquired during this doctorate through the creation of a piece entitled *Suite Aguirre* – a video installation which documents our perspective of this abandoned sugar mill through photographs, video, field recordings, and live instrumental improvisations.⁷⁰ In *Suite Aguirre*, the idea of masking, improvising, and borrowing have now been applied to sounds both found and performed within the sugar mill itself through field recordings that have been manipulated and incorporated within the video installation. This approach uses the sounds and resonances found within a borrowed space, in this case the *Central Aguirre*, as base musical material. The noise of insects, the creaking of rusty panels, and the echo of the columns holding up the remnants of a structure on the verge of collapse, turn into borrowed voices, harmonies, and rhythms that also enter in dialogue with us.

For the future I wish to continue engaging with the ideas I have developed over the course of the doctorate (i.e. musical borrowing, masking, and modality). Now, to me, contemporary music, and most importantly, my music, is not only a shadow of the works and ideas established by composers of the past, as I once thought, but more so a medium for presenting a fertile ground for creation, allowing for a synthesis of views and perspectives from all artistic mediums within our own individual sound-worlds.

⁶⁹ For the benefit of the reader, I have included a link to the catalogue of this exhibition. While the catalogue is in Spanish, the reader can still appreciate the elements found within the exhibition such as texts, sculptures, and photographs through the images provided.

Rivera Pico, John. E. Lalo, and E. Román. *Rastros*. Catalogue published by Universidad Ana G. Méndez de Gurabo. July 2024. <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/9eqxjsi1pkbaz6e992a77/Rastros-Cat-logo.pdf?rlkey=uwyx9xvxbje2p7fpbjvriywp3&st=xyaw7f1d&dl=0>

⁷⁰ John Rivera Pico and E. Lalo. *Suite Aguirre*. YouTube. Uploaded February 2025 <https://youtu.be/SJ-upXEJ-vo>

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