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The *Joropo* in Venezuela's Musical Modernity: Cultural Capital in José Clemente Laya's *Sonata Venezolana*

Joropo v venezuelski glasbeni moderni:
kulturni kapital v skladbi *Sonata Venezolana*
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IZVLEČEK

Venezuelska Šola nacionalne moderne (*Escuela Nacional Moderna*) iz 30-ih in 40-ih let 20. stoletja je imela ljudski ples *joropo* za polnokrvno sredstvo glasbenega izraza, ki je zahteval pozornost umetniške avtonomije. *Sonata Venezolana* Joséja Clementeja Laye (1946) prikazuje, kako so skladatelji okvir sonatne oblike preoblikovali z glasbeno navzočnostjo *joropa*.

ABSTRACT

The Venezuelan *Escuela Nacional Moderna* (1930s–40s) considered the *joropo* folk dance an inherently rich musical expression that demanded the spotlight of artistic autonomy. José Clemente Laya's *Sonata venezolana* (1946) demonstrates how these composers transformed the framework of sonata form with the *joropo*'s musical presence.

“It was with Aldemaro Romero's *Fuga con Pajarillo* (1990) that the 23-year-old Dudamel sealed his fate as winner of Bamberg's inaugural Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition in 2004.” So declares Berlin-based music critic Shirley Apthorp.¹ Romero's *Fuga con Pajarillo* continues to share in Gustavo Dudamel's visibility, receiving

1 Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, *Fiesta*, conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, recorded at the Centro de Acción Social por la Música, Sala Simón Bolívar, Caracas, 1/2008 (Deutsche Grammophon, 2008, compact disc, liner notes).

broad international exposure on labels such as *Deutsche Grammophon*, in social engines such as youtube, and in the repertoire of non-Venezuelan orchestras. Dudamel's choice of repertoire not only fulfilled the competition's requirement that contestants bring a symphonic work from their own country; it also set the spotlight on the *pajari-llo*, one of the many sub-genres of the *joropo*, a dance widely embraced by Venezuelans as a national symbol.

On first encounter with *Fuga con Pajarillo*, the average listener will be struck by its multidimensional contrapuntal vitality; music aficionados and scholars alike might also identify the ubiquitous *sesquiáltera*—the juxtaposition of triple and duple meters alternating with each other or in a simultaneous interplay. Within this interplay of meters, the rich syncopated discourse, rhythmic counterpoint, and *juegos hemiolados* (hemiolated games) create the “difficult to put together, but beautiful”² musical identity of the *joropo*. It was during the 1930s that this musical identity was partially codified and assimilated into the academic domain by the leaders of the *Escuela Nacional Moderna* (ENM hereon),³ Vicente Emilio Sojo (1887–1974), Juan Bautista Plaza (1898–1965), and José Antonio Calcaño (1900–1978). Indeed, Aldemaro Romero's successful rendition of the *joropo* stems from the groundwork established by several key compositions the ENM produced during the 1930s and 40s. Of these, Juan Bautista Plaza's *Sonatina venezolana* (1934) has received broad attention in various musicological circles, and has been exposed to an international audience through recordings and various editions.⁴ Other compelling works, such as the *Sonata venezolana* (1946) of José Clemente Laya (1913–1981), are recognized in international catalogues,⁵ but have received far less attention from scholars and musicians alike. Both compositions are notable in that they successfully codified musical elements that have become part of the *cultural capital* of Venezuelan composers to this day.

Building on the ideas of cultural theorists Néstor García Canclini and Pierre Bourdieu, I will argue that the ENM heard the *joropo* as an inherently rich form of musical expression, transporting its indisputable presence—not merely harvesting its isolated rhythms or melodies—from the world of song and dance onto the listening stages of the academy and the international field of music. The ENM established an autonomous field of music in Venezuela in part by codifying those musical qualities of the *joropo* they believed were deserving of the aesthetic spotlight.

After a theoretical contextualization of the ENM, I will provide a rhetorical and sonic foundation for a substantial examination of the *joropo*. I will continue by engaging José Antonio Calcaño's public review and analysis of the celebrated *Sonatina venezolana* (1934), composed by his colleague Juan Bautista Plaza. The traits that Calcaño identifies as successful in this work are expanded in the pieces of the early generation of graduates of the ENM, of which José Clemente Laya's *Sonata venezolana* (1946) is

2 Ibid. I am borrowing Dudamel's choice of words.

3 *Escuela Nacional Moderna* (Modern National School) is one of the epithets by which the early twentieth-century composition school in Caracas, led by Vicente Emilio Sojo (1887–1974), has come to be known. Other names include *Escuela Nacionalista Venezolana* and *Escuela de Santa Capilla*. José Peñín and Walter Guido, *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela* (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1998), s.v. “Laya Morales, José Clemente,” and s.v. “Sojo, Vicente Emilio.”

4 See note 33.

5 Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*, fourth edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 594.

a particularly interesting example. I will explore the first movement of Laya's sonata, titled *joropo*, identifying how the impelling traits of the *joropo* absorb the defining aspects of sonata form, the quintessential structure of autonomy in the international field. Finally, conclusive remarks and issues regarding the *joropo* in the field will be posed for future studies.

The *Joropo* and the Foundation of the (Autonomous) Music Field in Venezuela

Scholars have approached the ENM in a variety of ways, producing celebratory studies of its modernizing projects and critical deconstructions of its socio-cultural legacy.⁶ Most recently, building on the theoretical platforms offered by Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Ernest Gellner, Pedro Rafael Aponte argues that the ENM favored the *joropo*, among a rich diversity of regional traditions, as the homogenizing musical icon for Venezuela and, that it promoted the study of European composers and forms and the foundation of choral and symphonic entities, all of which the ENM considered crucial to modern artistic literacy.⁷ Aponte's approach to *invented traditions* demonstrates, among other things, how the Sojo/Plaza/Calcaño triumvirate strived to produce repertoire that audiences and critics would hear as both Venezuelan and aesthetically artful. In short, they were creating the audience, the repertoire, and the codes for hearing Venezuelan music as distinctively Venezuelan and artistically literate.⁸

From a Bourdieuan perspective, the ENM was effectively establishing a Venezuelan *academic field*, that is, the educational and civic spaces where musicians could receive and exhibit sanctioned training. They were also building *cultural capital*—skills, techniques, rhetoric, and codes—that could meet the challenge of being heard as both Venezuelan and autonomously artistic. And they were carving out ambitious social spaces for the reception of their work, seeking *symbolic capital*, the recognition of national and international critics, the embrace of the broadest possible audience, and a place in the international music field. All three “competing principles of legitimacy” of the field, as theorized by Bourdieu, were central to the ENM's project: “the recognition granted by the set of producers who produce for other producers . . . the recognition of the ‘bourgeois taste’ . . . the consecration bestowed by the choice of ordinary consumers”⁹ Indeed, like many other early twentieth-century Latin American ar-

6 On the celebratory side, see the highly regarded studies Marie Elizabeth Labonville, *Juan Bautista Plaza and Musical Nationalism in Venezuela* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007) and Miguel Castillo Didier, *Juan Bautista Plaza: Una vida por la música y por Venezuela* (Caracas: Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones y Estudios Musicales Vicente Emilio Sojo, 1985); important critical studies include José Peñín and Walter Guido, *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela* (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1998), s.v. “Nacionalismo,” José Peñín, “Plaza y el nacionalismo,” *Revista Musical de Venezuela*, no. 38 (1998): 217–256; Fidel Rodríguez Legendre, *Música, Sojo y caudillismo cultural* (Caracas: Fundación Vicente Emilio Sojo, 1998); and the work of Pedro Rafael Aponte, to be cited at length in this article.

7 Pedro Rafael Aponte, “The Invention of the National in Venezuelan Art Music, 1920–1960” (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2008). See especially chapters 4 and 5.

8 Ibid., especially 155–177.

9 Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed,” in *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. by Randal Johnson (Columbia University Press, 1993), 50–51. This compilation of Bourdieu's writings constitutes an excellent summary of his theoretical apparatus, aspects of which I have attempted to encapsulate in the italicized concepts of this section.

tistic projects, the ENM sought both emancipation and democratization, two of the dimensions of modernity theorized by Nestor García Canclini.¹⁰ The *academic* spaces, the symphony orchestra, the concert choir, the search for a Venezuelan musical voice, the assimilation of contemporary international practices as well as the quintessential forms of absolute music—the sonata and the symphony—and not least, the music appreciation programs, all appeared to them as necessary vehicles for the creation of an *autonomous music field*. For Bourdieu, autonomous fields are social spaces that adhere to the *belief* of “art-for-art’s-sake,” and that eschew “functionality” and the approval of the masses. The ENM desired that field of aesthetic autonomy, yet they also wished it to remain populist to the core.

This dynamic, “in its rejection of European domination but its internalization of its civilizing mission” has at times been read as “self-colonization.”¹¹ Yet, in discussing the first phase of Mexican modernism in the visual arts, García Canclini invites us to resist self-colonization readings: “It was not so much the direct-transplanted-influence of the European vanguard that gave rise to the modernizing vein in the visual arts on the continent, but rather *the questions of the Latin Americans themselves* about how to make their international experience compatible with the tasks presented to them by developing societies . . .”¹² In looking at the “permanent conflict” that is the “unifying principle” of the field,¹³ as Bourdieu proposes, what are “the movements of affection and participation in solidary or complicit activities in which hegemonic and subaltern groups are needed,” García Canclini could ask.¹⁴ Indeed, the ENM sought to “occupy a space that is already occupied;”¹⁵ they desired to be part of the international *music field* rather than subvert it, and like all members of the field, they “believed in the game”¹⁶.

In creating an emancipated aesthetic that would help them participate in *the game*—in the international *music field*, what questions did the ENM ask? How do their answers and actions suggest not only the invention of tradition and modernity, but also their hedonic regard for the musics practiced on their surrounding soil, their “affections” and “complicities”? In plain language, how does succumbing to the challenges of the modernization project allow the ENM to indulge in the “difficult but beautiful” intricacies of musics such as the *joropo*? García Canclini invites us to take these questions seriously, to look into the actions that take place beyond the symbolic projections of modernity and tradition, inside the coveted *autonomous field of music* in Venezuela.

10 Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, trans. by Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 12–13. (Originally published as *Culturas híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*, editorial Grijalbo, Mexico, D.F., 1990.)

11 See Aponte, “The Invention of the National in Venezuelan Art Music, 1920–1960,” 25, where he cites Fernando Coronil’s arguments from *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 73.

12 Ibid., 50. Emphasis mine.

13 Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 34.

14 García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 259.

15 Ibid., 75. García Canclini analyzes Jorge Luis Borges’s work, recognizing that “. . . to write, especially in peripheral countries, is to occupy a space that is already occupied.”

16 Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 14.

On the question of “how do we create the national?”

In analyzing the writings of ENM leader Juan Bautista Plaza, along with the reception of his works, Aponte provides evidence of the difficult task these composers faced. On the one hand, their own eclectic inclinations at times confused critics and audiences who were not keen to accept their creations as “Venezuelan” simply on account of the nationality of the composer. On the other, while the ENM leaders were aware of the rich variety of genres cultivated in different regions of Venezuela, neither the critics nor the urban audiences appeared to share that awareness. Interestingly, Plaza finds himself defending his *Siete canciones Venezolanas* (1932, “Seven Venezuelan Songs”) due to the apparent inability of one critic to hear anything “Venezuelan” in them; the critic particularly missed the presence of the *joropo*, which was the most broadly known vernacular genre in the country.¹⁷ Seemingly, the ENM leaders are initially pressed to favor the *joropo* as a possible answer to the question of how to create a “national” musical aesthetic. Aponte convincingly argues this point by discussing three other works by Plaza—including the *Sonatina Venezolana* (1934)—which draws strongly on the *joropo* and which proved to be successful with audiences and critics as “exemplars of Venezuelan music.”¹⁸

Even as they lamented the narrow knowledge of critics and audiences in relation to folk musics, one should not assume the ENM leaders were violating their own affectations in favoring the *joropo*. Calcaño does not spare effusive adjectives when describing the rhythm of *joropo* as “full of grace and exquisiteness,”¹⁹ and Vicente Emilio Sojo, well known for his admiration of vocal polyphony, often alluded (with a tinge of pride) to the polyrhythmic character of the songs and dances of the plains, which he believed to have sprung from the integration of Spanish sacred and secular techniques with the existing musical sensibilities of the laborers in the plains’ ranches.²⁰ The *joropo* claims kinship with the family of the fandango, which was widely spread throughout Latin America since the eighteenth century. Like the fandango, the *joropo* is an umbrella genre that engulfs a rich variety of dance, vocal, and instrumental regional sub-genres, each with formulas of musical and choreographic elements codified among their practitioners. In short, that the *joropo* genre emerged as the most likely candidate to represent an overall Venezuelan aesthetic identity is understandable, given its diffusion, popularity, and appeal across various regions of the country.

The work of art is an *object of belief*²¹ in an autonomous field that must justify its meta-functionalist claim to existence, its “art-for-art’s-sake” motto. But the work of art is also a collectively experience-able, *sonic object*, or, at the very least, the work of art involves such a sonic involvement. This leads us to an interesting crossroad in contempo-

17 Aponte, “The Invention of the National in Venezuelan Art Music, 1920–1960,” 161–162.

18 Ibid., 166.

19 José Antonio Calcaño, “La sonatina venezolana de Juan Bautista Plaza,” *El Nuevo Diario*, Agosto 20, 1934; quoted in Castillo Didier, *Juan Bautista Plaza*, 394.

20 See Vicente Emilio Sojo, “Carta del maestro Sojo al poeta Carlos Augusto León,” *Revista Musical de Venezuela*, no. 21 (1987): 35–36.

21 “The work of art is an object which exists as such only by virtue of the (collective) belief which knows and acknowledges it as a work of art.” Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 35.

rary musicology; even though post-1980s musicology has engaged in uncovering the sociological underpinnings of classical (canonized) repertoires, it has done so relying on the sonic familiarity facilitated by an established system of listening codes. Thus, even as it eschews formalism, the musicology field speaks to a coterie of readers who, whether keen on celebrating or destroying the musical work in question, is ultimately sonically and rhetorically familiar with the work and/or the genres that have been codified by the very formalism it rejects. So it is that in much of their discourse scholars can bypass formalistic analysis altogether. With musical practices that fall far from the international canon and its systemic codes, critical analysis must involve a *written listening*; it must introduce key aspects of the sonic experience at the center of the work of art in question—in this case, the *joropo*.

Listening to the *joropo*

Many varieties of *joropo* continue to thrive in Venezuela to this day. We will explore one of the most broadly known and studied, the *joropo llanero* (“plains *joropo*,” also called “golpe,” and “pasaje,” both of which should be considered sub-categories).²² This *joropo* is associated with the plains regions of both Venezuela and Colombia, and in its most traditional form features the *arpa llanera* (the “plains harp,” a diatonic harp with a varying number of strings), the *cuatro* (a four-string small guitar), and the maracas.²³ Figure 1 is a visual abstraction of the basic rhythmic functions of these instruments.

Harp treble strings $6_{-3} \frac{3}{4}$

Cuatro & Maracas $\frac{6}{8}$

Harp bass strings "bordones" $\frac{3}{4}$

Rhythmic key is *clave de corrido*

Figure 1: Joropo llanero, instruments and their rhythmic functions (with clave de corrido).

22 The seminal study of the *joropo* was undertaken by Luis Felipe Ramón y Rivera, and published in 1953. A second edition is available: Luis Felipe Ramón y Rivera, *El Joropo, Baile Nacional de Venezuela*, 2nd ed. (Caracas, Venezuela: E. Armitano, 1987). More recently, Claudia Calderón Sáenz has produced "Estudio analítico y comparativo sobre la música del joropo, expresión tradicional de Venezuela y Colombia," *Revista Musical de Venezuela*, no. 39 (1999): 219–256. An overview of the genre is offered in José Peñín and Walter Guido, *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela* (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1998), s.v. "Joropo."

23 The plains' harp and the *cuatro* are *criollo* versions of the Baroque harp and vihuela that arrived in Venezuela during colonial times. Musicologist Alberto Calzavara discusses historical documentation of these instruments in chapters seven and eight of his *Historia de la Música en Venezuela* (Caracas: Fundación Pampero, 1987).

Traditionally, the harp is the foundational instrument of the ensemble. The harp's treble strings at times carry a relatively lyrical melody. At others, they provide melodic counterpoint, alternating between 6/8 and 3/4 (as shown at the top of Figure 1), thus producing the ubiquitous *sesquiáltera* characteristic of the *joropo* and other Latin American genres.²⁴ The harp's bass strings—also called *bordones*—ground the music in one of several 3/4 patterns (Figure 1 shows one of the most common), interacting with the harp treble strings to produce a rich array of polyrhythmic encounters, like that shown in the first two measures of Figure 1 where the treble strings are in 6/8 against the 3/4 of the *bordones* (a *vertical sesquiáltera*). The *cuatro* player uses the *rasgueo*, an aggressive strumming technique; by alternating between open-hand strumming and closed-hand strumming, the *cuatrista* adds percussive, accented syncopations (Figure 1 shows one of the most common *rasgueo* patterns). In their most basic function, the maracas support the *cuatro*'s accents, although virtuoso *maraqueros* will greatly elaborate on the basic patterns.

A more involved discussion of the relationship between the *cuatro rasgueo* and the harp's *bordoneo* (here used as a verb) would require the distinction between two important rhythmic *claves* or “keys” in *joropo*: the *clave de corrido* (or *corrio*)—shown in Figure 1, and the *clave de seis*, where the bass strings switch to a “rest-quarter-quarter” pattern and the *cuatro*'s accented *rasgueos* fall on the first and fourth beats. Figure 2 is an abstraction of the *clave de seis*, as codified by *joropo* scholar Claudia Calderón:²⁵

Figure 2: Rhythmic key, *clave de seis*.

The characteristic rhythmic interplay of the *joropo* shown in Figures 1 and 2 represents only the foundational skeleton of what musicians actually perform. Ornamentation, elaboration, meter migrations, and a variety of *juegos hemiolados* (“hemiolated games”) are expected. The rhythmic interplay that ensues from moment to moment in a *joropo* is notable. In performance, the interplay between the treble and bass registers

24 For an in-depth discussion of the *sesquiáltera* see Pedro Van der Lee, “Zarabanda: Esquemas rítmicos de acompañamiento en 6/8,” *Latin American Music Review* 6, no. 2 (1995): 199–220. Although in Mexico and other Latin American countries the term *sesquiáltera* is used interchangeably with *hemiola*, in this article I will use the term *hemiola* for the migration of meters from triple to simple duple (from 3/4 to 2/4, for example), which is conspicuous in what *joropo* scholars call *juegos hemiolados* (hemiolated games).

25 For an in-depth discussion of these claves, see Calderón Sáenz, “Estudio analítico y comparativo,” 219–256. Many informal videos of this basic ensemble and of both claves are found in social engines such as youtube. The reader may look specifically for postings that feature harpist José Gregorio López.

of the harp becomes increasingly contrapuntal; perhaps in a desire to pursue this counterpoint more freely, many contemporary groups feature a bass player, acoustic or electric, freeing the harp to explore the treble line with more intricacy while playing with the *bordones*. This constant variation of horizontal and vertical rhythmic interplay is anchored by codified harmonic progressions that musicians learn by heart (much like the 12-bar-blues in the United States) and that are particular to a specific geographic region. The trajectories of these harmonic progressions vary in length and formal structure, as illustrated in these selected examples from Claudia Calderón's catalogue of nearly twenty patterns:²⁶

Uni-partite patterns:

Seis Corrido: (V-I-IV-V) in major

Pajarillo Golpe de Seis: (V-I-IV-V) in minor

Periquera: (I-I-V7-I-I-I7-I7-IV-IV-IV-II7-V-IV-I-V7-I) in major

Bipartite patterns:

Merecure: A (I-I7-IV-IV-I-V-I) repeated + B (V-V-I-I) four times or more.

Tripartite patterns:

Chipola: (I-IV/V-I-IV/V-I-IV/V-I-IV/V) and coda: (I7-IV-I-V) and modulation to dominant: (V-I/II-V-I/II-V-I/II-V-I/II-V) and coda: (I-V-II-I) and modulation to relative minor: (VI-II/III-VI-II/III-VI-II/III-VI-II/III) and coda: (II-I-III7-VI); da capo.

In performance, a *pajarillo* may begin with a *llamado* ("call"), an introduction that varies in length, which eventually leads into the main harmonic cycle V-I-IV-V. The ensemble then will anchor itself to the harmonic cycle and release a different interplay of rhythmic and melodic counterpoint with each pass of the cycle. That interplay will also be anchored to one of the rhythmic claves delineated in Figures 1 and 2. Although an extended study of the *joropo* in performance is not possible here, I will allude to listening examples, which should be accessible as streaming audio from most libraries in universities around the world. In the album *Sí, soy llanero* (Smithsonian Folkways),²⁷ track 3, the ensemble, Grupo Cimarrón, begins this *pajarillo* with a lyrical call, before engaging a harmonic progression rooted in the *cadencia andaluza* (the well known tetra-sequence of minor-major-major-major triads), which they realize on a *clave the corrido*. The *pajarillo* proper, now in the rhythmic *clave de seis*, starts approximately at 09:24²⁸, and it is at this point we can hear each cycle of V-I-IV-V come to life anew as all the instruments explore the possibilities of the *sesquialtera*, syncopation, *juegos hemiolados*, timbre percussive effects, etc.

The prominent presence of what in functional harmony are called primary chords may invite the moniker of "harmonic simplicity" often bestowed on folk and popular

26 Calderón Sáenz, "Estudio analítico y comparativo," 242–243. The *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela*, s.v. "joropo," lists over fifty patterns, not all of which coincide with the information in Calderón's catalogue.

27 Grupo Cimarrón, *Sí, soy llanero: Joropo Music from the Orinoco Plains of Colombia*, recorded at Audio Producciones Patrick Mildenberg, Bogotá, Colombia. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings SFW CD 40515, 2004, compact disc.

28 The time cue refers to the streaming library versions, which cue the overall length of the album, not each separate track.

musics. Let us resist this description. Beyond the particular ways we may hear the I-V polarity in the *joropo*, harmony is simply not the *impelling* element in this genre. "Harmony" in *joropo* is a relatively stable platform on which rhythmic interplay—indeed, rhythmic counterpoint—stands and becomes the impelling factor. Put in a simpler, if reductive way, in *joropo*, rhythm "uses" pitch and harmony to create action, as opposed to the post-enlightenment interplay where melody and harmony create discourse by resting on relatively stable and repetitive rhythms. One could argue that the economy of harmonic change in *joropo* is crucial; it is what lures the ear toward the dynamic action created by rhythmic counterpoint. The phrase "simple harmonies" is not germane to a fair musical description of the *joropo*, and the ear inclined to listen for harmonic richness and syntax will miss the very voice of the genre.

Thinking of rhythmic interplay in this way allows us one other important consideration: that several types of goal direction are evident in the various sub-genres of the *joropo*.²⁹ An instrumental *pajarillo*, such as the one on track 3 of *Sí, soy llanero*, is very much goal directed, although not based on the principle of melodic or tonal return. *Joropo* listeners have expectations of tension-release related to the interplay between compound duple and triple meters; the interplay must not ground itself for too long on an overall 3/4 pulse; the 6/8 tension against the triple *bordoneo* is used—although not syntactically—to play with the listeners' sense of tension and release. Tension and release are also achieved through what I call *riff counterpoint*, the constant juxtaposition of short, melodic gestures that are rich in rhythmic parlance, and that bounce with and against each other among all the instruments.³⁰ This type of riff counterpoint is particularly evident on track 1 of *Sí, soy llanero*, which bears the same name as the album. In this track, the added voice of the *bandola*—a pear-shaped, small guitar whose strings may be strummed or plucked—provides counter-melodic/rhythmic riffs to the rich texture of the ensemble. The ensemble administers these riffs carefully, at times multiplying them and at times decreasing their number and degree of metrical tension.

In addition to what we could call an *episodic goal direction*, grounded in meter and riff counterpoint, the principle of melodic return may also play a role in some *joropos*. Often, the codified patterns shown above are actually turned into full da capo forms, where musicians use the principle of return—in melody and tonal area—to recapitulate an initial section, but often with a more intensified riff counterpoint. In performance, for example, a *pajarillo corrido* can be goal directed in terms of the return of the opening melody of the vocal line, and, in terms of a heightening of the intensity of contrapuntal texture and percussive effects that accompany the melodic return; both can be heard in track 1 of *Sí, soy llanero*. This is particularly evident when the vocal element is present and a melodic, directional element is therefore in play. In a different variety of the genre—the Eastern Venezuelan *joropo* termed "*joropo* with refrain"—an ABAB alternation is evident, one that nevertheless grows in improvisatory intensity

29 A theorization of alternative ways of hearing goal direction (or *recombinant teleologies*) that has invigorated my own thinking on the matter is Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

30 For a more detailed exploration and application of the concept of riff counterpoint, see Ludim Rebeca Pedroza, "Merengue Meets the Symphony Orchestra: Interrogating *Music as One* and the *Terrific* Musical Experience at the Hollywood Bowl," *American Music* 32, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 317–352.

with each repetition. Angular and syncopated vocal melodies also take on a directional and quasi-syntactic character in the Eastern *zoropo* with refrain.³¹

The distinctiveness of the sonic experience of *zoropo* resides in the various kinds of goal direction it presents, most of which are rhythmically, metrically, and texturally impelling, rather than harmonically directional.³² In describing such alternative species of goal direction, I have chosen to use the term *impelling* rather than *syntactic* or *discursive*, particularly to emphasize dynamics of tension and release that are not rooted in any analogy to communicative rhetoric or syntax. This constitutes a conceptual invitation to re-code listening rather than a rejection of directed listening. One could even argue that it is through the focused listening of this impelling distinctiveness that key repertoires of the *Escuela Nacional Moderna* were negotiated effectively. This proposition can be examined more closely through the writings of one of the leaders of the ENM, José Antonio Calcaño.

Listening to the *zoropo* in Plaza's *Sonatina venezolana* (1934)

Juan Bautista Plaza's *Sonatina venezolana* (1934)³³ is entrenched in the musico-logy of Venezuela as one of the early, seminal successes in the domain of composition of the ENM. Calcaño explained the particulars of this success in an article-review published in the *Nuevo Diario* on August 20, 1934.³⁴ In addition to providing insight into the listening sensibilities of Calcaño, the review is also significant in that it represents an early scholarly hearing of the *zoropo*, several years before the first ethnomusicological study of the genre (1953).³⁵ It is reductive of the genre as a whole, yet indicative of Calcaño's careful consideration of a *zoropo* as sonic experience.

Calcaño begins by alluding to Plaza's harmonic treatment, deeming it conservative, because the "tonal principles" governing the musical form (binary) and the absence of "harmonic originality in our folklore" so justify it.³⁶ I read his choice of words—an absence of harmonic *originality*—not as a diatribe but as recognition that harmony is not what we listen for in this music. Calcaño quickly moves on to the musical elements that have caught his attention, melody and rhythm in particular. He praises Plaza for capturing the "intermittent" character of *zoropo* melodies, "which is perfectly in tune

31 Listen to track 11 "Zoropo Cruz Acu a" in *¡Que Viva Venezuela! Maestros del Zoropo Oriental* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2009).

32 See Robert Fink, "Goal-Directed Soul? Analyzing Rhythmic Teleology in African American Popular Music," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 179–238. Fink argues against the "antiteleological" analytical segregation imposed on many popular musics, and against scholars who have conceded "the entire domain of musical structure to the defenders of high art . . ." As he argues for a number of dance-based genres, I would argue that the *zoropo* does not reside in a non-descript state of *jouissance*, and does not resist analytical discourse.

33 The *sonatina* can be found in the international collection *Latin American Art Music for the Piano by Twelve Contemporary Composers* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1942). A recording by Arturo Nieto-Dorantes can be found in iTunes; recordings by Beatriz Balzi and Raquel Boldorini can be found in Juan Bautista Plaza's channel in youtube.

34 Most of the text of the review is published in Castillo Didier, *Juan Bautista Plaza*, 392–397. Other analyses of this review are found in Aponte, "The Invention of the National in Venezuelan Art Music, 1920–1960," 172–177, and in Peñín, "Plaza y el nacionalismo," 251–253.

35 See note 22.

36 As quoted in Castillo Didier, *Juan Bautista Plaza*, 393.

with the spirit of our popular dance music, given that in 'golpes' and 'pasajes' the melody almost disappears at times in an arpeggio or in a purely rhythmic fragment . . ."³⁷ In describing the "intermittent" character of *joropo* melodies, Calcaño has pointed to the element I have called riff counterpoint. He is clearly not disappointed to find an absence of lyrical, directional, syntactic melodies.

Calcaño's most exuberant language is reserved for the rhythmic aspect. "The richness of its rhythm is admirable, precisely as it comes to such a short composition; more than ten rhythmic formulas appear early on, of pure Venezuelan strain, applied with admirable cohesion and spontaneity."³⁸ He offers musical examples of these rhythmic cells—reproduced in Example 1 below—which point precisely to the conspicuous games of *sesquiáltera* central to the *joropo*.

Example 1: "Rhythmic Formulas" in Juan Bautista Plaza's *Sonatina venezolana* (1934), as rendered by Miguel Castillo Didier.³⁹

"It is in the rhythm where the expressive weight of this composition resides; it is the rhythm, which infuses that tireless and fluid vitality, that ultra-varied jocundity, that excitement, full of grace and exquisiteness."⁴⁰ Calcaño's affective exegesis embraces "rhythmic richness" with a zest comparable to the one implied in centuries of analyses of harmonic complexity in other repertoires. He continues: "The musical environment, which Debussy obtained principally through the harmonic element, is in this work

37 Ibid., 394. "Podiera decirse que la melodía es intermitente en la pieza, lo cual está perfectamente de acuerdo con el espíritu de nuestra música popular bailable, ya que en los 'golpes' y 'pasajes' la melodía casi desaparece a ratos en un arpeggio o en un simple trozo puramente rítmico."

38 Ibid., 394. "La riqueza de su ritmo es admirable, como que tratándose de una composición tan corta, aparecen en la primera más de diez fórmulas rítmicas, de pura cepa venezolana, aplicadas con una justeza y una espontaneidad admirable."

39 Ibid. In an email communication dated December 3, 2015, professor Castillo Didier granted his permission for the reproduction of the example, and informed me that he extracted it from a printed version of Calcaño's review he in turn obtained from Plaza's widow, Nolita de Plaza.

40 Ibid., 394-5. "Es en ese ritmo donde se concentra la carga expresiva de esta composición; es él quien le insufla esa vitalidad incansable y fluida, esa jocundidad variadísima, esa agitación llena de gracia y exquisitez."

achieved with rhythm, an always precise and defined rhythm.”⁴¹ The comparison to Debussy’s accomplishments may be read as a nod to the European literate vanguard and thus as part of the symbolic enactment where self-colonialism impersonates the “civilizing project” of modernity. It is well known, after all, that Debussy was admired in the circles of the ENM.⁴² Nevertheless, Calcaño is a scholar who sees himself carving out a space for aesthetic autonomy, and under this light, the nod to Debussy is meaningful in that he recognizes in Debussy’s “musical environment” a novel way of making music impelling, something Plaza has achieved by capitalizing on the distinct features of the *zoropo*.

In summary, the question of “how to create the national” involved, in its complicity with the nation-building project, the affective, hedonic practice of *reflective listening* in relation to vernacular musics and doing so with unprecedented attention and gusto. In this context, *reflective listening* is my conceptual alternative to the conventional score-centered analysis, as it involves not exclusively the analysis of a score, but the focused listening of musics that are conventionally rendered in aural environments—as the *zoropo* still is. Even when these musics migrate to the academic domain, “score-analysis” still demands *reflective listening*, because performers recognize the *zoropo* when they are learning the music. In the next section, my own reflective listening of Laya’s *Sonata venezolana* will take the form of a narrative from the perspective of a pianist raised in academic environments—both in Venezuela and the U.S.—where sonata form is heavily codified. But I was also raised listening to *zoropos* in the schoolyard, at friends’ ranches, and not least of all, in the concert hall. Mine is thus the reflective listening of an agent negotiating multiple capitals.

Musical Capital in José Clemente Laya’s *Sonata Venezolana* (1946)

In the academic space carved out by the ENM, musicians invited critics and the public to listen to the elements of the *zoropo* that they experienced as distinctive and loaded with musical capital, that is, with the potential to be musical materials of impelling force on the listening stage. A little over a decade after Plaza’s *Sonatina venezolana* helped establish the *zoropo* in the academic environment, a student of Sojo and one of the early-generation graduates of the ENM, José Clemente Laya, produced his *Sonata venezolana* (1946).⁴³ Its first movement, titled simply *zoropo*, can be heard as an example of the newly created musical capital.

Laya’s oeuvre indicates that, like his fellow graduates, he was systematically trained in the rudiments of the motet, the suite, the fugue, and the sonata, among other

41 Ibid., 394–5. “El ambiente musical de la obra, que Debussy obtenía principalmente con el elemento armónico, está aquí logrado con el ritmo, ritmo siempre preciso y bien definido.”

42 José Clemente Laya states: “As disciples of maestro Sojo, our formation began under the auspices of Mozart, with our eyes turned toward Debussy as the supreme objective.” As cited in *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela*, s.v. “Laya Morales, José Clemente.”

43 José Clemente Laya, *Sonata Venezolana para Piano* (Caracas, Venezuela: Fundación Vicente Emilio Sojo, 1991).

standard Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, and Romantic forms.⁴⁴ His *Sonata venezolana* (1946) features three movements: *Joropo* (Allegro) in sonata form, *Canción* (Adagio) in ternary form, and *Bolera* (Allegretto), a rondo. As Example 2 shows, his *joropo* begins with the expected call, where the *bordoneo* bass pattern is clearly present in the left hand, and the accents on beats one and three are “felt” in the pitch-register drop from E to B.

Allegro ♩ = 200

Harp bass “bordoneo” (3/4)

Example 2: José Clemente Laya, *Sonata venezolana* (1946), movement I (*joropo*), mm. 1–4.⁴⁵

As Example 3 shows, after this four-measure call, the long held note in the upper voice of m. 5 signals the emergence of a lyrical, directional melody, which soon enough acquires the angular and syncopated semblance of some *joropo* melodies (particularly the Eastern varieties). Yet, the pianistic language is contrapuntal, with other melodic fragments present and constantly traveling between three and four voices. Laya hints at the *cuatro*’s percussive closed strumming (labeled on m. 5) through the dissonant minor seconds, which roughly coincide with the rhythmic *clave de corrido* shown in Figure 1. Above all, the relentless, motoric activity at the suggested tempo poses a veritable challenge to the performer, who experiences the contrapuntal juggling of the entire ensemble in one body. Example 3 brings attention to the “home key”⁴⁶ of the movement, E major, and shows a relatively continuous slice of the exposition, which I will now discuss.

⁴⁴ For example, Laya’s works include, among others, the orchestral *Suite venezolana* (1947), the chamber *Fuga para cuarteto de cuerdas* (1947), the *Suite al estilo barroco, sobre tema propuesto por Vicente Emilio Sojo* (1946), and the *Sonatina para Rosita* (1946). For a complete catalogue see Peñín and Guido, *Enciclopedia de la música en Venezuela*, s.v. “Laya Morales, José Clemente.”

⁴⁵ Musical content and expression marks in all Laya examples are based on the 1991 edition published by Fundación Vicente Emilio Sojo in Caracas (cited in note 43); engraving and publication in this essay were undertaken with permission from the same institution.

⁴⁶ I am using the terminology codified in William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1998).

"Home Key:" E Major

5

Vocalist

Cuatro

Upper melody in syncopated 6/8

mf

Counter-riffs in 3/4

Counter-riff in 6/8

Harp bass "bordoneo" in 3/4

9

2

cuatro open strings mot "cambur pintón"

14

2 2 2 3

E Major point and 3/4 as "rhythmic tonic"

19

2 2 2 3

E Major point & 3/4 "rhythmic tonic"

Example 3: José Clemente Laya, *Sonata venezolana* (1946), movement I (joropo), mm. 5–23.

A musician raised in Venezuela will recognize the open strings of the *cuatro* in the left hand gesture found in measure 13. In the most common, reentrant tuning

of the instrument, these pitches are A3, D4, F-sharp4, and B3.⁴⁷ School children are taught to sing these four notes to the words *cambur pintón* (“ripening banana”), as rendered in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Common tuning in the cuatro with mnemonic syllabication.

Playing the passage that begins in measure 5 provokes additional aural reminiscences. The floating melody in the upper voice launches itself on a sustained D-sharp, which to my ears recalls the long sustained pitch with which vocalists begin some *joropos*.⁴⁸ The sustained D-sharp releases itself into a syncopated melody in m. 6, which then spins itself off by alternating between ascending riffs, sustained pitches, and syncopated and hemiolated bits (mm. 13 and 14). Supporting this upper melody is the bass line, which emphasizes the first and third beats by drawing the ears (and fingers) to the lower register (mm. 5 and 7). In subsequent measures, this bass line impersonates the rich *bordoneo* characteristic of virtuoso harpists (or bass players) in *joropo*, who far from repeating the same two or three-note riff, elaborate upon it. The pianist must also negotiate several counter-riffs that compete in interest with the upper-voice melody, a contrapuntal practice notable in Eastern *joropos*, where the harp treble *counterpoints* with the vocalist.⁴⁹ The riff counterpoint is further enhanced through the *sesquialtera* games of tension-release evident from measure to measure; for example, the juxtaposition of the 3/4 and 6/8 gestures in mm. 6 and 7 comes to a brief release in the solitary ascending gesture of measure 8. This ascending gesture continues to play a releasing role in its alternation with subsequent *sesquialtera* sonorities in measures 9 and 11.

Having identified the fundamental *joropo* elements that populate the pitch and rhythm fabric, one will begin to ponder the larger structural patterns that frame this fabric. Although sonorities that invite the hands and ears to identify with a functional “home key” are present (as in mm. 12–13, 15–16, 22–23, in Example 3), clear leading-tone motions to that key (E) are notably absent. Yet, pivotal arrivals at E major sonorities are immediately preceded by conspicuous *juegos hemiolados*, as indicated in measures 13–16, and 21–23 (Example 3). In a way, Laya is establishing the on-beat 3/4 *bordoneo* as a “rhythmic tonic,”⁵⁰ using the preceding *hemiola* duple groupings

47 On the history of the *cuatro* and its tuning, see Calzavara, *Historia de la Música en Venezuela*, chapter 8; and Luis Felipe Ramón y Rivera, “Sobre el origen hispano de nuestro cuatro,” *Revista Musical de Venezuela*, no. 4 (1981): 38–51.

48 Listen to track 1 of *Sí, soy llanero* (cited in note 27). This long, opening sustained pitch is often found in the *estilo recio* (hard style) of the plains region; the melody, however, afterwards, acquires a more active and lyrical profile, such as that often found in the Eastern regions of Venezuela (the *joropo oriental*). Indeed, the melodies of plains’ *joropo* tend to be made up of short riffs that facilitate poetic improvisation and virtuoso improvisation. Laya’s melody appears to be a compound melody of various *joropo* styles.

49 For example, listen to track 14, “Golpe de Arpa y Estrillito” in *¡Y Que Viva Venezuela!*

50 See Fink’s proposition regarding *tonic rhythm* in his “Goal-Directed Soul?,” 199.

as rhythmic cadential gestures. This practice continues in the ensuing measures (not shown in Example 3).

In measure 27, we encounter an F-sharp major ninth chord that anticipates the expected modulation to the dominant in a sonata form. This “subordinate key,” B major, arrives unequivocally in m. 44, with an indication of *cantabile*, an unmistakable reference to the change in character expected in late-classical and early romantic subordinate themes. As shown in Example 4, this theme maintains a counterpoint between the left hand and right hand, but presents more constant patterns of syncopation and angular melodies that provide it with a distinctive identity. Most notably, the first four measures of this *cantabile* (mm. 44–47) are heavily grounded on a 6/8 pulse, which this time is anticipated in the cadential figures of mm. 40 to 43, suggesting not only a modulation to the dominant B but also to the 6/8 meter. Indeed, 6/8 pervades the entire *cantabile*, and the 3/4 *bordoneos* thus become the stuff of tension.

39

f Cadential preparation

44

cantabile

p

3/4 emphasis as tension

"Subordinate key:" B Major/Metric emphasis shift to 6/8

Example 4: José Clemente Laya, *Sonata venezolana* (1946), movement I (joropo), *cantabile* theme in B major begins in m. 44.

A double bar and repeat signs point to the first 75 measures as the exposition of a sonata form. As shown in Example 5, measure 76 leads us into the development, which builds on the distinctive *cambur pintón* motif, now in B major, treated canonically and sequentially.

Example 5: José Clemente Laya, *Sonata venezolana* (1946), movement I (joropo), beginning of the development.

These sequences continue for 25 measures before arriving at a concerto-like cadenza, evoking romantic piano practice. The cadenza takes us back to the opening call in a clear recapitulation; nevertheless, the return of the four-measure opening call and the pitch-by-pitch recapitulation of the music shown in Example 3, all happen in the key of A major rather than the tonic E. As Example 6 shows, the A major area smoothly takes us to its own dominant, E major, the overall tonic, in the voice of the *cantabile* theme. This type of return-emphasis is similar to the ones found in some balanced binary forms of the keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti. (This is precisely the comparison Calcaño makes in reviewing Plaza's 1934 *Sonatina venezolana*, a comparison that, for Aponte, reflects Calcaño's desire to ground the *sonatina* in the neoclassical movement of the twentieth century, and ultimately, in an overall narrative of Western music history.)⁵¹

Example 6: José Clemente Laya, *Sonata venezolana* (1946), movement I (joropo), recapitulation of cantabile theme.

As Example 7 demonstrates, Laya closes the movement with the same riffs that closed the exposition. These riffs only obliquely drive the leading tone toward the tonic; rather, they tip-toe on pitches of the dominant, ultimately leading to a closing third-less E vertical structure elaborated by an F-sharp appoggiatura.

51 Aponte, "The Invention of the National in Venezuelan Art Music, 1920–1960," 176.

Example 7: José Clemente Laya, *Sonata venezolana* (1946), movement I (joropo), end of the movement, mm. 187–189.

I will end this reflective listening by summarizing some of the ways in which Laya's *joropo* negotiates the codes and techniques of the international music field. First, Laya's tonal fabric springs from the ubiquitous melodic pattern that announces itself in m. 13: the *cambur pintón* motif from the *cuatro*'s open strings. Revisiting the call of the movement shown in Example 2, it is notable that the pitch relations from the onset are rooted in the intervallic relations of this motif. Moreover, the *bordoneo* descending figure reaffirms the quartal identity of the *cambur pintón* motif. The major-7th chord that inaugurates the primary-key theme in m. 5—as well as numerous “tall” chords throughout the movement—could be heard as directly inspired by the impressionistic language so admired in the early nationalist circles of Venezuela. Or, they could simply echo the conspicuous major-second sonorities that are suggested by the tuning of the *cuatro*. Likewise, the preponderance of angular melodies and the importance of the open fourth and fifth intervals square well with the initial call and the intervallic identity of *cambur pintón*. All in all, Laya is composing “with the tones of a motif,” to borrow Schoenberg's words, grounding the musical fabric in a cohesive pitch relationality borne by the bass *bordoneo* and the *cuatro*.

Second, in his use of sonata form, it is notable that Laya chooses to recapitulate the opening theme in the subdominant, a tonal center that elevates the gesture of the initial rising fourth of the *cambur pintón*. This choice aligns with the quartal-intervallic universe Laya has created, one that I have attempted to visually represent in Figure 4. This visual conceptualization encapsulates my hearing of the E, not as a mono-linear tonic, but as a pivot pitch between B and A that relates to the three main areas of the sonata form in quartal relationships, which in turn harken to both the *cambur pintón* and the *bordoneos* of the bass harp strings.

This should not suggest that goal direction plays a weak role in the movement. The recapitulation in A rather than E does not debilitate the sense of return, nor does it clash with the goal-directed sensibilities of the *joropo* itself, in which the principle of return is not foreign. Rather, the return in the subdominant emphasizes “homeness”—a sense of arrival—through intervallic relationships rather than through a single pitch “tonic.”

Third, Laya dispenses with the gradual intensification of riff counterpoint and *juegos hemiolados*, as is customary in popular *joropos*; instead, he uses these elements as

Figure 4: Quartal relationships in the sonata framework of Laya's joropo.

impelling devices of tension/release, not only from measure to measure, but in the cadential motions toward, and as markers of identity for each of the sonata-form themes. Finally, Laya's appeal to virtuosity—arguably a requirement of the international music field at the turn of the century—seems to spring from the distinctiveness of the *joropo* as well. Under the pianist's fingers, the visceral, motoric energy of the *joropo* comes to life and the rhythmic counterpoint is pervasive, enveloping the performer in the “jocundity” of the genre. The technical challenge is augmented by the juxtaposition of a fully directional melody with the *intermittent* counterpoint of the inner voices and the *bordoneo*.

In this article I have shown how the pitch fabric, the sonata form, and other elements commonly associated with the autonomous field of music, are absorbed and transformed by the *joropo*'s presence. Indeed, it would be difficult to argue that Laya harvested the *joropo* in order to insert isolated melodies or rhythms into the thematic framework of the sonata form. That Laya, like many of his colleagues and teachers with other works, chose to call this a *Venezuelan sonata* (*sonata venezolana*) and the movement squarely by the name of the dance rather than the more abstract “allegro,” is perhaps telling of the particular beliefs invested on these sonic objects. This brings us full circle to our initial inquiry: In the creation of an emancipated aesthetic, what questions did the ENM ask? If one of these was “how do we create the national,” another was “how do we concurrently create the modern-artistic.” One answer may be said to have been Calcaño's concept of *stylization*, which also provides fodder for a closing platform that may facilitate future study of the music field in Venezuela.

The *Joropo* in the Music Field: Stylization, Elevation, and Multiple Capitals

*"What is truly astonishing is the achievement of an elevated stylization with our very own musical elements, given that these elements present us with difficulties that initially appear insurmountable, as one presumes to handle them in superior spheres without muddling their character. This is something we, Venezuelan composers, have been striving toward for years, and are only now reaching; in past works we were able to stylize insufficiently, so much so that those works barely deserved to be considered the individual work of a creative artist, given that we could almost confuse them with pieces of pure popular strain."*⁵²

Calcaño's praise for Plaza's 1934 *Sonatina venezolana* employs rhetoric that may invite readings of self-colonialism. Indeed, today, the term *elevation* conjures imperialist baggage, particularly the idea of "simple" vernacular musics being elaborated with the academy's tools of "complexity." A Bourdieuan perspective invites us to resist this direct projection of the fields of power and class struggle onto the autonomous field. On the one hand, acknowledging that Calcaño's rhetoric (and that of his colleagues) contains a degree of condescension toward popular musics should not obfuscate the implications of the very concerns he is expressing: The "originality" and "artistry," i.e. the coveted *stylization* associated with the "superior" sphere of autonomy cannot be achieved at the expense of a "muddling" of the character of popular musics. Plaza speaks in similar terms, when alluding to composers running the risk of destroying "the intimate vitality" of the "popular arts."⁵³ As I have argued, Calcaño's reflective listening of Plaza's *Sonatina venezolana* more than suggests a deep respect and affection for the inherent qualities of the *joropo* in its own social environment. To put it simply, the ENM chose the *joropo* not because they read potential complexity in its simplicity, but quite the contrary, because they read it as inherently complex, rich, and exuberant. All in all, in the *universe of belief* of the ENM, we could read the nascent (Venezuelan) autonomous musical work as a conceptual technology—a carving tool to be used with care—and the superior sphere as a platform of display—the earned spotlight of autonomy—for the artist and his/her affections.

On the other hand, the autonomous field is a social arena, even as it operates according to its own logic. In Venezuela—as in other Latin American countries—the music field was not forged entirely by wealthy artists in opposition to a popular artisanal

52 Quoted in Castillo Didier, *Juan Bautista Plaza*, 392–93. Translation and emphasis mine. "Pero lo que sí raya en lo asombroso es haber logrado esa elevada estilización con nuestros elementos musicales propios; pues estos ofrecen dificultades a primera vista insalvables, cuando se pretende manejarlos dentro de esferas superiores, sin que pierdan nada de su carácter. Eso lo venimos buscando los compositores venezolanos desde hace años, y solo ahora es cuando se empieza a lograr; pues en las obras anteriores a esta que nos ocupa solo se había podido estilizar en un grado insuficiente, tanto que apenas merecían esas obras ser consideradas como obra individual de un artista creador, pues casi se confundían con las obras netamente populares."

53 Juan Bautista Plaza, "Apuntes sobre estética Musical Venezolana," *Revista Literaria* no. 35 (Cubagua: Caracas, 1939): 10–12; quoted in Peñín, "Plaza y el nacionalismo," 229.

field; it was claimed and built largely by musician-artisans, who had themselves been forged in the “sub-fields” of the church, the dance floor, and the civic band, among many others. Indeed, the old, wealthy *mantuano* class cultivated music only as a diversion and did not consider its professional pursuit appropriate to its rank. The acknowledged leader of the ENM, Vicente Emilio Sojo, was born in this artisanal circle, in a family of limited means whose mixed-race background has been explored by musicologists.⁵⁴ Sojo's training in his hometown of Guatire took place with Regulo Rico, church composer, member of the *Unión Filarmónica* (which cultivated a variety of choral and orchestral repertoires), *estudiantina* and band director, performer in *fiestas* and *serenatas*, in short, a musician versed in popular music genres and Mozart and Beethoven alike—a musician of multiple musical capitals.⁵⁵

In the context of this artisanal music field, Calcan`o's historicism—which was only touched upon in this article—also provokes interesting questions; Calcan`o is indeed constructing a continuity between the ENM's output, the *joropo*, and the Scarlattian school of clavecinists, perhaps in an effort to highlight Venezuelan “tradition” as a protagonist in the grand historical narrative of the international field.⁵⁶ Post Calcan`o musicologists such as Alberto Calzavara and Mario Milanca Guzmán, however, consider this a socially grounded continuity, not merely a historicist construction. Their research has brought to light the documented reality that since colonial times, native-Venezuelans, slaves, mulattos, “poor whites”—in short, members of the artisanal class—have been the recipients of European-based musical training (particularly counterpoint) in the harp, the vihuela, and the organ.⁵⁷ The work of these scholars suggests that it was in the very bodies of these musicians—as opposed to in an abstract interchange between fields—where that training mutated with the Afro-Venezuelan and Native-Venezuelan practices that were also theirs. In short, these artisanal musicians accumulated a multiplicity of musical capitals while navigating the difficult socio-political arenas imposed on them.

The ENM's first generation of graduates was populated by many musicians who were versed in the artisanal field of music making, and who claimed their autonomous space by engaging in a reflective listening of the myriad musical manifestations they themselves practiced. They explored the *joropo* and other vernacular musics with the conceptual technologies of absolute music: the sonata, the symphony, the suite, the fugue. Theirs was a nationalism of immense eclecticism.⁵⁸ As they gained exposure to the international field of music, they expanded their objects of musical affection and cautioned themselves against an “excessive cult to folklore”⁵⁹. To this day, the music field in Venezuela does not define itself in opposition to the popular field; rather, it is generously populated by artists who move comfortably between the spaces of academic and popular musics, and who invest heavily in both (Aldemaro Romero being an

54 See in particular Guido Acuña, *Maestro Sojo* (Caracas: Editorial Arte, 1985), 55–66.

55 José Peñín, “Regulo Rico, Maestro de Sojo,” *Revista Musical de Venezuela*, no. 38 (1998): 40–44.

56 See Aponte's argument in relation to this in his “The Invention of the National in Venezuelan Art Music, 1920–1960,” 155–177.

57 Calzavara, *Historia de la Música en Venezuela*, 59–60; Mario Milanca Guzmán, *La música venezolana: de la colonia a la república* (Caracas: Monte Ávila Latinoamericana, 1994), 119 and especially the section titled “Los pardos en la música colonial venezolana.”

58 For a discussion of the background musicianship and the overall tendencies in the compositions of the ENM's early graduates—many of which were decidedly non-nationalist—see Aponte, “The Invention of the National,” 178–206.

59 Peñín, “Plaza y el nacionalismo,” 246.

example). This is an autonomous field carved out of complex affections and complications with multiple capitals that reside in the singular body of each musician. As much in its repertoire as in its difficult past and present dynamics, it poses compelling challenges for future studies of music as emancipated aesthetic.

POVZETEK

Joropo, ples, ki ga ima večina Venezuelcev za svoj nacionalni simbol, se je mednarodni javnosti predstavil zlasti z deli Aledamara Romera in s posredništvom dirigenta Gustava Dudamela. Romerove, a tudi druge akademske predelave *joropa* temeljijo na estetskih predlogah, ki so jih uveljavile ključne skladbe Šole nacionalne moderne (ENM) v 30-ih in 40-ih letih minulega stoletja v Venezueli. Ena izmed njih, *Sonatina venezolana* Juana Bautista Plaze (1934), je v muzikoloških krogih naletela na veliko posluha in dosegla tudi mednarodno občinstvo s pomočjo posnetkov in različnih izdaj. Druga dela, kot denimo *Sonata Venezolana* Josėja Clementeja Laye (1946), pa so sicer navedena v mednarodnih katalogih. V dialogu s kulturnima teoretikoma, Néstorjem Garcío Canclinijem in Pierrom Bourdieujem, članek argumentira, da je ENM *joropo* prepoznal kot po sebi bogat glasbeni izraz in prenesel njegovo glasbeno navzočnost – ne zgolj s tem, da bi odbral posamezne ritme in melodije – iz sveta ljudske pesmi in plesa v glasbene dvorane akademskega sveta in na odre mednarodne klasične glasbe. V teoretskem smislu je šola ENM ustanovila samostojno področje glasbe v Venezueli, delno prav s kodifikacijo glasbenih prvin *joropa*, za katere so njeni predstavniki menili, da zahtevajo pozornost umetniške avtonomije. Začetna kontekstualizacija v članku se osredini na simbolno projekcijo nacionalizma in modernosti v ENM-jevem temelju, a hkrati razkriva »afekcije« in »razloge«, ki so vodile do tega, da si je ENM izbral

prav *joropo* za središče svoje glasbene estetike. Zavoljo zvočne in retorične osnove srednji del raziskuje t. i. *joropo llanero* (»nižinski joropo«); njegove tradicionalne instrumente, in sicer *cuatro* in harfo, *sesquialtero* – sopostavitev dvojnih in trojnih taktov –, *refrenski kontrapunkt*, *juegos hemiolados* (igre hemiol) in vrsto ciljnih usmerjenosti, ki so značilne za žanr. Ta odsek pojasnjuje, zakaj je ENM določene značilnosti *joropa* slišal kot *glasbeni kapital*, torej kot elemente *poganjajoče* jasnosti, ki bi lahko bili dejavniki v osnovanju emancipirane estetike. Javna ocena in analiza, ki jo je za slavno *Sonatino venezolano* (1934) skladatelja Juana Bautista Plaze zapisal José Antonio Calcaño, prikazuje mnoge značilne elemente.

Zaključni del raziskuje nekoliko manj znan *joropo* Josėja Clementeja Laye, enega od učencev ENM-ja iz 40-ih let 20. stoletja. Prvi stavek Layeve *Sonate venezolane* – sonatne oblike – pretkano združuje kode in tehnike mednarodne klasične glasbe s tistimi, ki so značilne za *joropo*. Najprej zvoneča struktura stavka izide iz četvernih razmerij, ki so značilne za uglašenost *cuatra* (A3, D4, Fis4 in B3). Nato Laya izbere ponovitev glavne teme v subdominanti, tonalnem centru, ki privzdigne gesto začetnega dviga kvarte v uglašenosti *cuatra*. Naposled Laya učinkovito osnuje tekmujoče 3/4 in 6/8 takte kot polarne elemente, ki spremljajo teme na toniki in dominantni. Pod črto lahko rečemo, da Laya ponazarja, kako so ti skladatelji preoblikovali okvir mednarodnih glasbenih sredstev za doseganje avtonomije – zlasti sonatne oblike – s karakterističnimi elementi *joropa*.

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