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LISTENING FOR MODERN LATIN AMERICA:

IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION IN CONCERT MUSIC, 1920–1940

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Abstract

This dissertation proposes a variety of analytical lenses for considering concert music from Brazilian and Mexican composers during the years 1920–1940. In this period, Latin American concert music was part of a broad cultural and aesthetic project, one in which different voices vied to shape the artistic directions of the region. I discuss landmark compositions of the period from composers Carlos Chávez, Luciano Gallet, Francisco Mignone, Silvestre Revueltas, José Rolón, and Heitor Villa-Lobos, examining how these musical works conveyed multiple meanings to different audiences in national and international settings. Over the course of the four chapters of the dissertation, I address analytical questions relating to ambivalence, popular music, use of text, and non-nationalist composition, also known as *música universal* ("universal music"). In addition, I place these analyses in dialogue with prior studies in the field, demonstrating how these contextualized analytical approaches can provide alternative modes of understanding works that are all too often reduced to their nationalist signifiers, such as folk tunes or vernacular rhythms. Through historical contextualization and close readings of musical works, I demonstrate how these composers' musical responses to cultural shifts could be ambivalent or contradictory. In a region where cultural and political agents alike strove for international recognition in an increasingly global community, these works provide a telling lens into the stakes, limitations, and opportunities for such recognition.

Acknowledgments

Prior to preparing my applications for graduate study, I had never written a research paper greater than ten pages in length. Moreover, I had never worked with foreign-language scholarship, or done any kind of intensive research (unless you count the time I stayed up all night in fifth grade to write a paper on Abraham Lincoln). Needless to say, my work on this multi-year research project has benefitted immeasurably from the generous assistance of a number of people and institutions.

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Introduction

On January 1, 1938, then-director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Yucatán Samuel Marti sent a letter of musical proposals to the 1939–40 New York World's Fair Committee. He wrote:

> Gentlemen:
>
> May I suggest a program of representative Mexican Music as one of the attractions of the forthcoming Fair?
>
> Up till now the public of the United States and Europe has only heard either the coarse cheap songs or the strident, ultra modern, so-called Mexican type of musical compositions—neither representative of real Mexico.
>
> I offer you the novelty and attraction of real intelligible Mexican symphonic music played for the first time in the United States.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Samuel Marti (Marti 1938)

There is ample evidence of the performance of Mexican composers' works in the United States and Europe prior to this letter, including compositions by Julián Carrillo, Carlos Chávez, Manuel M. Ponce, and Silvestre Revueltas. It is possible that Marti was being hyperbolic as a way of emphasizing the importance of his offering for the World's Fair, or that he was unaware of some of these prior performances. His words suggest something different, however: that it was not sufficient that works come from Mexican composers to be considered Mexican music. Rather, there was something false, something incorrect about the "so-called Mexican type of musical compositions" that had been performed previously, His letter suggests that the real identity of Mexican music was contested, necessarily constructed, or at a bare minimum different from prior representations, and heretofore unperformed in the cultural centers of Europe and the United States.

Marti's concert proposals, sent in January of 1939 to New York World's Fair Corporation president Grover Whalen and forwarded to music committee member Olin Downes, indicate Marti's ideas

about what constituted "real intelligible Mexican music," including microtonal compositions, works incorporating "authentic Mayan music," and "representative Mexican symphonic music…which [has] great popular appeal." His letter, dated January 5, states,

> Dear Mr. Whalen:
>
> I wonder if Mrs. Clarence Woolley has had the opportunity of telling you about the musical novelties which we have prepared for the World's Fair?
>
> They may be summarized as follows:
>
> 1-World's Premiere of the First Symphony Orchestra of the Future, playing recognized masterpieces of contemporary composers and in contrast the Music of Nature, based on fractions of pure intervals, and utilizing not only the actual instruments of the orchestra but modern, electrical instruments as well. The program includes an inspiring and powerful new composition dedicated and written especially for the World's Fair by Julián Carrillo.
> 2-Lectures and demonstrations of the New and amazing Music System of the Future, the "13th Sound Music System," created by Julián Carrillo.
> 3-Two Mayan Ballets based on Mayan Legends with authentic Mayan music.
> 4-Programs of representative Mexican symphonic music, presenting for the first time many compositions which have a great popular appeal.
>
> I shall only be in New York for two weeks before returning to Yucatán, and shall appreciate it very much if I hear from you as soon as possible.
>
> Sincerely,
> S. Marti (Marti 1939)

While Marti's World's Fair proposal presents a particularly clear example of this contested national representation, it is certainly not the only situation in which these issues arose. Just one year later, New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) mounted an exhibition titled "Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art," and commissioned Carlos Chávez to create a coordinating music program, whose features are described in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. Carlos Chávez and Julián Carrillo, Marti's composer of choice, could not be further apart in their approaches to composition, and the two publicly and forcefully criticized each other; it is almost surely Chávez that Marti speaks of in his letter disparaging previously

performed Mexican musics (Madrid 2015). Chávez's program for MoMA included his own arrangement of a *canción*, an "imagined Aztec" work, music of the Yaqui tribe, and a series of other compositions. While there are clear differences in the emphases of these programs, one strong commonality shines through, which is the presence of diverse voices in creating a Mexican musical identity. Rather than a singular representative sound, both programs draw upon multiple representations of *mexicanidad* ("Mexican-ness"), including ideas of indigeneity and new music by conservatory-trained, Mexican-born composers.

In addition to questions of *mexicanidad*, similar issues arose regarding composers of Latin American birth writ large, both domestically and abroad: what was their role in (re-)presenting national identity, and how might this role or the musical markers of it be sources of tension or ambivalence for composers, issues to be navigated rather than a foregone conclusion of nationalist tendency? This dissertation draws upon these multiple voices and contested representations in presenting close analytical readings of Latin American works from the years 1920–1940. Using a critical lens that addresses both contemporary discourse and recent scholarship, I delve into musical works with an eye to gaps and contradictions between musical text and discourse/scholarship. This analytical work thus operates from the assumption that music plays an active role in discourse, and can serve to undermine, resist, or strengthen certain cultural and political claims.

The central theme of this dissertation is a deep reading of tensions within music that has often been discussed as a straightforward or simple representation of nationalist sentiment, such as Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Chôros* or Carlos Chávez's *Xochipilli*; in elucidating these tensions and contradictions, the dissertation delves into questions of the relationship between music and meaning, particularly for repertories that are sometimes described as being "peripheral." In addition, it draws into question the commonly held discourse of nationalist modernism for the period by showing music as an active participant in upholding or resisting this discourse.

In examining this repertory of concert music, I consider the multifarious nature of these works, particularly as they are distinguished for certain audiences. For example, in both Marti's and Chávez's visions of Mexican music, the programs are designed explicitly for a foreign audience, with the overt intent of representing the nation of Mexico as a whole, which affects both programming and interpretation. Indeed, throughout the dissertation, many of the works I discuss were composed with international audiences in mind, and contain a strong element of self-exoticism, complicating the idea of nationalism that seems at first glance to be thoroughly present in these works. Throughout the dissertation, I have attempted to be as sensitive as possible to composition and performance considerations in interpreting the works I address.

A major motivating factor for this dissertation has been the need for a re-examination of these works in analytical discourse. While they have received increasing musicological attention in recent years, these musics have generally been overlooked in the area of music theory and analysis—a field that often focuses on repertories that are based in or closely connected to Europe—or reduced to single-attribute readings of nationalist elements, such as highlighting a samba rhythm or a folk tune. In engaging deeply with this repertory, I address tension and equivocation in the works. In sharp contrast to some existing studies, I argue that these compositions are not only ambiguous or ambivalent, but they also reflect much larger stakes for the composers, audiences, and governmental institutions involved: what is the meaning of a musical work for an individual and a community, and how do these works fit within a network of demands from publics, officials, and peers? From letters and printed materials of the time, one can see that the answers to these questions were not at all clear, but rather involved debate and disagreement.

Setting the Scene

This study is, of course, a non-exhaustive exploration. In order to handle the material as richly as possible, I have limited myself to a narrow band of years and composers, addressing only composers from Mexico and Brazil writing in the years 1920–1940. This focus allows me to engage more closely with the specific situations of each of these places, as well as the unique concerns of individual musicians. Further, this is not even an exhaustive examination of composers from Mexico and Brazil in this period; rather, I have focused on composers who were prominent in their respective home countries during this time, and who engaged with issues of both modernism and nationalism. By working on composers from two countries—Mexico and Brazil—I show not only the nuances of individual works and their compositional histories, but also how larger trends are visible across the region. Moreover, what stands out beyond the specificities of these two places is how inadequate national labels are for describing an increasingly international community, a critical feature for understanding these works as part of an international musical conversation.

As sites of research in this period of intense and turbulent musical change, Mexico and Brazil form a compelling pair. The two countries had strong urban centers at the time where musical communities thrived, as well as sufficient activity to support conferences, a variety of publications, and concert series. Both Mexico and Brazil hosted major events in the 1920s in which musicians discussed the need for national modernist music, which provides a convenient starting point for exploring the relationship between printed discourse and musical compositions. For Brazil, this was the 1922 São Paulo *Semana de Arte Moderna* (Week of Modern Art), an event that incorporated art, music, and talks on the subject of modernism in Brazil that marked a notable shift in artistic values. In Mexico, the 1926 *Primer Congreso de Música Nacional* (First Congress on National Music) focused more on music than Brazil's *Semana*, but used talks more than concerts, with an aim of discussing in particular the issue of national modernism.

The two countries have unique political histories, of course, and these differences are reflected in the discourse and cultural products of the period. In Brazil, the period 1920–1940 is bifurcated by the arrival of the Vargas government through a military coup in 1930, while the Mexican Revolution ended around the beginning of the period of this dissertation, and the decades of the 1920s and 1930s saw the leadership of various military-related leaders and counter-revolutions. However, both countries saw the development of conservatories, orchestras, and domestic institutions that supported an increased infrastructure for cultural and artistic institutionalization in the period. While the world events of this time affected both countries—for example, hundreds of thousands of Mexican emigrants were repatriated by force from the United States during the Great Depression, and both countries fought for the Allied forces in World War II—their impact is not the same as it was in Europe, and the prominence of the two World Wars was at some remove for Latin America. Thus, while the years addressed in this dissertation roughly correspond with the European/U.S. interwar period, I do not use the boundary years of these conflicts as limits because the discourse and cultural change were not as dominated by the implications of these events.

In addition to distinctions between Brazil and Mexico as political states, each composer has an individual trajectory, such that broad homogenization or comparison of Mexican and Brazilian composers is less useful than it might at first appear. For example, the career trajectories of Mexican composer Carlos Chávez and Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos, the two most extensively discussed composers in this dissertation, have similar threads but unique shape. The two both served as "official" composers of their respective nations at various points, with Chávez directing the national orchestra (Orquesta Sinfónica de México, OSM) and Villa-Lobos creating the first national music curriculum under Vargas. Both also spent a significant amount of time abroad, particularly in the 1920s, though for Chávez the main destination was New York, while Villa-Lobos spent much of this period in Paris. Concomitantly, while both were deeply

affected by international experiences, the influences acting on the two men are different, with distinct artistic communities and different opportunities for performance and distribution.

Themes

Within the contextualized readings of the works of the dissertation, I had to skirt or omit a number of themes that were central to the period simply because of space and time limitations. Among these under-discussed topics are the roles of specific instruments that were heavily marked as regionally referent in the repertory, such as the guitar and various percussion instruments, and the role of race in nationalist discourse and music. This latter topic is particularly prominent in both Mexico and Brazil, and I only touch upon it in the briefest way in Chapters 2 and 3, whereas it merits considerably more discussion. Prominent intellectuals in both Mexico and Brazil wrote about this issue at the time: in Mexico, Secretary of Education José Vasconcelos wrote an essay on this topic titled "The Cosmic Race," while Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre's 1933 monograph *Casa-Grande e Senzala* discussed the same issue as relating to Brazil's historical mix of indigenous, European, and African heritages. While my dissertation does not delve into the significant research on this subject or that of instrumentality, a number of recent musicological studies have addressed these more thoroughly, such as Kassandra Hartford's 2013 dissertation, "Race, Nation, Modern Music: Rio de Janeiro, New York, Paris, 1914–1945," and Humberto Amorím's 2009 monograph, *Heitor Villa-Lobos e o Violão*.

In this analytically focused study, many larger institutional or technological histories are also missing. While I mention the importance of international frameworks for understanding these compositions, I do not spend considerable time on the sizeable body of resources that aided this transnational process, such as the technology of the radio or the U.S. Good Neighbor policy, which weighed heavily in events like the 1939–40 World's Fair described at the outset of this introduction. In addition, I

do not deal with transnational networks within Latin America, such as those encouraged by Francisco Curt Lange's *Boletín latinoamericano de música*, which sought to bring together music from a variety of Latin American sources. Certainly more work could be done to build upon studies such as Pablo Palomino's 2014 dissertation, "Transnational Musical Networks in Latin America, 1910–1950," Carol Hess's monograph *Representing the Good Neighbor: Music, Difference, and the Pan American Dream* (2013), or Bryan McCann's landmark 2004 study of Brazilian radio, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil*.

Within the dissertation, however, a number of persistent issues of inquiry appear repeatedly. Like loose threads on a garment, I continue to tug at them throughout this study, rather than seeking to resolve or tie them up tidily. I delve into the definition and parameters of words that have wide currency in scholarship and discourse, but whose scholarly use I argue often fails to line up with the musical and social realities of works by Mexican and Brazilian composers in the 1920s and 1930s. In particular, the terms *nationalism*, *modernism*, *cosmopolitanism* and *exoticism* are very prominent in the dissertation, but other descriptive words are also present, such as *universal* and *popular*, words that were used at the time to categorize approaches to and genres of music, and yet whose meanings were contested even during the period in question. Moreover, in seeking to untangle the meanings of these words, I found the contradictions and tensions productive, allowing for multivalent interpretations and multiple (often seemingly mutually exclusive) understandings of works. Thus these compositions could serve distinct and diverse functions for different audiences, an issue that is critical for understanding the issues and stakes of these works.

The strongest views presented in this dissertation are those of the literate, urban participants in the musical communities of Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. This exclusivity is especially highlighted in materials that deal with indigenous peoples or musics. In particular, indigenous identities and musics often served as a site of fantasy more than any kind of representation of active indigenous music-

making, even when they incorporated collected indigenous melodies, as in Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 3* and *Três Poemas Indígenas*, or Carlos Chávez's *Sinfonía India.* For these Western-notated concert repertories, the voice of indigenous peoples is always thoroughly mediated by conservatory-trained composers, and practically speaking not present in a rich or meaningful way.

Finally, the question of "center" and "periphery" remains a focus of this dissertation. Discourse of the time often used this mode of comparison for addressing the relationship between Latin American cultural and economic products and those of Europe and the United States—indeed, this very topic motivated large administrative initiatives, such as the Brazilian government's subsidies of European immigrants in an official policy of *branqueamento* ("whitening"), intended to help make Brazil more comparable to and competitive with its European and U.S. global neighbors (Schwarcz 1993). While it may have had currency at the time, the continued persistence of center–periphery discourse as a mode of scholarly attention and textbook presentation—looking at the "center" of European art music, with minimal inclusion of "peripheral" repertories tacked on at the end—is highly problematic. In some ways, the recent presence of other modernisms as presented in volumes such as *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (2012) increases awareness of alternative approaches to the idea of modernism. On the other hand, the very presence of this volume reinforces their status as "peripheral" by creating a repository of Others. For the purposes of my study, it is not important to assess whether the music is or is not "peripheral" (or what that would even mean). I argue that rather than affirming this status or advocating for a more prominent position for this music, it is most useful to discuss the works in a thoughtful and contextualized manner that allows for sensitive and nuanced readings of the works and attempts to avoid platitudes or foregone conclusions.

Structure

The four chapters of this dissertation are structured on two axes: first, each surrounds one complicating factor for narratives of nationalist modernism, and second, they shift from single-country studies in Chapters 1 (Mexico) and 2 (Brazil) to comparative studies in Chapters 3 and 4. Rather than engaging in a lengthy historical exposition of each place, I have chosen to weave in historical details as relevant to the conversation at hand. This approach has the weakness of failing to present a broad, comprehensive picture of the period, but allows for historical details to be presented in closer connection with specific musical issues as needed, and avoids repeating historical scholarship that is readily available in other texts.

Chapter 1 attends to the topic of ambivalence, particularly as expressed in features that have often been read as nationalist markers. Using two case studies, *String Quartet No. 2* by Silvestre Revueltas and *H. P.* by Carlos Chávez, I use musical analysis to delve into alternative understandings of these composers' uses of "Mexicanisms," such as folk melodies and parallel thirds that are vernacular-associated. Rather than a direct line between these features and a nationalist interpretation, I illuminate ambivalent treatments of these materials, which undermine a nationalistic interpretation.

Chapter 2 addresses the role of popular music in expressing national identity. In Brazilian discourse of the time, a significant amount of ink was spilled discussing the role of vernacular music as a feature to highlight *brasilidade* ("Brazilian-ness") in concert music. Using a backdrop of prominent modernist music critic and musicologist Mário de Andrade, I examine the works of three Brazilian composers in the context of written commentary. I place specific compositional treatment in dialogue with Andrade's texts, both general and unique to the work at hand, as he responded to each of these composers and works in addition to broader theoretical assertions about Brazilian nationalist modernism. To study the inherent contradictions and tensions between prose and musical works, I focus first on Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Chôros*

No. 4, and then briefly address Francisco Mignone's *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira*, followed by Luciano Gallet's *Turuna*. Through this dialogue between works and criticism, I show diverse ways in which composers and critics of the time connected or disagreed on the issue of how to integrate popular music as an element within Brazilian concert-music compositions, and what popular musics were most suitable for this task.

Chapter 3, the first comparative chapter, focuses on the question of text in music, and how the presence of certain kinds of texts triggers different musical signification and use. In order to assess how the presence of text affects musical treatment, I compare texted and untexted materials where possible, grouping the texts into three categories: folk songs, materials related to indigeneity, and art song. Despite distinctions between individual composers, I show how certain types of texts trigger the presence of similar musical markers (such as diatonicism in texted settings of folk songs), while others imply greater musical freedom. As a thread connecting the various sections of the chapter, I explore elements of Carlos Chávez's 1940 MoMA program, including his setting of the *canción* "La paloma azul" and his "imagined Aztec work," *Xochipilli*, as well as examining what kinds of works are excluded from the program (such as modernist art song lacking obvious nationalist features, as in his work "Segador"). In addition, I examine compositions from Mexican composer José Rolón (*Cuauhtémoc*) and Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (*String Quartet No. 5*, *A Prole do Bebê No. 1*, *Três Poemas Indígenas*)

Chapter 4 moves away from nationalist markers to see what composers did when they were writing non-nationalist music, sometimes called "universal music" at the time. How did composers write when attempting to avoid nationalist markers, and what were the uses of this music? As a means of understanding the multiple and changing functions of universalism, I attend first to early compositions, beginning with Heitor Villa-Lobos's *String Quartet No. 4*. I then move into mature works with Carlos Chávez's *Sinfonía de Antígona*, an orchestral composition that substitutes ideas of ancient Others in place of indigenous sites of fantasy in some of his Mexico-focused works. Finally, I discuss works that have no overt national/nationalist

element, but rather float between materials that have been interpreted as universalist or nationalist; to examine this fluid relationship between the two, I provide a close reading of Silvestre Revueltas's *Planos*. In this chapter, I also confront a change in values regarding this material in the 1930s—while a few compositions are not Iberoamerican-themed, most compositions in both Mexico and Brazil in that decade are at least tangentially "nationalist," creating a notable void in the category of universalism for much of the period.

Conclusion

Like many movements, Latin American nationalist modernism neither appeared starkly in 1920 nor disappeared in 1940. Rather, the shift was gradual; this dissertation focuses on the most intense period of production within that category, while drawing at times upon works that fall slightly outside of the bounding years 1920–40. Critically, none of the works I address are serialist, though they often move away from tonality or into polytonality. While nationalism and serialism are not mutally exclusive, as shown by Alyson Payne's 2012 dissertation study, "The 1964 Festival of Music of the Americas and Spain: A Critical Examination of Ibero-American Musical Relations in the Context of Cold War Politics," these issues largely arose after the period in question in my research. Indeed, serialism was not prominent in much of Latin America until after the end of World War II, as discussed by Carlos Kater in the monograph *Música Viva e H. J. Koellreutter: movimentos em direção à modernidade* (2000).

In this study, then, I have proposed a variety of alternative approaches to these works, and new points of entry for a repertory that is only minimally studied in the field of U.S. music theory, but whose works present compelling opportunities for critical analysis and fresh understandings. In so doing, I have sought to create a new paradigm for approaching music that has often been assessed merely as "nationalist" due to the presence of certain markers, like folk tunes or vernacular rhythms. Rather than hunting for these

features, I suggest that much is gained by closer analysis that seeks out alternative implications for these works, illustrating how they participate in multiple networks of meaning for these musicians. In addition to an external gaze focused on reception of these works in Paris or New York, I also attend to internal pressures and motivations, in order to understand how these issues relate to domestic consumption and a local community of artists. In sum, this dissertation seeks to reconsider analytical approaches to a repertory that is rich in opportunities for fruitful close engagement and nuanced readings.

Chapter 1. Strategies of Ambivalence

Silvestre Revueltas's 1931 String Quartet No. 2, subtitled "Magueyes," begins with an overt tonal gesture, an alternating root-fifth C–G motion in the cello. This is followed by the start of a folk tune from central Mexico, the titular "Los Magueyes." While these two lines are set in different keys (the folk tune begins in D rather than the C of the cello line) and seemingly different time signatures (the opening cello line aurally suggests a duple meter, but is written as a triplet cross-rhythm to the duple meter that the violin is playing), neither line derails the other, but rather each presents an element of popular, "low-brow" music:

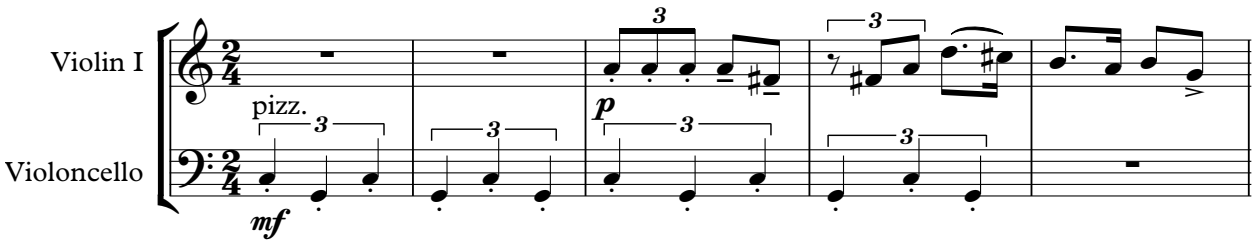

Figure 1.1: Silvestre Revueltas, Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), I. Allegro giocoso, mm. 1–5 (Vln II/Vla *tacet*)

Just two measures later, a very fleeting cadential gesture of V7–I is presented in D major. These gestures are surrounded by interjections that fit less neatly into these keys—the movement is littered with whole-tone scale excerpts and blocky chords that incorporate minor ninths and major sevenths; but a sense of the popular—and, moreover, the tonal—pervades the movement, from frequent parallel thirds (a gesture that many have referenced to Mexican popular styles in this setting) to echoes of "Los Magueyes" throughout.[1]

On a manuscript for the quartet, Revueltas wrote the following two statements:

[1] Regarding parallel thirds as "Mexican," see, for example, Mayer-Serra 1941 and Saavedra 2011.

> I could say, a Mexican sketch. (It could be, if you wish.) But it has no tendency to be folkloric, nor serious, nor transcendental.
>
> And later,
>
> I could call this a Mexican sketch with no folkloric transcendence. Rather a fantasy. It has a fragment of a popular song as its basis. It has nothing that is folkloric nor serious nor transcendental.[2]

In her 2001 dissertation, "Of Selves and Others," Leonora Saavedra writes that this is the earliest instance she can find in which Revueltas (1899–1940) uses a folk tune, but that the statements above undermine the nationalistic character of the work by minimizing the impact of the "folkloric" as well as the "serious." She asserts,

> The notes allow us to document Revueltas's misgivings, ambivalent attitudes, and contradictions concerning the nationalist project. Thus the notes for *Magueyes* reveal a Revueltas who, at the very least, finds the conscious act of using a folk melody in his quartet to be rather too deliberate…and who is fearful that the resulting Mexican or folkloric character might appear to be too contrived and as too obvious a statement. (Saavedra 2001, 245)

Saavedra's argument is framed specifically in contrast to prior interpretations of these writings, which she notes "have typically been interpreted merely as a sign of the composer's playfulness and general irreverence towards the musical and political establishment" (2001, 245). Here she suggests that there is something more compelling in looking at Revueltas's comments from this alternative angle, something that allows for more penetrating discussion of issues at stake in the music. In this chapter, I will discuss the relationship between ambivalence and a variety of compositional strategies employed by Silvestre Revueltas and Carlos Chávez. I examine the ways in which composers' ambivalence toward a network of issues—nationalism, cosmopolitanism, international reception, and the domestic and foreign avant-garde—manifested in diverse ways in their music. I argue that the frame of ambivalence allows access to issues of

[2] "Pudiera decir, un sketch mexicano. (Puede serlo si gustan). Pero no tiende a ser folklórico, ni serio, ni trascendental." And, "Pudiera decir un sketch mexicano, pero sin tracendencia folklóricas. Más bien una fantasía. Tiene por base el fragmento de un canto popular. No tiene nada de Folklórico, ni serio, ni tracendental (*sic)*." Original in Kolb Neuhaus 1998, 39, quoted in Saavedra 2001, 244–45.

composition that extend beyond dominant tropes of nationalism, and into deeper questions of approach and composerly technique. I frame this discussion in two halves: first I discuss Silvestre Revueltas, focusing especially on the Second String Quartet. Following a close look at issues of ambivalence in Revueltas, I move to a composer whose position and opinions contrasted strongly with his, Carlos Chávez. Despite their differences, Chávez demonstrated a similar ambivalence toward issues of nationalism, modernism, and exoticism. Following a review of scholarship addressing Chávez's complicated relationship with Mexican nationalism and U.S. relations, I will discuss Chávez's own responses to these issues as presented in the ballet *H. P.* Throughout the discussion, I will use close readings to demonstrate alternative understandings of both Revueltas and Chávez's works, using ambivalence as a lens that allows for a departure from some previous discussions on these composers and their musics. Through these readings, I will build upon previous studies that discuss Revueltas and Chávez's attempts to navigate nationalist and exoticist demands, such as Saavedra (2001), Gibson (2008, 2012), and Hess (2013). While these studies provide important insights, the close readings of these works leads me to depart in significant ways from prior studies, readings that are illuminated by the possibility of multiple interpretations and ambiguity, and which exert pressure on preceding discussions of these compositions.

Silvestre Revueltas: Fragmentation, Turning Away, and Stagnation

In this section, I will discuss the idea of ambivalence in relation to Silvestre Revueltas's music. The section is in four parts: first, a look at Mexicanism in the Second String Quartet; second, a discussion of reception history and ambivalence toward the value of analysis for Revueltas's music as well as the music's broader worth; third, an analysis of Revueltas's output—both prose and music—using the lens of ambivalence; and fourth, an exploration of the ways in which ambivalence served a functional purpose for Revueltas.

Mexicanism in Revueltas's String Quartet No. 2

As mentioned above, questions of Mexicanism tend to dominate discussions of Revueltas's music and the narrative attached to it. While I will explore other realms in the chapter at hand, this aspect provides a reasonable starting point, one that will also give a sense of how Revueltas has been received over the past 70-plus years.

In addition to undermining the folkloric or the national in his writings about the quartet (mentioned above), Revueltas breaks up the folk tune that forms the primary theme of the work, and never states it fully. It is difficult to ascertain precisely how much of "Los Magueyes" he intended to use; unlike Brazil's *Guia Prático*, there is no compendium of melodies that served as a singular guide for Mexican folk musics from this period; rather, there are a variety of *cancioneros* (songbooks) that different composers used as reference points for their compositions at this time. Further, Francisco Moncada García has catalogued eighteen different versions of "Los Magueyes," discussing regional variants and likely paths of distribution (1971). Even without a single point of reference, however, it is clear that Revueltas never incorporated the second half of the tune into the quartet, restricting himself to segments from the first few phrases. Below is the first half of one version of "Los Magueyes," taken from Lagos de Moreno, Jalisco in 1904, with Revueltas's version placed above it.[3] Note that he doesn't even use complete phrases of the song, but rather half phrases, creating a sort of lumpy realization (for a fuller excerpt of this section of the quartet, see figure 1.3).

[3] Moncada García's text publishes all of the versions in C major, but I have here transposed it to D major in order to facilitate comparison. Further, I have displaced the very first segment of the Revueltas, which begins on a downbeat instead of a pickup (the other segments are placed metrically as they occur in the score).

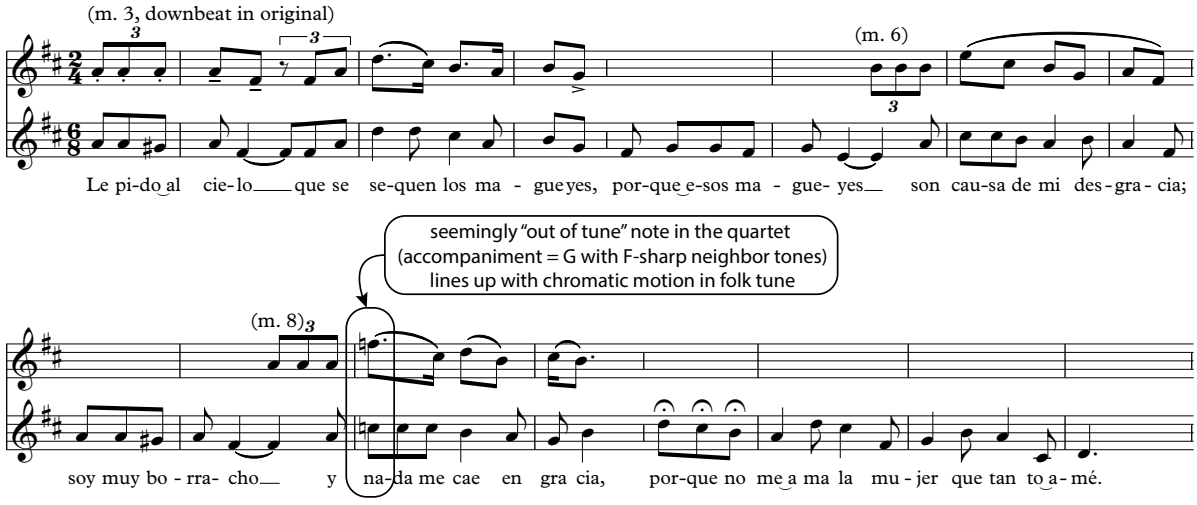

Figure 1.2: Comparison of folk tune versions. Lower staff: first half of "Los Magueyes" as presented in Moncada García 1971, 52 (Lagos de Moreno, Jalisco, 1904). Upper staff: adapted opening, Revueltas String Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), first movement.

Rodolfo Ramírez Rodríguez has argued that twentieth-century Mexican arts employed references to the *maguey*—a plant similar to agave that is used to make the beverage *pulque*—as a marker of Mexican agrarianism and rurality (2007). Yet this quartet hardly depicts an idyll of rural Mexico. Otto Mayer-Serra argues that in contrast to Carlos Chávez, Revueltas presents a uniquely urban image of Mexico:

> He is interested in present-day Mexico, with the festivities of its market-places, the comical, sad atmosphere of the *carpas*—the crude little playhouses of the capital—, the tumult of the crowd in the street, the shrill colors of the people and the landscapes, the songs and music of the country as it exists today. (1941, 127)

In his article on Revueltas's version of Mexican nationalism, Mayer-Serra continually refers to ways in which Revueltas alters folk idioms through a "thoroughgoing task of transformation and stylization" (130), resulting in "folk melody, twisted and disfigured by constant alterations" (125). Mayer-Serra emphasizes that Revueltas manipulates popular idioms to highlight noise or chaos. This second quartet, then, would seem simultaneously to draw on an agrarian icon, the *maguey*, while twisting the melody and interjecting with sounds that Mayer-Serra characterizes as urban in nature.

Despite these potential conflicts and statements that subvert nationalist characterization, Leonora Saavedra refers to this quartet (as well as the fourth string quartet, "Música de Feria") as "Mexicanist." She lists features of Revueltas's "Mexicanisms" that have been explored by a variety of scholars since Mayer-Serra, such as frequent changes of meter, metric displacements of melody, and hemiola; notes that suggest "popular tuning systems, slightly or plainly off according to Western standards"; collage techniques to represent street markets and fairs; and use of brass and tone colors that suggest popular bands (2001, 247). Many of these features are present in the second string quartet, as well as "Música de Feria," and in segments of the first quartet.

Reception History

For all the interest in Revueltas's nationalism, scholars and critics have displayed a distinct distaste for analysis of other features of Revueltas's works, a distaste that seems linked to a sense of "spontaneity" or "naturalness" in Revueltas's compositions, and an attitude that has only recently shifted. Claims regarding the propriety of analysis begin at least as early as 1941. In that year, Aaron Copland wrote,

> Revueltas was the spontaneously inspired type of composer, whose music is colorful, picturesque, and gay. Unfortunately, he never was able to break away from a certain dilettantism that makes even his best compositions suffer sketchy workmanship. Certain circles in Mexico are anxious to prove that in comparison with the music of Revueltas, with its natural spontaneity, that of Chávez is essentially cold and cerebral. But I see absolutely no need to choose here. It is not a question of Chávez *or* Revueltas, as at one time it was thought to be a question of Wagner or Brahms. We can have both men and their music for exactly what each is worth to us. In my own mind there is no doubt whatever that Chávez is the more mature musician in every way.[4]

[4] Originally published in 1941 under McGraw-Hill (New York) as *Our New Music: Leading Composers in Europe and America*, but was republished in 1968 as *The New Music 1900–1960* (p. 149). As quoted in Luisa Vilar-Payá 2002, 31.

Copland uses language of spontaneity and color, suggesting a kind of naiveté and lack of scholarly sensibility that has resonances with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century discussions of the noble savage.[5] In the same year that Copland wrote the preceding, Mayer-Serra's article also dismissed the general analytical worth of Revueltas's music, concluding,

> Contemporary Mexican music—in the works of Chávez as well as those of Revueltas—has not yet passed beyond the simple exposition of melodic, rhythmic, and instrumental materials derived from sources of popular inspiration and expressed in terms of the modern musical idiom. It still lacks a constructive principle of its own, such as Manuel de Falla in his *Concerto* for harpsichord, and Béla Bartók in his latest works, have developed on the basis of their respective folklore traditions. (Mayer-Serra 1941, 143)

In a 1976 interview with José Antonio Alcaraz, Carlos Chávez discussed his working relationship with Revueltas as follows:

> I strongly insisted that he polish his compositions, because I always found the same things: very pretty, but uninteresting. The piccolo, the tuba…and those ostinatos. That interminable repetition of a pedal; I felt like he could write much better without the need to always return to the same things. The ideas were good, but they gave the impression that everything was done in a big hurry. However, we premiered all of the works that he wrote in that period [1928–1935].[6]

To his credit, Chávez is correct that Revueltas composed many works quickly during this period; nearly all of Revueltas's music was written in just one decade (1930–1940) and the early 1930s were a particularly intense period of composition. Yet Chávez appears to be using the foil of haste to make a larger criticism about Revueltas, one that suggests a lack of creative innovation. It should be noted, too, that

[5] Discussions of the noble savage have been widely studied and compiled by scholars. For an example of this work as applied to Americans, see Ellingson 2001, who also incorporates a historical contextualization from well-known writings by Rousseau, Hobbes, and others.

[6] Antonio Alcaraz 1982, 23: "Yo le insistía mucho en que tratara de pulir sus composiciones porque siempre me encontraba con las mismas cosas: muy bonitas pero poco interesantes. El flautín, la tuba . . . y esos ostionatos. Esa repetición interminable de un peedal, siendo que él podía escribir mucho mejor sin necesidad de volver siempre a hacer las cosas iguales. Las ideas eran buenas, pero me daba la impresión de que todo estaba hecho con mucha prisa. Sin embargo, estrenamos todas las obras que él escribió en esa época."

Chávez and Revueltas had a serious falling out in 1935, which may have affected Chávez's characterization of Revueltas's music in addition to their relationship (Contreras Soto 2000).

Later, attitudes of Revueltas's writing as natural and "ethnic" persisted in many forms, including scholarly journals. In the *Latin American Music Review*, Charles Hoag (1987) wrote:

> The ostinatos in [Revueltas's] *Sensemayá* and *Caminos*, though related to those heard in *Rite*, seem to have naturally risen out of the folk musics of the Spanish, Indian, and African ethnic components of the Latin American population. Like the murals of his countryman Diego Rivera, Revueltas' music celebrates the folkloric essence of Mexican culture. (172)

Along the same lines, Peter Garland wrote in the 1991 volume *In Search of Silvestre Revueltas: Essays 1978–1990*,

> Revueltas's relationship to Mexican traditional musics was spontaneous and deep, not studied or self-conscious as it often is in Chávez's work. He shared a sense of camaraderie with that music, heightened by his political ideals. For Revueltas, there were no class distinctions in music. Music, life and revolution (social and artistic) were not separable. (152)

This list could continue practically *ad inifinitum*: in 2005, the *New York Times* Arts and Culture Desk published an article that said, "If the music of Silvestre Revueltas at its most unbuttoned confesses a kind of brilliant savagery, that of his contemporary Carlos Chávez is more reasonable, less dangerous" (Holland 2005). Not all reception of Revueltas emphasized the "natural" and the "spontaneous": in 1941, Virgil Thomson wrote a complimentary review of Revueltas's musical style (in which he took time to deride other Latin American composers such as Heitor Villa-Lobos) concluding, "his music has grace, grandeur, delicacy, charm, and enormous distinction" (Thomson 1981, 213). This statement, however, merely presents a counterexample to the dominant discourse about Revueltas, an exception that proves the rule. Moreover, while Thomson admits to a kind of elegant and refined sensibility in Revueltas's works, he does not speak of Revueltas with the same kind of language accorded to "great" composers in other essays, such as the inevitability, weight, and victoriousness heard in Thomson's discussions of Beethoven's works.

In addition to reinscribing stereotypes of Mexican identity, this kind of discussion presents a barrier to analysis. In 1989, Yolanda Moreno Rivas observed this phenomenon, writing of the reticence toward applying a critical, analytical lens to Revueltas's music:

> For too long, idealization of the Dionysian and mythical figure of Silvestre Revueltas (1899–1940) did not favor analysis and serious evaluation of his music. Thus, the brilliant and profoundly reflexive work of his short but intense production years (1930–1940) was explained as the natural emanation from a visionary genius; from an instinctive and vital musician who spouted score after inevitably Mexicanist score.[7]

Luisa Vilar-Payá (2002) agrees, writing that attitudes such as those above created an environment in which,

> As a result of this polarization, today few specialists study the music of Revueltas from a theoretical perspective that tackles formal and harmonic aspects of his work in depth. For some musicologists, analysis brings nothing to the music of Revueltas. Others think that this type of approach kills the idea of spontaneity and diminishes the value of studied music.[8]

Despite the tone of the writings from contemporary and more recent critics—often structured as thinly veiled criticisms—there is something in them that resonates with Revueltas's own attitudes toward analysis of his work. In discussing *Esquinas* (an orchestral work from 1930), Revueltas wrote: "From the point of view of musical skill, I can't say anything, because it doesn't interest me. Some good-humored people say that I have skill; others, bad-humored, say no. They surely know better."[9]

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[7] Rivas 1989, 183: "Durante demasiado tiempo, la idealización de la figure dionisiaca y mítica de Silvestre Revueltas (1899–1940) no favoreció el análisis y la evaluación seria de su música. Así, la obra brillante, y profundamente reflexiva de sus cortos pero intensos años de producción (1930–1940) fue explicada como la emanación natural de un iluminado genial; de un músico instintivo y vital del que surgía partitura tras partitura inevitablemente mexicanista."

[8] Vilar-Payá 2002, 31–32: "Como resultado de esta polarización, actualmente pocos especialistas estudian la música de Revueltas desde una perspectiva teórica que aborde con profundidad los aspectos formales y armónicos de su obra. Para algunos musicólogos el análisis musical no tiene nada que demostrar en la música de Revueltas. Otros piensan que este tipo de aproximación asesina la idea de espontaneidad y disminuye el valor de la música estudiada."

[9] Kolb 1998, 47: "Desde el punto de vista técnico musical no puedo decir nada, porque no me interesa. Algunas personas de buen humor dicen que tengo técnica; otras, de mal humor, que no. Deben saberlo mejor."

Further, Revueltas seemed to deride his own field. As when he undermined "folkloric" or "serious" materials in his compositions, he dismisses (perhaps tongue-in-cheek) much of classical music, writing in 1932, "I like all kinds of music. I can even stand some of the classics and some of my own works, but I prefer the music of my village, which is heard in the province."[10] In such sardonic writings, Revueltas appears ambivalent not only about national music (as Saavedra notes), but also about the composerly endeavor. He idealizes the rural and the unaffected, even as he composes learned works for ensembles that are central to the European art-music canon.

Despite the prevalence of scholars who seem reticent to explore Revueltas's music through an explicitly analytical lens, some musicologists have begun to look at his works with a view toward analysis, including Vilar-Payá (2002), Talía Jiménez-Ramírez (1999 and 2002), and Luís Jaime Cortez (2002). Nevertheless, through their own ambivalence toward Revueltas's music (or, if you prefer, dismissal of it), many scholars and critics—wittingly or not—have created a discourse that mirrors Revueltas's own misgivings about critical examination of his music.

This dual ambivalence—internal and external—raises pivotal questions about analysis of Revueltas's music. How does this question of ambivalence relate to analytical goals and values in scholarly and critical reception? Following that, is Revueltas's music "ambivalent"? Moreover, what would such a label entail?

In some ways supported by Revueltas's own writings, the comments from Copland, Mayer-Serra, Chávez, Garland, and Holland implicitly suggest that a large part of what prevents Revueltas from earning a place in a canon of "serious" (read: worthwhile and important) composers is his lack of a studied or scholarly approach—concomitantly, perceived intuition, spontaneity, and "naturalness" diminish a

[10] Revueltas 1989 [1932], 29: "Me gusta toda clase de música. Puedo soportar hasta a algunos de los clásicos y algunas de mis proprias obras, pero prefiero la música de mi pueblo, que se oye en la provincia."

composer's scholarly value. The claims of Revueltas's "unstudied" character are patently false: Revueltas both trained in and later taught at conservatories, and composed "studied" fugal forms (as in the last movement of the second string quartet). In this light, the quotes mentioned above appear to be a commentary more on the idea of Revueltas as a wild, exotic man than on the actual content of the music. Beyond this, however, the premises of these comments—that complexity and scholarly character are the goals of musical composition (and, by extension, analysis of it)—are also problematic.

In a recent article discussing Charles Ives, John McGinness (2006) notes that Ives scholars have recently tried to reframe discussion in an effort to recover his analytical worth. McGinness notes, however, the limitations of engaging in these terms of discussion:

> When Ives is defended against charges of compositional incompetence with the argument that the apparently "ill-made" can be shown to "have ample precedent and to be very carefully constructed," his defenders are succumbing to the very same prejudices of modernist evaluative criteria that caused the problem to develop in the first place. (100)

In his argument about alternative "ways forward" for Ives analysis, McGinness highlights the critical/aesthetic aspects of analysis, writing,

> Two principal stages are present in the formulation of analytic aesthetic/critical choice. The first, involving the formal elements of the music (such as the interpretation of rhythmic or pitch groupings), is a relatively straightforward category. The second stage, in which analytic choices are contextualized, is rife with issues that continue to propel the modernist/postmodernist debate. (100)

Similarly, my aim is not to argue that Revueltas possessed the values and skills that critics claimed he lacked, but rather to reframe discussion in terms of the tensions within and outside of the music, as well as to address questions of style and technique within his particular historical and cultural context. I do not address whether his music is carefully constructed, learned, spontaneous, or natural; rather, I aim to illuminate the issues of composerly technique, musical approach, and the stakes for Revueltas's compositional choices by whatever analytical means are useful.

Ambivalence as an Analytical Frame

As mentioned earlier, Saavedra (2001) argues that Revueltas's constant undermining of nationalistic elements in his music reflects an ambivalence toward the cultural-political project of nationalism. In addition, he often abruptly changes direction or negates assumptions about his aims in his own writings, even writing antagonistically toward the reader. Regarding his work *Esquinas*, for example, Revueltas wrote, "Street corners [Esquinas]. Of every street and every neighborhood… With a strong will, you could imagine anything: streets, alleys, squares, plazas. It would be fun to find in this music the noise of car horns, streetcars, trucks, etc. Unfortunately, there is none of this."[11]

Like his prose, Revueltas's music often incorporates abrupt turns, subverted expexctations, and interruptions. Revueltas's second quartet illustrates several of these features, even from the very start; figure 1.3 illustrates a number of these elements in the opening of the first movement. In measures 1–2, Revueltas creates an aural expectation of duple meter, C major, through the root–fifth cello introduction, but undermines both tonal and temporal space through the arrival of the D-major theme and different metric division in measure 3 (as discussed previously). Here the violin's entry is at odds with what is revealed to be triplets in the cello line. Just when the folk song "Los Magueyes" approaches the conclusion of the first half of the tune (and should resolve to the tonic), Revueltas breaks away from the theme and its D-major tonal space in measures 10–11 to preview a melody that is featured later in the Lento section. Following this, he restates the opening materials in a condensed way in measure 12, now in parallel thirds (one of the aforementioned "Mexicanisms").

[11] Kolb 1998, 47: "Esquinas. De todas las calles y de todos los barrios. . . . Con buena voluntad se podrá imaginar cualquier cosa: calles, callejones, plazuelas, plazas. Sería divertido encontrar en ésta música ruido de *claxons*, tranvías, camiones, etcétera. Desgraciadamente no hay nada de eso."

This statement, however, disappears as quickly as it was introduced, disintegrating into a rising sequence whose rhythm is derived from the initial statement of "Magueyes" (see mm. 13–15), one that wanders far from D major and concludes with an abrupt, fortissimo, harmonically unstable chord in measure 16. This chord, a hexachord of type [023568] (6-z23),[12] is approached from a steadily increasing registral spread over the preceding two measures, and bears little tonal relationship to these preceding materials, in addition to being associated with both melodic minor and octatonic pitch collections, while the movement up to then has been largely in major. Moreover, while the work is specifically in D major—with a suggestion of C Major bitonality at the beginning—the only doubled note in the chord is D♯, which is not part of either key. Revueltas returns to the opening thematic gesture in m. 17, this time in parallel seconds, and again moves through a rising sequence before breaking off at the end of m. 19.

[12] At various points in the dissertation, I will refer to prime-form pitch sets, taken from the language used by Allen Forte in his monograph *The Structure of Atonal Music* (Forte 1973). For more information about pitch-class sets and prime forms, see for example Straus 2016.

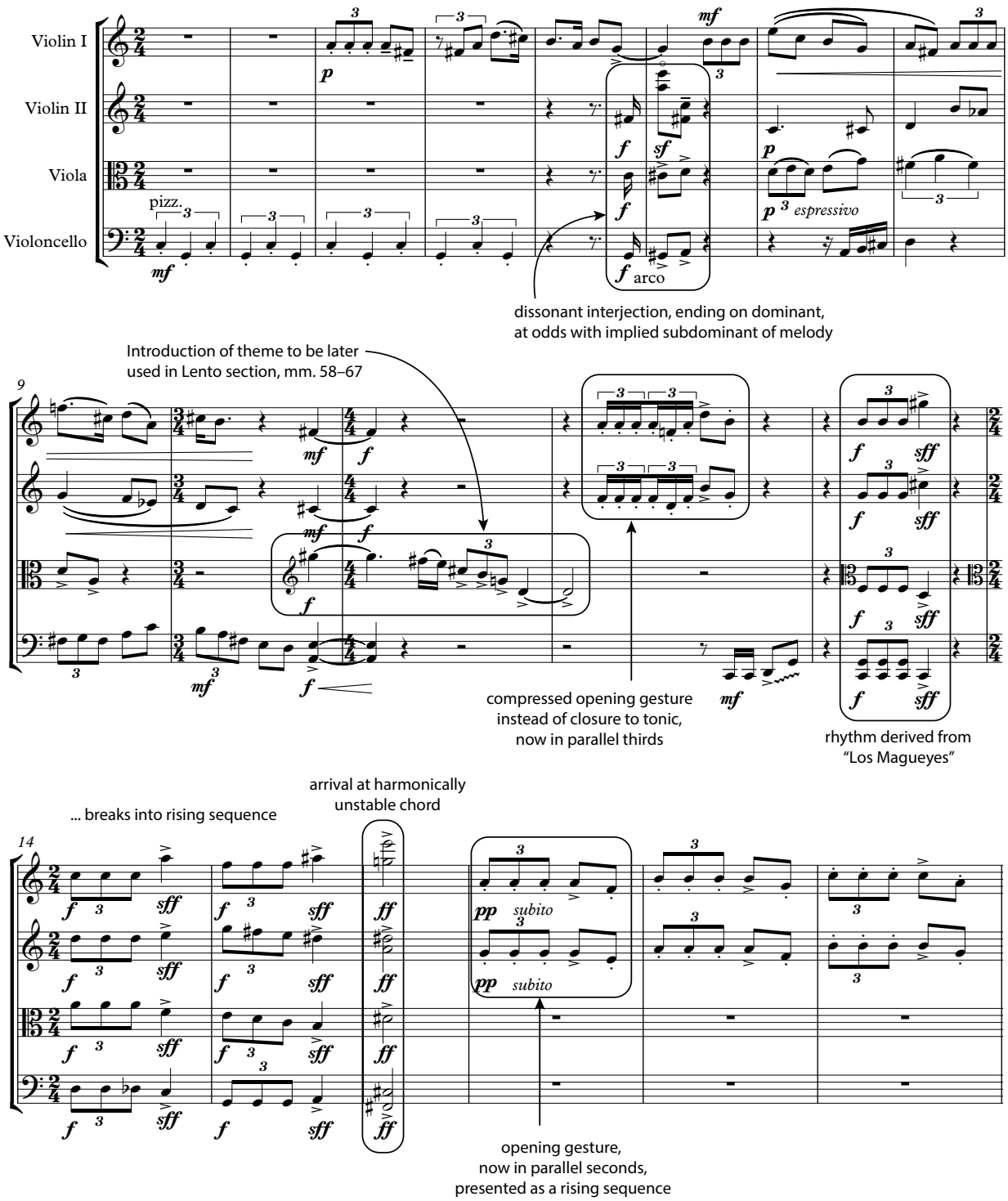

Figure 1.3: Revueltas, String Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), I. Allegro giocoso, mm. 1–19

With these playful and abrupt breaks and interruptions, Revueltas's music suggests quick shifts and turns of attention, subverting expectations of continuity and direction. In combination with these rapid changes, however, certain elements of Revueltas's writing remain surprisingly fixed. Repeatedly in the first movement, he restates the opening of the "Magueyes" theme, and each time he begins on the same pitch class, A (and, most often, A4 specifically). At times, he isolates the rhythm without the melodic contour, and in these cases he uses other pitch areas, but the contour of the opening theme is always set in (roughly) D major, beginning on A (as in mm. 3, 12, and 17 of figure 1.3). In a larger sense, D remains a harmonic anchor throughout the movement. Figures 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 show the sonorities that mark the section endings of the movement, chords that are related by change across sections: at the end of the first section (figure 1.4), the chord is comprised of bare, open fifths, D/A; at the end of the second section (figure 1.5), Revueltas adds an E3 in the viola; in the final chord of the movement (figure 1.6), Revueltas rests on a first-inversion extended D-major chord, incorporating the major seventh (C♯) and ninth (E).

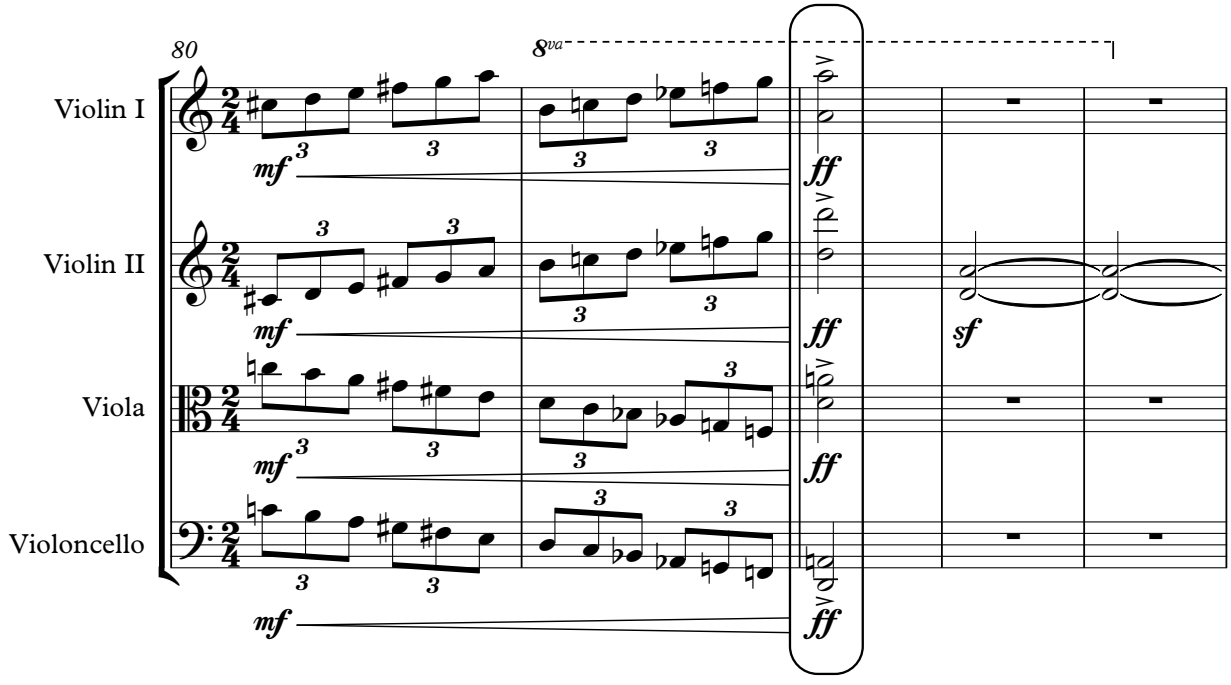

Figure 1.4: Revueltas, String Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), I. Allegro giocoso, mm. 80–84

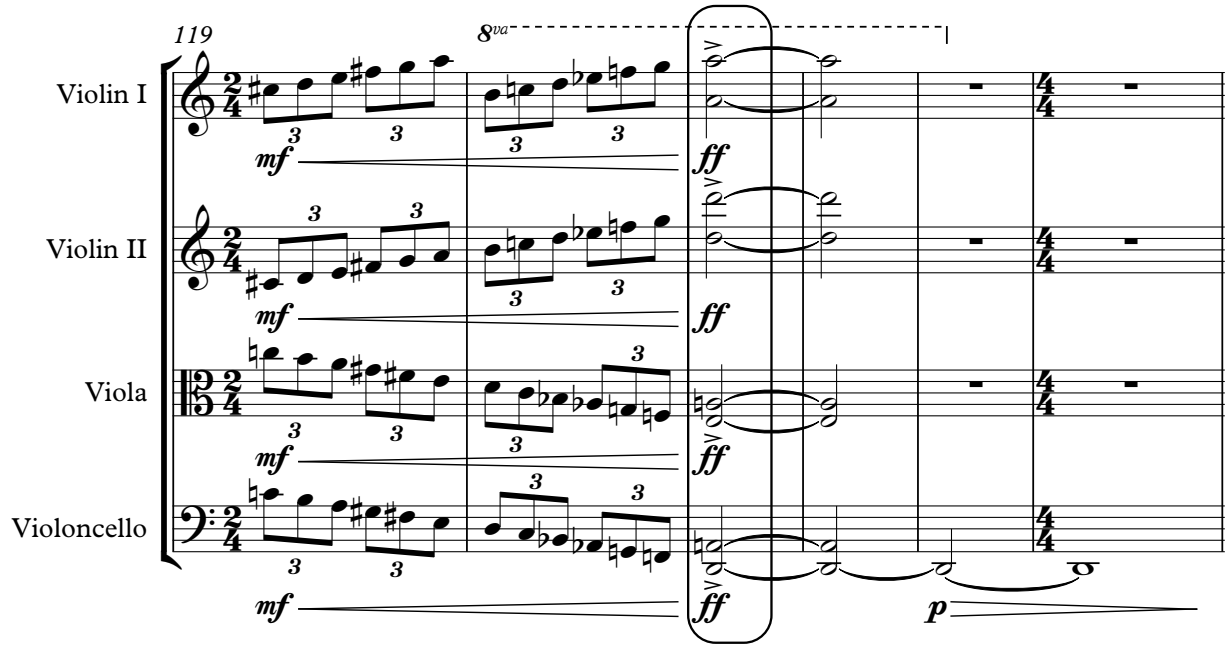

Figure 1.5: Revueltas, String Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), I. Allegro giocoso, mm. 119–24

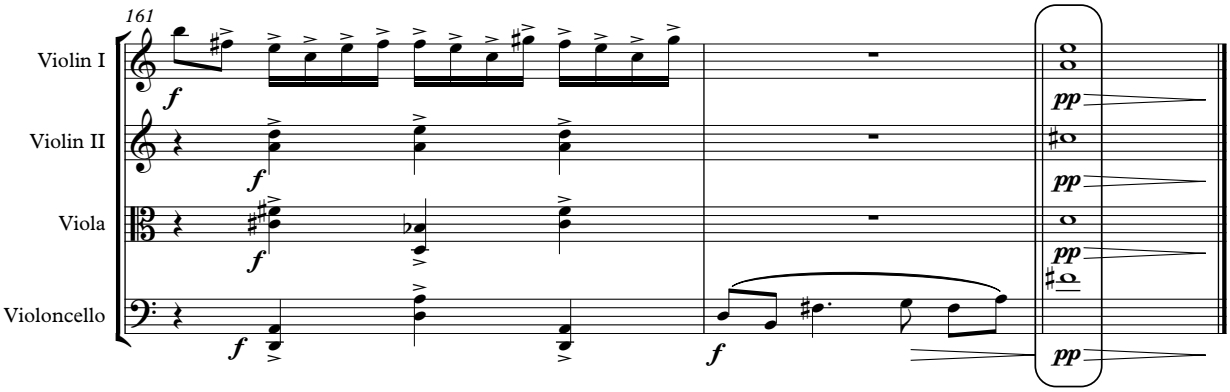

Figure 1.6: Revueltas, String Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), I. Allegro giocoso, mm. 161–end

In another sense, certain sections of the music are even more fixed, as large segments of the music repeat nearly verbatim in the quartets—a kind of wholesale repetition that Patrick McCreless (2009) notes is uncommon in early twentieth-century string quartets. One could note, for example, the nearly identical

writing in figures 1.4 and 1.5. Further, this kind of repetition, even in larger structures, also crosses between movements at times. Figures 1.7 and 1.8 show sections from the first and second movements of Quartet No. 2. As displayed in these figures, the two movements share a section comprised of ten bars that are essentially identical to one another, aside from a change of instrumentation (and, thus, register) for the folk tune statement at the end of the excerpt.

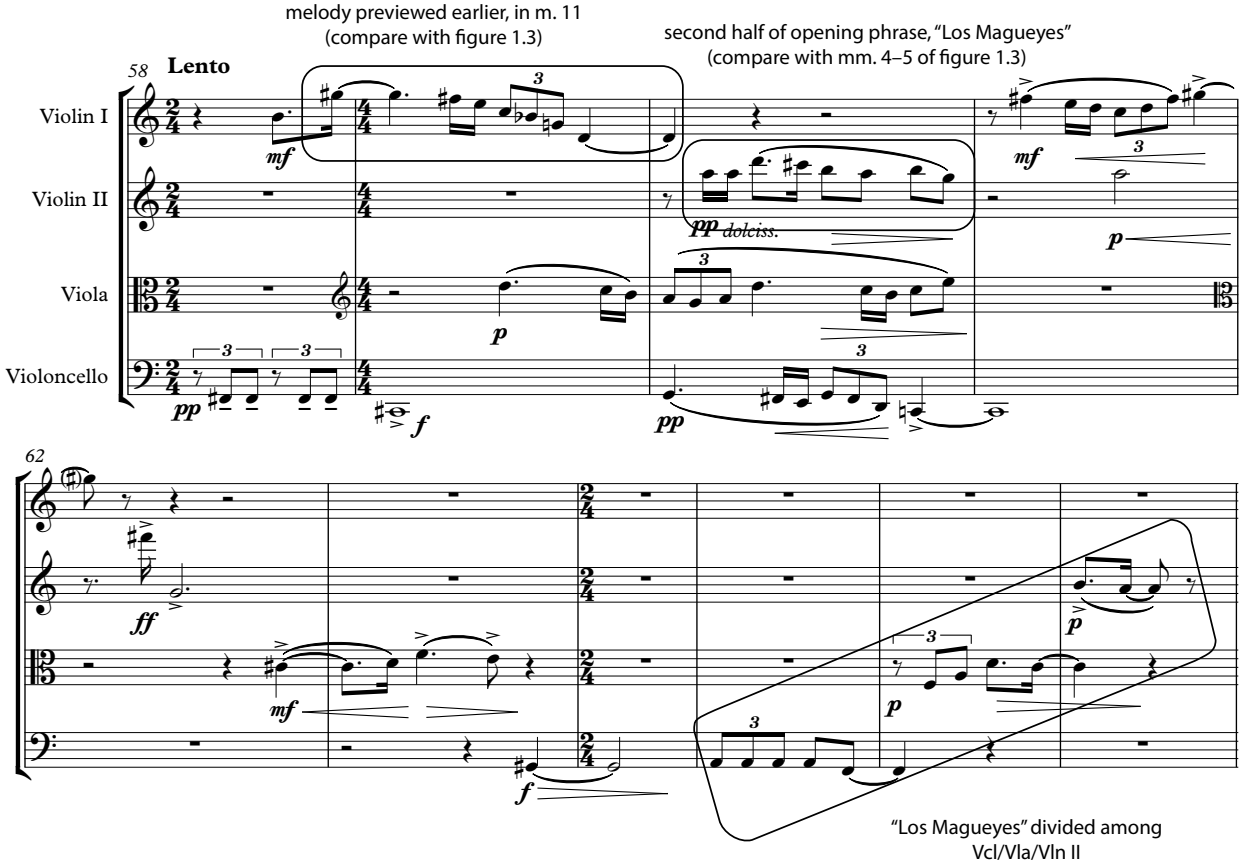

Figure 1.7: Revueltas, String Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), I. Allegro giocoso (Lento section), mm. 58–67

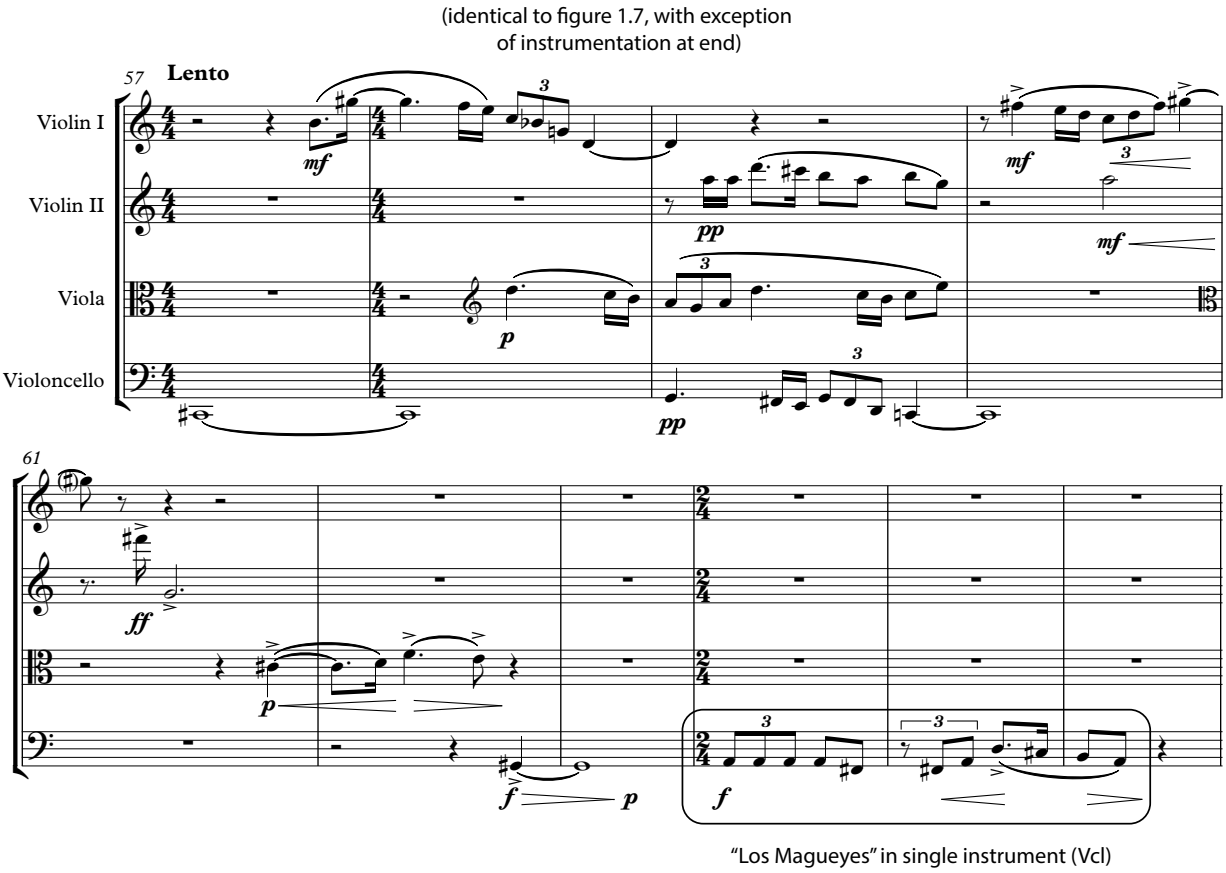

Figure 1.8: Revueltas, String Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), II. Molto vivace (Lento section), mm. 57–66

In addition to this direct repetition, the second movement as a whole is closely tied to the first, carrying over the opening gesture of "Los Magueyes" as the primary theme (compare, for example, mm. 1–2 from the second movement, in figure 1.9 below, to m. 3 of figure 1.1), and transforming it into a driving rhythmic motive for this energetic movement, a use that is even visible within the first several measures.

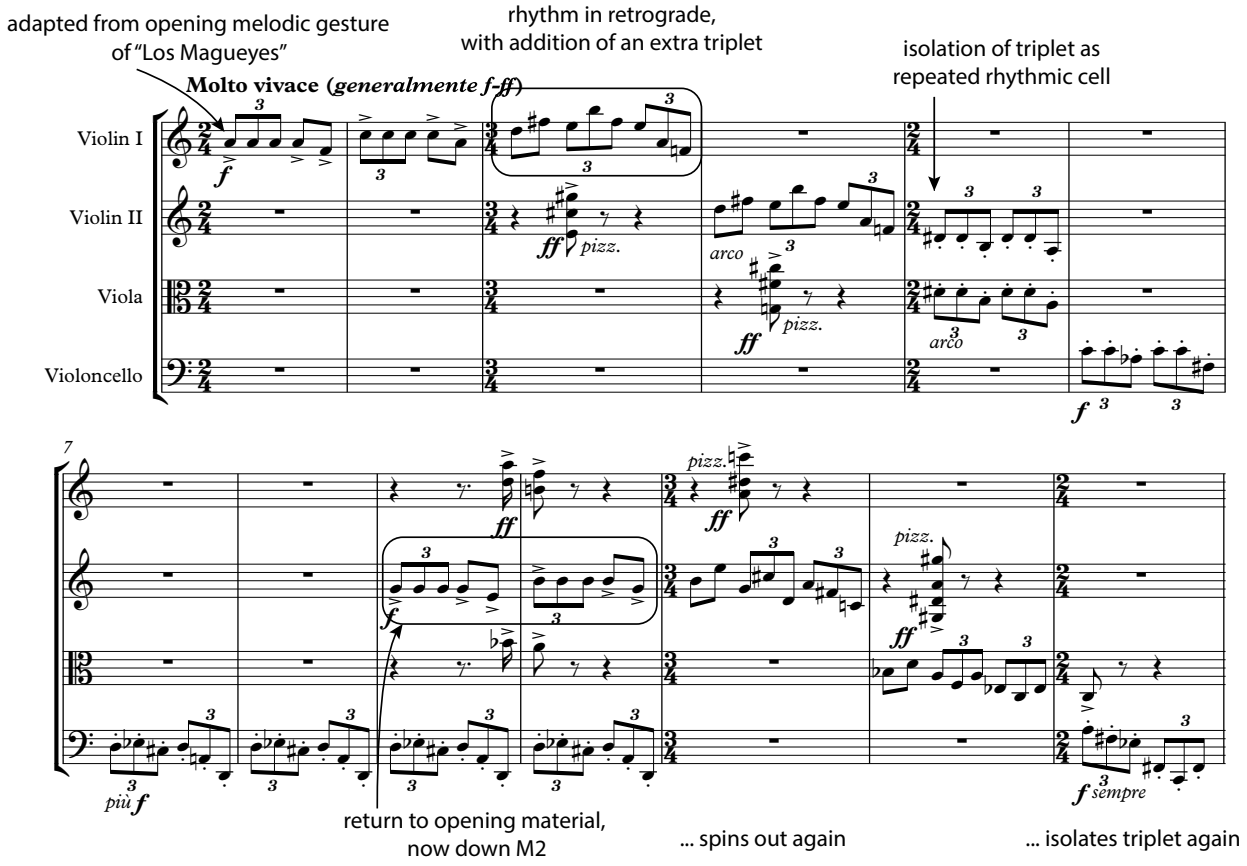

Figure 1.9: Revueltas, String Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), II. Molto vivace, mm. 1–13

Yet after two movements that share a kind of expressive continuity and hammer the "Los Magueyes" theme into a motoric triplet gesture, Revueltas turns entirely away from the "folkloric" for the final movement to create a mechanical-sounding contrapuntal texture. Instead of a popular meter like 2/4, the final movement is written in a chunky 5/4 whose flat rhythm is emphasized by the use of an accent mark on each note, as well as the tempo marking, "Allegro molto sostenuto." The subject begins with a leap of a tritone and outlines a major seventh while the answer presents a more varied intervallic content, a sharp divergence from the flavor of the two preceding movements. In this movement, Revueltas's writing excludes Mexicanisms, emphasizing instead precisely the studied and self-conscious quality that Copland, Mayer-Serra, and Garland claimed Revueltas lacked.

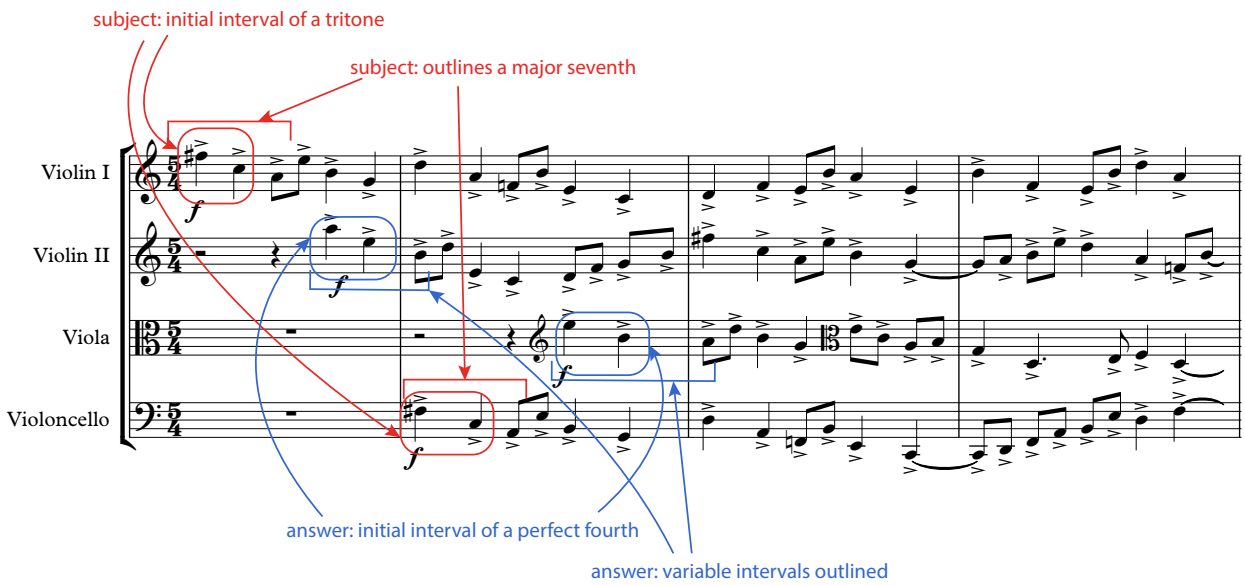

Figure 1.10: Revueltas, String Quartet No. 2 ("Magueyes"), III. Allegro molto sostenuto, mm. 1–4

This combination of fixedness with transformation, abrupt breaks, and interruptions is congruous both with Revueltas's prose writings and Saavedra's assertion that Revueltas eschewed some of the typical traits of Mexicanism, his seemingly reluctant use of them colored by manipulation and fragmentation of folk or nationalistic materials. This is not to treat ambivalence as a wholly open and flexible category, but rather to keep with the Oxford English Dictionary definition, "The coexistence in one person of contradictory emotions or attitudes (as love and hatred) towards a person or thing" ("Ambivalence | ambivalency" 2013). Here Revueltas's music reflects his ambivalent prose, specifically its ambivalence about nationalism and erudite composition, as well as expectations of progress and direction in art music. This ambivalence is perhaps strongest in the string quartets: Eduardo Mata (2007) argues that many of the defining features of Revueltas's string quartets are opposite to the common traits of the orchestral works (21–22).

Saavedra (2001) also notes that Revueltas's string quartets served a different purpose from his orchestral works. He wrote a number of pieces for both kinds of ensemble in the early 1930s, part of a flurry of composition that took place after Revueltas joined Carlos Chávez at the helm of the Orquesta

Sinfónica de México and the Conservatório Nacional. In the space of just a few years, Revueltas composed all four of his string quartets, several chamber-orchestra works, and at least three pieces for full orchestra. Among these, the orchestral works were more public, while the string quartets were performed in smaller venues, on instruments that Revueltas, a violinist, knew well. Implicitly, such familiar, comparatively safe spaces might allow Revueltas to express more private musical opinions.

Functions of Ambivalence

Revueltas's ambivalence is manifested not only in his music and prose, but also in the unique cultural-political environment of the time, and Revueltas's position in that environment. In considering ambivalence toward Mexicanism, I draw upon a question of identity and exoticism that is deeply entwined with nationalist expression. In the edited volume *Diálogo de Resplandores: Carlos Chávez y Silvestre Revueltas*, Talía Jiménez-Ramírez writes:

> Tradition exists from two points of view at the same time: the European and the native [Mexican]. Both composers [Chávez and Revueltas] identified, on one hand, with an idealized Europe (each in his own way), and on the other, with his experience of what is or ought to be Mexican. Although Chávez and Revueltas used a traditional European voice to give presence to their native identity in European or Europeanized forums, they also used their native voice to find a place in those circles, because this was new for [those circles]. In this way, both made an effort to belong, but also to differentiate themselves; they struggled to accept and also reject the attractive force of the European… What's more, each of these forces involves an internal conflict between acceptance and rejection of their own tradition.[13]

[13] Jiménez-Ramírez 2002, 49: "La tradición existe desde dos puntos de vista al mismo tiempo, el europeo y el autóctono. Ambos compositores se identifican, por un lado, con una Europa idealizada (por cada uno a su manera), y por otro, con su experiencia de lo que es y/o de lo que debería ser lo mexicano. Aunque Chávez y Revueltas utilicen su voz europea tradicional para darle presencia a su identidad autóctona en foros europeos o europeizados, también utilizan su voz autóctona para hacerse lugar en estos círculos, por ser ésta novedosa dentro de ellos. Así, ambos se esfuerzan por pertenecer, pero a la vez por diferenciarse; de esta manera se manifiesta su lucha por aceptar y a la vez rechazar la fuerza de atracción europea. . . . Por si fuera poco, cada una de estas fuerzas implica un conflicto proprio entre la aceptación y el rechazo de su propria tradición."

In fact, while issues of cosmopolitanism and nationalism are pertinent for most of the composers in this dissertation, often in connection with international experiences, the question of dual identity (cosmopolitan and national) is especially relevant for Revueltas. He spent many years outside of Mexico—the better part of the period 1917–1930, including much of his musical training and formative professional experiences—and while he self-identified as a Mexican composer, he spent nearly half of his life in the United States prior to Carlos Chávez's invitation to return to Mexico to work with the Orquesta Sinfónica de México and the Conservatorio Nacional. Even after returning, Revueltas worked to emphasize ties with the United States through concerts in New York and new-music festivals that presented works from composers in the Pan American Association of Composers (Contreras Soto 2000 and Gibson 2008). Yet as mentioned previously, even as he pursued these external audiences, he wrote that his favorite music was that of his village (notably placing his music outside of that category and thus treating it as an external object).

In broader terms, as Madrid and Saavedra write, questions of nationalism were highly contested in Mexico during this period, with individual composers providing contrasting answers to questions of not only *how* Mexican music should present a unique and recognizable identity, but also *whether* Mexican music should have such an identity at all (Madrid 2008 and Saavedra 2001).

The question of ambivalence in the case of Revueltas largely hinges on issues of Mexicanism, and to this end, draws into question the usefulness of labeling some of Revueltas's music "Mexicanist" in opposition to "modernist." For example, Saavedra (2001) labels Quartets 2 and 4 "Mexicanist," while she describes Quartets 1 and 3 as "modernist," and "non-Mexicanist" (241–45). Saavedra proposes this distinction as follows:

> Several of [Revueltas's early] works…are intimate, rather playful, and modernist, and contributed to Revueltas's reputation as irreverent and a member of the avant-garde. Others constitute the composer's first attempts both at writing music that sounded Mexican, and—because of the public

and contested context in which the pieces were written and performed—at making an ideological and aesthetic statement of sorts. These attempts clearly appear from the beginning to be fraught with ambivalence. The reasons for this ambivalence, however, are not easy to pin down. (242)

Saavedra makes a useful point that Revueltas addressed multiple aims through these works, but the division of works into Mexicanist *or* modernist creates an artificial partition into categories of works that I would argue are more fluid and multifarious than this binary division would suggest. For example, compare the opening of Quartet 2 (figure 1.1) with the following excerpt from the final movement of Quartet No. 1, a work that Saavedra characterizes as modernist rather than Mexicanist (2001, 241):

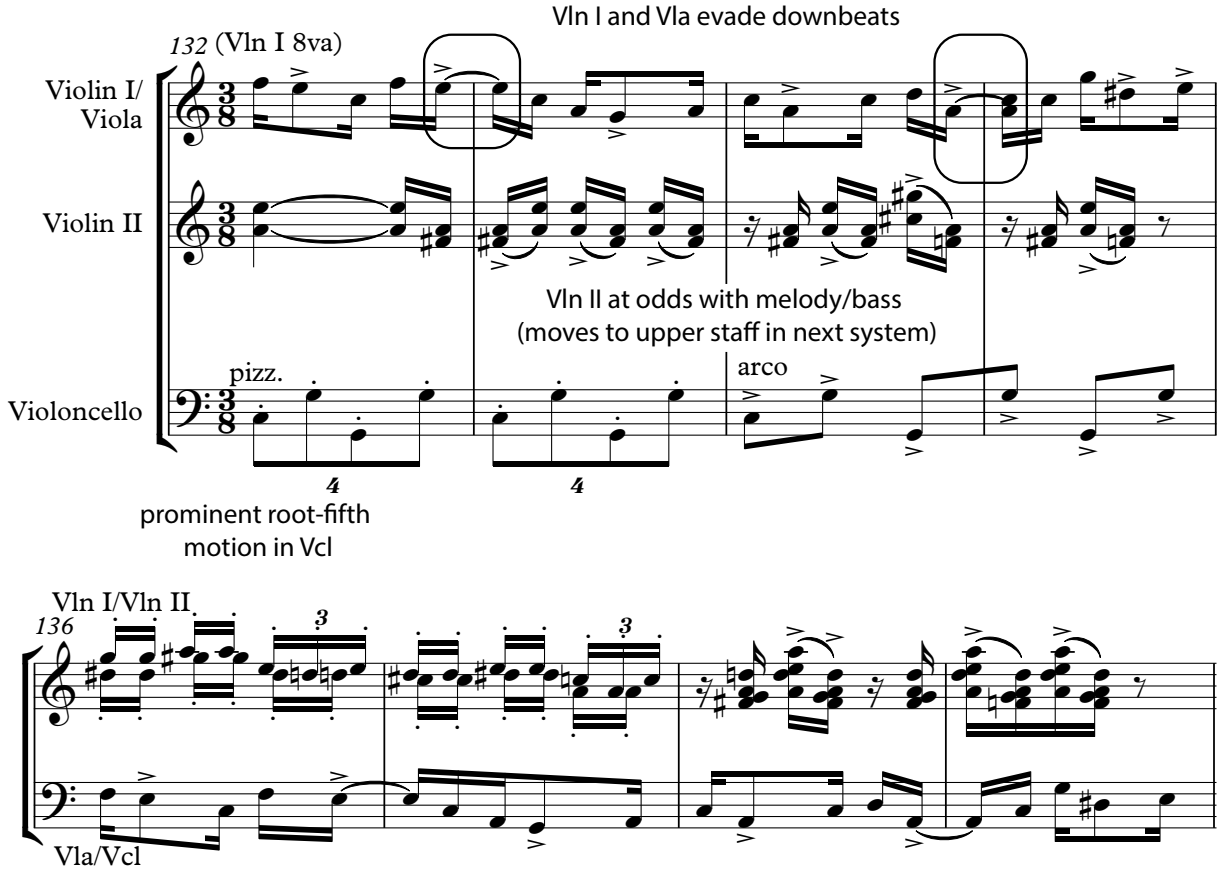

Figure 1.11: Revueltas, String Quartet No. 1, final movement, mm. 132–39

Between these two examples, several features stand out: prominent root-fifth motion in the bass; a seeming mismatch between this light, comic, popular-style accompaniment and the meter of the other parts

(in this example, the melody also deliberately evades downbeats and clear meter suggestion); and a vague bitonality or harmonic friction—here, the second violin provides a dissonant and somewhat halting filler between melody and bass. Similarly, other less-"Mexicanist" segments of Quartets 2 and 4 find parallels with more "modernist" gestures within Quartets 1 and 3 (as in the previously discussed figure 1.10, the last movement of "Mexicanist" Quartet No. 2). I propose that instead of characterizing some works as modernist and others as Mexicanist, or with varying shades between, one might productively see moments of Mexicanism that appear in various ways across Revueltas's music, sometimes fleeting and other times more dominant within a work; by extension, all of these works could be considered "modernist," thus minimizing the value of highlighting this attribute in certain works over others. Instead of a unified approach that continuously asserts a single viewpoint or works toward a single goal, this music can be characterized as "disunity modernism," one that prioritizes disjunction over organicism.[14]

Revueltas's particular brand of ambivalence could be described as a dialectic between fracturing and stasis: he twists and breaks up some materials while holding others quite fixed. This pairing is not unique to Revueltas: scholars such as Cone (1962) and Taruskin (1996) have discussed this issue in relation to Stravinsky, and Hoag (1987) specifically addresses this relationship in style between Stravinsky and Revueltas, who knew of Stravinsky's work.[15] In concert with his social and musical aims, Revueltas's ambivalence may well have been strategic, an attempt to avoid being labeled in one way or another. More than simple questions of nationalism and folk markers, the lens of ambivalence provides a compelling way to grapple with a variety of aspects of Revueltas's compositional style, and highlights common threads between the composer's own comments and those of his critics. In this way, it allows for movement beyond

[14] For further discussion of this topic, see Chapter 4.

[15] In a letter from 1925, Revueltas mentioned Stravinsky in a letter to Chávez—in passing, as though both men were familiar with him and, presumably, his music (Carmona 1989).

the current musicological paradigms for Revueltas, and can further prove useful for highlighting tensions and issues for similarly essentialized composers.

Carlos Chávez: Dialectical Indigenism, Strategic Alterity, Musical Fuzziness

While Silvestre Revueltas held ambivalent views toward nationalism and art music writ large, Carlos Chávez has historically been depicted as a hero of Mexican music during this period. He led the national orchestra (Orquesta Sinfónica de México) and the national conservatory (Conservatorio Nacional) for many years—indeed, Revueltas's posts with these institutions were a direct result of Chávez's leadership and the invitation he extended to Revueltas in this capacity. He also had the greatest visibility of any Mexican composer of this period; he conducted concerts of Mexican music all over the United States, even leading the New York Philharmonic, and programmed a 1940 concert series at New York's Museum of Modern Art created to complement the three-floor exhibit at the museum, "Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art." Even today, as Alejandro L. Madrid notes, he remains "the Mexican composer perhaps best known to American musicologists" (2008, 49).

Chávez is implicated in some of the quotes given earlier in this chapter, such as Otto Mayer-Serra's 1941 complaint that the works of "Chávez as well as those of Revueltas" lack depth and development. In general, however, musicians and critics have tended to describe the two composers quite differently. In contrast to Copland's criticisms of Revueltas, he wrote of Chávez,

> Carlos Chávez is one of the best examples I know of a thoroughly contemporary composer. He has faced in his music almost all the major problems of modern music: the overthrow of Germanic ideals, the objectification of sentiment, the use of folk material in its relation to nationalism, the intricate rhythms, the linear as opposed to vertical writing, the specifically "modern" sound images. It is music that belongs entirely to our own age. It propounds no problems, no metaphysics. Chávez's music is extraordinarily healthy. It is music created not as a substitute for living but as a manifestation of life. It is clear and clean-sounding, without shadows or softness. Here is contemporary music if ever there was any. (Copland 1941a)

Copland's description is practically a paean to Chávez. It should be noted that the two composers were quite close friends, and communication between them was warm and friendly, with Copland staying in Chávez's home at times.[16] Still, Copland's description is not merely praise for Chávez, but an idealization that is quite similar to any number of characterizations of Copland's own musical style. He takes pains to highlight not only the modernist elements but also the nationalist ones, and presents no perceived weaknesses or reservations regarding Chávez's compositions.

In stark contrast to Revueltas, contemporary critics often held Chávez in high esteem as a thoughtful, scholarly, intellectual composer of Mexican music, the "head" to Revueltas's savage and wild "heart" if you will. Further, Chávez published numerous times on Revueltas as a composer (as in the quote on page 20, in an interview from 1976), as well as on Mexican music broadly speaking; in particular, his writings on Mexican music gave him greater visibility. Coupled with his official positions with the conservatory and the symphony, his opinions on music were taken to be more authoritative and prominent than those of Revueltas. Moreover, his role in the history of Mexican music was inscribed and affirmed in official narratives of national musical history in the post-Revolution era. Alejandro L. Madrid (2008) notes that the Mexican government placed Chávez at the center of its nationalist artistic rhetoric, in which "indigenist" materials were taken to promote and validate two aspects of national identity: a new post-revolutionary government, and an emphasis on pre-Columbian civilizations as a new origin myth of sorts.

Yet recent scholarship paints a much murkier picture of Chávez's music. Carol Hess (2013), Christina Taylor Gibson (2012), Alejandro L. Madrid (2008), and Leonora Saavedra (2002) have all pointed out that Chávez's music participates in a kind of doublespeak that suggests ambivalence toward some of these very notions. In this section of the chapter, I will delve into questions of ambivalence in relation to

[16] See, for example, Copland's letter of May 15, 1930 to Chávez, which he begins by saying "I can't tell you how happy it made me to receive your very affectionate letter" (Copland 1930).

Carlos Chávez's musical and political attitudes: first I will discuss this through a lens of historical engagement, and second through a close reading of a work that offers unique opportunities for viewing tensions and compositional strategies employed by Carlos Chávez—the ballet *H. P.*

Carlos Chávez and a History of Double Messages

The early 1920s, following the end of the Revolution, saw a number of shifts in national Mexican discourse. José Vasconcelos, newly appointed head of the Secretary of Education and rector of the National University (Universidad Nacional de México, UNM), adopted a vision of national music that not only affected education but also branched into other realms of musical culture in Mexico as well. Saavedra (2001) notes that Vasconcelos's influence on music of the period was not as direct or powerful as some scholars have suggested, but his approach had an impact on official narratives of music, particularly in connection with Carlos Chávez and other composers in his immediate community of *neoateneístas*.[17] Indeed, Madrid (2008) points out that Chávez and fellow *neoateneístas* benefited from the support of Vasconcelos's *ateneísta* group, from which they took their name. He writes:

> The support of the influential *ateneísta* translated into a powerful social validation for the group of young artists and intellectuals. However, the benefit came with a handicap: although the ideas of the *ateneístas* were somewhat progressive, they still formed the agenda of a rather conservative generation; the youngsters had to align themselves with the *ateneístas'* ideology and support their cultural enterprises. Disregarding this inconvenience, with Vasconcelos's and the *ateneístas*' rise to power came the emergence of the young generation into public recognition. (Madrid 2008, 55)

[17] The *neoateneístas* were a group of poets, writers, and musicians Chávez befriended in high school, among them Octavio Barreda, José Gorostiza, and Carlos Pellicer. This group has also been called El Nuevo Ateneo de la Juventud. Both names refer to this group as coming after the *ateneístas*, also known as El Ateneo de la Juventud, which included most prominently José Vasconcelos and Henríquez Ureña. The *neoateneístas* in many ways opposed the *ateneístas* artistically, but they also owed a debt to them, as Vasconcelos sponsored them starting in 1921. Importantly, they also needed to remain at least minimally in alliance with the *ateneístas* until Vasconcelos's departure from the Ministry of Education in 1924. For further discussion of this relationship, and Chávez's place in it specifically, see Madrid 2008 and Saavedra 2001.

Madrid shows that the relatively conservative position and agenda of the *ateneístas* forced Chávez into a delicate position, in which he officially supported Vasconcelos, but was perceived by critics as *estridentista* in compositional style—the *estridentistas* were an avant-garde group that actively criticized the conservative position of the *ateneístas*. Yet Chávez didn't outwardly support the *estridentistas* until 1926, after Vasconcelos had left his official posts at UNM and the Ministry of Education (Madrid 2008). Between these two conflicting positions, Chávez created music that did not match his speech; while outwardly supporting the Vasconcelos stance, his music bespoke a competing aesthetic.

A number of scholars have commented on Chávez's work navigating multiple positions and identities. And while Parker (1985) describes Chávez's style as synchronic rather than progressive, Hess and Saavedra both observe a shift in Chávez's own characterization of his style around 1928, during Chávez's second trip to New York City. At this time, according to Hess and Saavedra, critics began to discuss his music as indelibly Mexican for the first time, and Chávez appears to have followed their lead, retroactively characterizing his music in similar terms (Saavedra 2002, Hess 2013).

These strategic descriptions—officially conservative while musically avant-garde, or asserting the inevitably Mexican quality of his music in accordance with critical reception—reflect a need for delicate negotiation between opposing demands. Further, recent studies by Gibson (2012) and Hess (2013) reveal a deep ambivalence toward these representations of nation and internationalism, one that played out in his musical handling of the ballet *H. P.*, and that contrasts strongly with Revueltas's response to a similar network of issues.

H. P.

In 1932, Leopold Stokowski conducted the premiere of Carlos Chávez's ballet *H. P.* in Philadelphia.[18] The loose plot of the ballet in some sense follows a Pan-American narrative in which New Yorkers travel to "the tropics" on a boat, then return home; for this performance of the four-movement work, Diego Rivera designed costumes and sets and Catherine Littlefield choreographed dancers from the Philadelphia Grand Opera Company. The performance was heavily publicized months in advance, including the display of Rivera's set and costume drawings in a Philadelphia museum and press releases about Stokowski's travel to Mexico in order to get a sense of the "essence" of the place (Gibson 2008, 2012). On the surface, this explicitly cross-national narrative seems to provide a good opportunity to observe how Chávez might characterize these two places musically, and to consider questions of nationalism and modernism in relation to place. Upon closer examination, however, such depictions are not so clear or simple: as studies from Saavedra (2001 and 2002), Gibson (2012), and Hess (2013) have shown, Chávez faced tensions and pressures in the composition of this work not unlike those he encountered in Mexico in the early 1920s. Like his experiences with Vasconcelos's *ateneísta* group, Chávez faced artistic and political demands that did not necessarily match his own preferences and composerly goals.

In an article discussing questions of representation in this performance, Gibson (2012) mentions that Chávez was under significant financial pressure during the creation of *H. P.* First, he needed greater visibility and success in order to stay in the United States; second, after Chávez's public arguments against one of his own works in final dress rehearsal caused the premiere to be canceled (*Fiesta*, 1927), he desperately needed to regain the trust and confidence of friends and potential backers. Further, the late

[18] This work and the three-movement orchestral suite that was later published from it have been known by a few different titles, including *H. P.*, *Horsepower Suite*, and *Suite de Caballos de Vapor*. In American scholarship, musicologists most commonly refer to it as *H. P.*, and moreover, the clean-copy manuscripts in the archives of the New York Public Library (JOB 84–11 no. 97) carry the title *H. P.*, so this is the title I will use for the work in the dissertation.

1920s and early 1930s saw a time in the United States often referred to as the "Mexico Vogue," in which leftists in the U.S. showed great interest in "all things Mexico."[19] This would seem to provide the perfect entrée for Chávez into the New York arts scene as an up-and-coming modernist from Mexico. While the language of the Mexico Vogue highlighted international exchange and positive images of Mexico, Gibson notes that the reality "emphasized those aspects of the culture that were foreign to U.S. urbanites" (2012, 170), particularly aspects that were viewed as exotic or primitive.

Within this environment, Chávez uses what Leonora Saavedra calls "strategic alterity," presenting his own identity as that of the Other. *H. P.* was explicitly written for a foreign gaze onto Mexico, and it was first performed as a ballet in its entirety for an audience of urban residents of New York, Philadelphia, and other Northeastern cities. For this audience, Chávez creates an image of both North and South that matches the U.S. desire for tropical flair as well as modernism. In *H. P.*, he depicts New York as a bustling, industrial, urban environment; by contrast, the scene of "the tropics" fits perfectly into stereotypical images, with marimbas and maracas accompanying dancers dressed as raw materials such as pineapples and bars of silver and gold (see figure 1.12).

[19] There are a number of sources that address this phenomenon, particularly in relation to U.S. foreign policy. See, for example, Delpar 1992. For more specific discussion of how this related to musical output, see Gibson 2008, 2012, and 2013, and Hess 2013.

Figure 1.12: Diego Rivera, costume drawings for *H. P.* Museum of Modern Art 505.1941.13 (pineapple) and 505.1941.14 (gold and silver bars)

Thus, in the work Chávez depicts Mexico in a consciously self-exoticized fashion, and the somewhat awkward realization of this exoticism is clear in Frida Kahlo's oft-cited response regarding the performers, their costumes, and the choreography at the premiere performance:

> It turned out to be a *porquería* [rubbish/lousy] . . . not because of the music or the decorations, but because of the choreography since there was a crowd of insipid blonds pretending they were Indians from Tehuantepec and when they had to dance the *zandunga* [Tehuantepec waltz] they looked as if they had lead instead of blood. To sum up, a pure total *cochinada* [filth/piggery]. (Parker 1985, 192—see also Gibson 2008, 198 and Saavedra 2011)

In this performance, Mexico is not only depicted as "other," but also as natural, a source of raw materials to be exploited by the North. This binary contrast naturalizes the rawness of the South against the unnatural

manipulation of the North, as in the following statements from Philip Leidy's program notes, which were printed in the playbill for the premiere.

> The North with its skyscrapers, machinery, and mechanical activity. Man collects the raw materials of the earth: gold, silver, cotton, tobacco, and the machinery which enables him to dominate his surroundings, and satisfy his desire and needs. The world at work, dominated by the stock-ticker, denoting increasing wealth. Mankind's struggle for its welfare revolts against mere material values, reverting to an insatiable desire for the natural products of the earth. Men and raw materials dance and blend into the rhythm of *H. P.* as the Ballet ends. (Quoted in Gibson 2008, 200)

> The Ballet *H. P.* symbolizes the relations of the Northern Regions with those of the Tropics, and shows their inter-relationships… The Ballet depicts the fact that the North needs the Tropics, just as the Tropics need the machinery of the North, and attempts to harmonize the result. (Quoted in Gibson 2008, 191)

In her discussion of lopsided Pan-Americanism evidenced in *H. P.*, Carol Hess (2013) highlights the power relations in this situation: the funding coming from U.S. backers like the Rockefellers, and the New England audience hungry to see developed, sophisticated, modern images of themselves in contrast to the delightful, tropical, exotic South. In an interview with the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Chávez says of the work:

> The sailors of North America find themselves intrigued and intoxicated by their own imagination of what the glamorous tropics hold for them… As the ship leaves the north, inhibitions tend to vanish under the warmer sun and above the bluer waters, until the southern port is reached. In this episode the [score] departs from the abstract musical setting and becomes frankly languorous and sensuous. It again grows abstract as the ship returns northward, the voyagers resume their mannered inhibitions, and the measured cadence of the machine rises as the curtain descends. (Quoted in Hess 2013, 64)

In quotes like these, the North is the only real frame of reference: Northern views, Northern values, Northern assumptions. Nowhere is the voice of the South present. Yet as Leonora Saavedra (2002) points out, Chávez's own musical voice prior to the composition of *H. P.* matches much more closely the style that he depicts as "North" than the one he presents as "South." She describes this approach—strategic alterity—as a method Chávez used to gain entrée to an international community that otherwise had little use for him. She writes:

> The strategy of representation that Chávez used cannot be qualified/described more than paradoxically, since he elected to represent the South—supposedly emblematic of his part in the conflict and, therefore, himself—not with original music but with a tango, a sandunga, and a huapango. In contrast, he used his own personal, modernist style to represent the North.[20]

In an environment that demanded a position of alterity for a Mexican composer, Hess (2013) and Gibson (2012) both argue that Chávez managed also to engage in double messages that would read as subversive to audiences in the know, some obvious and some less obvious. Hess refers to this approach as "dialectical indigenism," borrowing from scholarship on Diego Rivera. For example, at the end of the ballet, dancers dressed as workers briefly revolt before concluding in a happy celebration, a narrative that was subtle enough to be misinterpreted by some as a "sooty parade" (Hess 2013). Thus Chávez does not merely create a passive image that fits the needs of the socially and financially empowered U.S. cultural players, but rather one that navigates between spaces and fulfills multiple demands, delivering different messages to different interpreters.

Hess and Gibson provide nuanced interpretations of *H. P.*, in which double messages reach the initiated and allow Chávez (and Rivera) to communicate an anti-capitalist agenda that resisted Northern domination and exploitation. In both readings of *H. P.*, the authors employ readings of the music to support their argument of duplicity. I find, however, that a close inspection of the music yields conclusions that are not quite as clear. Rather than a depiction in which, as Gibson argues, the aggressive North completely dominates and subjugates the South musically, I see musical fuzziness in *H. P.*, both literal and metaphorical. To this end, in combination with a grounding of Chávez's views through historical documents, my close

[20] Saavedra 2002, 133: "La estrategia de representación que utilizó Chávez no puede ser calificada más que como paradójica, ya que eligió representar el Sur—supuestamente emblemático de su parte en el conflicto y por tanto de sí mismo—no con música original sino con un tango, una sandunga y un huapango. En cambio, utilizó su proprio estilo modernista personal para representar al Norte: el frío industrializado Otro."

analytical exploration yields a more specific understanding of the relationship between composerly attitude and musical realization.

In addition to questions of Mexican perception in the United States, Chávez also takes a clear cue from Stravinsky, an unavoidable force in the area of modernist ballet. Chávez shows a clear awareness of Stravinsky's prominence as well as his works, mentioning him in letters with friends and colleagues at least as early as the mid-1920s (Carmona 1989). Indeed, the fourth movement of *H. P.* premiered at an International Composers Guild (ICG) concert in New York in 1926, and Stravinsky was a topic of discussion for Chávez well before that performance (NYPL Archives JOB 93–94). Rather than asserting any specific relationship or influence here, I mention Stravinsky's presence and prominence as a means of addressing the continuity of sound and community. *H. P.* shares a sonic relationship with some of Stravinsky's ballets, as well as containing overlap between modern sounds and exotic fantasy, and the audience very likely would have been familiar with Stravinsky as well, given the performances of his works in the New York area for more than a decade prior to the Philadelphia performances of *H. P.*

The first movement, "Danza del hombre," ("Dance of the Man"), is set in New York, and creates a perfectly modern image of the Northern city. As figure 1.13 shows, the movement begins with a flurry of angular activity: fortissimo violins breathlessly traverse a passage of leaping, disjointed sixteenth notes and sixteenth-note triplets, while other instruments walk up a scale in stepwise motion. The contrabass and tuba seemingly ground this C-major setting with a C-G dyad. Yet despite the completely diatonic pitch collection of the first two measures and prominent tonic–dominant open fifth in the lower register, the opening feels unsettled. The tonic triad is barely present—while E appears in this passage, D is the more prominent pitch—and the dominant harmony does not make an appearance. The stepwise diatonic motion of the clarinets, bassoons, and cellos is made dissonant with the trumpet by unsynchronized motion—the regular movement (two notes per beat) of the winds and cellos rubs against the irregular motion of the

trumpet, creating moments of consonance and moments of dissonance. And yet, even in this seeming paragon of modernity, Chávez creates a fuzzy sense of place, one in which there is more overlap between North and South than there might at first seem to be. Here, in the midst of a movement about urbanity, Chávez incorporates a fleeting Mexicanism in the trumpet lines, as trumpets 1 and 2 move in parallel thirds; I will return to this question in a moment. In measure 3, the second trombone adds to the friction by playing in parallel sevenths with the tuba (parallel fourths with the first trombones), interrupting what otherwise would have been a smooth series of parallel tenths between the first trombone and tuba. With all of this motion in and out of consonance, and interjection of dissonant lines, the overall impression of measures 1–4 is a jumble of musical voices that each pursue their own musical course, without much regard to the other instruments. Even within the single line of the violin part, the compound melody appears to diverge from itself, moving from parallel sixths in beat 3 of the first measure to parallel sevenths in beats 4 and 5. It is not until measure 5 (see figure 1.14) that some kind of evident coordination emerges.

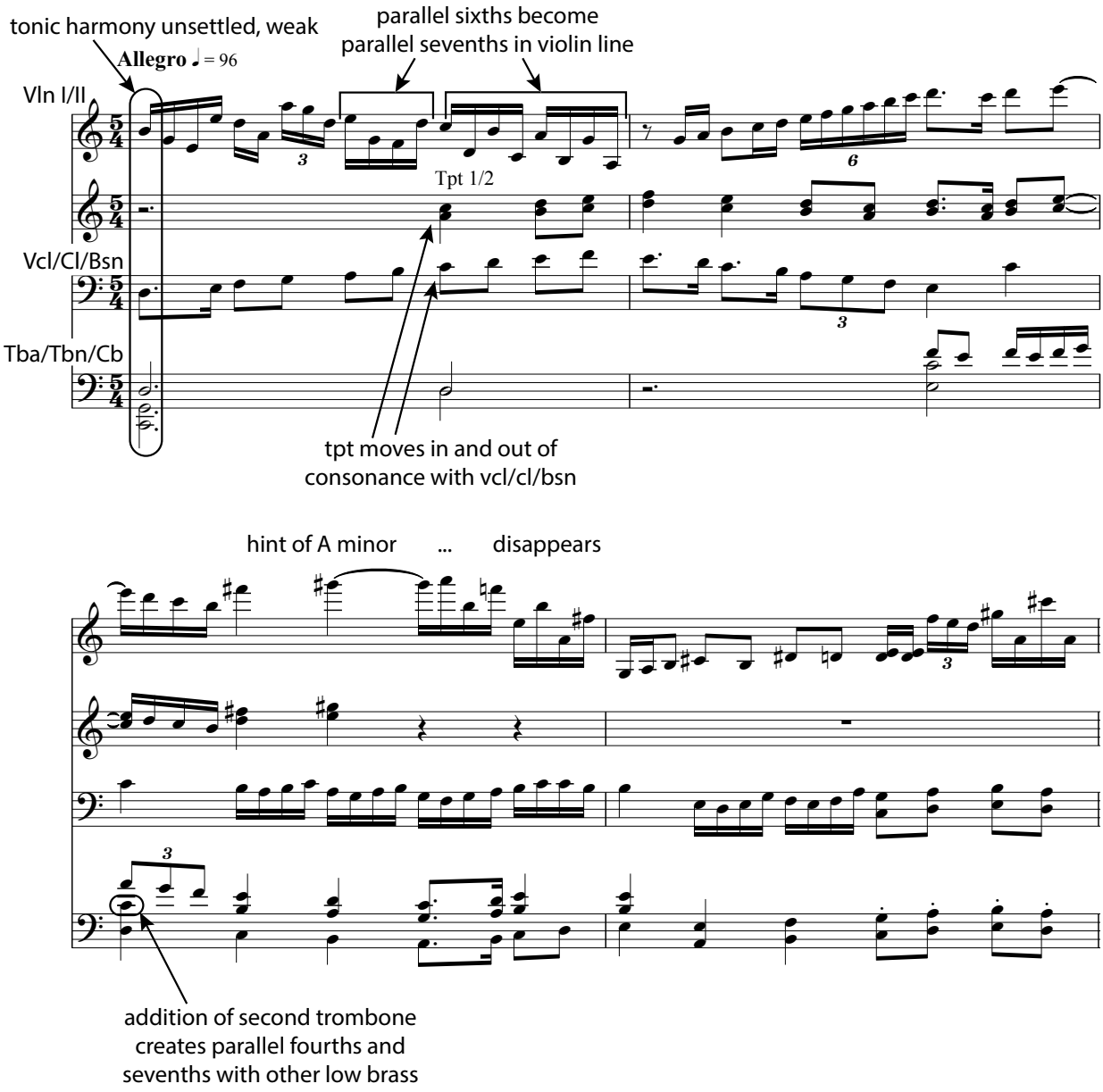

Figure 1.13: Carlos Chávez, *H. P.*, I. Danza del hombre, mm. 1–4[21]

As shown in figure 1.14, the downbeat of measure 5 is marked melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically as a moment of focus. As if to reinforce the importance of this moment as an arrival point,

[21] The first three movements of *H. P.* have been published as a suite, *Suite de Caballos de Vapor (Horse-Power Suite, H. P.)*. All score excerpts taken from movements 1–3 have been drawn from the orchestral suite, which is the only form of the work that is currently available in published form.

measures 5–6 are repeated almost verbatim as measures 7–8, and the piece appears to have landed (albeit roughly) in a somewhat more stable harmonic environment for a theme area. Despite the appearance of arrival, however, very little harmonic movement has taken place. Rather, the harmony of measure 5 is similar to that of measure 1 (emphasizing the open fifth of C-G in the bass, with a secondary presence of stacked thirds D-F-A-C above), and relatively little clear harmonic motion occurs in the interim. While the trumpets and violins hint at A Minor in measure 3 (through F♯ and G♯), this possibility disappears as quickly as it appeared, muddled through the addition of C♯ and D♯ (as well as the continued presence of D♮ and F♮). Moreover, as mentioned above, measure 5 is not prepared by any kind of dominant harmony.

Contrast and arrival are shown, therefore, through other means. A brief pause in some of the instruments allows the downbeat of measure 5 to stand out as a beginning. A new, more stable harmonic motion—into and out of C[22]—is coupled with a more regular and easily distinguishable meter of 4/4, and the texture changes such that the trumpets stand out as melody against the accompanying violins and countermotion of cellos and trombones.

[22] The specific assignation of harmonies in this passage is less clear than it might seem, but the recognizable pattern of the motion is supported by the direct repetition of all parts, not just the harmony. While the basses, cellos, and tubas alternate between C/G and A♭, the harmonies are structured in a diffuse way. Above the C bass Chávez writes G, B, D, F, and F♯ (avoiding the third of the chord until the fourth 8th note of the measure). Above the A♭ is D♯, E, and A, and out of that collection Chávez emphasizes major sevenths, tritones, and minor seconds, largely avoiding the open fourths and fifths that are available to him. More than a sense of root motion between C and A♭, or even a sense of "C" and "A♭" harmonies, the quintal structure of the C harmony, with stacked thirds above, provides more stability than the A♭ harmony, and serves as a contrast between stability and instability rather than a progression away from and back to tonic.

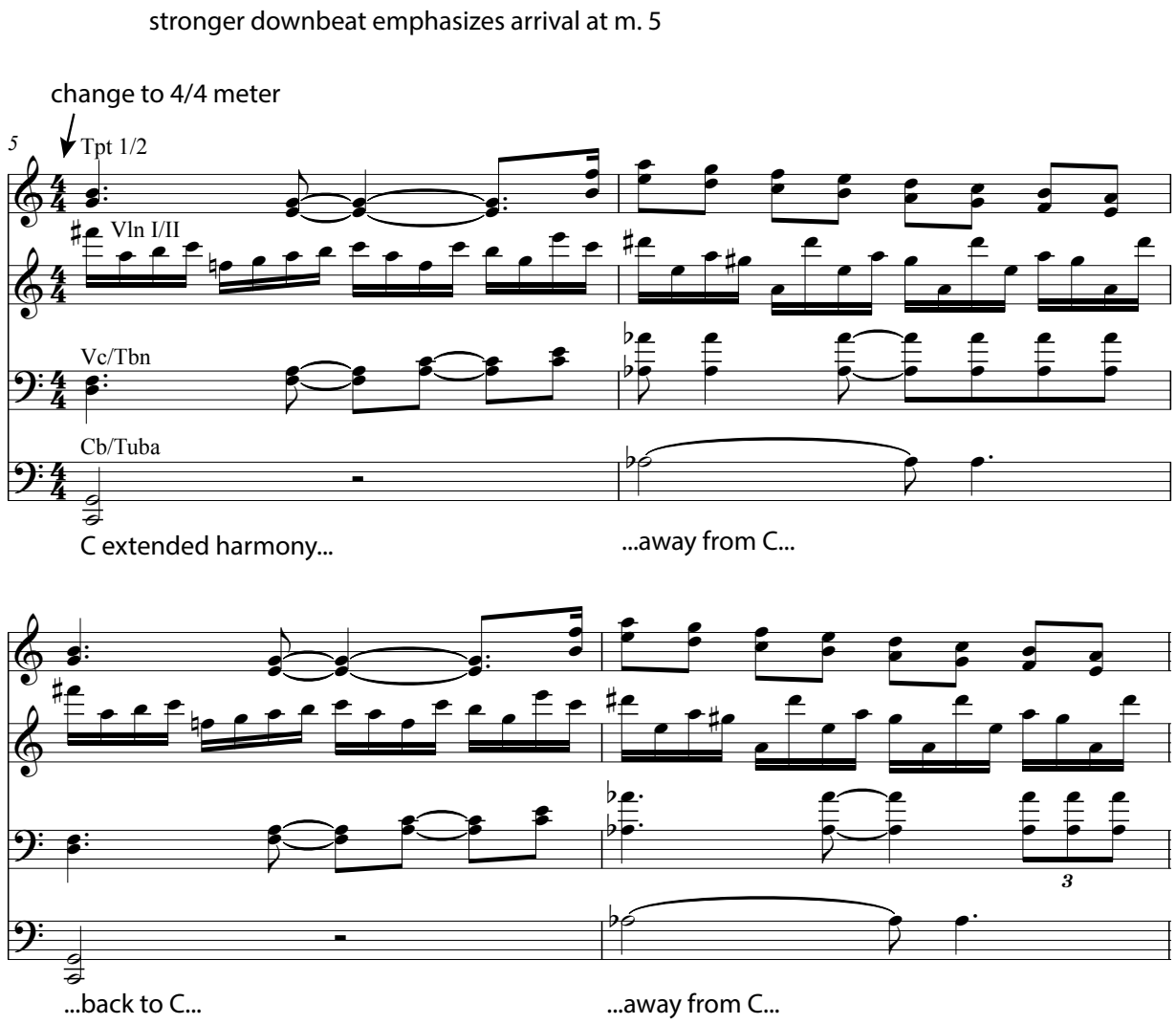

Figure 1.14: Chávez, *H. P.*, I. Danza del hombre, mm. 5–8

This interplay between motion and stasis pervades the first movement of *H. P.* Although the thematic structure of the movement suggests a sonata form or, at least, some sort of return and restatement beginning at rehearsal 31, no tonal center other than C is convincingly asserted. Instead of moving between C and other tonal areas, Chávez moves in and out of tonal clarity. As in the first few measures, where the asynchronous movement of parts results in a sort of fuzzy expression of the key (and the subsequent synchronization of parts announcing an "arrival"—of sorts—at C Major in measure 5), Chávez often

employs dissonance, dis-coordination (or, perhaps, discord-ination), or seeming lack of tonal fit to move away from key, and "returns" by bringing back clearer key-defining pitches or more coordinated motion between parts.

Stokowski wrote program notes for *H. P.* that were printed in *Musical America* months before the premiere. He described the suite as follows: one, "a steamship leaving New York for southern waters"; two, "passengers have forgotten the steel-edged, jagged life of the North as they approach the tropics"; three, "the music turns from the abstract, and grows completely languorous and sensuous"; and four, "the closing episode takes the passengers back…into the North of prohibition and machine civilization."[23]

This image of "prohibition and machine civilization" comes across in music that fits within the well-established trope of machine music of the time, as in, for example, John Alden Carpenter's *Skyscrapers* (1923–24) and George Antheil's *Ballet Mécanique* (1923–25, premiered 1927) (Hess 2013). In *H. P.*, the mechanization of New York is realized as a static, buzzing frenzy, something Chávez emphasizes in his treatment of both melody and accompaniment. Consider the accompaniment shown in figure 1.15. The violin/oboe melody at rehearsal 3 is accompanied by an insistent four-note pattern in the winds and low strings that seems to be running in place, as the percussive notes of the xylophone, military drum, and (two measures later) the glockenspiel, extract a larger stepwise motion from the strings that, nonetheless, does not have any clear destination. Rather, each voice enacts a sort of treadmill—or, perhaps, machine-like—movement, in which the same stepwise motion is taken repeatedly in order to accomplish very little ultimate movement.

[23] Daniel 1982, 283–4: There is no recording of the fourth movement, and it is not available in published form. The manuscript for this movement is available in the New York Public Library Carlos Chávez collection (JOB 84–11 no. 97).

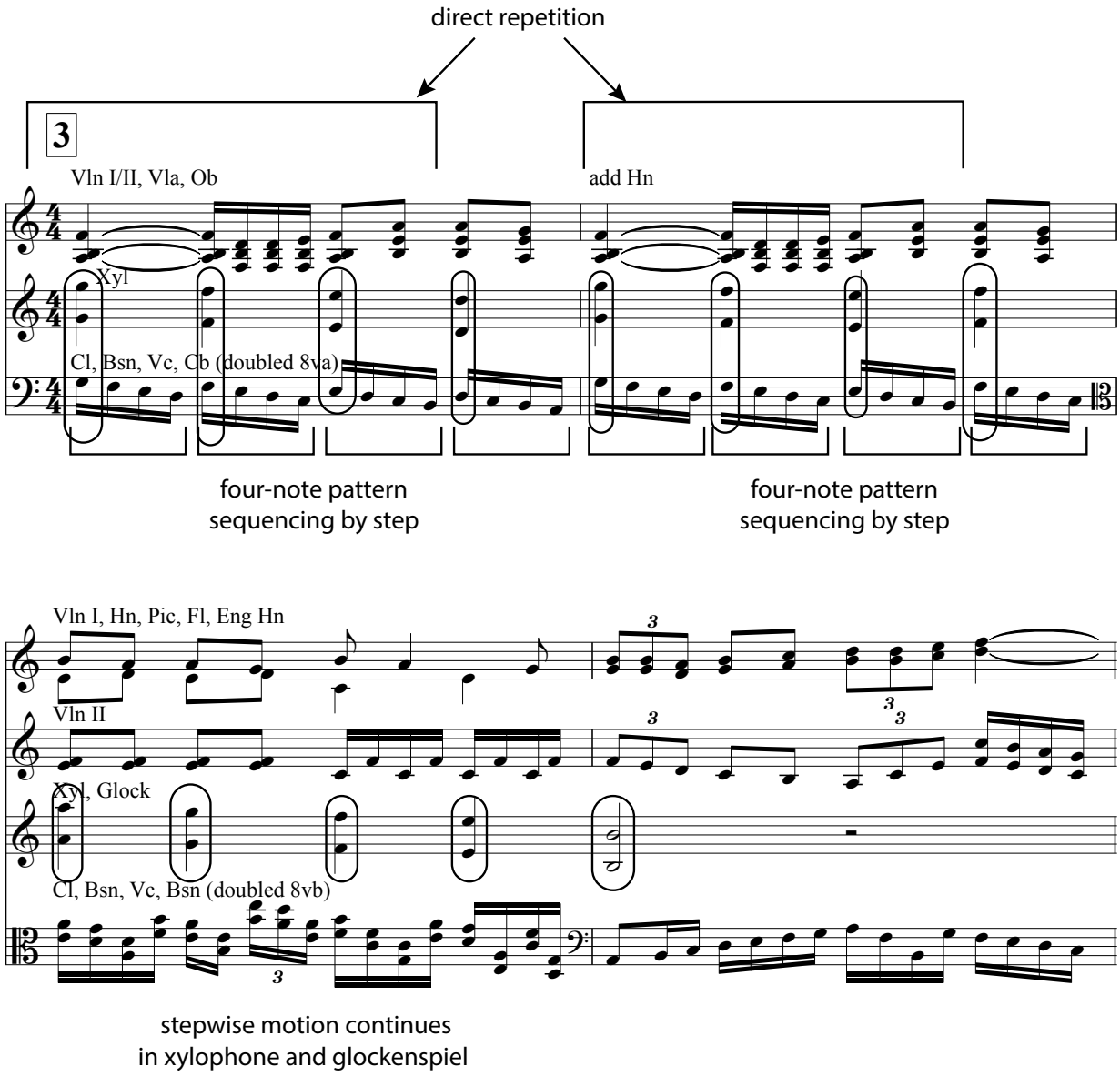

Figure 1.15: Chávez, *H. P.*, I. Danza del hombre, mm. 3.1–3.4

Other sections of accompaniment emphasize a buzzing quality to this mechanism. Figures 1.16 and 1.17 show two related moments: in the first, rehearsal 8, the strings are accompanied by steady A-B alternating sixteenth notes in the winds; figure 1.17 shows an adaptation of this figure at rehearsal 17,

where buzz is reincarnated as a trill passed among winds and brass without changing pitch, despite implied harmonic changes in the melody, a sort of electric hum to support the machine.

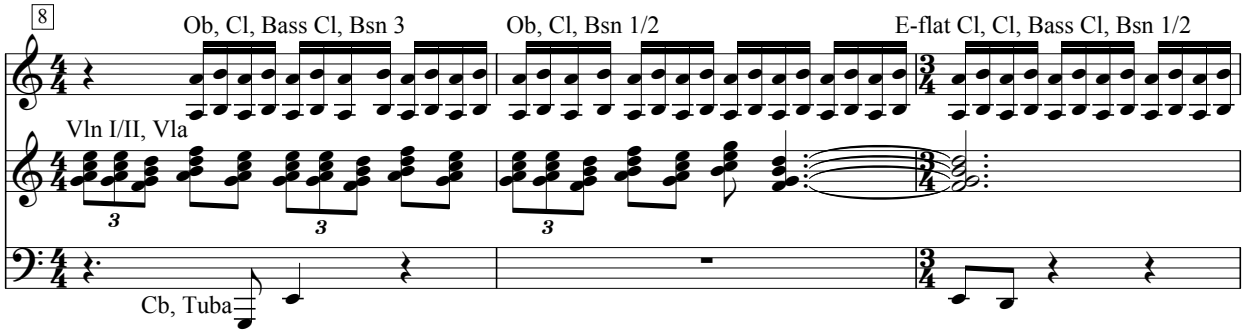

Figure 1.16: Chávez, *H. P.*, I. Danza del hombre, mm. 8.1–8.3

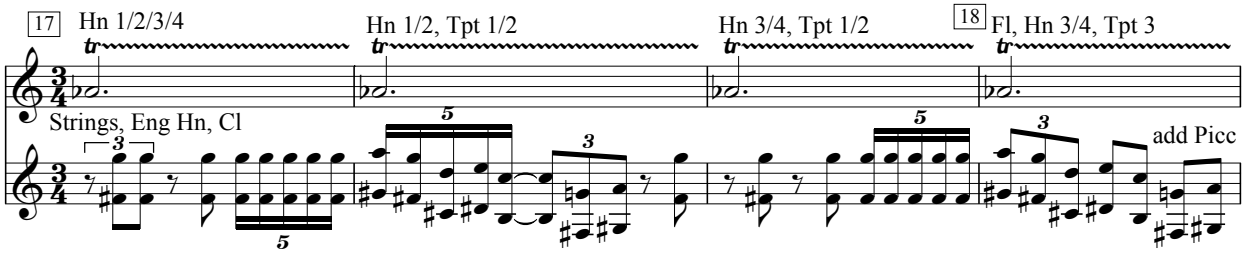

Figure 1.17: Chávez, *H. P.*, I. Danza del hombre, mm. 17.1–18.1

Many of the melodies connect to this mechanical stasis and buzz through repetition, either in a small-scale, nearly stuttering fashion, or in larger-scale structures. On a small scale, many of the melodies emphasize repeated notes. Returning to figure 1.16, one can see that the melody here in the strings is structured around repeated notes. This emphasis is made clearer when compared to the solo trumpet melody at rehearsal 6, as shown in figure 1.18, of which rehearsal 8's melody (figure 1.16) is an adapted form. As noted by Gibson (2008) and Hess (2013), this trumpet melody is in the genre of Mexican *son*, recognizable for its major tonality and triple rhythms. Here specifically, Chávez elaborates upon the repeated notes in this *son* melody, as shown by the sequence of figures 1.18–1.16–1.17 (rehearsals 6–8–

17). With the *son*, as at the opening, Chávez slips a Mexican marker into the midst of urban New York, again asserting a kind of fuzzy identity for this modern place.

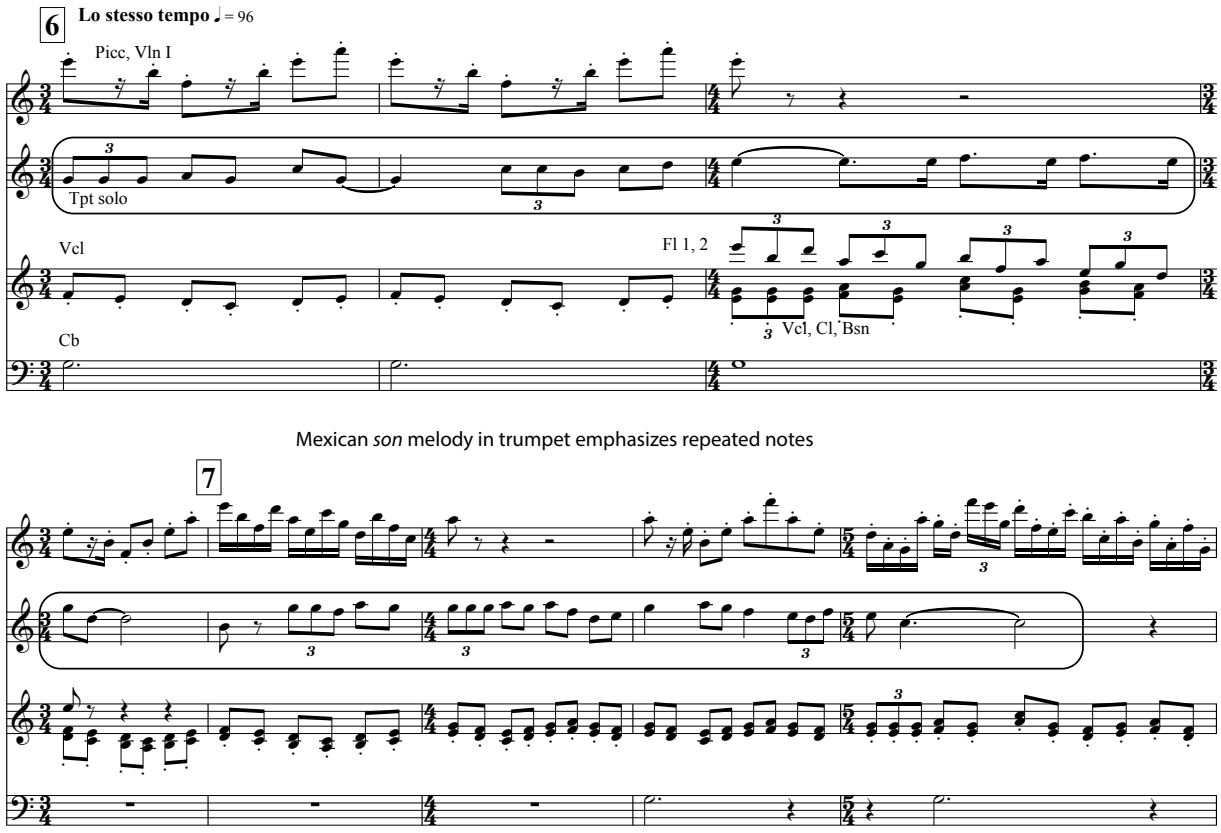

Figure 1.18: Chávez, *H. P.*, I. Danza del hombre, mm. 6.1–7.4 (second theme)

In other instances, individual notes seem to stutter or get stuck in place, producing themes that emphasize repeated notes before moving on. This stuttering shape is prominent in the process that yields rehearsal 17's melody. Figure 1.19 shows the several measures leading up to and including rehearsal 17. As shown here, a forceful series of repeated notes initiates the theme, preceded by a period of preparation that emphasizes the stilted, jolting nature of the repetition. Beginning at rehearsal 14, the strings accompany a declamatory trumpet/trombone with insistent and irregular repetition of C♯–G/F♯–G/F♯. At the end of the brass dialogue (which shifts from trumpet-trombone to trombone-tuba), the repeated G/F♯s take on a

life of their own, launching into a melody that reappears later in the movement. Figure 1.20 shows the restatement of this melody near the end of the movement, where the role of repeated notes becomes even more prominent, moving from alternating notes one second apart to repeated notes, then to the stuttering energy of the theme.

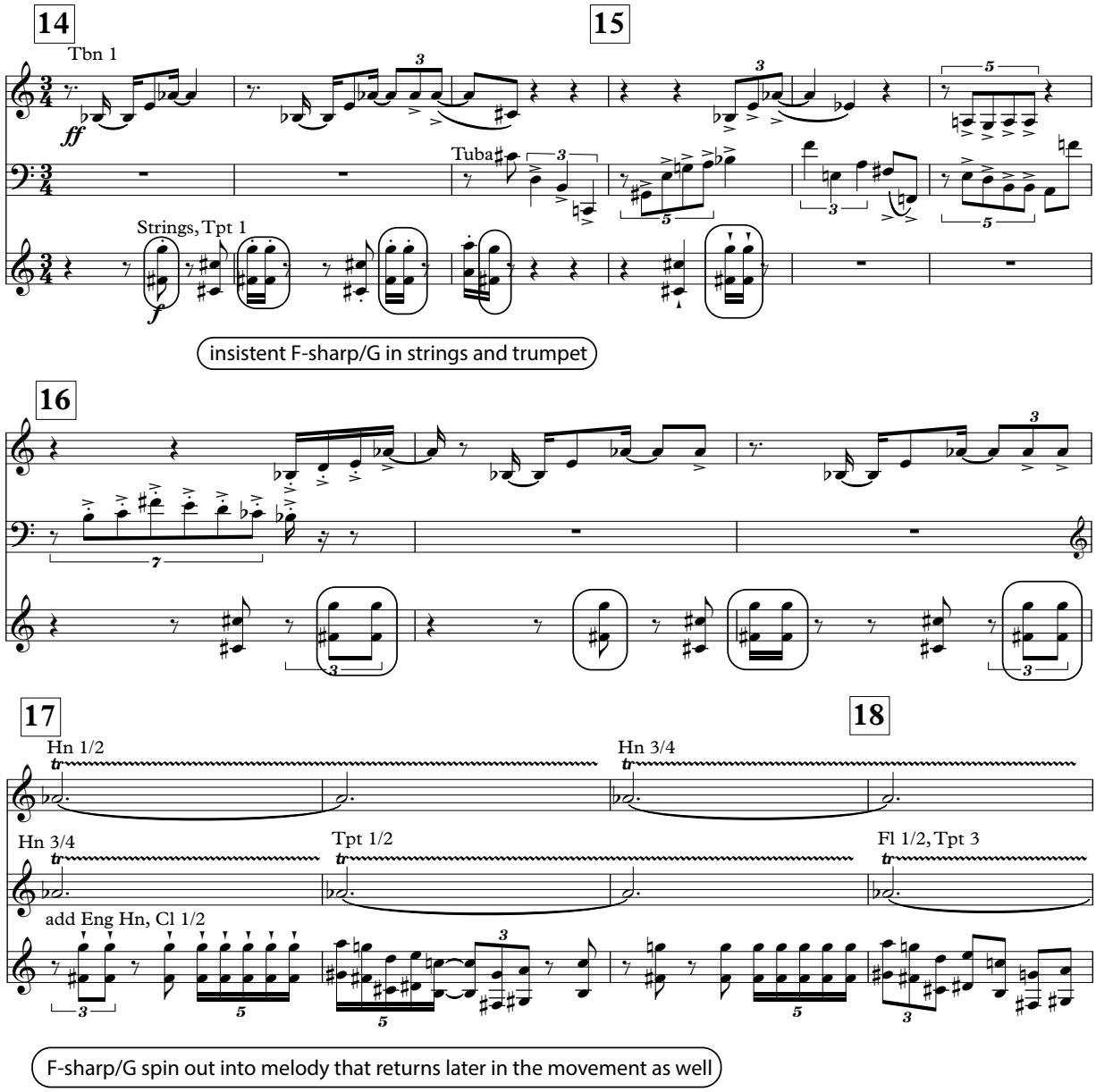

Figure 1.19: Chávez, *H. P.*, I. Danza del hombre, mm. 14.1–18.1

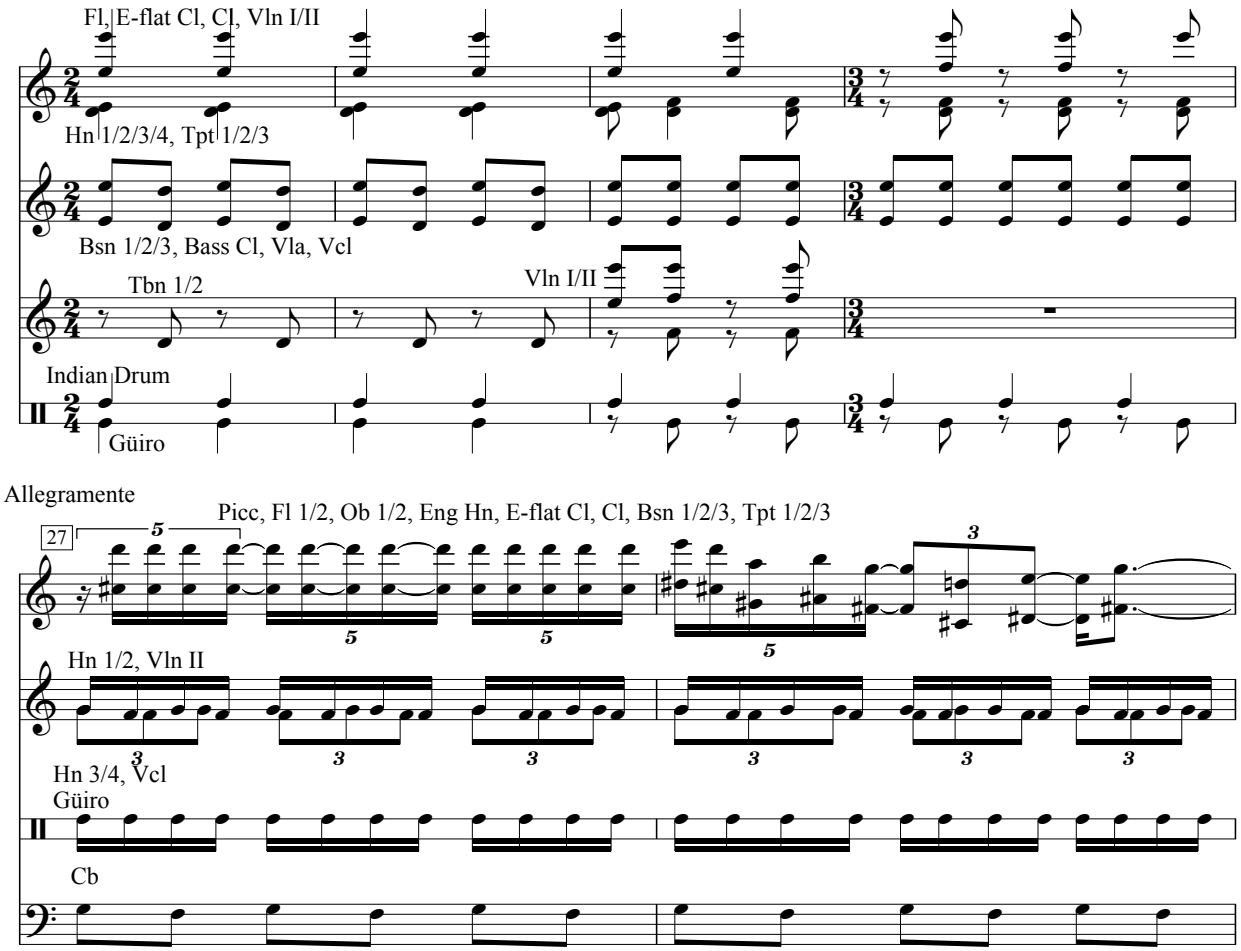

Figure 1.20: Chávez, *H. P.*, I. Danza del hombre, mm. 26.2–27.2

Despite its frenzied energy and frequent moments of "arrival," "Danza del hombre" is thus dominated by a sort of stuck-ness, a failure to move away from its starting place, and a failure to be completely distinct from the tropical South that Chávez depicts in later movements. This is not to say that he does not create a different aural environment for the South—in the third movement, he not only incorporates parallel thirds and vernacular genres like folk dances, but also clear tonal structures, and prominent exoticism in the form of the marimba (which was not then a standard orchestral instrument) being played simultaneously by three performers highlighting hemiola and 2-against-3 polyrhythms. Figure

1.21 shows an excerpt of the third movement, in which a brass choir moves in parallel thirds with clear tonic–dominant harmonic motion, supported by timpani emphasizing each harmony.

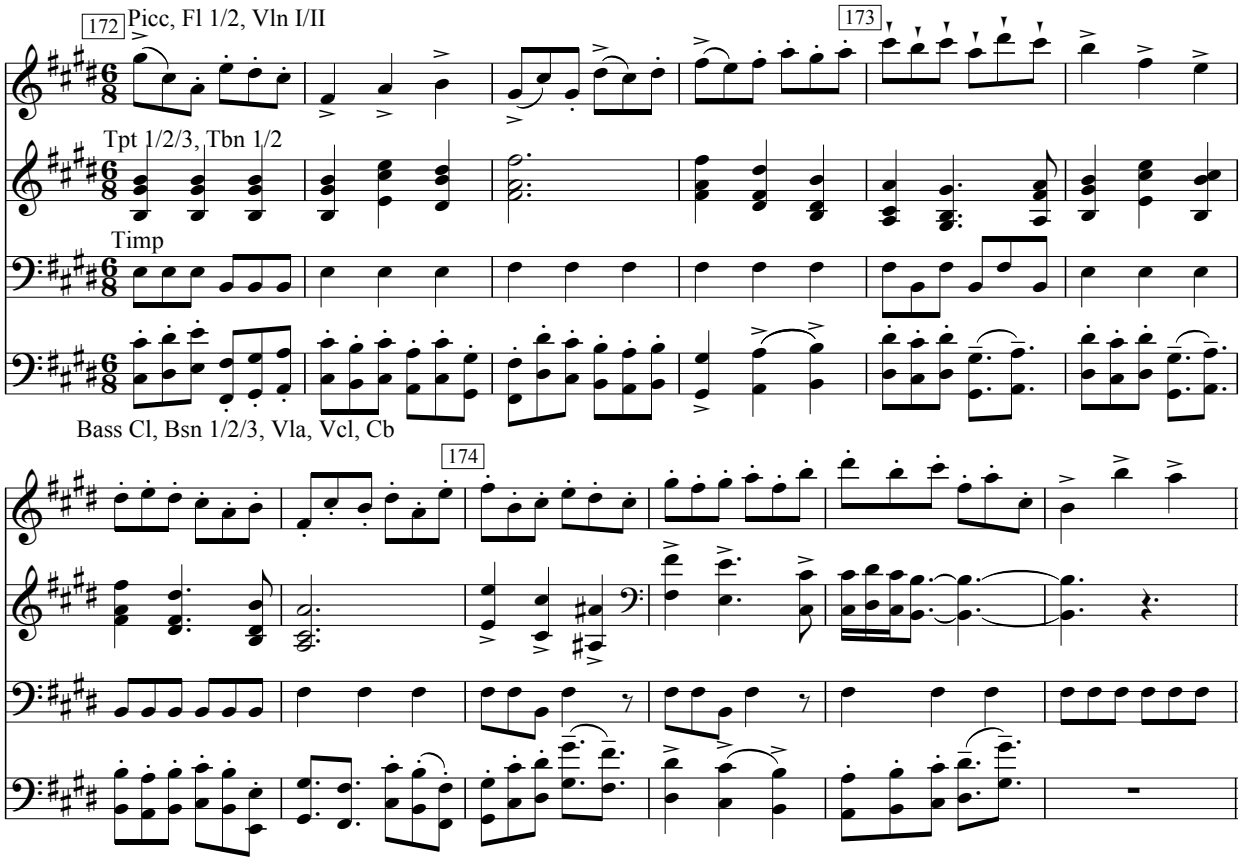

Figure 1.21: Chávez, *H. P.*, III. El trópico, mm. 172.1–174.4

Beyond this infusion of tonality, however, several of the audible markers for the primitive and exotic in the third movement are perilously close to those of the urban/industrial, such as hammering ostinati and parallel motion. This is not to say that the aural environment he creates is not recognizably different between the North and the South; as I have shown, he effectively employs stereotypes to draw distinctions. Rather, his ambivalence is palpable in these overlaps and intersections, to the point that several reviewers appear to have been confused about place—for example, Paul Rosenfeld wrote of the first

movement ("Dance of the Man," urban New York) as referring to ancient America (Hess 2013). Thus reception for the work was, at times, also fuzzy.

Like Revueltas, Chávez could be seen as having multiple identities in this situation: one in which he is an outsider, a Mexican nationalist, and another in which he is part of the musical avant-garde, working with an international community to press modernist artistic agendas. And, like Revueltas (perhaps even more so, given his long international career), Chávez emphasized international connections in his work, performing compositions by U.S. composers in Mexico and conducting concerts in the United States. Yet, in these settings, strong demands were placed upon Chávez both in Mexico and the United States, such that he faced musical concerns that were sometimes at odds with his aesthetic and political preferences. In contrast to Revueltas's fragmentation and shifts of direction, Chávez employed strategies that would bring him greater success in United States markets by positioning himself as exotic and primitive, but continued to include elements that were potentially legible as subversive or dialectical. Further, his use of both modes—urban machine music and tropical exoticism—demonstrated to audiences that he was capable of doing both things, and that the two were not as separate as they might at first seem. As he wrote music that represented both places, he showed his own technical capacity to work both within and without his own national identity, composing equally comfortably in urban and tropical modes.

Conclusions

The two composers I have discussed in this chapter—Silvestre Revueltas and Carlos Chávez—both expressed ambivalence about the artistic demands that they faced as liminal modernists working in the United States and Mexico. Both Chávez and Revueltas struggled with questions of representation, particularly demands for a nationalist voice. These questions are undoubtedly both internal and external, though I have highlighted in this chapter internal issues for Revueltas and external ones for Chávez,

resulting in distinct depictions of men who practically speaking faced similar constraints and pressures. In this chapter I addressed how Revueltas questioned the entire composerly endeavor and its concomitant critical and analytical apparatuses, while Chávez navigated pressures of exoticism in the national and international music markets. Influenced by the voracious tastes (and deep pockets) of the "Mexico Vogue" in the United States, Chávez created music that could fulfill the demands of United States consumers while deploying musical techniques that simultaneously revealed his mastery of current cosmopolitan compositional trends, while Revueltas sarcastically avoided ascriptions of nationalism and folklorism in his music. These two distinct results in part show multiple possibilities for managing similar stresses of social and political exigencies, one emphasizing avoidance (Revueltas) and the other embrace (Chávez); on the other hand, as discussed here, this surface assessment potentially belies both composers' works upon closer examination.

Both Chávez and Revueltas engaged (at times) in strategic alterity. In addition to composing, Revueltas played for silent films in the U.S. theaters, music that contained frequent expressions of stereotypical exoticism, and which he described as "mamarrachos" (complete messes/monstrosities) (Chávez 1989, 83). And while Revueltas attempted to distance himself from labels related to the nationalist movement (such as "folklorism" or "Indianism"), he occasionally included overt stereotypical gestures in his works, not unlike those that Chávez incorporated into *H. P.*[24]

Of course, Revueltas and Chávez were not alone in navigating ambivalent feelings: other composers in both Mexico and Brazil also expressed ambivalence toward various aspects of nationalism, and each could be seen to use his or her own strategies for this. For example, Julián Carrillo felt ambivalent toward the primarily tonal approach to national modernism in Mexico, and his music as well as his theoretical writings reflect this. As Alejandro L. Madrid (2008) has discussed, Carrillo enacted a highly individualistic,

[24] For example, Saavedra 2001 describes overt Indianist gestures in *Cuauhnáhuac*; see Chapter 3.

microtonal approach that nonetheless shared connections with a Germanic narrative of progress away from tonality. Further, others such as Daniel Castañeda and Baqueiro Foster proposed a division into thirty-second tones in order to better approximate Mexican folk practices, another microtonal approach to national modernism. As Madrid has shown, Carrillo's pieces show ambivalence toward this approach at times, underpinning microtonal gestures on the surface with a tonally focused basic structure. In Brazil, Francisco Mignone's Italianate sound incorporated nationalist elements in ways that contrasted strongly with his modernist countrymen; in addition to modeling his compositional style after Italian opera practices, his music reflects a sort of outsider perspective, treating Brazilian elements as primitive features of the music, and using exotic narratives of Brazil.

While ambivalence can serve as an effective heuristic, it is undoubtedly limited in its usefulness. For example, to highlight this ambivalence is to ignore much of what concerned Revueltas, including the simple act of being a composer in a community of composers, as well as issues of new music in this community. Talia Jiménez-Ramírez (2002) notes that Revueltas and Chávez participated together in a workshop (along with several other composers, including Candelario Huízar and Vicente Mendoza) at the National Conservatory that aimed to develop new styles of melody that were not based on vocal models, but rather on idiomatic instrumental expression. According to Jiménez-Ramírez, Revueltas and Chávez decided to write string quartets based on the ideas explored in the course, which may have resulted in Revueltas's fourth string quartet (the aforementioned "Música de Feria") and the first two movements of Chávez's second string quartet. Jiménez-Ramírez goes on to compare the two works in order to assess how the two of them handled the strictures of the course differently, as well as contrasts in style. In her analysis, Jiménez-Ramírez dissects the two works on parameters of rhythm, melody, and form. By highlighting parameters other than questions of whether a work is "Mexicanist" or not, Jiménez-Ramírez provides another window into the works of both Revueltas and Chávez.

Despite its limitations, the analytical frame of ambivalence provides a useful tool for discussing tensions within the works of Revueltas and Chávez. Notably, ambivalence is not a singular interpretation, and other frames might also adequately address these issues within the music. In a monograph on the music of Shostakovich, Esti Sheinberg proposes a variety of semiotic frames: irony, satire, parody, and the grotesque. Sheinberg catalogues these frames systematically within Shostakovich's music, arguing for interpretations that account not only for the notes on the page but also the historical context of the composition of the works. Within this assessment, however, Sheinberg highlights the role of ambiguity, defining ambiguity as "two or more meanings [that] coexist in one discourse" (2000, 15). Like ambiguity, ambivalence is structured by the existence of multiple feelings or ideas—explicitly allowing for multiple simultaneous interpretations, while acknowledging their potentially contradictory implications. Thus as an analytical tool, ambivalence can allow for illumination of multiple readings, which I argue is a critical feature of many of the works in the repertory of this dissertation.

While these terms are intriguing, and provide interesting opportunities for considering complex interactions at work in the music, Judith Kuhn points out a critical shortcoming to this approach in her review of Sheinberg's book. She writes, "The sense that meaning—generated through the dialogic interaction of speaker, listener, and cultural context—is always in flux must inevitably seem at odds with any attempt to conceive an overarching system" (2004, 404). Similarly, by using the term *ambivalence*, I have resisted providing a singular interpretation to the music; rather, this frame allows for the ambiguity of meaning that Sheinberg addresses in her introduction. Further, the frame of ambivalence highlights the unsettled quality of the music more than an assertion of composerly intent or clear and transparent semiotic meaning. Thus without claiming overt or specific intent, I have provided a window not only onto the stakes of compositional techniques for Revueltas and Chávez, but also onto their artistic responses to these demands.

Chapter 2. Mário de Andrade, *Música Popular*, and the Invention of National Art Music in Brazil

Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 4* (1926, published in 1928) is built like two miniatures that have been pasted together, leaving an obvious seam in the middle. Scored for three horns and one trombone, the short work begins by alternating between chromatic chords in the three horns and a speech-like line in the trombone. The first two-thirds of the work feature lush, extended harmonies, chromatic motion, and interwoven sweeping melodies that break down into abrupt interjections. These interruptions punctuate the texture heavily, and accentuate the irregular phrase length and meter, as well as the evasion of resolution. Villa-Lobos plays upon the limits of brass instruments for these kinds of interjections, writing quick melismas that sound like mistakes, or press just to the edge of blatting in the horns, as at measure 12 in the first horn line. Figure 2.1 shows the opening measures of *Chôros No. 4*, which include several of these features.

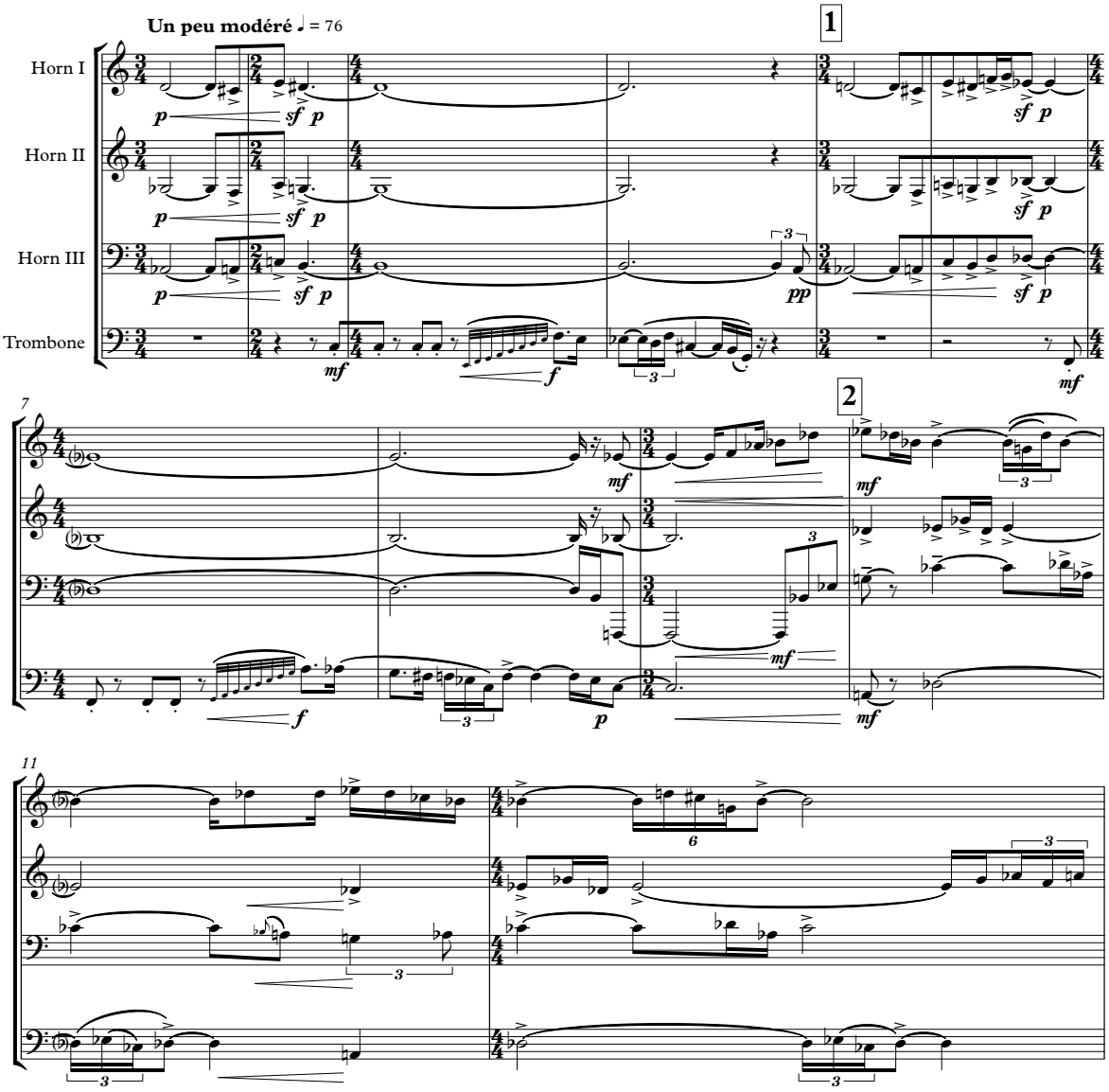

Figure 2.1: Heitor Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No. 4*, mm. 1–12 (NB: notes given in concert pitch for all figures)

While this first part of the work contains some shifts of texture and tone, the segment that stretches from the opening to rehearsal 15 emphasizes chromaticism, modal structures, and frequent meter changes. At the pickup to rehearsal 15, however, a marked shift takes place. In sharp contrast to the rhapsodic texture of the previous section, the four instruments move into a clear and regular duple meter with four-bar phrases and a melody of restricted range. As shown in figure 2.2, the music has a clear tonal center of B♭

Major, and the third horn emphasizes off-beats in a texture that resembles that of an early brass jazz band. Villa-Lobos scholar Adhemar Nóbrega refers to the melody in this section as "evoking some sort of typical chorinho from Cidade Nova, the neighborhood where some very representative features of Carioca [from Rio de Janeiro] popular music developed."[1] The shape is typical and familiar enough that shifts like that of the melody at rehearsal 16, off by just one sixteenth, seem playful, almost a joke about being slightly off beat. In contrast to the evasive tonality and ephemeral movement of the first section, the second section hammers at this single melody over and over again, never obscuring it or straying too far from the simple harmonies that accompany its very first statement. This section thus carries markers that are strongly associated with vernacular repertories, particularly in contrast with the opening of the work.

[1] Nóbrega 1975, 47–48: "a evocação de tal ou qual chorinho típico da Cidade Nova, bairro onde fermentaram algumas modalidades bem representativas do populário musical carioca." Nóbrega also describes the rhythm in the third horn as a transfiguration of the then-popular polka: "Eis a citação em causa, com as suas saborosas acentuações transfiguradas de polca, pela 3a trompa" (48).

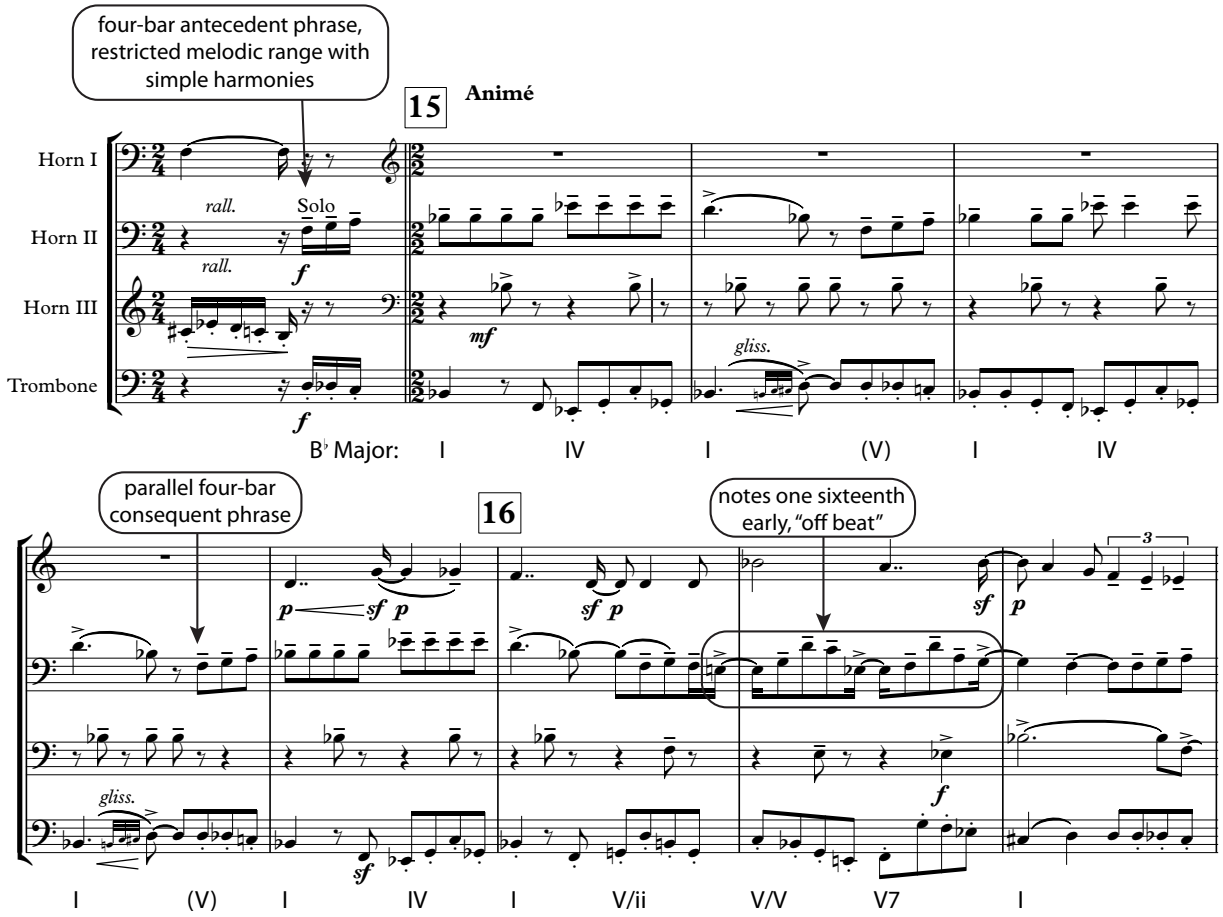

Figure 2.2: Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No.* 4, mm. 81–89

In *Chôros No. 4*, the "popular" has thus been separated from the "erudite" or "learned," with clear indicators for each.[2] These two sections have their own vocabularies of texture, harmony, melody, and rhythm, with little crossover between them. This distinction between the "learned" and the "popular" is too facile, however, as it is based upon the assumption that one knows these two styles clearly, and can distinguish them easily from one another. As I will discuss in this essay, the definition of "popular" music is often highly contingent and ideologically charged. As a point of reference, one might consider the writing of music critic, novelist, and all-around advocate for nationalist modernism Mário de Andrade: he went to

[2] I will employ the terms *learned* and *erudite* in this chapter to represent European art music traditions. In particular, *erudite* connects to the Brazilian term *música erudita,* which refers to this same repertory.

great lengths to delineate the precise kind of music he wanted to qualify as popular—and Villa-Lobos's execution here does not fit the bill.

Chôros No. 4 is one of sixteen works Villa-Lobos wrote during the 1920s and marked with the title *Chôros*, the name of a popular street music from Rio de Janeiro. Like the other "chôros" Villa-Lobos wrote, *Chôros No. 4* presents idiosyncratic analytical problems. Nóbrega (1974) writes that the harmonic language of *Chôros No. 4* is nearly incomprehensible, arguing that "traditional" analysis is useless in this case, while Tarasti (1995 [1987]) struggles to reconcile the name *Chôros* with what he describes as a nine-part work with many shifting harmonic centers, concluding that the name simply refers to the presence of winds in vernacular chôro groups. Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 4* is far from unique in its conscious blend of street music and art music; rather, this mix is a common feature of Brazilian modernist composition. This trait has often been addressed with a simple two-part analytical strategy: 1) formal and harmonic descriptive analysis, and 2) a search for popular features to point out. I argue that in contrast to this prevailing approach, much can be gained by looking deeply at the gaps and tensions of discourse regarding this popular/erudite intersection, and conducting analysis that responds to these dialectical tensions.

In this chapter, I discuss various iterations of the popular in Brazilian art music of the late 1920s and early 1930s, focusing on Francisco Mignone's *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira* (1929) and Luciano Gallet's *Turuna* (1926), in addition to Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 4*. My discussion is two-pronged, incorporating a careful reading of historical sources as well as music analysis. I elucidate whose voices were included in this discussion, and how those voices inflected composerly choices, giving them a specific kind of weight and valence. My aim is to illuminate the ways in which contemporary discussions of the "popular" and its role in Brazilian *modernismo* music affected the structure and sound of compositions of the period, guiding and limiting composers' choices.

The Popular and the Modern

In order to discuss questions of modernist music in Brazil, it is critical first to address the central figure in this discourse, Mário de Andrade. Andrade was undisputedly the most prominent thinker in this area, shaping the terms and values of classical music for the time in a way that no other cultural figure could. While other voices formed part of the *modernista* conversation, major players such as Graça Aranha, Oswald de Andrade (no relation to Mário),[3] and Paulo Prado dealt mainly with art, poetry, and prose, leaving wide berth for Mário de Andrade's musical opinions and thoughts. As a critic and writer, Andrade produced essays, articles, and books discussing the history of Brazilian music, ideals of modernism, and feedback on current compositions and performances, in addition to writing poetry and novels that have become essential works of the Brazilian modernist canon.

It is difficult to state strongly enough Mário de Andrade's considerable power and influence over *modernista* culture in Brazil. Daryle Williams (2001, 41) and Esther Gabara (2008) have called him the "'pope' of Brazilian modernism," while Suárez and Tomlins (2000, 9) refer to him as "São Paulo's most famous modern son" and "the avowed intellectual leader of the Modernist movement." Numerous volumes have been dedicated to elucidating Andrade's particular approach to modernism (see, for example, Suárez and Tomlins 2000, and Alvarenga 1974). Andrade was widely published during his lifetime (1893–1945) as well as posthumously; an article listing the publishing history of various works up to just 1968 shows that several had already reached a fifth edition by then, a highly uncommon event in Brazilian publishing (Lopez 1969).

As Minister of the São Paulo Department of Culture and Recreation, Andrade exerted control in shaping the musical community in São Paulo as well as guiding the development of urban musical culture in the nation as a whole. In São Paulo, his vision for the artistic life of the city guided which events were

[3] Unless otherwise specified, all further mention of "Andrade" refer to Mário, not Oswald.

funded with public money, and also what music received critical attention in the periodical he founded and ran through the Department of Culture, the *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* (*RAM*). He also was one of the founding members of *Klaxon*, a publication that was printed in Brazil as well as in Europe, and was dedicated to promoting modernist culture in urban Brazil. In a landmark 1922 poetry collection, *Paulicéia Desvairada* (often referred to in English as *Hallucinated City*, though literally it translates as "Untapped São Paulo"), Andrade wrote a series of modernist poems about the city of São Paulo; this highly influential collection still forms a reference point today for the urban metropolis (Sandroni 1988, Gough forthcoming). Andrade's nationalist views on music fit well with the strong central government of the Vargas administration, though he did not personally support the Vargas candidacy because of the political alliances Vargas relied upon in running for president (Andrade 1929, as cited in Lemos 2004).

As the most well known writer on modernist music, Mário de Andrade was in the unique position of being able to call for certain kinds of composerly behavior, without composing professionally himself.[4] Many of his writings aimed to instruct composers on what he felt was the right direction for the future of Brazilian concert music, and criticized composers for works that failed to meet his demands. One of his most famous monographs, *Ensaio sôbre a música brasileira* (*Essay on Brazilian Music*, 1928) discusses elements of art music in Brazil and, as Cristina Magaldi notes, functions as "essentially a prescriptive text: it sets guidelines for art music production and criticism and establishes the future of Brazilian music" (2006, 207). In another of his texts, "Os Compositores e a Lingua Nacional" ("Composers and the National Language," 1938), Andrade wrote that he felt that most Brazilian composers did not write songs properly because their processes were not the most logical ones for this kind of composition, and because the composers did not have an intimate enough sense of the text before they started composing (Andrade 1991, 35).

[4] Mário de Andrade did compose some works, but they are not generally seen as major works of this period, and his roles as writer and critic were much more central to his career.

In the realm of content and style, Mário de Andrade argued forcefully that composers needed to create a unique Brazilian musical language. He contended that composers should sacrifice their individual ideas and tastes and work together to create a singular, unified Brazilian music. Andrade felt that this music should be a deliberate mixture of the three major parts of the Brazilian people: the indigenous, the European, and the Afro-Brazilian.

Andrade also argued that composers should transform *música popular*—popular music—into *música erudita*—art music. And for this purpose, he most valued a narrow selection of popular music. Andrade argued that most urban popular genres had been debased by foreign and commercial influences, and for this reason were not ideal models of Brazilian music.[5] In articles such as "Música Popular" (1960 [1939]), he bemoaned the decay of the "true" samba from the favelas into a commercial product that pandered to the public's desire for novelty in the yearly carnaval season. His disdain for urban popular practices was not unusual: a critical view of these genres was so common that many composers used pseudonyms for their popular compositions. For example, Francisco Mignone opted for the name Chico Bororó for songs in an urban popular style that he wrote early in his career, so that they would not tarnish his reputation as a "serious" composer (Mariz 1997, Travassos 2000).

In light of the perceived corruption in popular music, Andrade suggested that composers should draw upon rural music, which he felt was more pure and ready for metamorphosis by the art-music composer. To help provide an ample and visible resource of Brazilian folk songs, Andrade used his position as Minister of the Department of Culture and Recreation to instigate projects in which scholars collected rural folk tunes. Yet, as he wrote in articles such as "Influência Portuguesa nas Rodas Infantis do Brasil" ("Portuguese Influence in the Children's Circle Songs of Brazil," 1960 [1929]), much of the children's music

[5] Such views are of course by no means confined to Brazil in this period. See, for example, Schneider 2006 for a discussion of Bartók's attitudes toward popular music, especially p. 188.

in Brazil had Portuguese roots and was not purely Brazilian in nature. Despite these misgivings, Andrade idealized rurality and peasant culture as the source of *brasilidade* (Brazilianness). He argued that art music should entail a transformation of the music of the *povo* (the "folk" or the "people") to a "higher" level, converting *música popular* into *música erudita*. As Gerard Béhague notes, Andrade's conception constructs "the folk population as crude masses in need of educational and political enlightenment" (1994, 151; for a similar sentiment, see Reily 1994). Like Béla Bartók's approach to vernacular materials, Andrade's arguments about art music thus placed the Brazilian composer in a pivotal position, whereby his or her compositional processes would transform "folk" materials into "artistic" ones.[6]

This process of digesting and transforming materials had a parallel in literary and visual arts circles of the time, known as *antropofagia* (sometimes translated as "anthropofagy," other times as "cannibalism"). Oswald de Andrade is most closely associated with this approach because of his "Manifesto Antropofágico" ("Cannibalist Manifesto") of 1928, but the term was used broadly at the time, and was also the title of a Brazilian modernist journal of the period. The basic idea of *antropofagia* was that Brazilians would metaphorically digest the influences of others and that the result of this digestive process would be a unique and superior Brazilian product (this is discussed in many sources; see, for example, Madureira 2005, Travassos 2000, or Brasil 1976). For Mário de Andrade, one way to take European musical models and digest them into national material was to use nonstandard instrumental ensembles (such as the one Villa-Lobos used in *Chôros No. 4*, or that of any of his other Chôros) or to incorporate Brazilian instruments into European standard instrumental groups.

In this situation of marking diverse materials as Brazilian, Andrade was concerned about quotation and exoticism as stand-ins for deep incorporation of these materials within art music. In the aforementioned

[6] Filho and Herschmann (2003) also note that Andrade's approach bears a close relationship to Herder's description of Germany in considering peasant culture the source of the "national soul."

Ensaio, Andrade wrote about Villa-Lobos as employing "pseudo-Indian" music in order to gain success, adding the jab, "No one imagines that I am diminishing the value of Villa-Lobos, no. On the contrary: I want to increase it. Even before his pseudo-indigenous music of today, Villa-Lobos was a great composer."[7] Andrade argued that instead of "surface" elements such as folk melodies, dance rhythms, or simple reference to nationalist subject matter, *modernista* composers should embed national elements deeply within their music, such that they (national elements) could disappear into the fabric of the work (Travassos 2000, 38). Of course, the line between exoticism and exploitation was impossible to draw clearly; as Travassos notes,

> The desire to achieve an immediate and emotionally charged identification with Brazilian music made nationalization challenging. Weren't Candomblé [an Afro-Brazilian religion] chants and rural dances exotic for a musician trained in the conservatories of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro? Weren't they just as exotic for this musician as they were for the graduates of similar European institutions? Wasn't the song of the Pareci indians, recorded by Roquette-Pinto and used by Villa-Lobos in *Chôros no. 3* exotic? Of course it was, and the attraction these sonorities held for cultured men was the same as Milhaud's enchantment with Carioca maxixes. The boundary that separates exoticism from deep incorporation of popular music was difficult to delineate.[8]

Within this charged and ambiguous setting, questions of precisely how to define exoticism or "deep incorporation" left significant room for debate and interpretation.

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[7] Andrade 1972 [1928], 2: "Ninguém não imagine que estou diminuindo o valor de Vila-Lobos [*sic*] não. Pelo contrário: quero aumentá-lo. Mesmo antes da pseudo-música indígena de agora, Vila-Lobos era um grande compositor."

[8] Travassos 2000, 39: "O desejo de alcançar uma identificação imediata e emocionalmente carregada coma a música brasileira fez da nacionalização um desafio. Não seriam os cânticos de candomblé e as danças rurais exóticos para um músico formado nos conservatórios de São Paulo ou do Rio de Janeiro? Não seriam tão exóticos para este músico quanto para os egressos das instituições congêneres européias? Não seria exótico o canto dos índios Pareci, gravado por Roquette-Pinto e usado por Villa-Lobos no *Choros no. 3*? Por certo que sim, e a atração que essas sonoridades exerciam sobre os homens cultos era semelhante àquela que fez Milhaud encantar-se pelos maxixes cariocas. A fronteira que separa exotismo da incorporação profunda da música popular era difícil de traçar."

Changing Ideals of *Brasilidade*

Andrade's anxieties about exoticism reflect a changing set of values regarding perceived authenticity and what specific elements marked a work as national rather than foreign. Brazilian *modernistas* frequently described composers of the preceding generation, such as Alexandre Levy and Alberto Nepomuceno, as failing to incorporate a more structural use of these materials, and lacking the intimacy with authentic Brazilian musics to use them deeply. For example, composer Luciano Gallet (1930, 15) argued that Nepomuceno's *Suite Brasileira* was not really Brazilian, because it used a totally foreign (read: European) form and structure.[9]

In this line of criticism, no one was seen as a better target for the modernists than Carlos Gomes. In the late nineteenth century, Gomes was the model of Brazilian musical success. As an opera composer, Gomes worked with the Opera Lyrica Nacional (formerly Academia Imperial de Música e Opera Nacional), an organization that put forth projects for translation of foreign-language operas into Portuguese, and creation of operas with Brazilian subjects. As Cristina Magaldi describes, "the goal of the Opera Lyrica Nacional was not to encourage the creation of a uniquely Brazilian musical language . . . [Rather, it] equipped Rio de Janeiro's residents with the means to produce homemade European opera" (2006, 209). With this model in mind, Gomes wrote works that fit a European mold but whose plots contained Brazilian content elements. Brazilian critics and musicians of the time praised his work. Luiz Caetano Pereira Guimarães (a.k.a. Guimarães Junior), for example, wrote a 70-page "biographical profile" in praise of the composer, holding him as an example of the future of Brazilian music (Rodrigues 2011). His works were some of the first to be recognized critically by European composers, and used Brazilian narratives, such as

[9] As cited in Chagas 1979, 19. It should be noted here, as Chagas 1979 argues, that Gallet was heavily influenced by Mário de Andrade, and the view he espouses here was most strongly advanced by Andrade in various publications. Thus, this view may not have been the common one for all Brazilian intellectuals, but rather a certain subset of those closely connected to Andrade.

plots of Indianist novels; his most famous work was an opera based upon Brazilian novelist José de Alencar's 1857 blockbuster success *O Guarani*, a love story between an (indigenous) Guarani man and the daughter of a Portuguese nobleman. The libretto was written in Italian by Antonio Scalvini and Carlo D'Ormerville and renamed *Il Guarany*, and the music followed a common Italian opera style of the time. Brazilians celebrated the 1870 work for its content and, most importantly, for its recognition abroad.[10]

In the 1920s, however, Gomes's reputation dropped precipitously in modernist circles and among music critics. Graça Aranha lambasted him during São Paulo's 1922 Semana de Arte Moderna (Week of Modern Art) for being an Italianist, and for not really using Brazilian materials, but rather exoticist stories couched in essentially European music. The year of 1922 in particular presented two opposing views on Brazilian identity in music, arts, and architecture. In this same year, while the *modernistas* presented a vision for modern art, poetry, and music, Republican leaders organized official celebrations for the centennial of national independence from Portugal, including pavilions that highlighted neocolonial architecture and a vision of continual national progress. Gomes's style fit with the ideals of the nominally democratic government, which later became known as the República Velha, "Old Republic," while the *modernistas* railed against state conservatism. As Daryle Williams (2001) notes, antistatism was an essential part of 1920s modernism, though this paradigm changed in the 1930s as many modernists received state commissions and official positions.

Along these same lines, "Indianist" novels like those of Alencar also went out of favor around this time for capitulating to exactly the kind of primitive depictions of native Brazilians that suited European stereotypes of the place: a wild, untamed set of noble savages (Wisnik 1977). Here it might be noted, however, that Oswald de Andrade's use of another "primitive" Indian reference in the basic construction of

[10] Magaldi 2006, 205. Magaldi notes that while the recognition in Milan blatantly highlighted the ability of a "savage" to write opera, the mere fact of its success in Italian circles brought national fame to Gomes's work at home in Brazil (211).

modernist arts—the cannibalism of *antropofagia*, a persistent image of indigenous people in Brazil—requires the continued stereotyping of the Brazilian indigenous population, even as the *modernistas* fought for a more "authentic" representation of Brazil (Devine Gúzman 2013, 94). Béhague echoes this sentiment in his discussion of modernist visions of Brazilian music, noting that they rely upon a romantic notion of both folk and nation (1994, 151). Further, the use of such stereotypes serves as a reminder that the audience for these materials was not all of Brazil, but rather national and European publics, wherein the national was restricted to an elite, Portuguese-speaking, literate, largely urban sector of the population, for whom such stereotypes served nationalist purposes without needing to relate to the lived reality of indigenous people in Brazil at the time. As Nestor García Canclini writes,

> One cannot talk about socialization or collectivization of artistic and intellectual culture, because in Brazil their manifestations at the erudite level are so restricted quantitatively, that they do not go beyond the small minority that can enjoy it.[11]

As with Mário de Andrade's concerns about exoticism, a certain amount of fetishism and ambiguity is propped up by the approaches and terms employed by the *modernistas*.

Within this discussion, Andrade's specific agenda was quite different from those of most composers at the time. As a critic and arts administrator, his position and source of income was quite different from that of professional composers, who needed income and popular appeal in order to sustain themselves. In the broader context of international modernism of the early twentieth century, Madureira (2005) observes that modernism in the New World was inflected by "unequal modernization"; further, several structures that predate modernism in Europe developed in concert with the modernist movement in Brazil, such as public theaters and universities, as well as government cultural programs (Gouveia 2013). Within this setting—and in particular the pre-Vargas modernism of the 1920s, when institutions were hostile to

[11] Cited in Gouveia 2013, 17: "Não se pode falar em socialização ou coletivização da cultura artística e intellectual, porque no Brasil as suas manifestações em nível erudito são tão restritas quantitativamente, que vão pouco al´m da pequena minoria que as pode fruir" ("A revolução de 30 e a cultura").

modernism—many composers relied upon the patronage of private backers for their livelihoods rather than support from universities or the state; for example, the aforementioned 1922 Week of Modern Art was sponsored by coffee magnate and modernist sympathizer Paulo Prado (Berriel 2000). Under Getúlio Vargas's government, a regime that shifted from the dictatorship of the Estado Novo (1930–45) to a democratic structure (1951–54) with a six-year gap in the middle, Villa-Lobos and other modernists received official posts, sanctioning the modernist aesthetic and political agenda (Williams 2001). Andrade's position as administrator and critic allowed him to make demands of composers that did not personally affect his own income, and did not require him to consider the opinion of private backers in forming ideals of artistic realization. And while his work reflected a political orientation toward the strong central government of the Vargas regime and the vision of a unified autonomous Brazil, Andrade was eventually pushed out of the Estado Novo for having communist leanings, a move that left him without a position of power from which to bring about national musical change (Reily 1994). His impotence following the loss of official post convinced him further of the need for official programs to create real reshaping of musical culture, paradoxically a position that aligned neatly with the Vargas government's continued central nationalist initiatives.

The Chôro in *Chôros No. 4*

With these questions of nationalism, modernism, and popular music in mind, I now return to *Chôros No. 4*, beginning with a discussion of its namesake, chôro.[12] The chôro was arguably the most popular urban music in Brazil in the 1920s, a music whose name represented both a genre and a practice. As a practice, chôro was most commonly played in a participatory setting, a sort of jam session in which

[12] Recent changes in written practice have removed certain accents from Portuguese; today the word is often written without the circumflex accent, *choro*. Because I am dealing with materials from a time when common usage included the accent, I use the accented form of the word here.

musicians would gather and play in what is called a *roda* (literally, "circle," but here it just means a group that has gathered together). As a genre, chôro was sometimes notated but often un-notated, most commonly a rondo form over which performers would improvise or ornament a melody (Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia 2005).

Chôro has often been discussed as a blending of influences and social register. For example, many of the early published chôros were written by literate pianists who published several works; "Odeon" and "Atraente" from pianists Ernesto Nazareth and Chiquinha Gonzaga are representative (see figures 2.3 and 2.4). In a 1928 description of chôro, Luciano Gallet highlights a mix of Afro-Brazilian and European musical inspirations and sources:

> Blacks and mulattos introduced us to the use of "Chôro" and "Serésta." They're not exactly recently invented "forms of composition" as has been wrongly suggested. The "Chôro" is the name given to small popular gatherings, formed of instruments from European and African origins, which in various circumstances, are played for dancing—(dances of European origin)—or just for listening. In these cases, one of the players' virtuosity intervenes… You can find in "Chôro brasileiro" flagrant approximations of "North American jazz."[13]

Gallet goes on to describe parallels with jazz—its comparable instruments, free composition practices, black rhythmic formulas (whether Afro-Brazilian or African-American), and Latin influence. Ever the nationalist, he concludes his discussion of the genre by asserting that these Brazilian innovations were independent of external influence: "it's good to remember that 'Chôro' and 'Serésta' were already popular

[13] Gallet 1934 [1928], 62: "Os negros e mulatos, introduziram entre nós o uso do 'Chôro' e da 'Serésta.' Não é exáto que sejam 'formas de composição' recentemente inventadas, como erradamente se afirmou. O 'Chôro,' é o nome dado a pequenos conjuntos populares, formados de instrumentos de origem européa e africana, e que em diversas circunstancias, tocam para fazer dansar,—(dansas de origem européa),—ou apenas para se fazerem ouvir. Nestes casos, intervem a virtuosidade de um dos executantes. . . . Encontram-se no 'Chôro brasileiro,' aproximações flagrantes com o 'jazz norte-americano.'" Gallet died in 1931; Mário de Andrade organized and published this work of Gallet's posthumously in 1934 under the title *Estudos de Folklore*, and the texts date from 1928 (Abreu 2001).

in Brazil, when the existence of 'jazz' wasn't yet known here."[14] While foxtrots and other social musics of the time are known to have been circulating in Brazil during this period, one might also note that some salon music of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also share certain traits and harmonic progressions with early jazz. Rather than asserting the directionality of influence, I mention this observed connection as a point of reference for stylistic traits as we move into looking at examples and characteristics of the *chôro,* and to demonstrate that this connection was also discussed at the time.

This flexible mix of practice (improvisatory, virtuosic) and genre (often notated, sometimes rondo or ternary form) is echoed in publications from the U.S. just a few years later. In the 1942 Pan American Union publication *Recordings of Latin American Songs and Dances: An Annotated Selected List of Popular and Folk Music*, author Gustavo Duran describes the chôro as follows:

> The chôro is perhaps the most flexible of Brazil's musical forms. Its structure may be any structure, its rhythm any rhythm. Some years ago, the name Chôro was used to describe a musical ensemble consisting of large and small guitars ("violões" and "cavaquinhos"), flutes, trumpets, drums, etc., a kind of popular band which gave life and gaiety to the peoples' celebrations. The jovial, boisterous music played by those groups came to be known as "Músicas de Chôro" (Chôro music). Later on, common usage shortened the expression to Chôros. Today it may be generally stated that a Chôro is an improvised piece in which one instrument, predominating over an ensemble, shows its skill and virtuosity. The Chôro frequently adopts the Waltz form, also that of the *Maxixe* and *Samba*. But the *Chôro-samba*, instead of adopting the quatrain-refrain (A-B) form of the *Samba* take on the ternary form (A-B-A or A-B-A-C-A). (Duran 1942, 17)

Tamara Elena Livingston-Isenhour and Thomas George Caracas Garcia (2005) have chronicled how the genre changed over time, including an explanation of typical forms, instrumental rhythms, and melodic shapes. Their discussion is admittedly problematic; the term was used widely during the period—both in popular and art musics—and such narrow description would exclude many works that contain the word *chôro* in their titles. Yet, these references still provide a useful point of departure for an examination of the music and its relationship to Villa-Lobos's composition. They note, for example, that melodies typically

[14] Ibid.: "É bom lembrar que o 'Chôro' e a 'Seresta' já eram correntes ha muito no Brasil, quando aí ainda não era conhecida a existencia do 'Jazz.' "

begin with three sixteenth-note pickups, as in these standard tunes from the repertory, all written in the 1910s—note that while "Atraente" (figure 2.3) has seven pickup notes, the fermata effectively separates the gesture so that there are three pickups into the A section:

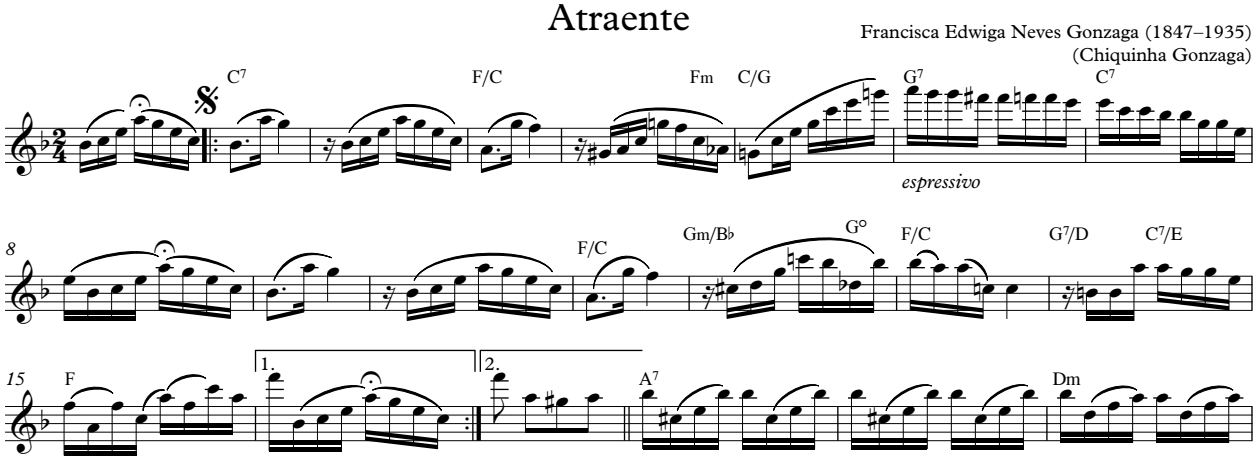

Figure 2.3: Chiquinha Gonzaga, "Atraente," A section and start of B section

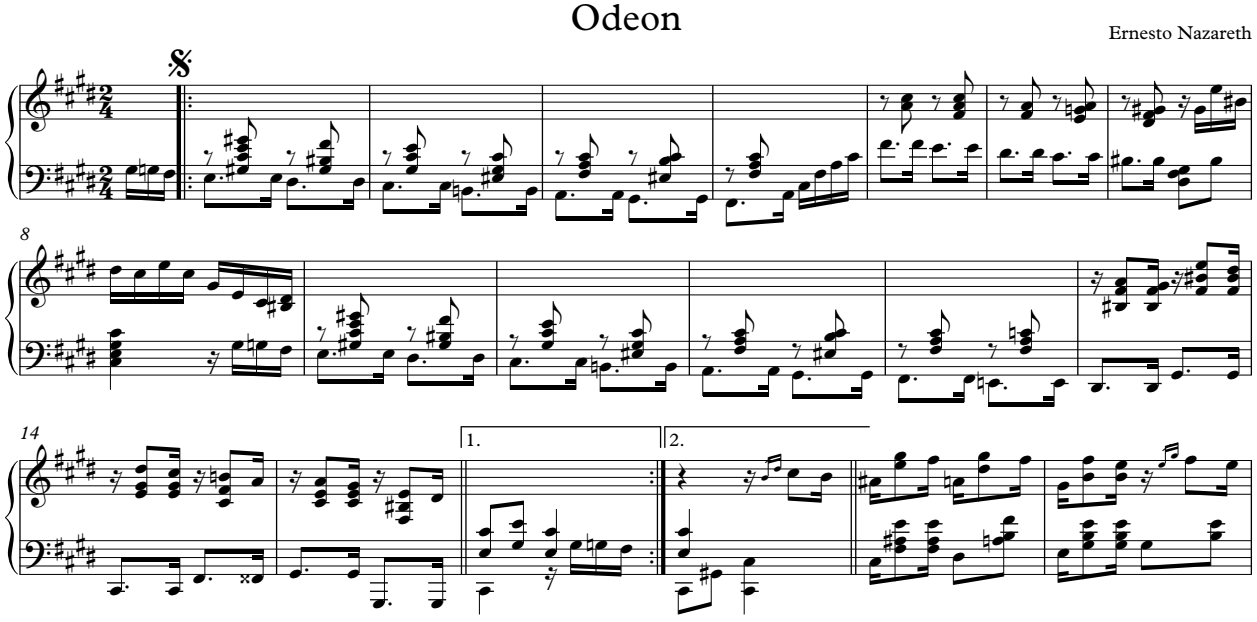

Figure 2.4: Ernesto Nazareth, "Odeon," A section and start of B section

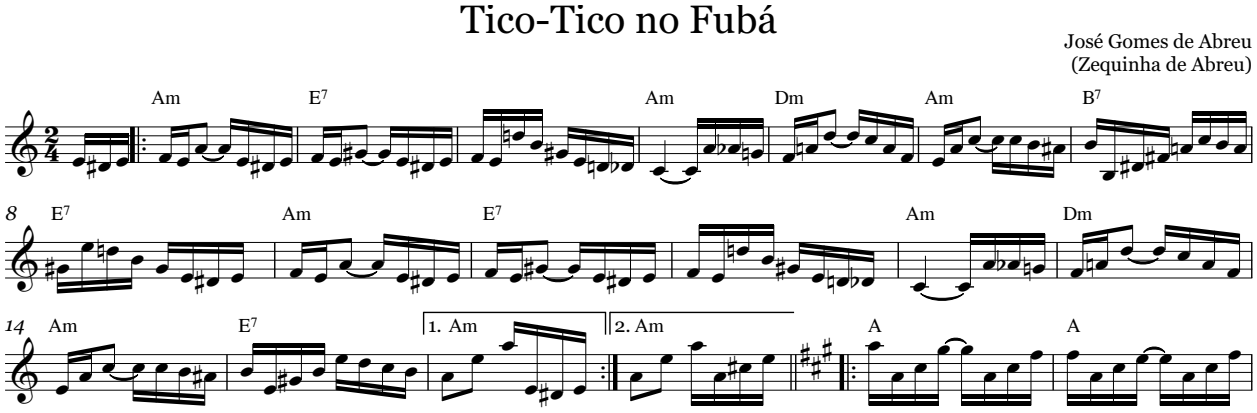

Figure 2.5: Zequinha de Abreu, "Tico-Tico no Fubá," A section and start of B section

The ensemble often includes a *violão de sete cordas* (seven-string guitar), which plays an active bass line as well as some harmonies; a *pandeiro* (type of tambourine), which provides rhythmic stability; *cavaquinho* (an instrument that is similar to the ukelele, but has steel strings instead of nylon, and is tuned differently), which primarily plays chords; and a *bandolim* (Brazilian mandolin) or flute to play the melody. According to Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia, one of the hallmarks of the genre is the way that the parts combine to create constant motion at the sixteenth-note level, where each part on its own shifts across the beat in various syncopated ways—figure 2.6 shows Garcia's realization of how an ensemble might play "Flôr amorosa," demonstrating how these parts fit together. While the genre's harmonic vocabulary grew in the 1920s and 1930s, Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia note that chôros are not generally harmonically innovative or adventurous (2005, 3–12).

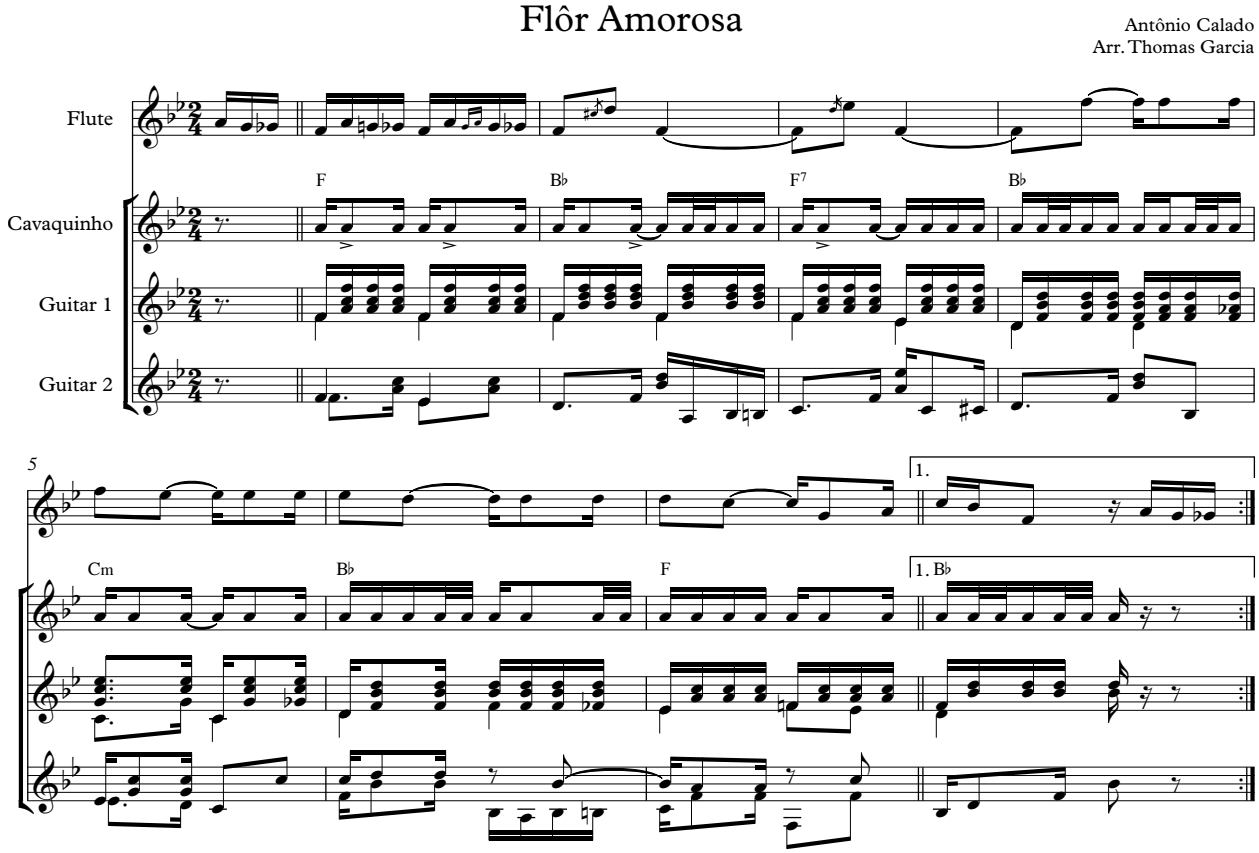

Figure 2.6: Joaquin Antonio da Silva Callado, "Flôr Amorosa," mm. 1–8, as realized by Thomas George Caracas Garcia

Some of these features connect with the "popular" section of Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 4*, and others do not. For example, the melody at rehearsal 15 shown in figure 2.2 (see page 66) contains the characteristic three-sixteenth pickup, and the harmonies are conservative, consisting mainly of tonic, subdominant, and dominant. The instrumentation is of course different, exclusively brass, but the trombone plays the role of the typical v*iolão de sete cordas*, with an active bass line, while the horns share and trade melodic roles. As mentioned previously, this alternative instrumentation fits Andrade's call for an alteration of standard European instrumental ensembles, and also a transformation of a vernacular practice into something closer to art music—fully notated and using instruments that are part of the standard European orchestra. Villa-Lobos transfers the typical sixteenth-note level of motion to the eighth note here, maintaining almost constant articulation at this level across the four instruments (the three sixteenths at the

beginning of the initial statement are played at the end of a *ritardando*, effectively matching the eighth notes of the subsequent section, and are converted to eighth notes in later statements of the melody).

Yet this segment of *Chôros No. 4* also contains some features that appear to be a deliberate mischaracterization of the popular chôro. For example, while Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia characterize the chôro as harmonically non-adventurous, Villa-Lobos's writing here is overly simple. In many chôros, the principal harmonic structures resemble jazz II–V–I progressions (a trait becomes increasingly prominent in the 1920s), and the various sections of the tune move to different keys, while Villa-Lobos mainly sticks to the primary harmonies of B♭ Major, and does not move to other closely related keys. Further, the different sections of a chôro often (though not always) each feature a distinct melody, whereas Villa-Lobos pounds away at this single tune over and over again.

This oversimplification does not come from a lack of familiarity, or an unwillingness to write in the style. Villa-Lobos was a chôro guitarist, and was also familiar with the genre from his time playing music for silent film in the Odeon Theater in Rio de Janeiro, where chôro groups were hired to perform in the lobby or play intermissions while film operators changed reels. (Presumably, the aforementioned "Odeon" by Ernesto Nazareth refers to this same theater, as Nazareth also worked there; see Béhague 1994 and Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia 2005.) Indeed, Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 1* for solo guitar, the opening of which is shown in figure 2.7, demonstrates a high level of comfort with the genre. As with the chôros in the previous examples—"Odeon," "Atraente," and "Tico-Tico no fubá"—*Chôros No. 1* has an A section that is structured as two statements of the opening theme, and the guitar highlights the same maxixe rhythm (), which was very popular in vernacular music of the time, and appears in both Nazareth's "Odeon" (figure 2.4) and Garcia's realization of "Flôr amorosa" (figure 2.6). The B section of *Chôros No. 1* shifts to major with a new melody, a common move that is also visible in the final measures of

figure 2.4 and 2.5's excerpts of "Odeon" and "Tico Tico no Fubá."[15] As a whole, *Chôros No. 1* replicates the structure, common harmonies, and shape of the popular chôro. The work is dedicated to Ernesto Nazareth, composer of "Odeon" (figure 2.4) and many other similar works, and about whom Villa-Lobos wrote, "[He] is the true incarnation of the Brazilian musical soul: he transmits in his admirable, spontaneous temperament, the vivid emotions of a given people whose character he presents typically in his music" (as quoted in Béhague 1994, 76).

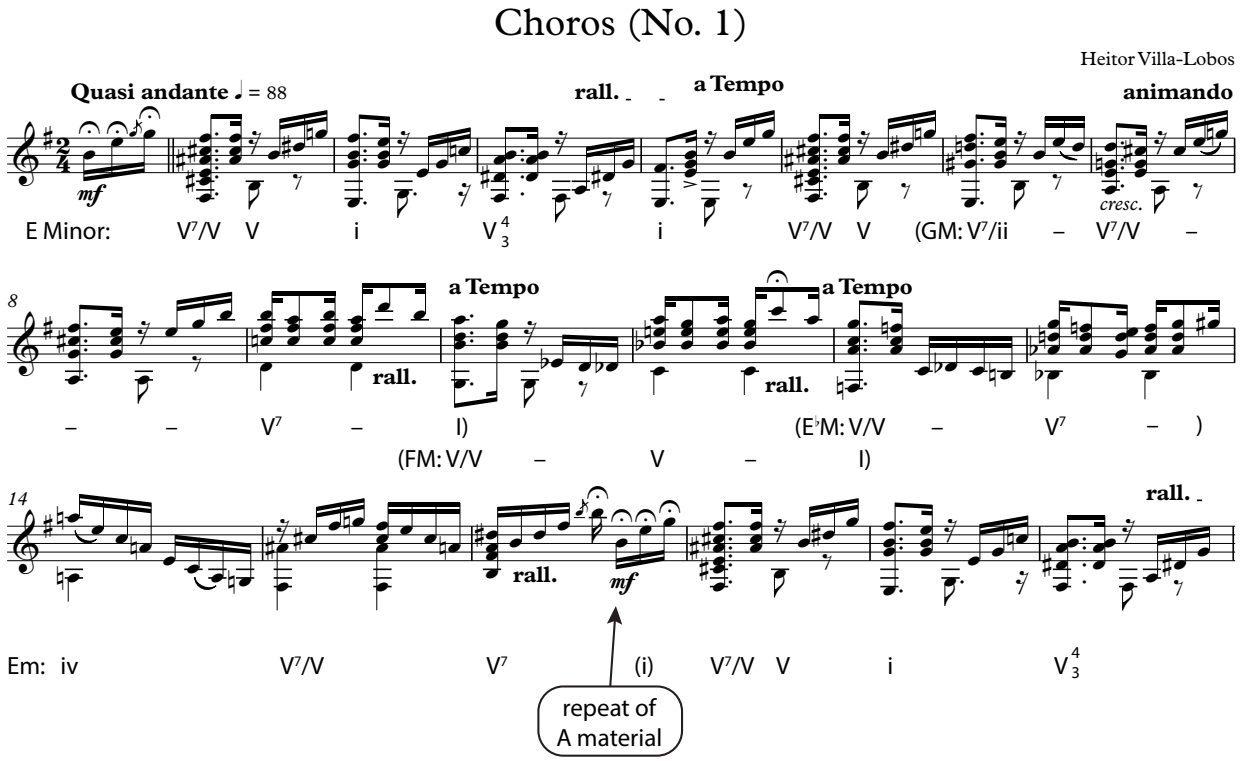

Figure 2.7: Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No.* 1, mm. 1–19

Thus Villa-Lobos's simplification of the chôro in *Chôros No. 4* appears to be strategic, or at least deliberate, as he knew the genre firsthand, and intimately.

[15] "Atraente" also shifts mode/key for the B section, but in the other direction—it begins in F Major and shifts to D Minor for the B section, as shown in the final measures of figure 2.3.

Música Erudita* in *Chôros No. 4

The first two-thirds of the work largely emphasize Villa-Lobos's ability to write in a literate, European style, starting with the very first notes. He begins with a B-A-C-H reference in first horn (that is, B♭-A-C-B♮, transposed up to D-C♯-E-D♯), surrounded by lines that each approximate, without duplicating, this same contour; each of the other two horn lines differs from the B-A-C-H shape by just one note. As Figure 8 shows, this series of sliding, chromatic gestures combines homorhythmically to create a "chorale" of harmonies, all of which evade common tonal relationships; three of the four verticalities outline whole-tone harmonies (trichors of types [026] and [048]), with one minor triad in their midst, hardly a space of tonal comfort among such chromaticism.

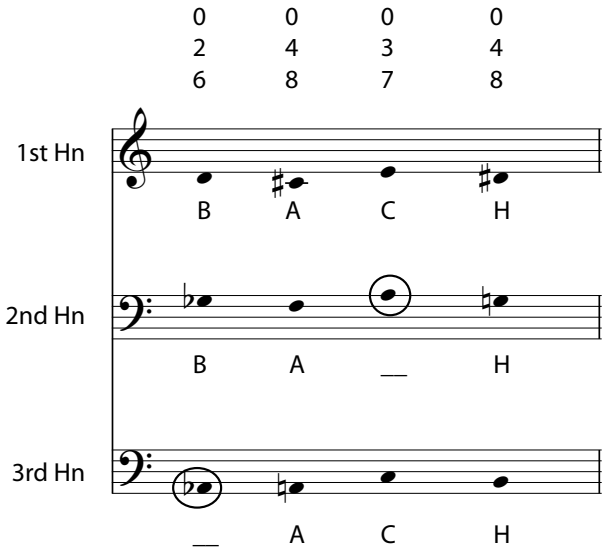

Figure 2.8: Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No. 4*, opening harmonies

This opening is at once harmonically fresh and structurally conservative: following the first "chorale" and its aggressive, Stravinsky-esque response in the trombone, Villa-Lobos repeats the phrase almost identically, with the initial gesture extended by two notes as a kind of minimal variation. The trombone, too, despite its semi-improvisatory sound, repeats nearly identically, displaced from the initial statement by a perfect fifth. Throughout the "non-chôro" section of the work, Villa-Lobos engages in this

practice of varying phrases just a little on repeat, a technique that suggests a kind of classical stability, while the irregular bar lengths and avoidance of tonal shapes simultaneously serve to destabilize this structure.

Villa-Lobos employs this same variation strategy at rehearsal 5, the section with the aforementioned "deliberately simple melody." Figure 2.9a shows this theme's preparation: modified horn fifths in the first and second horn lines, accompanied in the trombone by irregularly leaping staccato eighths, which create a distorted "oom-pah" pattern. Figure 2.9b displays the arrival of the "simple melody" in the first horn, while the third horn continues the "oom-pah" pattern of the trombone, this time converted into a repeating, disjointed pattern. Here, one can see that the first horn's melody is divided into parallel antecedent and consequent segments, with a consequent that is transposed down a fourth from the antecedent. A small change to the consequent also serves a kind of destabilizing function: Villa-Lobos transfers the characteristic P5 leap in the antecedent into a d5 in the consequent. As Figure 2.9c shows, this first horn melody is undergirded by second horn and trombone lines that together create a chromatically descending set of fifths with voice exchange in the middle. As in the opening of the work, Villa-Lobos uses stable repetition (as in the third-horn pattern) with destabilizing variation (as in changing the identifying P5 leap in the melody) to create a somewhat uneasy combination.

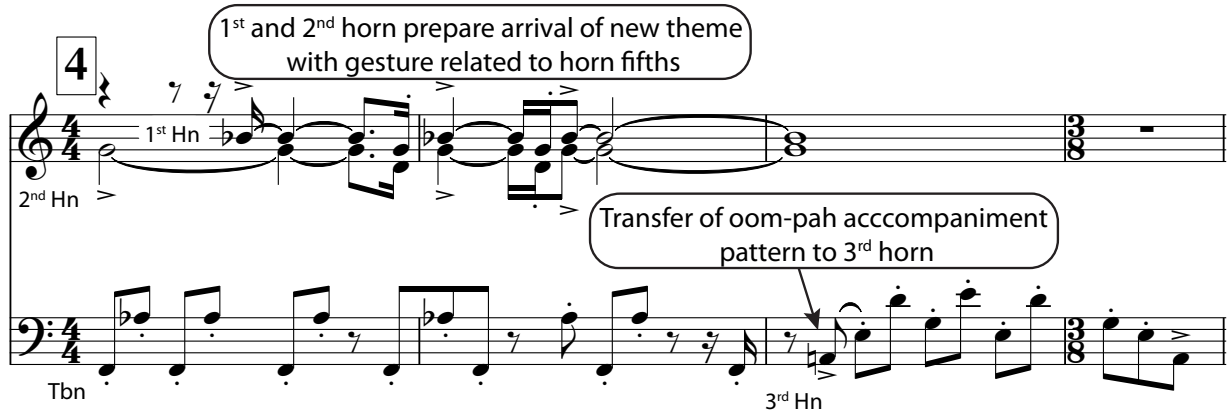

Figure 2.9a: Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No. 4*, preparation of new theme at rehearsal 4

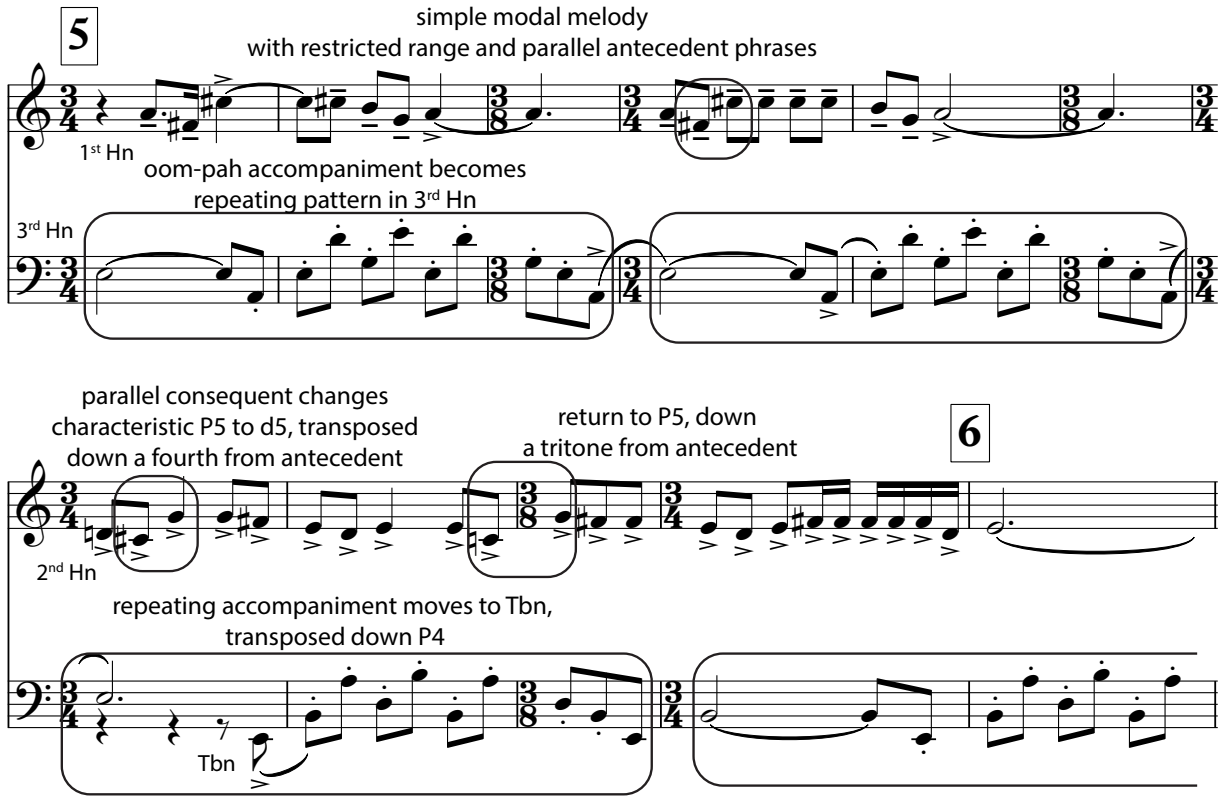

Figure 2.9b: Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No. 4*, melody and bass line at rehearsal 5

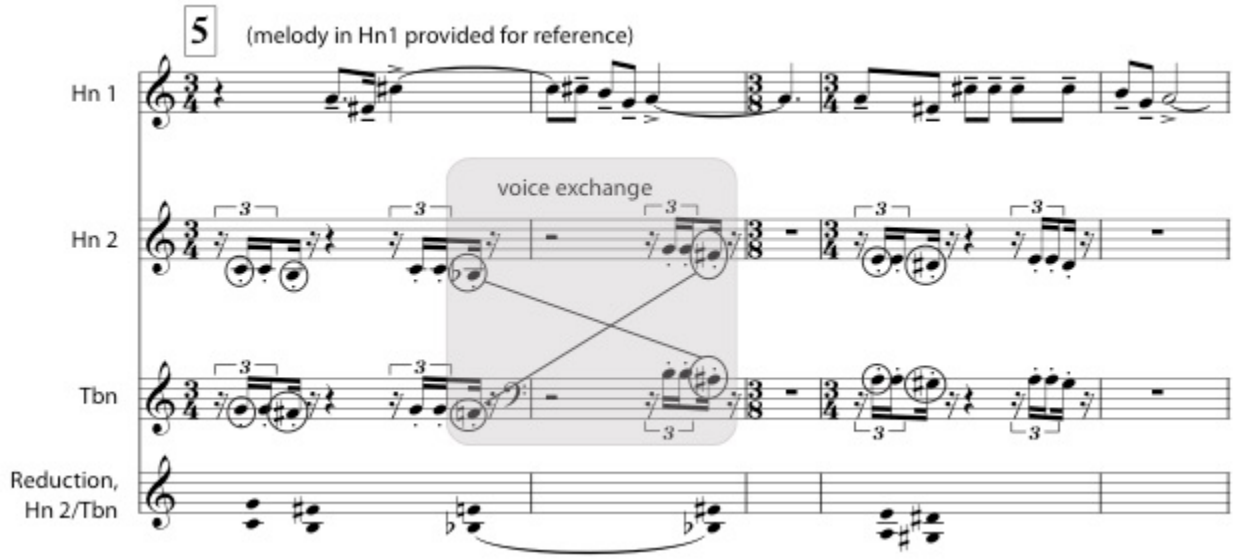

Figure 2.9c: Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No.* 4, chromatic descent with voice exchange at rehearsal 5

At moments like rehearsal 5, Villa-Lobos incorporates vernacular idioms within this section of *música erudita*. One can hear him play with suggestions of tonality, touching on familiar shapes while withholding a completely tonal character, ephemerally incorporates elements of popular music like an oom-pah bass. These features often coincide in the first two-thirds of the work—a hint of vernacular style is paired with a playful taste of tonality. For example, as shown in figure 2.9b, he gives the tune a kind of modal character; the accompaniment, however, is at odds with this character, such that even the label "modal" is questionable; along with the eighth notes of the third horn, which do not support the implied harmonies of the melody at all (figure 2.9a), the chromatic descent of the second horn and trombone (figure 2.9c) further complicates this supposed simplicity. By simultaneously introducing and undermining vernacular elements, Villa-Lobos flirts with the popular while remaining solidly in the realm of *música erudita*.

As figure 2.10 demonstrates, Villa-Lobos particularly highlights the strategy of variation at rehearsal 13. Here, he states the theme twice, but the second time changes both the peak and ending pitches, moving what was an unresolved finish ostensibly on scale-degree 2 in the first statement to a lowered 2 in the second statement, thereby heightening its unsettled quality. These small changes are quite prominent within the texture of this section, which presents a sharp shift from the style of the preceding material. Here, for the first time, the instruments play in a steady and unsyncopated quadruple meter, with four-bar phrases and a clear melody-accompaniment structure. Even within this new regularity, however, Villa-Lobos shows his skill at highlighting dissonance and evading tonal clichées: while the first and second horns operate within C Aeolian, the third horn and trombone rumble below in rocking quarter notes that combine to create a chromatic mélange. These two lower parts have different contours—the third horn slides up and down chromatically, while the trombone rocks back and forth between F and an alternating B♭/A♭—but even with these different shapes the two are almost constantly a seventh or a ninth apart from one another.

This quiet, legato section of the work presents a kind of restfulness by contrast to the preceding materials, but even within this brief section of respite, Villa-Lobos continues to place things off-kilter by highlighting dissonant relationships and unsettled phrase endings. This off-kilter quality resonates with compositions by Milhaud, who Villa-Lobos first met during Milhaud's visit to Brazil in 1917–18.

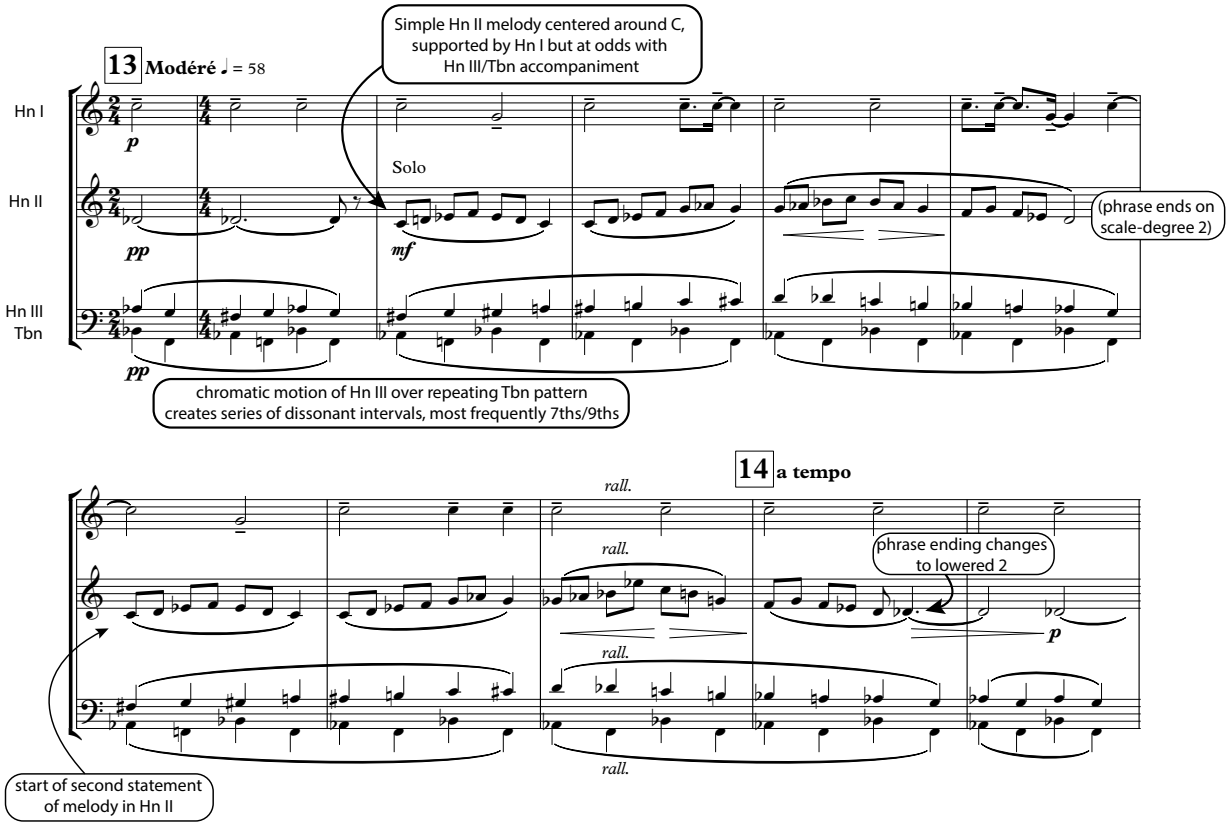

Figure 2.10: Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No. 4*, rehearsal 13

In another demonstration of technical competence, Villa-Lobos places his themes in counterpoint with one another. As figure 2.11 shows, at rehearsal 7, the first horn states a variation on the melody of rehearsal 1 that has been transposed down a tritone, while the third horn repeats the melody from rehearsal 5 at its original pitch. These two themes are stated here in equal length—two measures—and repeated (the third horn states its line a third time as a transition out of this contrapuntal section). Yet the two lines appear to be operating in different pitch spheres, engaging in "parallel play" rather than really interacting:

note that while neither is rightly in a "key," the pitch collections employed by the two conflict with each other.

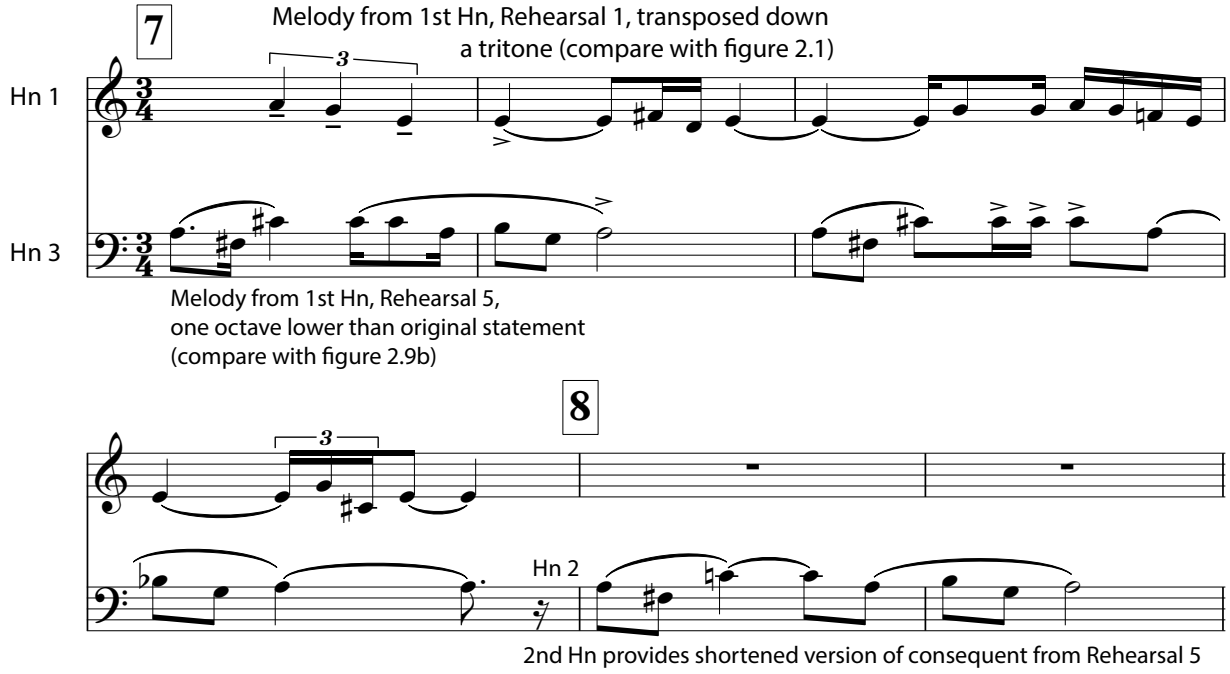

Figure 2.11: Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No. 4*, themes in counterpoint at rehearsal 7

Villa-Lobos does not "develop" his themes in this work. While he occasionally places them in dialogue with one another via counterpoint, or brings them back (as at rehearsal 10, where there is an approximate return to the opening), these themes do not operate germinally, or feed from one to another. Rather, they flit in and out, each carrying a marked texture such that the "theme" is as much textural and rhythmic as it is melodic and harmonic, insofar as these aspects of each are rarely changed. Specifically, the only statement of a theme absent its surrounding harmonic and rhythmic environment is the aforementioned contrapuntal statement of the two themes together at rehearsal 7, shown in figure 2.11. This seemingly aimless motion from one thematic area to another may explain, at least in part, why Tarasti (1995 [1987]) described *Chôros No. 4* as a nine-part work, rather than emphasizing any one boundary over others. However, based on Villa-Lobos's own sectional boundary indications (double barlines paired with

tempo changes), the work is more properly described as dividing into three parts plus a coda: 1) from the opening up to rehearsal 13; 2) from rehearsal 13 to the pickup to rehearsal 15; and 3) from the pickup to rehearsal 15 to rehearsal 19; and 4) a coda from rehearsal 19 to the end of the work. These boundaries are also borne out thematically. The first section ends with a return to opening material, and also wraps the themes up with one another in the aforementioned counterpoint. The middle section does not serve as a transition, but perhaps works as a calming before the highly energetic "chôro" section. As such, this brief slow section is a curiosity, untied to the opening and yet equally unconnected to the later material. Indeed, this sectionality might be characterized as a larger commonality this work shares with the vernacular chôro, which tends to be highly sectional. Considering the question of vernacularity and erudition, however, I place this middle section with the opening as part of the "non-chôro" part of the work. This is to say that this part of the work carries over Villa-Lobos's use of "learned" markers, and highlights chromaticism even as it flirts with the suggestion of tonality.

Through these self-conscious markers of modernity, Villa-Lobos highlights his competence as a composer in the so-called "universal" style. His use of French markings throughout the work—indeed, his publication through French printer Max Eschig rather than a Brazilian one such as Dois Irmãos—suggests attention toward external markets rather than nationalist zeal. And while his use of "chôro" is ostensibly geared toward Brazilian audiences—a genre unknown to Europeans, and without any particular exoticism to it—it fails to match many of the most common chôro traits, instead presenting a simple, almost joking representation of the "popular" more than the particularities of a rich and varied practice, drawing into question the "national" (or nationalist) nature of the work.

In the coda, Villa-Lobos provides a quasi-reconciliation of these two contrasting sections of the work. As shown in figure 2.12, following several statements of the "chôro" melody, the first four notes break off as a cell that gets echoed across all four instruments in a stretto frenzy that resembles (in

miniature) a sort of late nineteenth-century symphonic finale. Like the "chôro" part of the work, this ending is all about unvaried repetition: each of the instruments plays the four-note gesture on a different scale degree of F Major (scale degree 2 for the 1st horn, scale degree 1 for the 2nd horn, scale degree 5 for the 3rd horn, and scale degree 4 for the trombone), then they play their last notes of each gesture together in a chord. Villa-Lobos does this three times in a row with the same notes before spinning these chords off in a series of [0147]- and [0157]-type tetrachordal harmonies that are built through triadic arpeggios in each individual voice. Finally, Villa-Lobos brings the four voices together in simple triads that operate in a non-tonal manner: D Minor followed by C♯ Minor. To end, the bottom three voices slide into a tidy B♭ Major chord—the tonal center of the "chôro" section—before being blurred by a D♭ in the first horn. As Daniel Harrison (2010 [1994]) notes, the direct juxtaposition of major and minor triads creates an uneasy duality. Like the "vernacular" and "learned" within the work as a whole, this final harmony is two things—both major and minor—and yet neither completely because of contradictions between the two.

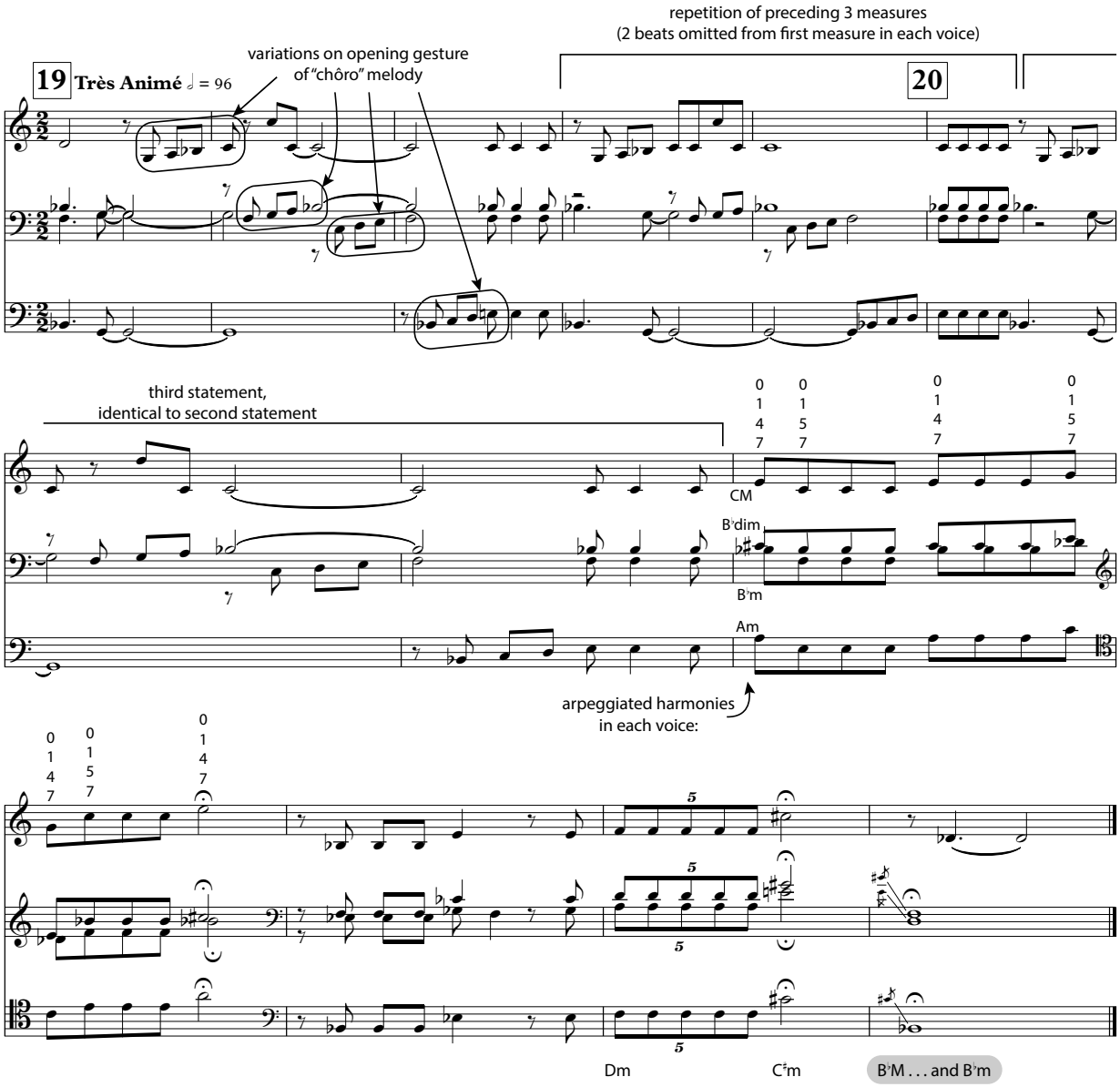

Figure 2.12: Villa-Lobos, *Chôros No. 4*, coda

An All-Encompassing Identity

Chôros No. 4 presents two distinct—but not completely separate—sets of style markers. With the first part of the work, Villa-Lobos advertises himself as competent, skillful, and fashionably modern (with hints of the popular), while the second part shows his ability to write in an overly simple "vernacular" or

perhaps "naïve" style; the coda then briefly turns back toward the "learned" style. Why call something a "chôro" if only to paste in a somewhat artificial suggestion of this popular genre? On the copyright page of several of Villa-Lobos's chôros, publisher Max Eschig inserted the following explanation:

> The *Chôros* is a new form of musical composition, where different modes of Brazilian, Indian, and popular musics are synthesized. They have as principal elements rhythm and also any melody, typically popular, that appear from time to time, accidentally, and are always transformed according to the author's personality. Also, the harmonic processes are almost always a complete stylization of the original. The word *Serenade* can give an approximate idea of the meaning of *Chôros*.[16]

This description emphasizes two critical points: first, it highlights the blending of various elements (indigenous and popular musics) to create a new kind of music, and second, it stresses the essential role of Villa-Lobos himself in this transformation. These two parts both fit Andrade's comments about Villa-Lobos's music—first, the overall need for composers to blend elements to create a national modernist voice, and second, Villa-Lobos's focus on himself in this process rather than the self-sacrifice needed for a greater community of nationalist composition.

Villa-Lobos was a tireless self-promoter, and ceaselessly sought to be viewed as the embodiment of the whole of Brazilian identity through his printed statements and compositions. At times, he created stories that demonstrated his experience with all parts of Brazilian society, particularly indigenous people, who were quite removed from most urban Brazilians' experience, but were seen as critical to the identity of a unified Brazil. For example, according to recollection by Artur Rubinstein (who was an advocate for Villa-Lobos's music abroad and premiered some of his works in Brazil as well), Villa-Lobos claimed that he

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[16] This text is present, for example, in the scores for *Chôros No. 8* (1928 [1925]) and *Chôros No. 3* (1954 [1925]): "Le Chôros représente une nouvelle forme de composition musicale, dans laquelle sont synthétisées différentes modalités de la musique brésilienne, indienne et populaire, ayant pour principaux éléments le Rythme et n'importe quelle Mélodie typique de caractère populaire, que apparaît de temps à autre accidentellement, toujours transformée selon la personnalité de l'auteur. Les procédés harmoniques sont, eux aussi, presque une stylisation complète de l'original. Le mot Sérénade peut donner une idée approximative de la signification du Chôros."

"listened to the voices of the savages of the Amazon. I was living for weeks in the jungles of Mato Grosso to catch the tunes of the 'caboclos' [persons with a mix of indigenous and European ancestry]. I was often in grave danger, but I didn't care" (Appleby 2002, 47). Further, in Max Eschig's notes to the piano score for *Amazonas*, Villa-Lobos (or perhaps the publisher, as no authorship is given for the notes) claims to base the work on indigenous melodies that he collected in the Amazon, whereas all available evidence suggests that he himself composed these themes (Béhague 1994, 55). Andrade himself commented on this at the 1930 São Paulo premiere of *Amazonas*, writing:

> These sonorous forces are profoundly "nature," and the little they take from the Amerindian musical aesthetics is not sufficient to place [the work] within [the category] of indigenous music. It is more than this. Or less, if you want. It is not Brazilian either: it's nature… It is the rowdy impudence of the virgin land that Villa-Lobos represents, better in this than any other work. (Béhague 1994, 56)

Finally, there is the statement often attributed to Villa-Lobos of "eu sou folclore"—"I am folklore" (see, for example, Appleby 2002). In his various statements, Villa-Lobos makes clear attempts to draw himself as a synecdoche for all of Brazil, an individual embodying the people as a whole.

Villa-Lobos's situation exemplifies the contradictions between the demands of Mário de Andrade and the behavior of composers of the period. While several composers attempted to follow Andrade's call for a style with distinct Brazilian components that formed a deep part of the fabric of the work rather than a surface feature, Andrade's narrow definitions of what was suitable in that category (emphasizing the rural and pure, and pushing for an "authentic" representation of the indigenous) did not accommodate the choices that several composers made. Further, the question of national versus international audiences complicates the idea of what musical features best create space for a unique Brazilian art-music style. In an article discussing Villa-Lobos's initial visit to Paris in 1923, Paulo Renato Guérios (2003) argues that Villa-Lobos introduced exotic elements specifically in order to meet the perceptions and desires of artists and musicians he met there, such as Jean Cocteau and Erik Satie. According to Guérios, Villa-Lobos was received by these

artists as an out-of-fashion composer who was stuck in the style of Debussy, while the tastes of Parisians at the time had moved toward *Les Six* and a predilection for exoticism. He cites Milhaud's 1920 commentary from *La Revue Musicale*,

> It is a shame that all of the compositions from Brazilian composers … are a response to different phases that have occurred in Europe, from Brahms to Debussy, and the *national* element isn't a more lively and original style of expression. The influence of Brazilian folklore, so rich in rhythms and with such a particular melodic line, only appears rarely in composers from Rio. When a popular theme or dance rhythm is used in a musical work, this indigenous element is deformed because the author sees it through the lens of Wagner or Saint-Saëns, if he is sixty years old, or Debussy, if he is only thirty.[17]

As with the strategic alterity of Revueltas and Chávez (see Chapter 1), Villa-Lobos in some ways capitulated to the demands of international artistic communities, presenting himself as precisely the wild savage they wanted him to be. This positive reception of exoticism can also be seen in Andrés Segovia's commentary on meeting Villa-Lobos:

> Among all of the guests that night, the one that gave me the greatest impression upon entering the room was Heitor Villa-Lobos. Despite his short stature, he was well proportioned and he had a virile carriage. His vigorous head, crowned with a wild forest of rebellious hairs, presented itself upright. And his front, endowed by providence with a profusion of musical seeds destined to be produced later, a splendid crop, was large and noble. His eyes shined with a tropical spark that soon transformed into flames, when he joined an entertaining conversation around him. His strong nose, with large nostrils, seems to be inhaling and appreciating the delicious aroma of *carne asada* [grilled flank steak or a thin cut of beef] in the bonfires of the camps of his native Brazil. In the course of conversation, as many blessings as passionate anathemas exploded from his mouth voluntarily. And, suddenly, his apparent brusqueness dissolved, giving way to good-humored bursts of laughter and expressions of friendship.[18]

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[17] Quoted in Guérios 2003, 95, emphasis in original: "É lamentável que todas as composições de compositores brasileiros … sejam um reflexo das diferentes fases que se sucederam na Europa de Brahms a Debussy e que o elemento *nacional* não seja expresso de uma maneira mais viva e mais original. A influência do folclore brasileiro, tão rico em ritmos e de uma linha melódica tão particular, se faz sentir raramente nas obras dos compositores cariocas. Quando um tema popular ou o ritmo de uma dança é utilizado em uma obra musical, esse elemento indígena é deformado porque o autor o vê através das lentes de Wagner ou de Saint-Saëns, se ele tem sessenta anos, ou através das de Debussy, se ele tem apenas trinta."

[18] As quoted in Amorím 2009, 116: "Dentre todos os convidados daquela noite, o que me causou maior impressão ao entrar na sala foi Heitor Villa-Lobos. A despeito de sua baixa estatura, era bem proporcionado e tinha um porte viril. Sua cabeça vigorosa, coroada com uma floresta selvagem de cabelos rebeldes, apresentava-se ereta. E sua fronte, dotada pela providência com uma profusão de sementes

These dual concerns—transformation of Brazilian culture through the conduit of the artist/composer/writer, and the exotic characterization of Brazil—created an irreconcilable tension in this music, a tension that correlates with Mário de Andrade's aesthetic perspective. On the one hand, Mário de Andrade urged composers to embed Brazilian elements deeply within the fabric of the music, and to avoid surface references like rhythms or popular tunes, and on the other hand, both national and international audiences and critics requested features that were easily recognizable as Brazilian, and thus quickly audible on the surface of the work. This appears to be an area where Andrade struggled to specify what might constitute a deep integration of these features, as opposed to exotic reference. In his own artistic work, Andrade attempted to embody these ideals textually through his novel *Macunaíma*, but the result was a sometimes-confusing pastiche of markers that contained their own dose of exoticism (Travassos 2000). Reily (1994) notes that the full title, *Macunaima—the Hero with no Character* (*Macunaíma—O Herói sem Nenhum Caráter*) is literal, in that the main character changes identity across chapters. While the book as a whole contains its own logic, each chapter is disconnected from the next, as the main character of one chapter is displaced by another in chapter after chapter.

Perhaps as a result of this tension, or perhaps simply because audiences both in Brazil and abroad would accommodate it, composers embedded "Brazilian" elements in a variety of ways into their works, most often in a manner that made these features clear and recognizable as such, and could also be characterized as exotic or obviously vernacular. Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 4* presents one possibility of this kind of integration, where a sharp wall is placed between the "European" and the "Brazilian." In addition to

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musicais destinadas a produzir, mais tarde, uma esplêndida colheita, era larga e nobre. Seu olhar brilhava com uma centelha tropical que logo se transformou em chama, quando ele aderiu à conversação entretida ao seu redor. Seu nariz forte, de narinas largas, parecia estar inalando e apreciando o aroma saborosa de carne assada nas fogueiras dos acampamentos de sue Brasil nativo. No correr da conversa, tantas bençõe como anátemas explodiam de sua boca voluntariosa. E, de repente, sua aparente rispidez se dissolvia, dando lugar a gargalhadas bem-humoradas e a expressões de bondade."

an "incomplete integration" of popular music within the fabric of the work, Villa-Lobos fails to meet Andrade's ideals by indexing urban popular music to Brazilian identity, rather than rural music. In the next section of the chapter, I turn to examples from two other composers for alternative approaches to this dialectic.

Francisco Mignone's *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira*

At first glance, composer Francisco Mignone's path was quite similar to that of Heitor Villa-Lobos. Like Villa-Lobos, Mignone (1897–1986) was trained in a Brazilian conservatory before going abroad for much of the 1920s, returning in 1929. Like Villa-Lobos, Mignone is commonly characterized as a nationalist composer, and his pieces, particularly following his return to Brazil, are explicit in their "Brazilian" bent. Also like Villa-Lobos, Mignone was strongly connected to Mário de Andrade—they were classmates at the São Paulo Conservatory, and Mignone himself explicitly acknowledged Andrade for a number of musical and professional choices he made. Yet for all of their similarities, Francisco Mignone and Heitor Villa-Lobos had quite different career trajectories, and their musics differ sharply.

This begins with a difference of influence and place. Unlike Villa-Lobos, whose time in Europe was spent primarily in Paris—the epicenter of modernist ballet and music in the style of Stravinsky, Satie, and Milhaud—Mignone went to the Milan Conservatory, where he worked with Vincenzo Ferroni, a disciple of Massenet (Azevedo 1997). Ferroni was known for his operas, which won awards in the 1880s, alongside Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Like Carlos Gomes before him, Mignone built his operas upon Italian models, as in his 1928 work, *L'innocente*, which Gerard Béhague describes as showing "a strong Romantic Italian influence" (2014b) Also unlike Villa-Lobos, Mignone began the intense use of Brazilian references after returning to Brazil, whereas Villa-Lobos engaged with nationalist/exotic materials while in Paris, in

order to gain a strategic foothold in the Parisian artistic community (compare, for example, Béhague 2014b and Guérios 2003).

Brazilian or Italian?

If Villa-Lobos was criticized for being too self-serving, using exoticism in place of true *brasilidade* to give international appeal to his works, Francisco Mignone was accused of allowing significant international influences that were to some degree out of his control. Like many residents of São Paulo at the time, Mignone was of Italian descent; his parents immigrated to Brazil in the 1890s. The late nineteenth century saw a broad Italian diaspora encompassing several countries—Mexico and Brazil among them—related to Italian unification and the economic and military pressures connected with it. In particular an influx of Italians arrived to southeastern Brazil. The Brazilian government especially welcomed immigrants to fill in for agricultural positions that had previously been held by slaves; while abolition did not arrive until 1888, the slave trade had been gradually diminishing, with increasing restrictions placed upon the importation and birth of individuals into slavery. In addition, the Brazilian government embarked upon an effort to encourage European immigration in order to gradually whiten the population of the country ("Histórico das Imigrações" and Schwarcz 1993). Mignone's parents were part of this immigration wave, arriving from Castellabate (near Salerno) in 1896 (Mascolo-David 2003).

Even prior to his travels to Milan, Mignone was trained by Italian musicians. At the São Paulo Conservatory of Music and Drama (CDM), a majority of Mignone's teachers were of Italian descent. For Mário de Andrade, this immigrant influence in Brazilian cities was precisely what was wrong with the urban representation of Brazilian-ness. As part of a fervor for a "Brazilian" sound, Andrade disparaged Mignone's Italian background as well as his training. Several musicologists have described Mignone's relocation back to Brazil—and concomitant turn toward nationalist composition—as a direct response to Andrade's call for

Mignone to become an important Brazilian rather than one of countless Italian composers. Specifically, Andrade wrote a withering review of Mignone's *L'innocente*:

> No one values [Mignone] more than I do. I cheer for him as I do for all composers that I consider to be of some worth. But I have to admit that Francisco Mignone's current situation is quite painful, and we are at risk of losing a real Brazilian asset… He doesn't meet librettists that provide national subjects. And if he finds one: the libretto, to be performed, must be converted to Italian, because no one in this world sings in Brazilian.[19]
>
> Look, in these circumstances, Francisco Mignone finds himself constrained to compose what? *The Innocent*. It is a piece that shows well the musician's culture, and his possibilities. But what national value does *The Innocent* have? Absolutely none. And it is very sad in the decisive moment of ethnic normalization in which we find ourselves, to see a national artist lose himself in useless attempts. Because, in Italian music, Francisco Mignone will be one more, in a brilliant, rich, and numerous school, to which he adds nothing. Here he will be of indispensable value. Even in the time of Carlos Gomes *The Innocent* would have been counted as a Brazilian piece of art. Because then we didn't have a definitive national base… Today, no. We have original popular music… *The Innocent* belongs to Italy. Brazilian music remains the same, before and after this opera. And it is for this reason that I consider the situation of Francisco Mignone very painful.[20]

Note Andrade's use again of that thorny term, *popular*. While he does not specify the kind of music he meant, his other writings on the subject make it clear. More on that in a moment, but first: what were the consequences of this harsh review?

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[19] It is notable that Andrade uses the word "brasileiro" to represent the language, and not "português," marking a distinction that was critical at the time, in which Brazilians highlighted the use of Brazilian Portuguese rather than continental Portuguese language in their writing.

[20] Andrade 1928, as quoted in Kiefer 1983, 17: "Ninguém preza mais esse artista que eu. Torço por ele como torço por todos aqueles que considero de algum valor. Mas tenho que reconhecer que a situação atual de Francisco Mignone é bem dolorosa e que estamos em risco de perder, perdendo-o, um valor brasileiro útil. . . Não encontra libretistas que forneçam assuntos nacionais. E se encontrar: o libreto, para ser representado, terá de ser vertido pro italiano, porque ninguém não canta em brasileiro neste mundo.

"Ora, diante de tantas circunstâncias, Francisco Mignone se vê constrangido a compor o quê? *O Inocente*. É uma peça que prova bem a cultura do músico, as suas possibilidades. Mas que valor nacional tem O Inocente? Absolutamente nenhum. E é muito doloroso no momento decisivo de normalização étnica em que estamos, ver um artista nacional se perder em tentativas inúteis. Porque, em música italiana, Francisco Mignone será mais um, numa escola brilhante, rica, numerosa, que ele não aumenta. Aqui ele será um valor imprescindível. Mas com *O Inocente* ele é mais um na escola italiana. No tempo de Carlos Gomes ainda *O Inocente* teria de ser contado como manifestação brasileira de arte. Porque então não tínhamos base nacional definitivada… Hoje não. Possuímos música popular original… *O Inocente* pertence à Itália. A música brasileira fica na mesma, antes e depois dessa ópera. E é por isso que considero o caso de Francisco Mignone bem doloroso."

According to Bruno Kiefer (1983), Mignone himself said that this specific critique had an immense effect, and that Andrade's comments led directly to the composition of Mignone's first *Fantasia Brasileira,* a one-movement work for piano and orchestra. Mignone wrote the work in 1929 and it premiered in São Paulo in 1931.

Primeira Fantasia Brasileira

Mignone shows a very different sense of *brasilidade* from that of Andrade, despite the explicit connection between the two men in the motivation for creating this work. The work contains no folk tunes, but rather emphasizes rhythmic markers for Brazil, particularly the maxixe (described previously, see p. 82) and the *tresillo* (), called by Andrade "the most Brazilian of rhythms," despite its pan-Latin American use.[21] Indeed, while melodic themes shape the work, it is these rhythmic references more than any melodic or harmonic gestures that most define *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira* (See, for example, Figure 2.13a, which includes both maxixe and tresillo rhythms).

Mário de Andrade was explicit in his disdain for (urban) genres like maxixe, *sertanejo*, and samba. João Freire Filho and Michael Herschmann have dissected Andrade's views toward various popular musics of the time; drawing upon a variety of Andrade's writings, they write that Andrade felt these musics "were songs produced 'in the *popular* vein' but shaped by the 'harmful influence' of urban society and international fads" (2005, 248). Filho and Herschmann's references, drawn from the final three decades of Andrade's life (1893–1945), show considerable consistency of language and preference. In response to this work, then,

[21] *Tresillo* is not a Brazilian term, but has become common parlance in Brazil for this rhythm, as in other Latin American countries—see, for example, Sandroni 2001, who discusses this rhythm and Andrade's taste for it extensively.

we should see Andrade at least critique the lack of rurality in Mignone's work. Yet, in direct contradiction, he writes of the *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira*:

> It is with much greater pleasure that I got the best of impressions from the *Fantasia*. It is a positively happy piece, and perhaps what one finds best in the work is the symphonic writing of Francisco Mignone. Through the natural juggling of the concerto genre, the composer enriches his work with curious effects, some the most delicious, like for example when he, after a strongly rhythmic tutti preparation, begins a vertiginous maxixe movement with a magical[22] distribution of the melodic line through all registers of the piano … It seems to me that in this conceptual orientation, nationality doesn't undermine concerns with the universal, which is the position from which Francisco Mignone will be able to give us valuable works fertilized with his own personality.[23]

Perhaps Andrade felt that Mignone had made an important step by moving toward Brazilian references, and this shows an individualized response to Mignone's artistic shifts rather than a uniform approval of the *maxixe*. Even so, it draws into question the notion that Andrade suggested a clear standard for the ideal representation of *brasilidade*.

What is more, there is no mention here or elsewhere of a modernist mandate. Given Andrade's central role in designing and preparing the aforementioned 1922 Semana de Arte Moderna in São Paulo, and a spokesperson for Brazilian modernism, his failure to comment on the innovative or modern qualities of the work are striking. This is, perhaps, because Mignone's work is the opposite of modern in terms of style and sound, instead adopting much more conservative models. The work remains essentially in G♭ major throughout, with a structure that draws strongly on nineteenth-century techniques for thematic growth. Most themes are presented with one instrumental set (either solo piano or orchestra without

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[22] literally, "abracadabra" ("abracadabrante")

[23] 1931, as cited in Kiefer 1983, 19: "É pois com tanto maior prazer que tive da *Fantasia* a melhor das impressões. É uma peça sipositivamente muito feliz, e porventura o que de melhor se encontra na bagagem sinfônica de Francisco Mignone. Levado pelo malabarístico, natural do gênero Concerto, o compositor enriqueceu sua peça de efeitos curiosos, alguns deliciosíssimos como por exemplo aquele em que, após um preparo fortemente rítmico de tutti, se inicia um movimento vertiginosamente de maxixe, com abracadabrante distribuição da linha melódica por todos os registros do piano (…) Me parece que nessa orientação conceptiva, em que a nacionalidade não se desvirtua pela preocupação do universal é que está o lado por onde Francisco Mignone poderá nos dar obras valiosas e fecundar a sua personalidade."

piano), then elaborated with a statement that includes both piano and orchestra. Figures 2.13a and 2.13b show one typical example of growth in the *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira*, wherein Mignone widens the register, increases the volume, and builds up sound through longer pedal in the piano part, a treatment that recalls works like Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto.

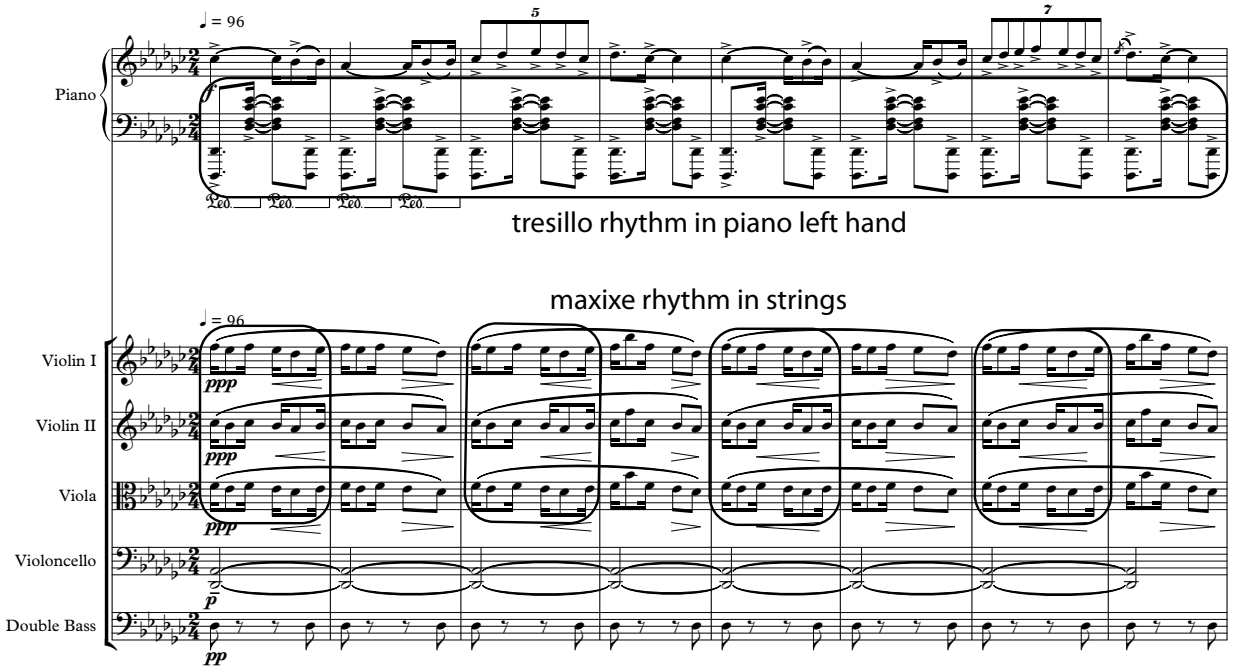

Figure 2.13a: Francisco Mignone, *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira,* rehearsal 5

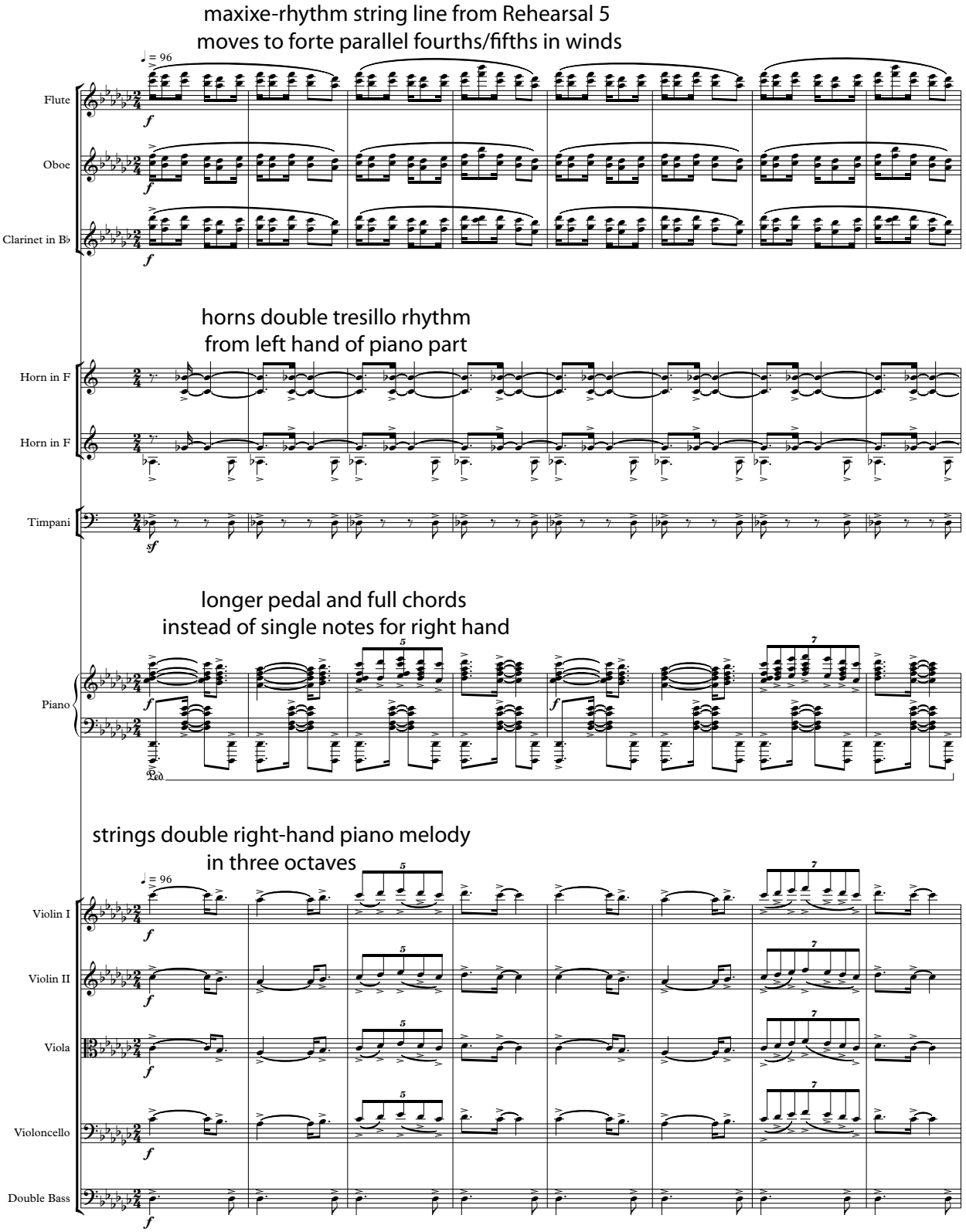

Figure 2.13b: Mignone, *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira,* rehearsal 23 expansion of theme from rehearsal 5

In other moments, there are cinematic flourishes of tension, as in the opening wavering between F♯ and G, later rising to a trill of G♯ to A, or the alternation of [026]-type trichord harmonies, but these are temporary flashes, whereas the work is dominated by clear tonal themes with regular meter and conservative, static harmonies. Figures 2.14a and 2.14b show the wavering trills of the opening as they move from F♯/G (spelled enharmonically at the opening) to G♯/A, then back again.

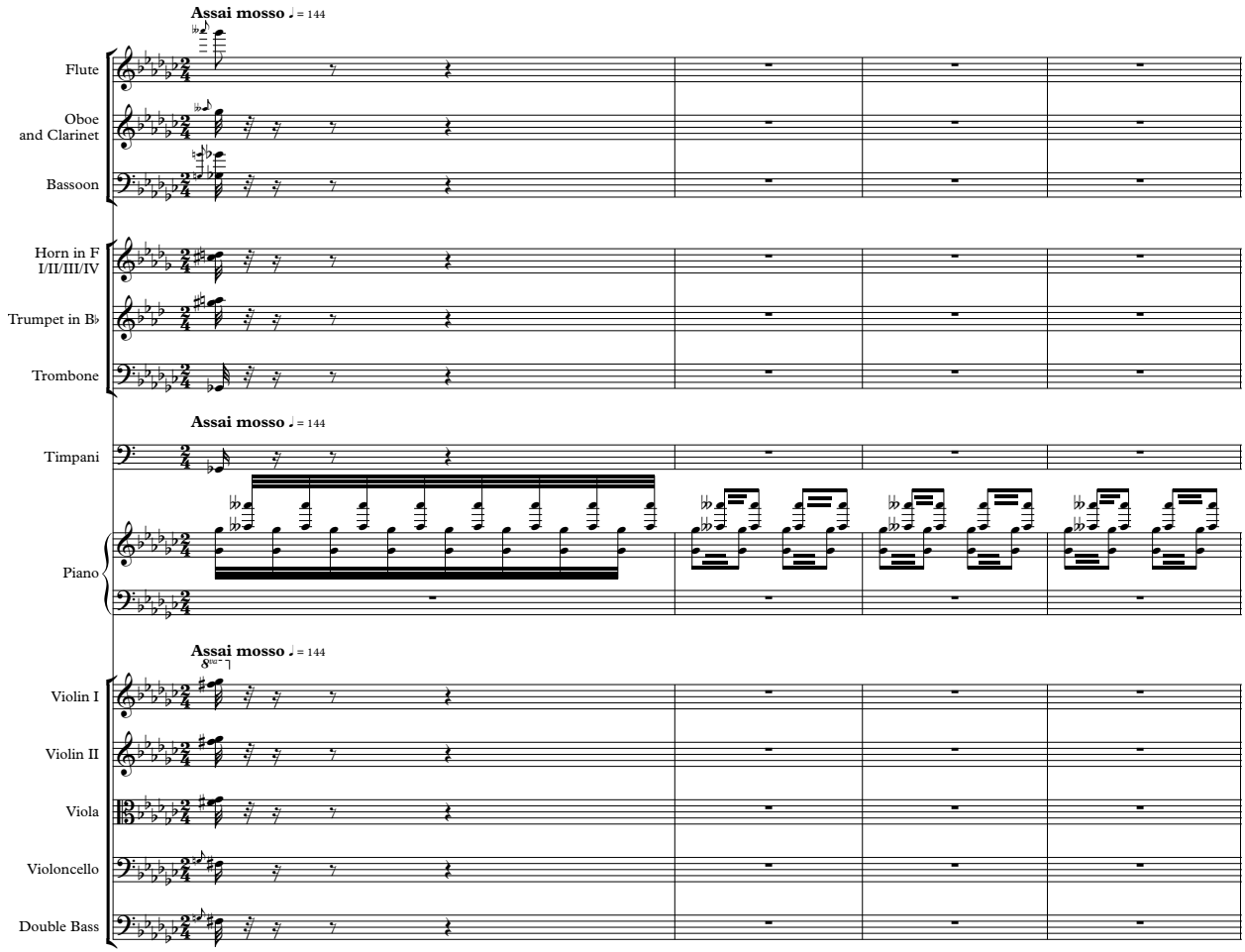

Figure 2.14a: Mignone, *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira*, opening F♯/G trill

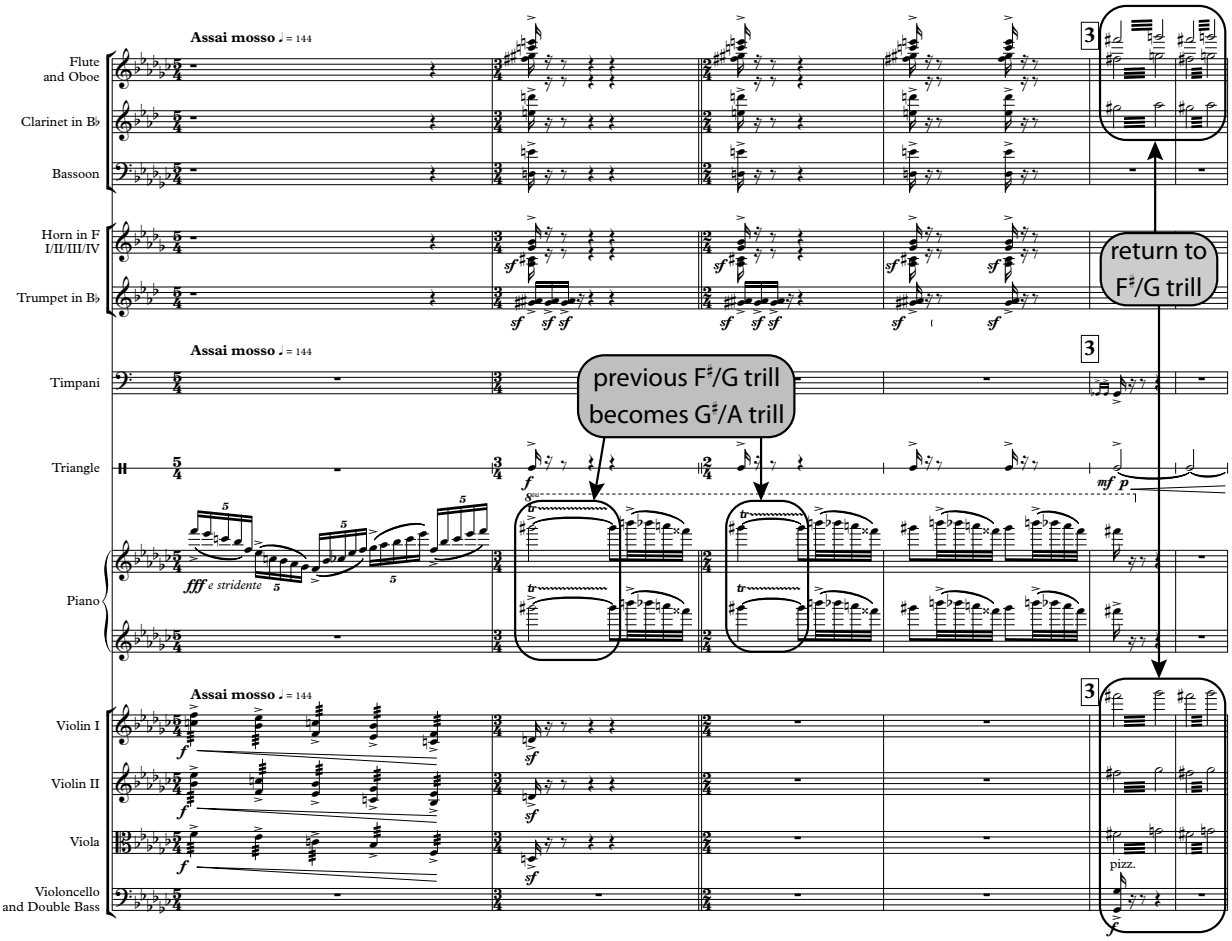

Figure 2.14b: Mignone, *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira*, mm. 18–22

This is not to suggest that Mignone has failed at being a modernist Brazilian composer; rather, it is not clear that he was even aiming at a "modernist" sound. Instead of tropes of alienation and a break with the past, Mignone speaks at length in interviews and essays about the political and cultural obligation of contributing to a nationalist body of composition. Even later, when he adopted some more dissonant techniques, like tone clusters and polytonal sections of works, he emphasized that he was writing for the "people" or the "public," rather than an erudite and effete audience (see, for example, Mignone 1947, Mignone 1968, and Mignone 1977).

This raises an important issue in the representation of Brazilian modernism. Mignone's failure to adopt serialism or other modernist techniques does not exclude him from the cadre of Brazilian modernists.

Rather, as Gouveia (2013) argues, Brazilian modernism encompasses styles that are seemingly incompatible: Gouveia writes that in attempting to create a "pan-Brazilian modernism" that valued multiple voices and contributions, as well as presenting a continuous path of progress, Andrade and others employed the term *modernista* as a category that included artists and writers whose approaches explicitly contradicted to European modernist aesthetics, such as northeastern neorealist novelists Jorge Amado, Rachel de Queiroz, and others. Gouveia argues that this stitching together of contradictory approaches provides a critical metanarrative of progress and growth for Brazilian cultural products, presenting the modernist works of Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade, and Graça Aranha as stepping stones on a continued path rather than an isolated moment that was succeeded by more populist approaches to art. Gouveia writes, "Some of these new writers [of the 1930s] were influenced by the early modernist manifestations, but many of them introduced an aesthetic sensibility and themes that were never part of the 1920s modernist output" (2013, 44). This deliberate move to include less avant-garde materials is visible as early as 1942, in Mário de Andrade's talk for the twentieth anniversary of the Semana de Arte Moderna, "O Movimento Modernista." Here, he describes a move around 1930 into a more "proletarian" and "calm" style (Andrade 1942, 43). Thus, Mignone's contribution is self-described as part of Brazilian modernism even without the "innovation, rebelliousness, and transgression" (Gouveia 2013, 40) of some of the other works within this same category. He describes himself as part of a group that includes Villa-Lobos, Oscar Lorenzo Fernândez, and Luciano Gallet, particularly emphasizing how they bring a new consciousness to Brazilian music. In that sense, Mignone sees the prioritizing of nationalist material itself as an act of innovation (Mignone 1948).

Luciano Gallet's *Turuna*

Of the composers discussed in this chapter, Luciano Gallet (1893–1931) was perhaps the most active in advocating for a national Brazilian voice in concert music. In addition to composing, conducting,

and teaching at the Instituto Nacional de Música in Rio de Janeiro (INM, his alma mater), he harmonized dozens of folk tunes in the 1920s, and wrote ethnographic monographs on Afro-Brazilians and indigenous Brazilians, including photographs of instruments as well as descriptions of musical practices. Mário de Andrade strongly supported Gallet's work; according to Elizabeth Travassos (2000), Andrade preferred Gallet over other composers of the time specifically because of his collective nationalist bent. She writes,

> Above all, the social responsibility of the artist implicated sacrifices that Villa-Lobos did not seem disposed to make. Hence the contrast, perceived by Mário, between the individualism of Villa-Lobos and the detachment of Gallet. "If the motto of Villa-Lobos is 'I am ME,' that of Luciano Gallet is one of the most delicate 'we are us.' "[24]

After Gallet's death, Andrade compiled his ethnographic writings in a single volume, *Estudos de Folclore* (*Studies of Folklore*, 1934).

Considering Gallet's extensive nationalist advocacy, however, *Turuna* (1925–26) seems almost understated in comparison to Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 4* and Mignone's *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira*. Where Villa-Lobos and Mignone highlight popular music references, Gallet weaves such markers into the fabric of the work in more subtle ways. Despite the overt subtitle, "Serie Brasileira" ("Brazilian Series"), the three-movement chamber work does not contain large sections dominated by popular rhythms, or themes based on folk tunes. While Gallet employs rhythms that call to mind popular genres, there is no explicitly dominating gesture from popular music of the time. Rather, Gallet emphasizes a conversational style, in which each instrument has a unique character. Within this setting, markers for the popular buttress the composition, rather than dominating it.

Little information exists about the history of *Turuna*, a work for violin, viola, B♭ clarinet, and percussion. At the time, Gallet was on faculty at the INM; in this post, he taught piano and occasionally

[24] Travassos 2000, 50: "Além do mais, a responsabilidade social do artista implicava sacrifícios que Villa-Lobos não parecia estar disposto a fazer. Daí o contraste, percebido por Mário, entre o individualismo de Villa-Lobos e o desprendimento de Gallet. 'Se o lema de Villa-Lobos é "EU sou EU", o de Luciano Gallet é um dos mais delicados "séjamos nós." ' "

conducted the chorus and orchestra (Béhague 2014a). The work is dedicated to Mário de Andrade, with whom he was in regular correspondence at the time (there are several letters between the two of them in 1925 and 1926, when the work was composed), but outside of these few facts, there is no information available about the context of composition—it did not premiere until after his death, with the first performance taking place at the INM in 1932 (Gallet 1934). The first movement of the work, "Seresteiro," was written last, and is the most substantial of the three. In this movement, Gallet sets out a conversation among instruments, creating a dialogue and contrast in styles between the viola and the clarinet. The viola leads in moments that are dark and slow, while the clarinet is virtuosic and fluttery, often creating transitions between sections with a cadenza-like passage. Here, and in the work as a whole, Gallet emphasizes semi-independent linear motion of individual instruments over a chordal or more homophonic texture. Frequently, the lines seem in conflict with one another, or simply oblivious to the action taking place in the other instruments' lines.

Within this setting, Gallet employs a kind of "wrong-note" sound, or a suggestion of bitonality, as shown in figures 2.15 and 2.16. Note in figure 2.15, for example, how the dominating octave interval in the opening melody shifts to a major 2nd in measure 5, where the viola and clarinet take over with a persistent tritone. The subsequent theme in the violin, a simple tune in A♭ Major, not only clashes with the clarinet and viola, but also ends on a strident D♮. In figure 2.16, the opening theme returns, this time in the clarinet, but out of step with the other instruments: the clarinet plays the melody in B♭ Major, while the other instruments blithely continue on in G Major. These techniques yield a sound that is reminiscent of some of Milhaud's works; Gallet studied with Milhaud during the composer's extended visit to Rio de Janeiro during World War I, 1917–18.

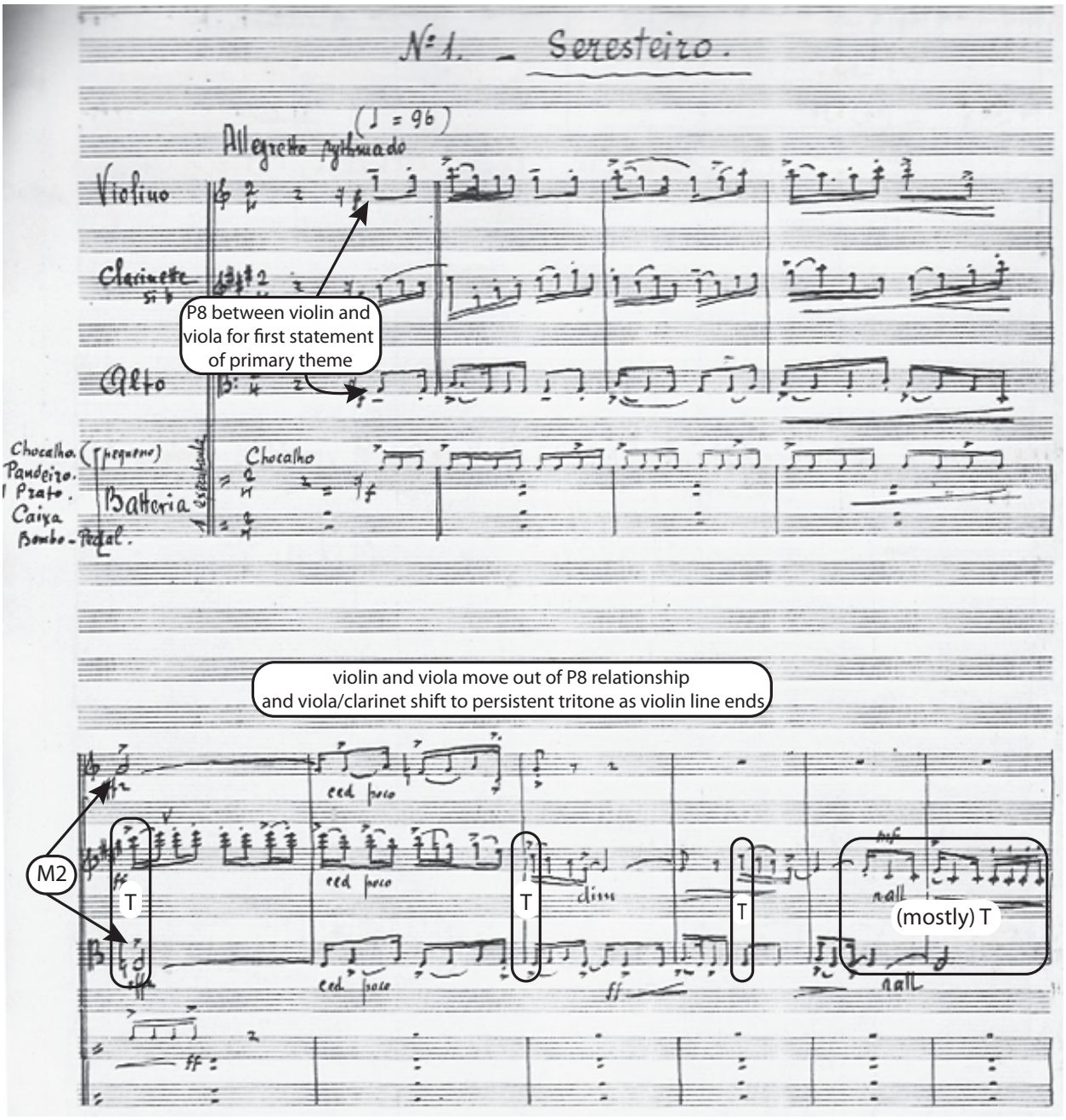

Figure 2.15 (continued on next page): Luciano Gallet, *Turuna*, I. Seresteiro, opening

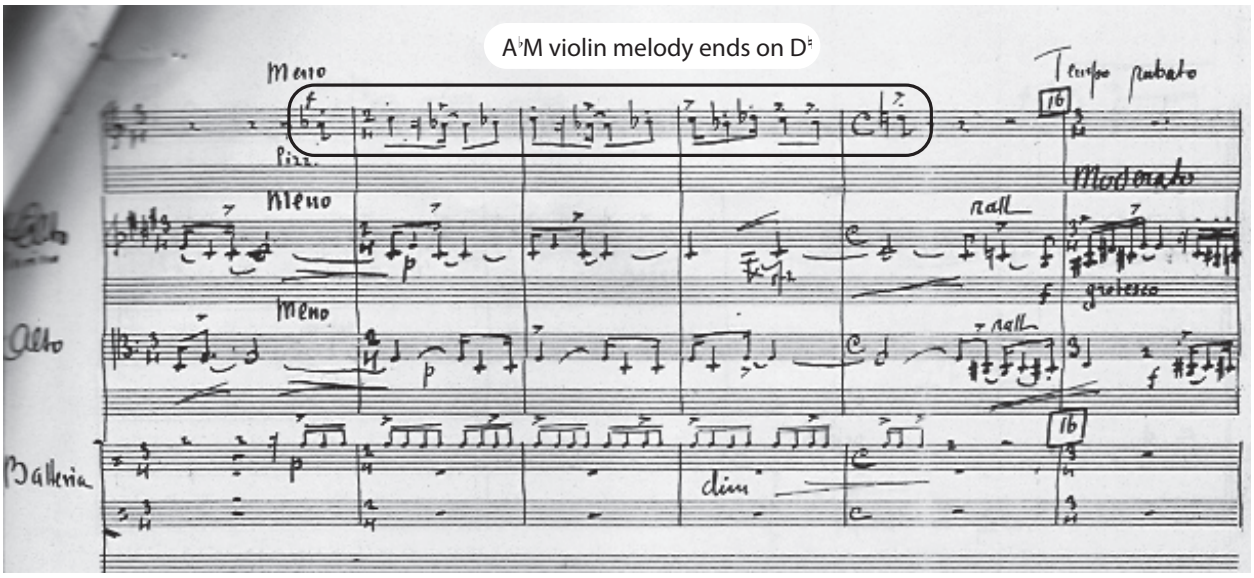

Figure 2.15 (continued from previous page): Luciano Gallet, *Turuna*, I. Seresteiro, opening

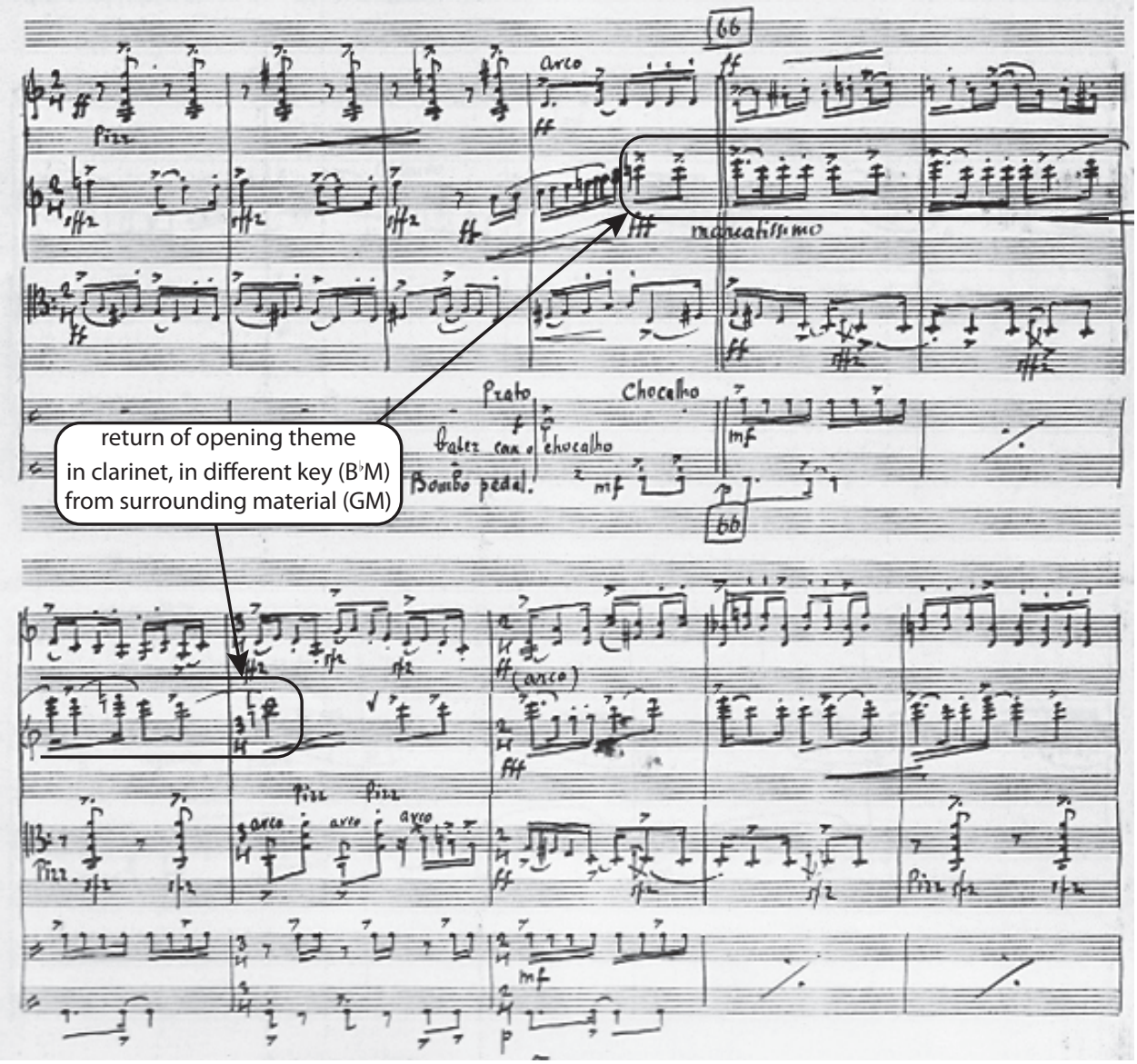

Figure 2.16: Gallet, *Turuna*, I. Seresteiro, mm. 62–72

Much like Milhaud's piano miniatures *Saudades do Brasil*, several of which are named for Rio de Janeiro neighborhoods, each movement of *Turuna* is titled as an explicit references to *brasilidade*. The first movement, "Seresteiro," refers to a musician who would play *serestas*, an urban popular music of the time, which Gallet addresses in *Estudos de Folclore*. Gallet discusses this genre alongside chôro in the segment titled "Folkloric Musical Contribution of the Blacks in Brazil." In this section, he describes a Seresta as a chôro that

is sung.[25] This matches the texture of the movement as a whole, in which the clarinet leads with the melody in the same way a singer might—figure 2.17 shows tempo changes that are indicated especially for the clarinet at times, wherein the other instruments are instructed to remain in tempo while the clarinet speeds up or is specifically marked to play with rubato.

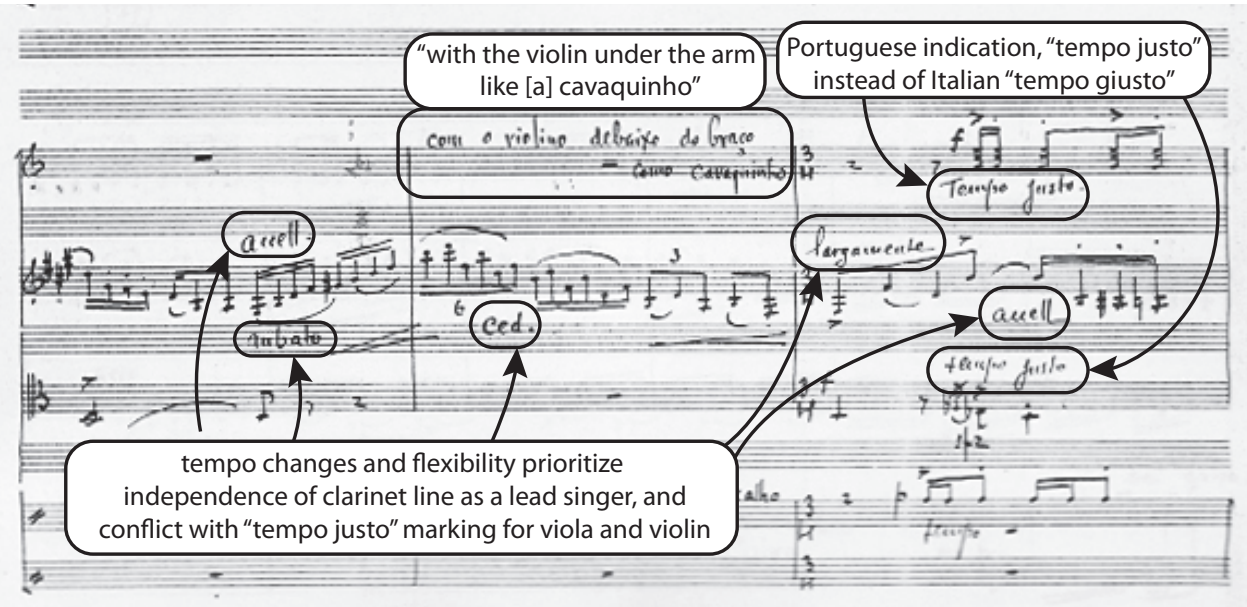

Figure 2.17: Gallet, *Turuna*, I. Seresteiro, mm. 20–22

At times in this movement, three instruments respond to the fourth with an exclamatory expression; while this is not an idiosyncratic technique by any means, and might be described as a "Greek chorus" in another context, Gallet's specific indications of *brasilidade* suggest a different purpose here. In *Estudos de Folclore*, he notes, "in the middle of the song, of the instruments, of the dance, [Afro-Brazilians]

[25] Gallet 1934 (1928). This definition is not universal in discussions of seresta. Like chôro, seresta has a diverse set of definitions, one of which is also "serenade." Further, there are other names for sung chôro, such as chôro-canção (literally, "chôro-song") (Livingston-Isenhour and Garcia 2005). In this case, however, it is Gallet's definition that is of the greatest interest in ascertaining the relationship between this genre and his use of the term in *Turuna*.

mix in shouts, exclamations, and joyous commentaries of assistance."[26] Figure 2.18 shows just a few of the many instances of this sort of exclamation.

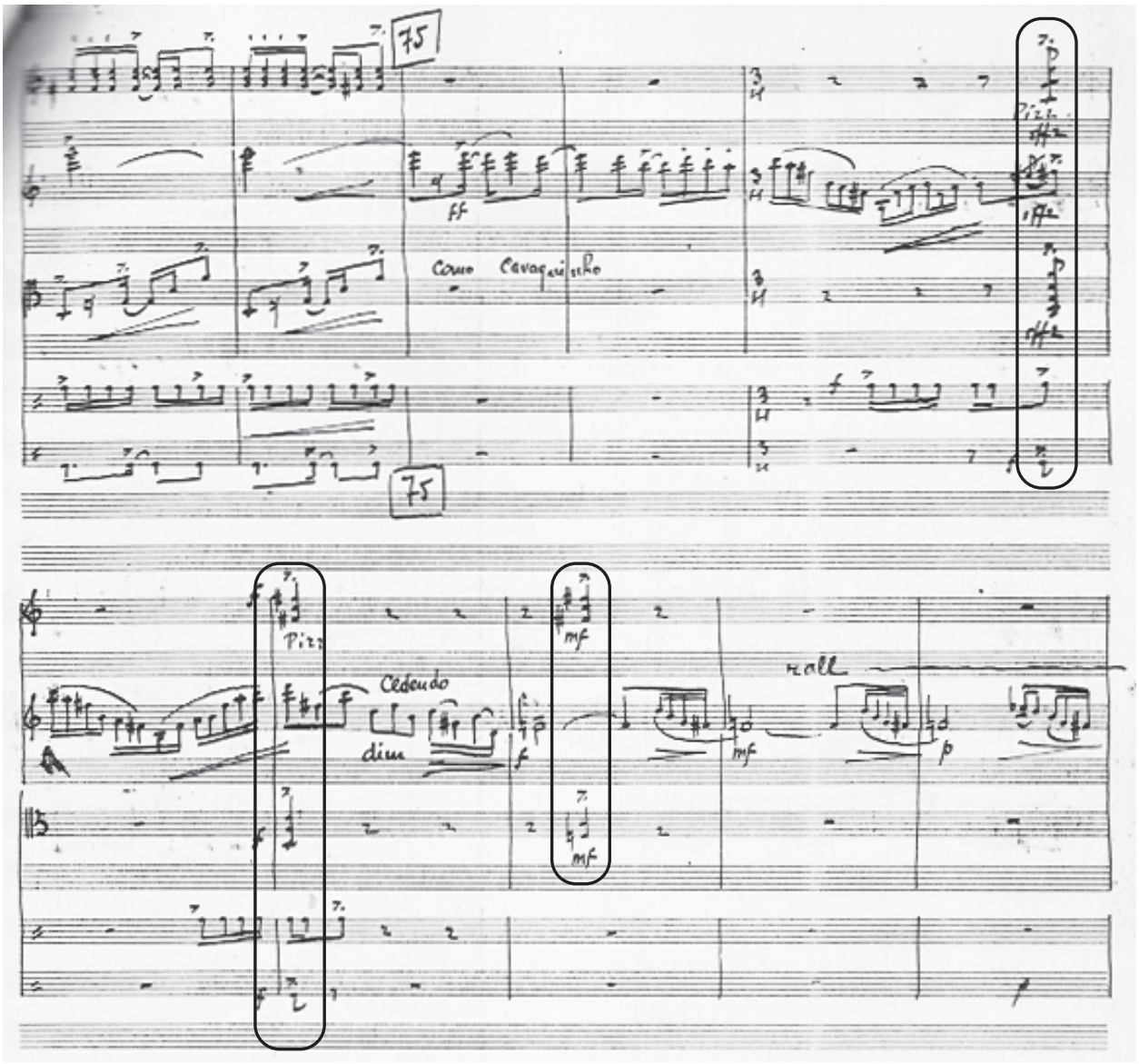

Figure 2.18: Gallet, *Turuna*, I. Seresteiro, exclamations, mm. 73–82

The title of the second movement, "Saudôso," is the adjectival form of the word *saudade*, a term that is untranslatable directly, but roughly refers to nostalgia and longing, and has long been treated as a

[26] Ibid., 56: "No meio do canto, dos instrumentos, da dansa, misturam-se gritos, exclamações e comentarios alegres da assistencia."

word that marks a distinctly Brazilian sentiment (see, for example, DaMatta 1993), which is perhaps partly why Milhaud used it in the title of his collection. The movement is slow, with a poignant melody in the viola that emphasizes half steps, and which Gallet marks in the score "cantando, dolente" ("singing, painful"), as shown in figure 2.19 below.

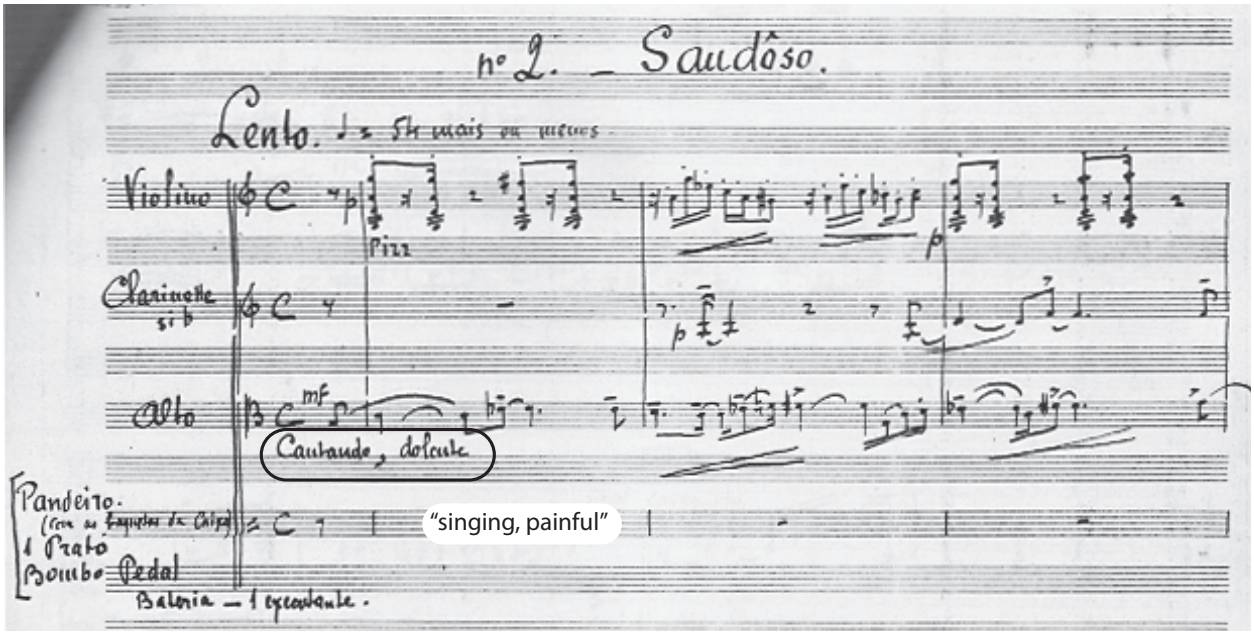

Figure 2.19: Gallet, *Turuna*, II. Saudôso, opening

The third movement's title is another Brazilian reference, "Mandinga," which refers to a West African population and the language they speak, some of whom were brought to Brazil as slaves. While Gallet did not write specifically about this group, he did discuss what he considered to be "Musical Characteristics of the Black in Brazil" ("Característicos Musicais do Negro no Brasil," Gallet 1934 [1928], 54). In this discussion, divided into melody and rhythm, he asserts that the melodies involve small intervals and syncopation. While he notes that their are "enormously rich and varied" (Ibid., 55), he especially emphasizes  as a common rhythm, particularly one that is used for deep percussion

instruments. Figure 20 shows how Gallet features this rhythm in the opening to "Mandinga" by using it for the bass and snare drums.

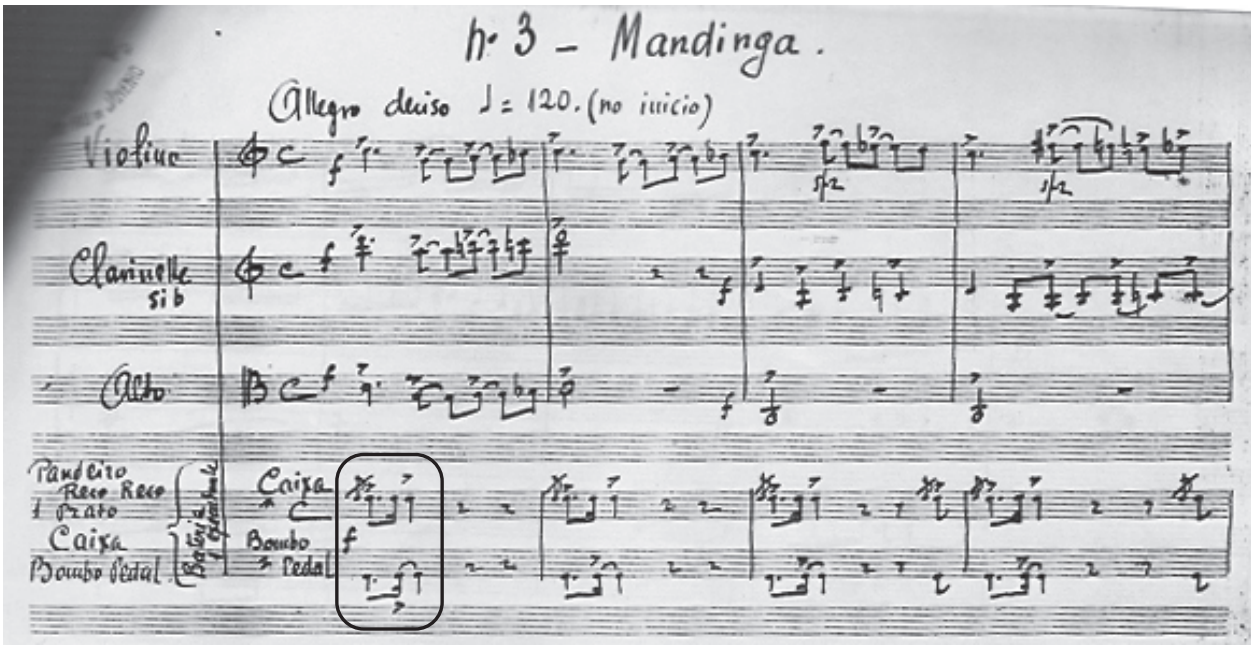

Figure 2.20: Gallet, *Turuna*, III. Mandinga, "black rhythm" in opening

Gallet makes several references to Brazil that are distinctly visual in nature, either through the performance experience or through the visuals of the score. Returning to figure 2.17 (see p. 112), Gallet uses almost exclusively Portuguese markings in the score, even for common Italian musical terms, as in "Tempo justo" instead of "Tempo giusto" at measure 22. In this same section, Gallet makes a comment in the score that points to popular music practices; he writes, "com o violino debaixo do braço como cavaquinho" ("with the violin under the arm like a cavaquinho"). The subsequent segment of violin playing is aurally recognizable as a strumming action, but the combination of the specific reference to the cavaquinho in the score with the visual impact of the instrumentalist putting the instrument under his or her arm in performance recalls vernacular music practices.

Gallet's use of percussion instruments unmistakably aims at a national character. The list of instruments for the battery is as follows: small shaker, *reco-reco* (which is sort of like a guiro), pandeiro (a

Brazilian tambourine), plate (literally, a dinner plate that is scraped with a knife), drum without snares, and bass drum with pedal. He uses these instruments in an idiomatic way in the work; for example, he notates distinctions between left hand beating of the head of the pandeiro, right hand shaking, and a trill played with the fingers scraping the edge. These techniques are not unique to Brazil, and do not come close to representing all of the variations used by pandeiro players in samba and chôro performances, but Gallet's use of this instrument creates a suggestive sound that elaborates the tresillo rhythm, as shown in figure 2.21. It is moments like this that the strongest suggestion of Brazilian popular music shines through aurally; when the percussion plays repeated, syncopated rhythms like those in figure 2.21, the other instruments also tend to come together in terms of both tonal center and regular metric expression, abandoning some of the discord that characterizes much of the work.

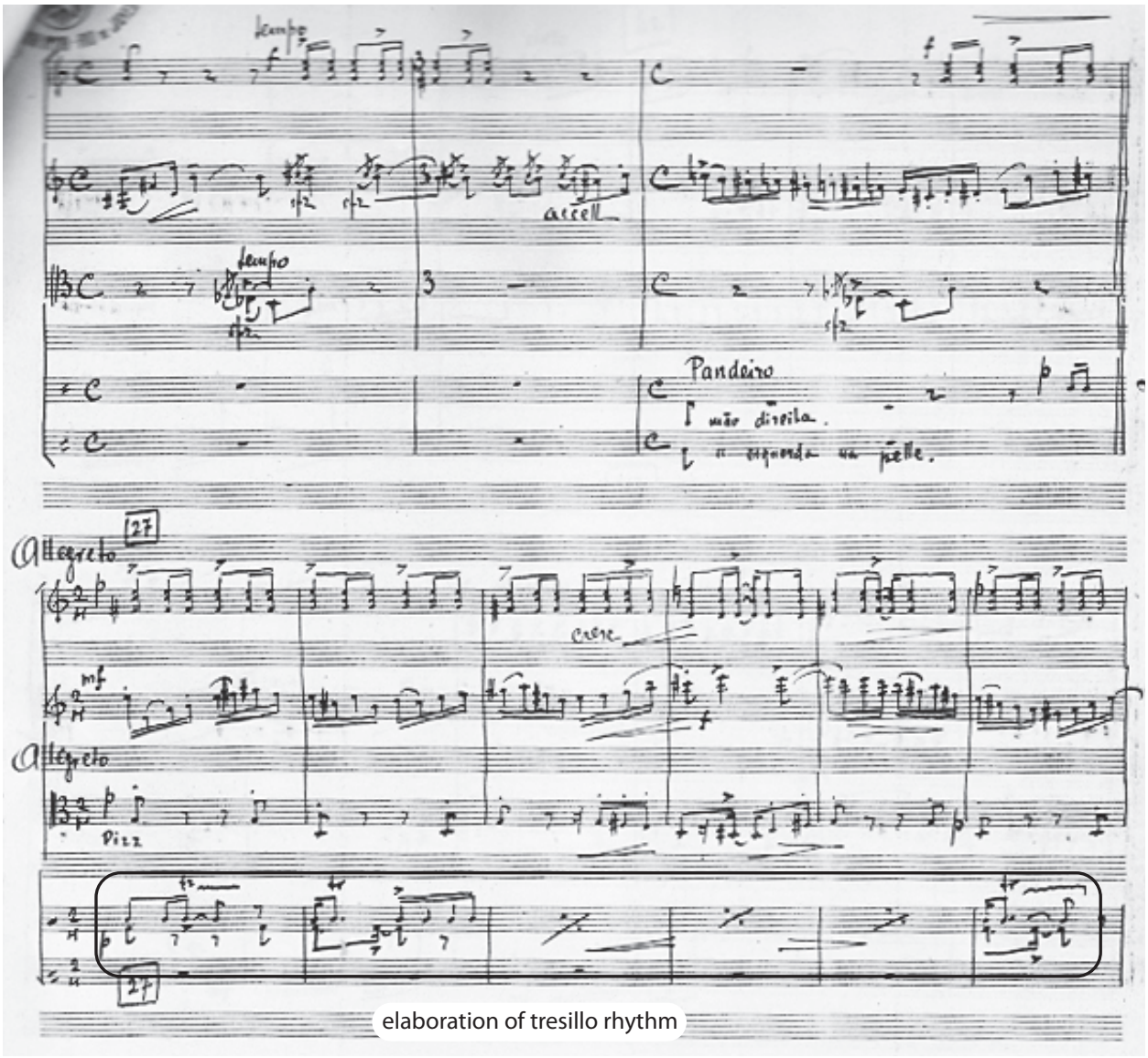

Figure 2.21: Gallet, *Turuna*, I. Seresteiro, mm. 24–32

Unlike Mignone and Villa-Lobos, both of whom at times used "indigenous" music as a point of reference for Brazilian identity (see, for example, Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 3*, or Mignone's *Maracatú de Chico Rei*), Gallet does not cite indigenous materials in *Turuna*, perhaps because of his doubts about the presence of indigenous music in current Brazilian urban practice. Gallet begins his text "The Indian in Brazilian Music" with the following statement: "THE Indian DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE FORMATION OF OUR CURRENT MUSIC" (Gallet 1934 [1928], 37, emphasis in original). Rather,

Gallet asserted that Brazilian popular music was formed out of the populations that mingled with each other in cities, primarily Afro-Brazilian and European, while indigenous music remained exotic and unknown to most urban Brazilians.

By omitting markers of the indigenous and embedding subtler vernacular references, Gallet provides an alternative view of Brazilian national art music. Specifically, his transformation of popular materials hinges upon a narrower definition that excludes certain segments of the population from Brazilian musical identity. Further, Gallet creates a product whose national character is recognizable to a more restricted audience who might recognize certain rhythmic references or the percussion instruments present on stage in a live performance. Unlike Villa-Lobos and Mignone, Gallet had no long-term experience or publishing distribution in Europe (his primary publisher was Carlos Wehrs, based in Rio de Janeiro), and so his materials are almost surely designated for domestic audiences who have greater familiarity with these features than European publics, for whom exoticism is a driving taste. In writing works for such audiences, perhaps it was more plausible for Gallet to incorporate materials in a less-obvious manner, which could still be perceived by listeners for whom such gestures are easily recognizable.

Conclusion: Nationalist Anxieties

These three works—Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 4*, Mignone's *Primeira Fantasia Brasileira*, and Gallet's *Turuna*—show different approaches to the integration of "popular" music. While Villa-Lobos creates a segmented work that highlights an overly simplified version of urban chôro, Mignone uses maxixe and tresillo rhythms as a dominating structure of his Romantic rhapsody, and Gallet weaves popular features in as subtler elements within the work.

All three of these composers were part of a relatively small artistic community in the two cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro; all three were outspoken about the presence of *brasilidade* in their works, and

all three had extensive relationships with Mário de Andrade. Yet for all of their agreement on basic ideas of nationalism, they show very different realizations of these ideas, particularly as regards what constituted an appropriate "popular" reference within music. Andrade and Gallet discussed this tension between individual and community directly—in a 1927 letter to Andrade, Gallet wrote of the incompatibility between individual creative inspiration and collective artistic-political obligations of representation (Travassos 2000), to which Andrade replied (in his 1928 *Ensaio*), "Either the composer makes national music and falsifies or abandons the expressive force he or she possesses, or he/she accepts this and abandons the national characteristics."[27]

This tension, however, described by both Gallet and Andrade as inherent in the task of national music, belies a more personal, individualized aspect of reception. As mentioned in the various examples of this chapter, Andrade's response to each work was colored by context and personality. Andrade writes of Mignone's maxixe as a great expression of Brazilian music, even as he complains in the aforementioned *Ensaio* about how jazz and Argentine tango have infiltrated and corrupted the maxixe with syncopation and polyrhythms (which feature in Mignone's use of the maxixe). This irregularity of opinion is also partly a consequence of Andrade's historical position. Magaldi notes that Andrade attempted to write an exhaustive history of Brazilian music while arguing for a certain aesthetic and political position (nationalist modernism). And while he instigated programs of traveling and collecting rural musics, he also had many gaps to fill. Magaldi writes,

> Given that Brazilian music, as Andrade defines it, had to reflect the nation's racial and cultural identity, Andrade's essay establishes that before the twentieth century, Brazilian culture and Brazilian music did not exist as such. As a result, Andrade's interpretation of the musical past is vague and problematic as he attempts to assess compositions stemming from different aesthetic ideals through the framework of his nationalistic agenda. (2006, 207)

[27] Andrade 1972 [1928], 39: "Ou o compositor faz música nacional e falsifica ou abandona a fôrça expressiva que possui, ou aceita esta e abandona a caracteristica nacional."

Further, Andrade's persistence in contrasting Villa-Lobos and Gallet smacks of personality conflicts: in a letter to Gallet dated May 4, 1927, Andrade writes, "In fact, I don't know of two men less comparable: Luciano Gallet, through his delicacy and natural generosity being a man who asks for pardon, and Vila-Lobos [*sic*], someone we have to live forgiving."[28]

There is some obvious slippage here between popular music and nationalism. Yet this very slippage, I argue, is what defines the Brazilian modernist approach to concert music. From Andrade's writings, we see that what defines art music as "Brazilian" is most commonly markers of the "popular." Thus disagreements about what specifically constituted popular music were critical for asserting not only what defined Brazilian national identity at the time, but also how Brazil could be recognized in the future by cultural elites, both nationally and internationally. It is precisely this anxiety that one sees in Andrade's complaints of Villa-Lobos's exoticism (1928), call for Mignone to become an "important Brazilian" (1929), and continual emphasis of Gallet's personal sacrifice for communal benefit (1927, 1928).

[28] Andrade 1927: "Não sei de dois homens menos feitos pra se entender: Luciano Gallet pela sua delicadeza e generosidade natural sendo um homem a quem se pede perdão e Vila-Lobos alguém que temos que viver perdoando."

Chapter 3. Music, Text, and Context

How did the use of texts affect musical considerations for modernist Mexican and Brazilian composers in the 1920s and 1930s? As I have discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, composers in these communities navigated a unique set of political and cultural mandates, creating music that communicated differently to distinct audiences, and thus had to meet multiple needs. In a setting where texts not only carried a kind of functional or specific meaning but also a political charge, composers' choices about what *kinds* of texts to use created critical distinctions (and limitations) for musical possibilities. Given the particular pressures of this repertory, works that suggest or include a text provide unique opportunities to consider how texts serve as markers that indicate distinct kinds of musical treatment. To that end, this chapter addresses texts and contexts—specifically, the ways that the composers under study in this dissertation treated different kinds of texts, marking them for certain purposes.

Latin American composers of this period were quite inclusive in terms of texts, with a special interest in a catholic interpretation of national identity and heritage. However, these texts were treated unequally; a close examination reveals that some texts were typically reserved for pedagogical or communal uses, while others were marked with exoticism, and still others were treated in a more cosmopolitan fashion. For this discussion, I group the texts into three non-comprehensive categories: folk songs, indigenous materials, and modern poetry. I discuss works from both Mexican and Brazilian composers, demonstrating that these categories apply similarly (though not identically) across the two countries. My aim is not to describe the use of text exhaustively, but rather to show how text functions differently in these categories—specifically, that the individual text matters more in some categories than others. As a thread running through the various parts of this chapter, I address Carlos Chávez's work on the 1940 New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) concerts that accompanied the exhibit "Twenty Centuries of Mexican

Art." In each of the three categories, I include a work by Chávez, discussing not only its relationship to the topic at hand, but also to this landmark exhibition.

Chapter Overview

I begin with folk songs. Starting with Chávez's "La paloma azul"—written for the aforementioned MoMA concerts—I show how Chávez sets folk tunes, and the way he positions his compositional act as an "arrangement" rather than a new creation. To explore the importance of the text in this setting, I contrast "La paloma azul" with instrumental settings of folk tunes, returning briefly to Revueltas's Second String Quartet (Chapter 1), as well as examining two works from different periods of Heitor Villa-Lobos's oeuvre. I compare these vocal and non-vocal settings to demonstrate how the trappings of text and the act of singing mark a different purpose than instrumental uses of folk materials.

From folk tunes, I move to indigenous materials. The idea of indigeneity is broad, and composers used the label of "indigenous" or "Indian" for materials ranging from transcriptions collected in the sixteenth century to contemporary collected songs, as well as imagined materials, and even modern texts about indigenous themes. Despite the range of these features, several commonalities emerge. To demonstrate these commonalities and the treatment of indigenous themes, I discuss several works, beginning with a return to the 1940 MoMA concerts, and Chávez's composition *Xochipili-Macuilxochitl*, an instrumental work written "for pre-Conquest instruments." To show the relationship between instrumental and vocal treatments of indigenous themes, I compare this work with two texted compositions, one Mexican and one Brazilian. First, I explore José Rolón's *Cuauhtémoc*, a symphonic poem on the topic of the last Aztec emperor that incorporates an excerpt from Ramón López Velarde's poem, *La suave patria*. From there, I move to Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Tres poêmas indígenas*, three songs that unite diverse source materials under the label "indigenous." Here I explore not only the relationship between texted and untexted works on

indigenous themes, but also the contrast between the treatment of text here and in Chávez's "La paloma azul."

Finally, as a contrasting example, I discuss art song, and settings of modern poetry. I focus on Chávez's 1938 song, "Segador," a setting of a poem by Carlos Pellicer. Here, I discuss how Chávez treats material that is focused on a modern textual aesthetic. Unlike the other categories, Chávez did not include any modern poetry or art song in the MoMA concerts; I suggest why that might be, and how this work fits into Chávez's compositions that formed part of the MoMA program.

In closing, I address questions of other categories of texts—such as opera or political songs—in order to think more broadly about the use of text in works of the period. Over the course of this chapter, I return briefly to several of the questions from preceding chapters, especially those of nationalism and internationalism, exoticism and essentialism, in order to reframe these issues within the context of musical texts. I show how much of this material was handled similarly between Brazilian and Mexican composers, suggesting a shared set of strategies when facing texted music.

I. Folk Songs, Texted and Untexted

Carlos Chávez, "La paloma azul"

On May 16, 1940, Carlos Chávez conducted the first of several performances at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), a program he organized on commission from the museum to accompany the exhibit "Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art." The concert featured arrangements of popular Mexican *corridos*, *huapangos*, and *sones*; colonial compositions; and a few of Chávez's own works focused on indigenous themes. To accompany the program, Herbert Weinstock wrote extensive program notes—with an introduction by Chávez—discussing not only the individual works but also ideas of Mexican music broadly speaking, including history as well as a discussion of indigenous instruments. The printed program

is peppered with pictures of these instruments, along with music-themed Mexican art and photographs of musicians at work—such as Chávez leading the ensemble in rehearsal—as well as an excerpt from the manuscript of Chávez's *Los cuatro soles* (1925).

Among the works on the concert was "La paloma azul," listed in the program as "traditional, arranged for orchestra and chorus by Carlos Chávez." In this score, Chávez presents a flowing, simple, consonant song for SATB chorus and chamber orchestra (according to publicity materials from MoMA, the musicians were a mix of members of the New York Philharmonic and some Mexican musicians), one that alternates between C Major and F Major (Museum of Modern Art 1940). He groups the singers by gender, often setting the paired parts in parallel thirds.

In the program notes, Weinstock writes:

> *La Paloma Azul (The Blue Dove)* is based on a XIXth century Mexican *canción* of that name. The exact original source of its music is impossible to determine. Perhaps it is a much-changed version of one of the many Spanish songs that have drifted into Mexico across the years. (Weinstock 1940, 23)

Note that this description shifts the nature of the work: while the program itself lists the song as "traditional, arranged," Weinstock's program notes admit a more liberal composer's hand, though he still emphasizes the history and popularity of the tune that shares its name with this work. And while both the program and notes emphasize the role of a single tune, Chávez's arrangement contains parts of several folk songs. Indeed, Copland uses some of these same tunes in *El Salón México*, which dates from just a few years earlier, and for which Chávez conducted the premiere. Like Copland, Chávez allows parts of songs to float in and out, sometimes blending flexibly with each other. For example, Chávez uses the folk song "De Laredo" as a basis for the opening vocal melody of "La paloma azul," as shown in figures 3.1 and 3.2 below. For comparison, figure 3.1 shows a version of "De Laredo" as presented in Mendoza 1939, while figure 3.2

shows the opening vocal lines from Chávez's "La paloma azul," including a small melodic shift that takes place between stanzas 1 and 2.[1]

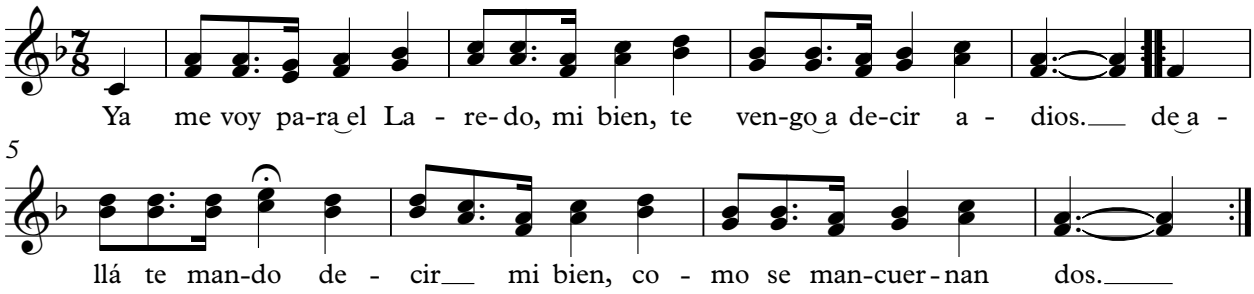

Figure 3.1: "De Laredo" as printed in Mendoza 1939, p. 583

[1] Mendoza's published version includes six stanzas. Chávez's version skips Mendoza's fifth stanza in his use of the folk tune.

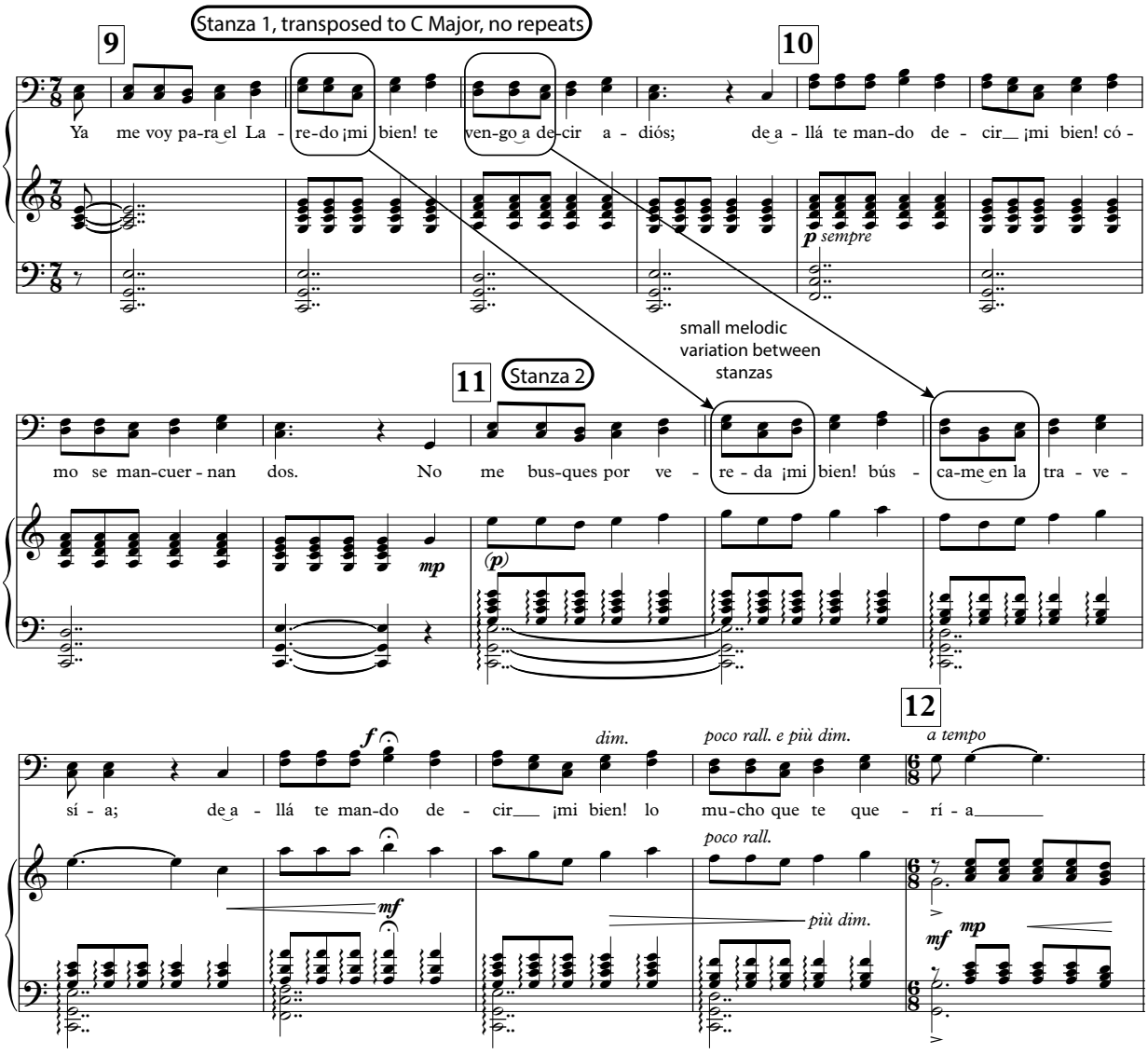

Figure 3.2: Carlos Chávez, "La paloma azul," rehearsals 9–12 (mm. 38–53)[2]

In these opening vocal lines, Chávez presents the first two stanzas of the song. At rehearsal 21 (m. 93), he uses the next two stanzas of "De Laredo." When this melody returns for a third and final time at rehearsal 34 (m. 157), however, Chávez weaves "De Laredo" with another song, presenting the final stanza

[2] All examples of "La paloma azul" taken from published reduction to vocal/piano score, Boosey & Hawkes 1956.

of "De Laredo" in the men's lines, while the women weave in a new, though similar, melody: a phrase from "El mosco"—a folk song shared with Copland's *El Salón México*.[3]

Figure 3.3 shows the folk song "El mosco" as printed in Campos 1928. Just below it, figure 3.4 shows how Chávez inserts this tune into the fabric of "La paloma azul." To flow smoothly from "De Laredo" to "El Mosco," Chávez makes a few adjustments to the "El mosco" melody. As shown in Figure 3.4, Chávez maintains a 7/8 time signature, and alters the opening measure of the melody, choosing to maintain the contour from "De Laredo" rather than that of "El mosco." After just eight measures of "El mosco"—a half-statement of the folk song—he returns to phrases from "De Laredo" to end the work.

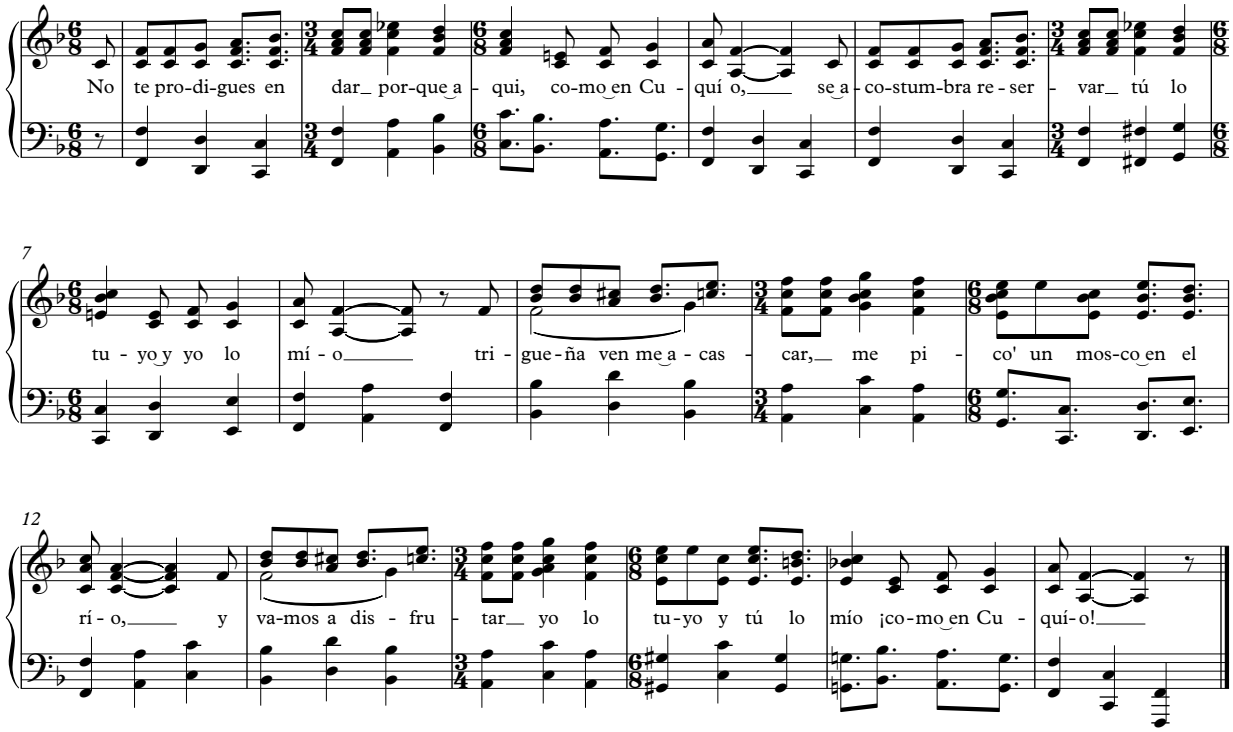

Figure 3.3: "El mosco" as printed in Campos 1928, p. 318.

[3] He skips the fifth stanza, at least as presented in Mendoza 1939. The melody of "De Laredo" is also related to materials in *El Salón México*, but Pollack 1999 and Crist 2005 suggest that Copland instead used a similar melody from Rubén Campos's *El folklore y la música mexicana* (1928), titled "El mosquito," which has a different text, time signature, and somewhat different contour.

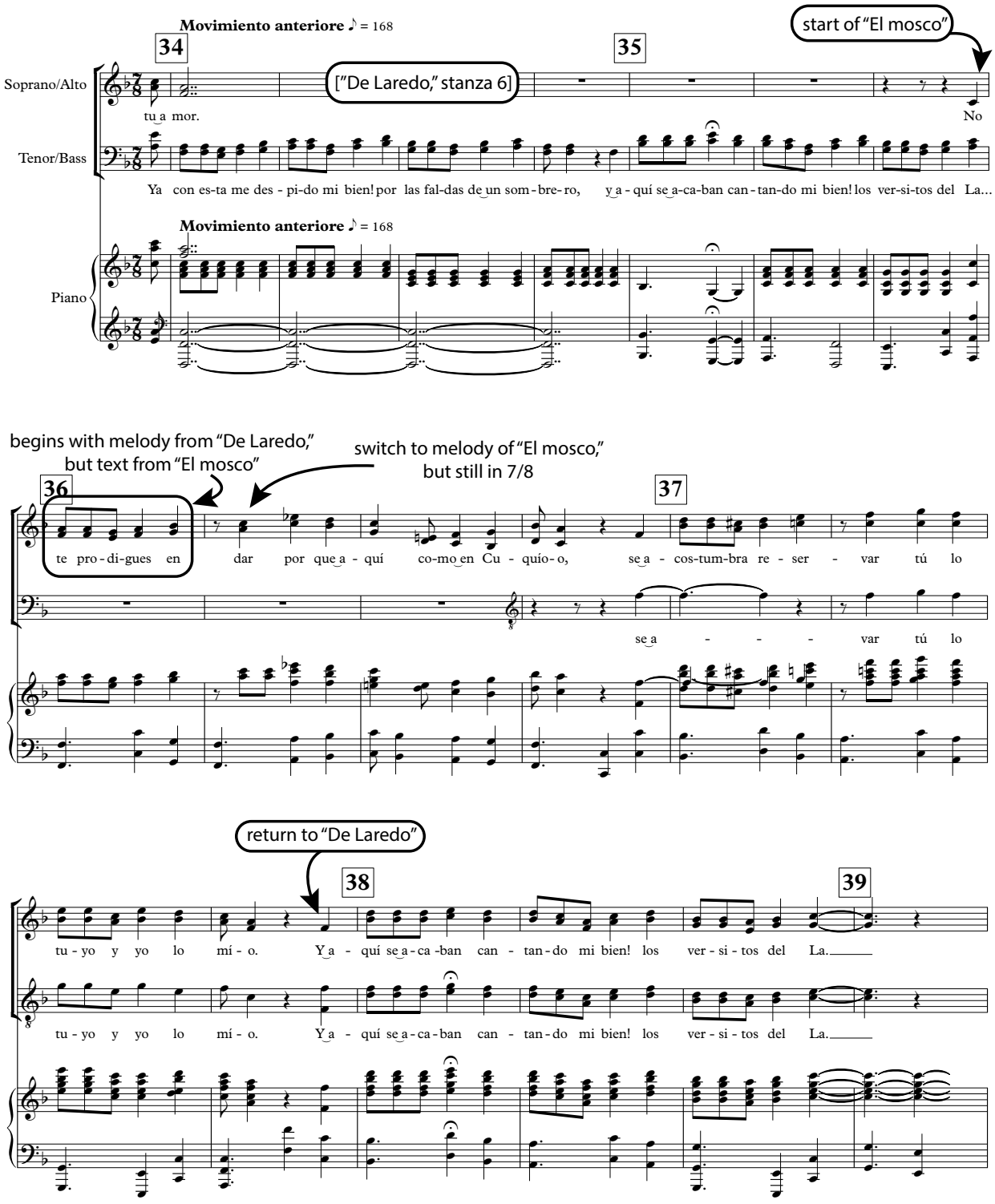

Figure 3.4: Chávez, "La paloma azul," rehearsals 34–39 (mm. 157–75)

In addition to "De Laredo" and "El mosco," Chávez uses the melody and words from "La paloma azul," a popular *canción* that is still sung and recorded today by *norteño* groups such as El Tigrillo Palma and Carlos y José. Figure 3.5 below shows the folk song "La paloma azul" as printed in Mendoza 1998—Mendoza describes this melody as being collected in Zacatecas in 1885—and figure 3.6 shows the beginning of Chávez's version of the melody as presented at rehearsal 14 (m. 60). As shown in these figures, the two versions have a few notable melodic differences, particularly at the ends of phrases. The phrases vary in length, but I have marked in both figures the phrase-ending shape that varies most between the two versions for reference. These phrase endings appear to be somewhat more idiosyncratic, varying across versions of the folk song; for example, El Tigrillo Palma and Carlos y José's recordings each have their own take on this melodic segment as well. Like many folk songs, the texts also vary across versions, in general presenting small variations that have similar or comparable meanings.[4]

[4] For example, while "no se enreda con cualquiera" in Mendoza's version means roughly "don't get tangled up with [just] anybody," Chávez's version has "no se roza con cualquera," which means "don't rub shoulders with [just] anybody." In addition, there is a spelling difference here, between "cualquiera" in Mendoza and "cualquera" in Chávez. It is unclear whether this difference is a publishing error or a musical choice on Chávez's part—from some of the markings in the published score from Boosey & Hawkes, it appears that the publisher may have been unaccustomed to publishing in Spanish language; for example, tildes above the letter *n*, as in *ñ*, are written with the symbol for a musical turn instead of the tilde. On the other hand, the same spelling difference occurs in the preceding line with the words "por donde quera" instead of "por donde quiera," as in the Mendoza version, creating a clear rhyme scheme that nonetheless is different from the common spellings for these words in Spanish with "…donde quera / …con cualquera." In addition, the last line of each stanza changes from a question in the Mendoza version to an imperative form in the Chávez version. I am not certain that Chávez was working from the Mendoza version, but have presented these variations more as a point of reference for the idea that the folk song varies in iterations, both melodically and textually.

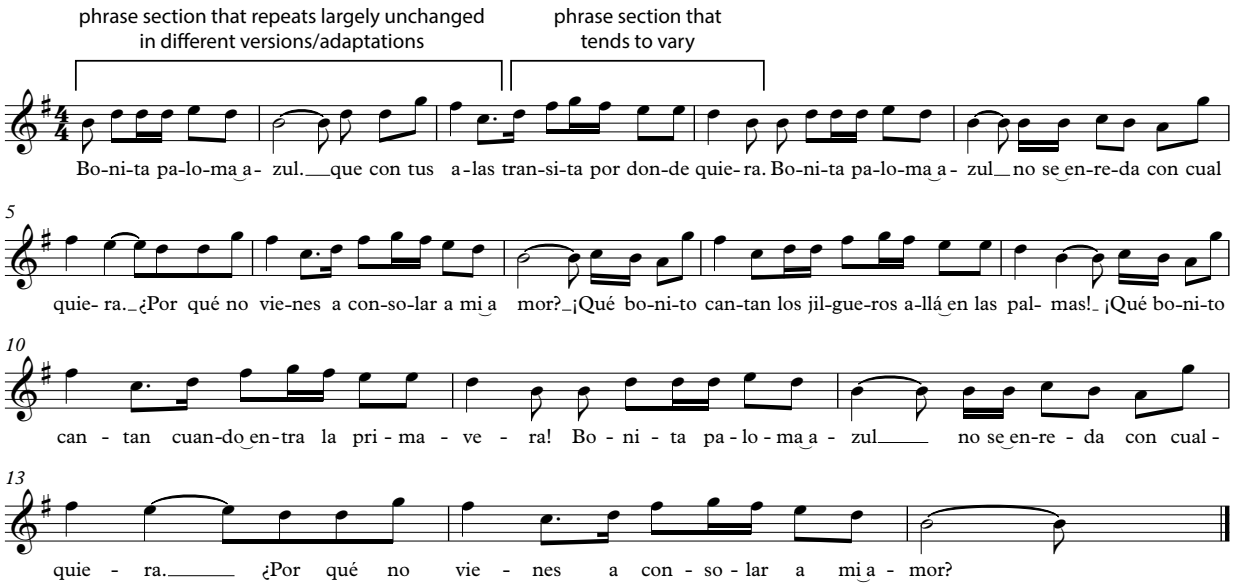

Figure 3.5: "La paloma azul" folk song as presented in Mendoza 1998, p. 184

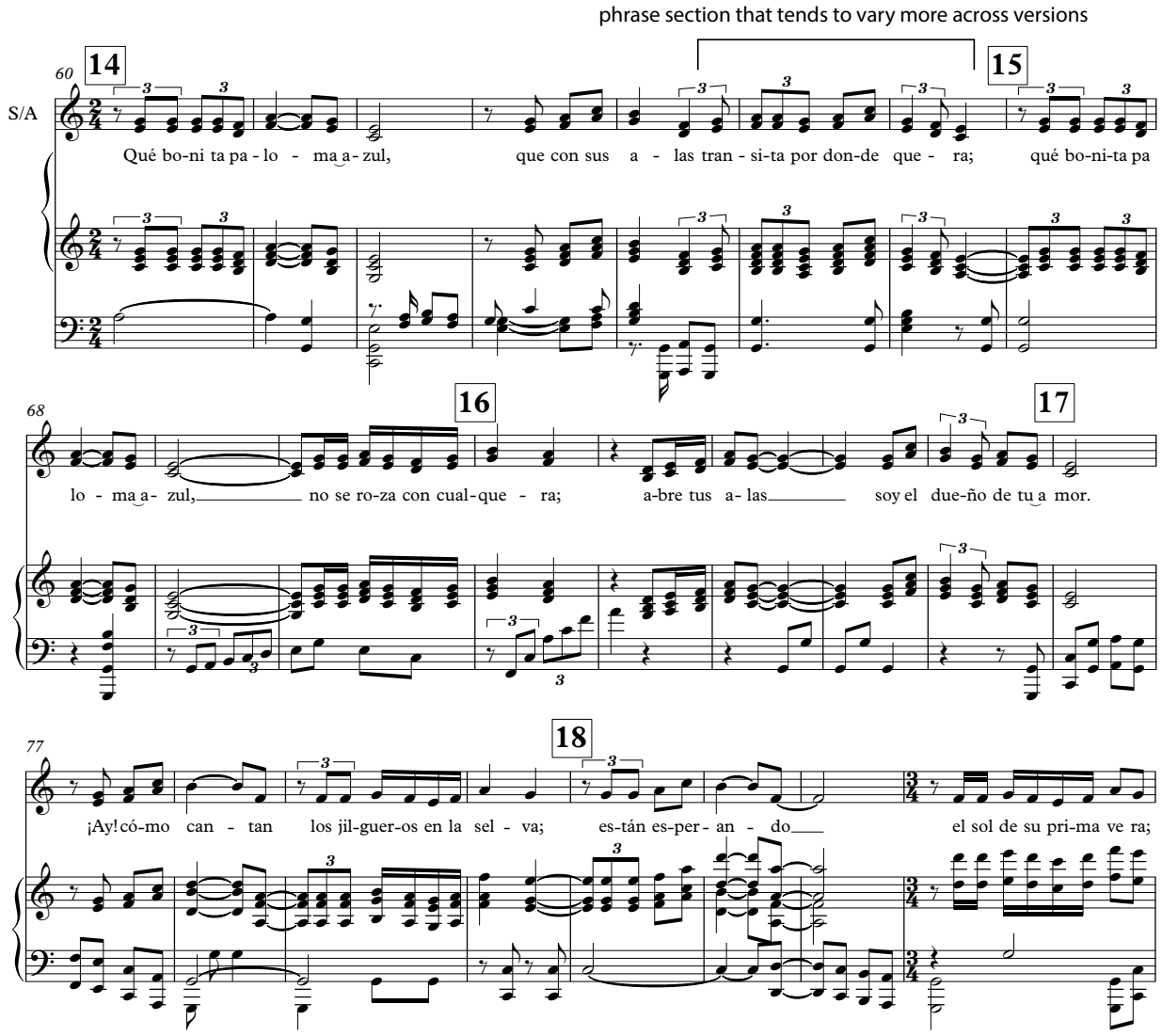

Figure 3.6: Chávez, "La paloma azul," mm. 60–84

Even as Chávez weaves together these disparate folk melodies and their concomitant texts, he creates a smooth, consonant whole that flows together, a task that clearly involves more manipulation than the program notes suggest. Figure 3.7 shows how Chávez arranges the various materials to create the whole of "La paloma azul."

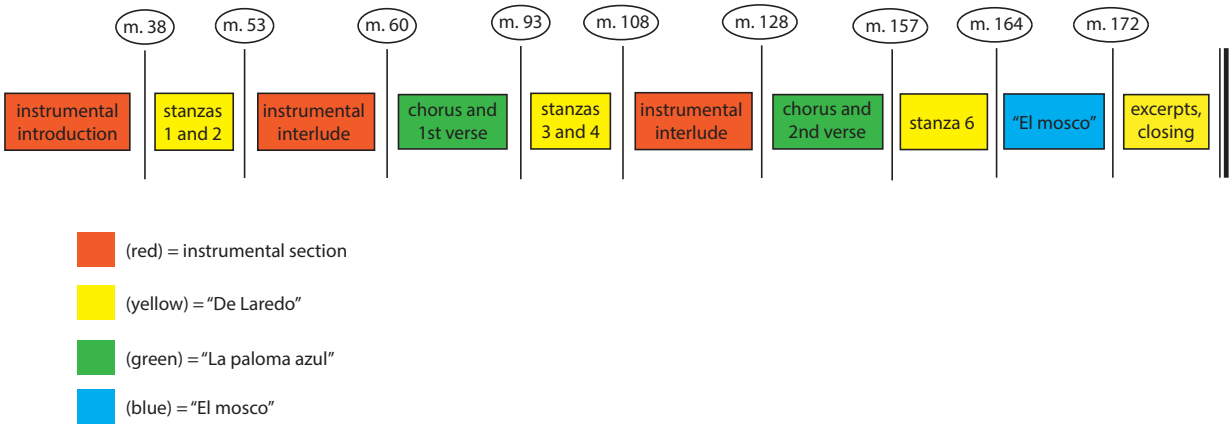

Figure 3.7: Chávez, "La paloma azul," outline of materials

In addition to changing the nature of these songs by weaving them together as a single unit, Chávez varies each statement of each tune to keep things fresh. For example, in the opening melody—the first two stanzas of "De Laredo"—Chávez uses male singers in parallel thirds in F Major; when the song returns, he has the men sing the next two stanzas in C Major. Similarly, he changes the treatment of "La paloma azul" between statements: the first time, only the women sing it, while the men join for the return of the melody at rehearsal 29 (m. 128). These changes are not huge or revelatory, but they show the active hand of the composer. Altogether, with the weaving in of three different songs and small changes across stanzas, Chávez's involvement is significant, far more than the comparatively minimal task suggested by the label of "arrange[ment]" given in the program. Yet Chávez's effacement of his own active engagement in his song only bolsters the suggestion that this material is presented to audiences as an example of a rural, communal practice rather than the activity of a modernist composer who has spent most of his professional life in the urban settings of Mexico City and New York City. It is clear that the nature of this material is intended to suggest a certain kind of usage, one that differs strongly from other kinds of texts.

Chávez's arrangement provided urban New Yorkers a depiction of rural Mexican song and its longstanding traditions. In his introduction to the program notes, Chávez emphasized the effort to present

something that reflects practice in some ways, even if it had been adjusted for this particular performance setting. He wrote regarding the program:

> With the exception of Aldana's Mass and my own pieces, none of it was originally intended for concert presentation… On the harmonic and contrapuntal levels, the works presented in this program retain their original complexion. It is my hope that the inspiration which originally gave rise to this music may arrive here, living and fresh across the intervening years and miles.[5]

It is not surprising, given the nature of the event and this description, that Chávez treated this material conservatively, aiming at a kind of transparency rather than manipulation. I argue, however, that this conservative use of sung folk tunes transcends the individual event of the MoMA concerts—while the MoMA concerts present an unusual setting, and one which transfers the practice to a larger stage, this conservatism is part of a broader set of markers relating to sung folk materials, and one that existed in both Mexico and Brazil at the time. In Mexico, Manuel M. Ponce set numerous folk songs and *canciones* to piano accompaniment, settings that are harmonically conservative and generally double the vocal line, emphasizing ease of singing and accessibility (see, for example, *Siete canciones* or *Seis canciones mexicanas*). In Brazil, similar efforts can be seen in the works of Francisco Mignone, Luciano Gallet, and Heitor Villa-Lobos.

The timing of this practice differs slightly between Mexico and Brazil, partly because of political histories. As Alejandro L. Madrid has shown, Ponce's settings of Mexican *canciones* in the 1910s presented a kind of renovation of Mexican musical language, one that mixed rural and urban, "erudite" and "vernacular." Following the Revolution, however, Ponce faced a kind of ageism and the perception that he was part of the pre-Revolution *porfiriato*.[6] In order to stay current as a modernist composer who could

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[5] Chávez 1940. The mass by Aldana was one of the colonial works featured in the program.

[6] The word *porfiriato* refers to the period when Porfirio Díaz's administration governed Mexico, 1876–1910 (leading up to the Mexican Revolution). More broadly, it also refers to ideas of urban cosmopolitanism and extreme wealth in the governing classes under Díaz's rule, ideas that came under strong criticism with the Revolution.

participate in new approaches to art music, Ponce went abroad, spending the latter part of the 1920s in Paris studying with Paul Dukas (Madrid 2008). However, while Ponce moved on to other compositional tactics, this style of composition remained popular, with salon music printed in periodicals like *Revista de Revistas* throughout the period of this dissertation. In light of how vocal settings like this were treated in Mexico City—as an accessible object for mass consumption rather than the concert stage—Chávez's particular transformation of "La paloma azul" marks a kind of shift. Here, he presents to U.S. audiences a projection of the salon onto the stage, and a move from solo singing with piano to full chorus with chamber orchestra, scaling up these intimate works for larger audiences. Nevertheless, he retains the consonant treatment of these materials, perhaps as a way of calling upon a more conservative past, or as a means of resonating with U.S. perceptions of Mexico and its music as simple and "authentic."

Heitor Villa-Lobos, *A prole do bebê no. 1*, I. Branquinha; and String Quartet No. 5

While art-music composers in Mexico generally tended away from the direct use of sung folk tunes in the 1920s and 1930s, this period saw a surge of interest in rural songs in Brazil, as Heitor Villa-Lobos, Luciano Gallet, and others presented collections of folk songs with piano accompaniments, similarly set in a manner that allows for very easy singing, with conservative harmonies. In the 1930s, under Getúlio Vargas's administration, Villa-Lobos created a national music curriculum that was based around these materials; for school use, he created songbooks for *canto orfeônico*, a practice that involved full-throated a cappella singing by massive groups of children. Francisco Mignone published similar settings of folk songs as well. These settings are, unsurprisingly, made to be clear and easy to sing, as a means to nationalist inculcation.

However, this same usage does not hold for instrumental settings, suggesting that it is not merely the use of folk tunes, but specifically the presence of words that marks this kind of behavior. As shown with

Revueltas's String Quartet No. 2 in Chapter 1, folk tunes can serve as material to be twisted, broken, or played with in combination with modern, dissonant sounds. More broadly, this manipulation is not restricted to Revueltas: Leonora Saavedra (2015a) observes that Chávez also made folk melodies twisted and "ugly" in some of his instrumental works from the 1920s, specifically *Jarabe* (1922) and *Sonatina for Violin and Piano* (1924).

This distinction between words and wordlessness is visible in works from both Mexican and Brazilian composers in the period, but this changes over time for Brazilian composers. To illustrate these shifts, I turn now to two instrumental examples from Villa-Lobos's oeuvre; I begin with the first movement of Villa-Lobos's piano suite, *A prole do bebê no. 1* (1918/22), and will follow with a brief discussion of Villa-Lobos's Fifth String Quartet (1931), written after his time in Paris.

Villa-Lobos wrote *A prole do bebê no. 1* before he left Brazil for Paris in 1923. As one of his early works, it has a particularly Debussyan sound, and is written for a different audience than his Parisian works.[7] For this children's suite, Villa-Lobos titles each movement as a doll that a baby might own—the name of the suite literally translates as "The Baby's Progeny, No. 1." Most of these movements are racially labeled (e.g., "The Little Black Doll," "The Little White Doll," "The Little Mulatto Doll"), and several of them contain Brazilian folk tunes. The first movement, "Branquinha: A boneca de louça" ("The Little White Doll Made of Porcelain"), contains the lullaby, "Dorme, nenê." Villa-Lobos presents the melody several times in the course of the short movement, most often in G Major; however, his accompaniment weakens the sense of this tonality, as does his treatment of the tune.

[7] For further discussion of Villa-Lobos's early (pre-Paris) style, see Chapter 4. It is well documented that Villa-Lobos knew Debussy's music prior to the composition of this work; see, for example, Tarasti 1995 and Béhague 1994. Further, much could be said of the relationship between this work and Debussy's *Children's Corner*—for example, comparing the movement "Branquinha" with "Jimbo's Lullaby."

As with many folk tunes, there are several versions of this song. In general, "Nana, nenê" (also known as "Dorme, nenê" or "Nana, nenem") is a strophic song in the form of a double period whose melody ends on the tonic.[8] However, Villa-Lobos only uses the first half of the song, and while he varies the consequent phrase somewhat, he maintains its ending on scale degree 3. In fact, this first half of the tune does not present the tonic pitch at all in many versions, Villa-Lobos's included. Figure 3.8 shows a version of the score drawn from several sources: as demonstrated here, the text is the same in the two halves, so while he does not use the complete song, he does cover all of the implied text in his excerpt. For comparison, figure 3.9 shows Villa-Lobos's first statement of the melody in "Branquinha," transposing the melody to G Major.

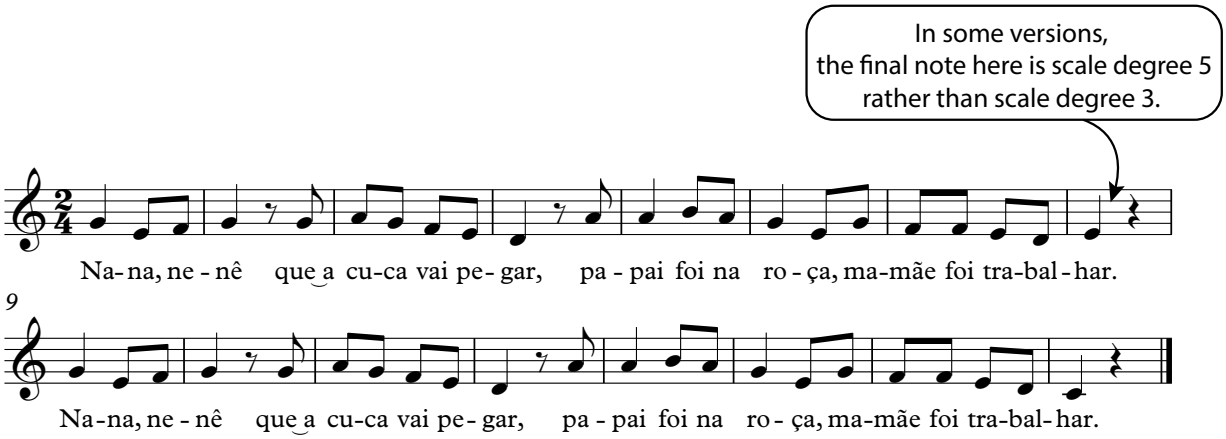


Figure 3.8: "Nana, nenê"[9] adapted from a variety of sources

[8] There are several songs that take the title "Nana, nenê" in Brazil, some of which are quite different from the version Villa-Lobos uses; across most versions, the text stays the same, while there are at least three broadly different groups of melody, each with distinct contour and common variants.

[9] This text translates roughly as "Sleep, baby, the cuca is going to get you, / father went to the fields, and mother went to work." The cuca is a mythical elderly woman who takes the form of a crocodile and steals disobedient children (Lobato 1944).

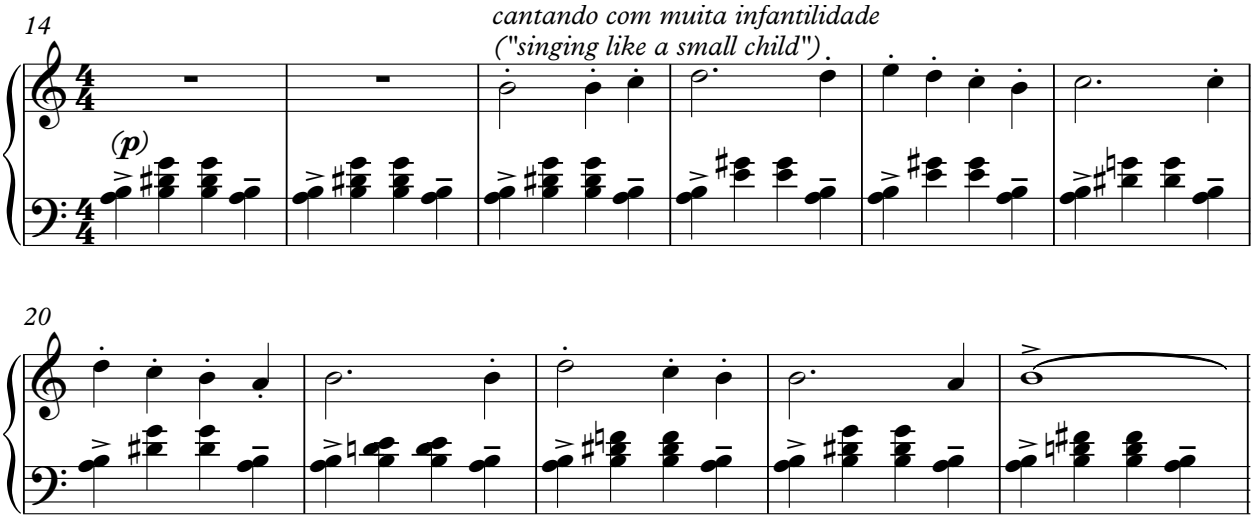


Figure 3.9: Heitor Villa-Lobos, *A prole do bebê no. 1*, I. Branquinha, mm. 14–24

In this setting, the presence of the tonic in the accompaniment would help ground the tonality of the song. However, as with figure 3.9 above, in most statements of the tune over the course of the movement, Villa-Lobos instead bases his accompaniment upon a repeated A/B dyad. In figure 3.9, Villa-Lobos intersperses the A/B dyad with chords to create a kind of altered "oom-pah" pattern. In these chords, the left hand plays two or three notes that slide up and down between B3 and G4, without giving emphasis or priority to primary-triad pitches in the key of G Major. Instead, Villa-Lobos highlights whole-tone harmonies—more than half of the left-hand harmonies in this excerpt fit that category (mm. 14–16, 20, and 22–23). Concomitantly, even when G is present in the accompaniment, it is paired with D♯, undermining any kind of G Major harmony.

While Villa-Lobos largely states the melody with these same pitch classes and rhythms (sometimes expanded to twice the note value or doubled in two-octave jumps), there are two statements in which he veers away from this structure. The first, shown in figure 3.10, occurs in measure 39, where the melody begins on D instead of B, and converts scalar stepwise motion to half-step motion. Villa-Lobos ties the melody in the right hand to the motion of the left hand, which drags up and down to match it in parallel

fifths, creating an [025]-type trichord that slides chromatically through these two measures before the melody breaks off in measure 42. The right hand carries on the repeated A/B dyad, this time with the addition of F♯ on top.

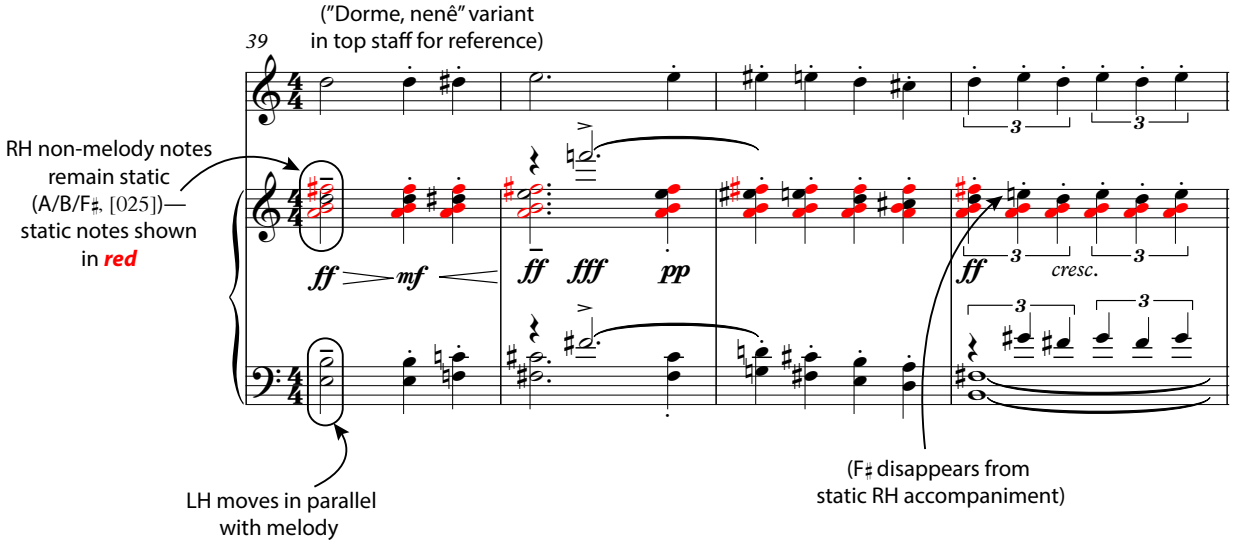


Figure 3.10: Villa-Lobos, *A prole do bebê no. 1*, I. Branquinha, mm. 39–42

Figure 3.11 shows the second instance, also an incomplete statement of the melody. In this statement, Villa-Lobos begins again on D instead of B, but this time starts, pauses, and then restarts on G♯, spinning off into a whole-tone scale.

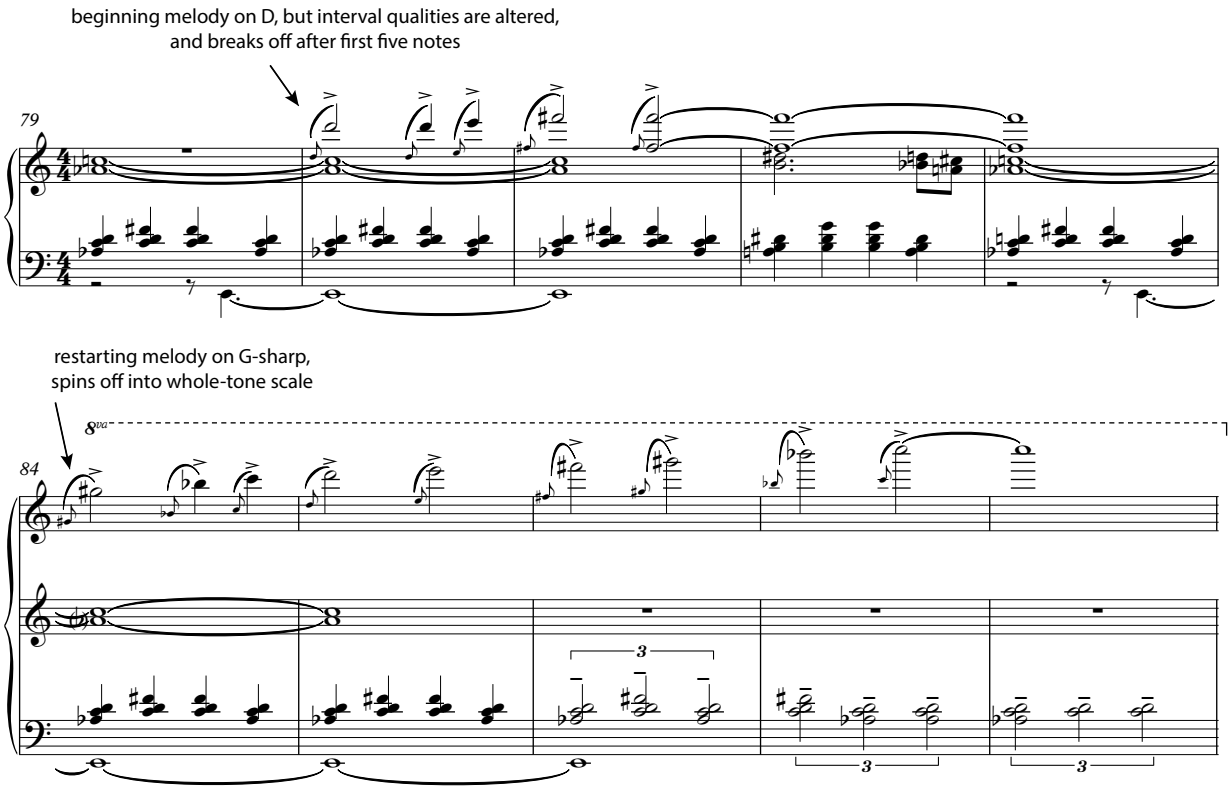


Figure 3.11: Villa-Lobos, *A prole do bebê no. 1*, I. Branquinha, mm. 79–88

Note that the melody is not unclear or ambiguous in any of these statements, even when Villa-Lobos breaks it off—indeed, he marks the tune for the player to highlight throughout—but the nature of this presentation is significantly different from that of Chávez's arrangement of "La paloma azul," or any number of other folk-song collections that are designed to be sung. Here, the melody becomes somewhat unmoored from its setting, such that it not only loses its calm, lullaby feeling, but also provides a direct contrast to its accompaniment, a highly tonal melody with clustery, unsettled surroundings.

Around 1930, when Villa-Lobos was back in Brazil and angling for the post of creating Brazil's first national music curriculum under Vargas, folk tunes took on a different valence for him. As evidenced by Villa-Lobos's Fifth String Quartet (and several other works incorporating folk tunes following 1930), these tunes became marked as rural and pure, something not to be manipulated in the ways he did in the past.

The first movement of the quartet is based upon three folk tunes: "Fui no Itororó," "Que lindos olhos!" and "Vamos atrás da serra, ó Calunga!" Each section has its own tonal center and is built as a move from minor to relative major (the latter for the folk tune), then back to minor again. The movement as a whole is tripartite plus a coda/return, as follows:

Key	Rehearsal #	Folk tune
e	(m. 1)	———
G	2	"Fui no Itororó"
e	6	———
f♯	9	———
A	11	"Que lindos olhos!"
f♯	12	———
b	15	———
D	17	"Vamos atrás da Serra, ó Calunga!"
e	19	(varied reprise of opening material)

Table 3.1: Heitor Villa-Lobos, String Quartet No. 5, outline of first movement

Here, Villa-Lobos operates in a tonal format, and closer examination reveals that his treatment of each tune lacks the harmonically adventurous quality of *A prole do bebê no. 1*. Figure 3.12 shows the first folk tune in the movement, "Fui no Itororó," as Villa-Lobos used it in the quartet. For this folk song, Villa-Lobos employs harmonics to get a particularly high (perhaps childlike) sound, and while gentle dissonances appear in the other instrumental parts, it is quite clear tonally. He also sets the entire folk tune, rather than just one part of it.[10] In the sections between the folk tunes, slightly more modern sounds are used—gentle superposition of triads or extra notes, but nothing too dissonant—but the folk tunes in particular are set aside as a different sound, always in a high register with light, tonal accompaniment.[11] As is clear in

[10] The *Guia prático* presents this song with an extra third part on the ending, but many scores of the folk tune do not include this section of the song, such that the statement Villa-Lobos includes here appears to be commonly described as the full tune.

[11] Eero Tarasti discusses String Quartet No. 5 both in his biographical study of Villa-Lobos and in a chapter of *Intimate Voices: the twentieth-century string quartet, Vol. I* (ed. Jones, 2009). While his study in both places contains some important errors (specifically, the attribution of folk tunes to various measures, and

comparing this to "Branquinha," Villa-Lobos is not merely using conservative harmonies because of the presence of the folk tune, but rather choosing to avoid dissonance in this setting. Throughout the 1930s, Villa-Lobos used folk melodies this way, avoiding the kinds of modernist techniques found in *A prole do bebê no. 1*. This string quartet also highlights melodies that he reproduced in his well-known collection of folk tunes, the *Guia prático*, a kind of cross-promotion of his own materials that is not the case for "Branquinha"—"Dorme, nenê" is not featured in the *Guia prático*.[12]

---

the description of the harmonics shown in figure 3.12 as "parallel fourths"), it still provides a useful point of departure for understanding the folkloric orientation of this work as a whole.

[12] The *Guia prático* remains today the most widely used resource of collected Brazilian folk melodies. While Villa-Lobos credited the melodies to a collection group he led under the secretary of musical/arts education (SEMA), several of the tunes were printed previously in collections from the early 1900s. For a deeper discussion of the resources involved in the *Guia prático* and its implications for Brazilian folkloric research or reproduction, see the "Separata" volume of Villa-Lobos 2009. It should also be noted that there are folk tunes in *A prole do bebê no. 1* that are featured in the *Guia prático*, but his later works rarely incorporate melodies that he did not print in the *Guia prático* (1932).

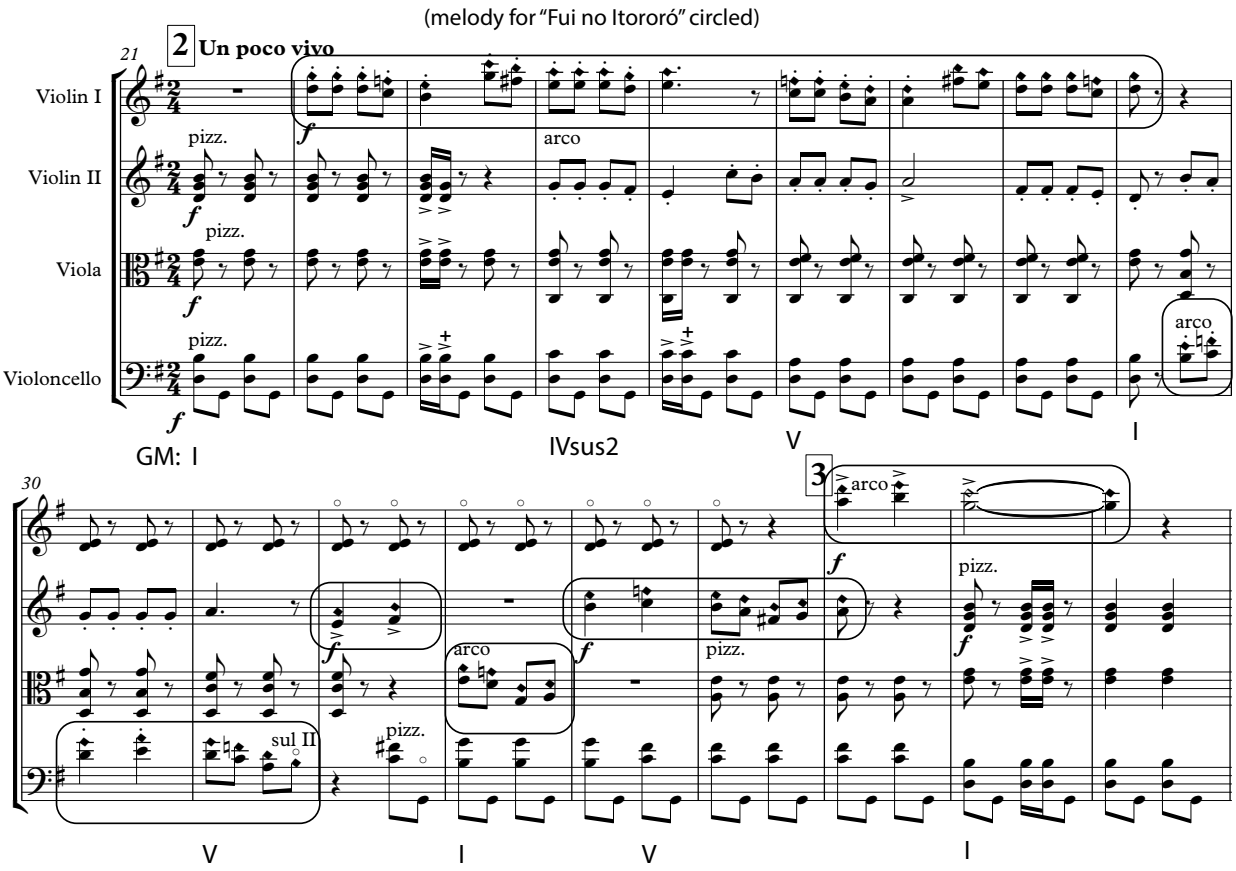


Figure 3.12: Villa-Lobos, String Quartet No. 5, first movement, mm. 21–38

Thus while the distinction of texted versus untexted folk melodies exists early on for Villa-Lobos, it disappears later (following the arrival of the Vargas administration and Villa-Lobos's move into a position creating the national music curriculum). In considering this particular kind of material, then, one must be sensitive not only to the specific setting of a single work, but also its place in the broader trajectory of the composer's oeuvre and within the relevant political system. Chapter 4 will discuss this issue in greater detail as it relates to Brazilian composers' choices under Vargas.

It is clear that the presence of words is not the only distinction to be made in terms of marking this kind of conservatism—indeed, the works I have just discussed vary in both genre and occasion, from museum concerts to salons and even classrooms. However, I mean to argue here that the presence or lack of sung text is one that might alert a different kind of functionality and musical use, whether for

participatory or presentational settings. Within the context of this repertory, folk tunes with text often—though not always—mark a different usage from untexted use; when sung with words, the purpose becomes communal or pedagogical, precluding the freedom of manipulation and distortion that is so often visible in instrumental settings from the same period. If we return to Chávez's "La paloma azul," the subsequent publication of the work bears out this distinction. Boosey & Hawkes later published this song as a work by Chávez, with an indication that refers not to melody, but to text: "The words are from traditional Mexican songs" (1956). And while the text of the song forms a somewhat cohesive whole on the surface, the threads of each individual folk song are marked by both text and melody.

II. Indigeneity and Text

While composers gave vocal settings of folk songs a distinct character, this contrast between vocal and instrumental settings is not applicable across all kinds of texts in the repertory. For compositions on indigenous themes, composers treated the relationship between text and surrounding materials much more freely, blending modernist techniques with primitivist features such as ostinati and pentatonic melodies. Here, the trappings of exoticism shine through, whether vocal or instrumental. I need not rehearse the traits of Indianism and primitivism here. Rather, it is the relationship between texted and untexted materials that I wish to address. That is to say, these same traits are found in both vocal and instrumental works, and the presence of the vocal line does not affect the way in which these traits are handled. Within the repertory at hand, composers used indigenous labels for works based upon a wide variety of materials, including collected songs (ranging in collection date from the 16th to the 20th century), exotic imaginings, and modern poetry on indigenous topics. By comparing vocal and instrumental works on indigenous themes, one can see the shared traits across compositions—both texted and non-texted works tend to serve

as sites for fantasy rather than community education or exposure to living practices of resident indigenous peoples in either Mexico or Brazil.

Carlos Chávez, *Xochipilli*

I have argued elsewhere in this dissertation that indigeneity was a site of exoticism for these composers as much as it was for European visitors (see Chapter 2), and a deeper look at the use of text bears out this claim. To begin, I return now to Chávez's program for the 1940 MoMA exhibition. The first item on the program was Chávez's *Xochipili-Macuilxochitl*, an instrumental work he specifically wrote for this concert series.[13] In the program, Chávez lists the work as "music for pre-Conquest instruments (XVIth century)," with Chávez's name as the composer.

The concerts were broadcast on the radio at the time, and recorded for release that year. In the 1960s, Columbia released a series of Legacy albums of Chávez's compositions and conducting performances, including a lavish album re-releasing the MoMA concert recordings with hardcover accompanying book about art and music in Mexico (1965), and Mills Music printed the score in 1964 (Nelson Rockefeller Personal Papers 1940–41). The score indicates instrumentation of piccolo, flute, E♭ clarinet, trombone, and percussion; while there are orchestral instrument options given, Chávez also notes, "the percussion section was originally written for a group of primitive Indian instruments," and specifies which ones should be used if possible. Both the score and the recording book contain explanatory notes about the work, written by Chávez, and the two are roughly the same in content. In the recording book, the work is listed as "An Imagined Aztec Music." Here, Chávez writes:

[13] The name of this work varies somewhat between this initial program (*Xochipili-Macuilxochitl*) and the later printed score and recording (*Xochipilli*). For the remainder of the discussion, I will refer to this work as *Xochipilli*.

> This composition is an attempt to reconstruct the music of the ancient Mexicans. The source material available for such an endeavor is very scarce, and if I have been able to accomplish it at all, it has been because there is at least one reference point where one is on solid ground. I refer to the collections of pre-Cortesian musical instruments in the archaeological museums of various cities in Mexico and other countries. These instruments are also described in ancient codices and in reports by the chroniclers of the period…
>
> Although we have an idea of their scale system, we know nothing of the ancient Mexicans' concepts in other technical areas. Everything leads us to believe that they were never conscious of, and never established, even the most elementary principles of harmony and polyphony as we conceive them… It is also true that we have no base for supposing that the ancient Mexicans had any developed concepts concerning form…
>
> There are no melodies or rhythms which we positively know to be authentically pre-Cortesian. The melodies and rhythms in *Xochipilli* are more than anything else the result of my prolonged thoughts on topics of Mexican antiquity.[14]

As is clear from Chávez's comments, the meaning found within the materials is more of a fantasy than an expression of any specific reference point. Indeed, even the name of the work, while meaningful in Aztec history, is not tied to this same meaning for Chávez: as Weinstock writes in his 1940 program notes, "Xochipili-Macuilxochitl was the Aztec god of music, the dance, flowers, and love. His name was chosen by Carlos Chávez as the title of this piece because its very sound (it is pronounced exactly as spelled, x sounding like a sibilant s, i like a long e) seems to evoke the flavor of an ancient Indian culture." Despite its significance for the people Chávez sought to represent, his use of it is utterly disconnected from its contextual meaning.

What do Chávez's imaginings tell us about his ideas of indigenous music-making in Mexico? Chávez creates a simplistic music that avoids harmonic change by building up highly repetitive cells in pentatonic pitch collections, reflecting a common view at the time that all indigenous musics were derived from pentatonic bases. Indeed, this question was of great interest to Chávez: during his time at the Conservatorio Nacional de Música, Chávez founded several academies dedicated to studying the topic of indigenous musics

[14] Chávez 1965, p. 51. Very similar notes are given in the published score as well, from Mills Music (1964).

past and present. In a 1930 lecture discussing the topic, Castañeda (one of the leaders of these academies) wrote about these musics, operating under the evolutionist assumption that current indigenous peoples were more primitive and less developed than their urban European counterparts, and that they presented a relatively unchanged idea of music that could provide a window into pre-Columbian/pre-Cortesian musical practices in Mexico (Saavedra 2015). Yet even as he seeks to create a sense of music lacking in development and emphasizing pentatonicism, Chávez undergirds his creation with a clear form, one that lays bare certain structural considerations.

Chávez begins the work with the most minimal of resources, just two alternating pitches on the piccolo, B6 and C♯7; over the course of the first seventeen measures, Chávez adds one pitch at a time to the collection, completing his pentatonic set with a doubling of B at B7. Figure 3.13 shows the piccolo line of measures 1–17, and how each pitch is added individually as a kind of miniature evolutionary growth.

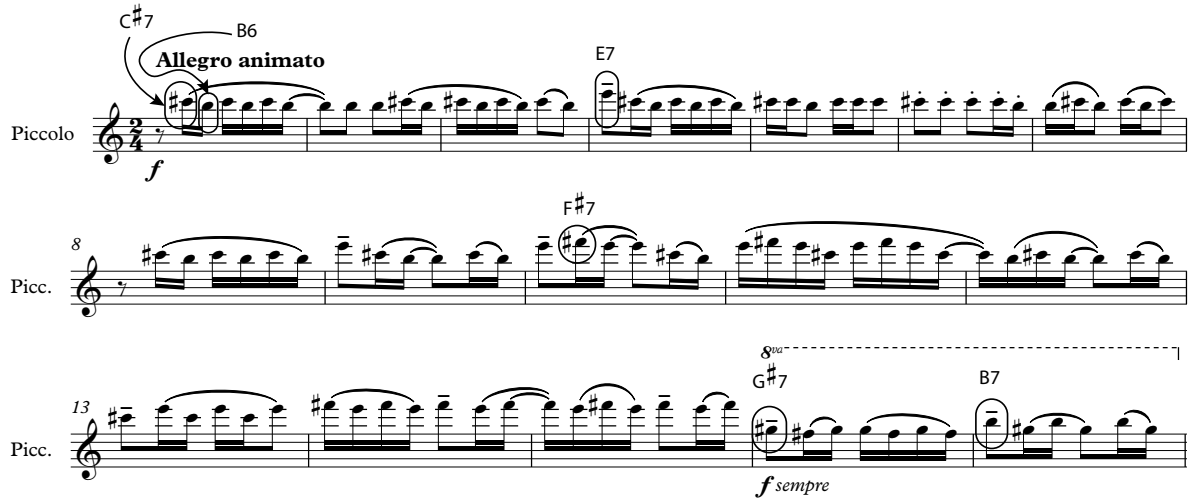


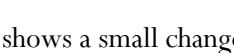
Figure 3.13: Chávez, *Xochipilli*, mm. 1–17, piccolo line

Although he emphasizes pentatonicism in the opening, Chávez fairly quickly expands this pitch collection: in measure 34, he adds two pitches (A and G♯) to create a diatonic, A Major section. In measure 61, he returns to a pentatonic set, this time C-D-E-G-A. At measure 99, he changes this set, moving into an

ambiguous zone where F♯ and F♮ coexist, as well as G♯ and G♮, C♯ and C♮. In measure 117, he transposes this set down a perfect fifth for a restatement of the preceding material in a new pitch area. The work finishes with a multi-key pentatonic section, where one instrument plays in G♭ pentatonic while another plays in D pentatonic, and the third in A pentatonic. Thus Chávez maintains a sensitivity toward pentatonic structures, but uses them in such a way that the result is the opposite of the simplicity he suggests in his notes regarding Aztec musics, placing them in direct conflict with one another rather than creating an environment of consonance and stasis implied in a pentatonic pitch collection.

In contrast to "La paloma azul," where Chávez varied each song as he presented it in multiple iterations, *Xochipilli* is built with several segments of exact repetition. Following the opening segment of measures 1–30, Chávez writes another 30-measure segment in which the flute plays the same music that the piccolo played in the previous section (down an octave), with minimal variations.[15] Chávez also continues the piccolo line, so that the two winds become a duet. This second line is freer, more flexible, while the flute's repetition of the initial piccolo line is rigid and precise. In the subsequent 23-measure section, the piccolo takes up this original line again, this time transposed down a major third and beginning at the eighth measure of the line (hence the shorter segment).

Each part of this tripartite work contains some kind of large-scale repetition like this. In the middle slow section, measures 117–34 present an exact repetition of the clarinet and piccolo lines, transposed down P5/P12, with the piccolo line moved to the flute. In the final vivo section, which begins with an energetic marimba duet, the flute melody grows out of the driving rhythm of the marimba, and becomes the theme of a canon that repeats several times across the flute, E♭ clarinet, and piccolo, each in a different

[15] These variations are so small as to be likely typos. In the entire thirty-measure segment, there are only two differences. The first is the omission of a tie between measures 36 and 37 that the original piccolo line has in measures 6–7. The second is a change in rhythm: in measure 54, the rhythm  shows a small change from  in measure 24.

key (G♭ for flute, C for clarinet, A for piccolo). Figure 3.14 shows the four large repeating lines as they form each section of the work, each represented by a color (red, yellow, green, blue). Within each section, the repetition is not only large scale, with wholesale restatement of materials, but also small scale—within the opening segment of 30 measures for example, the piccolo line contains several small cells that each repeat a few times, cells that then reappear and re-repeat in the restatements of mm. 31–60 and 61–83.

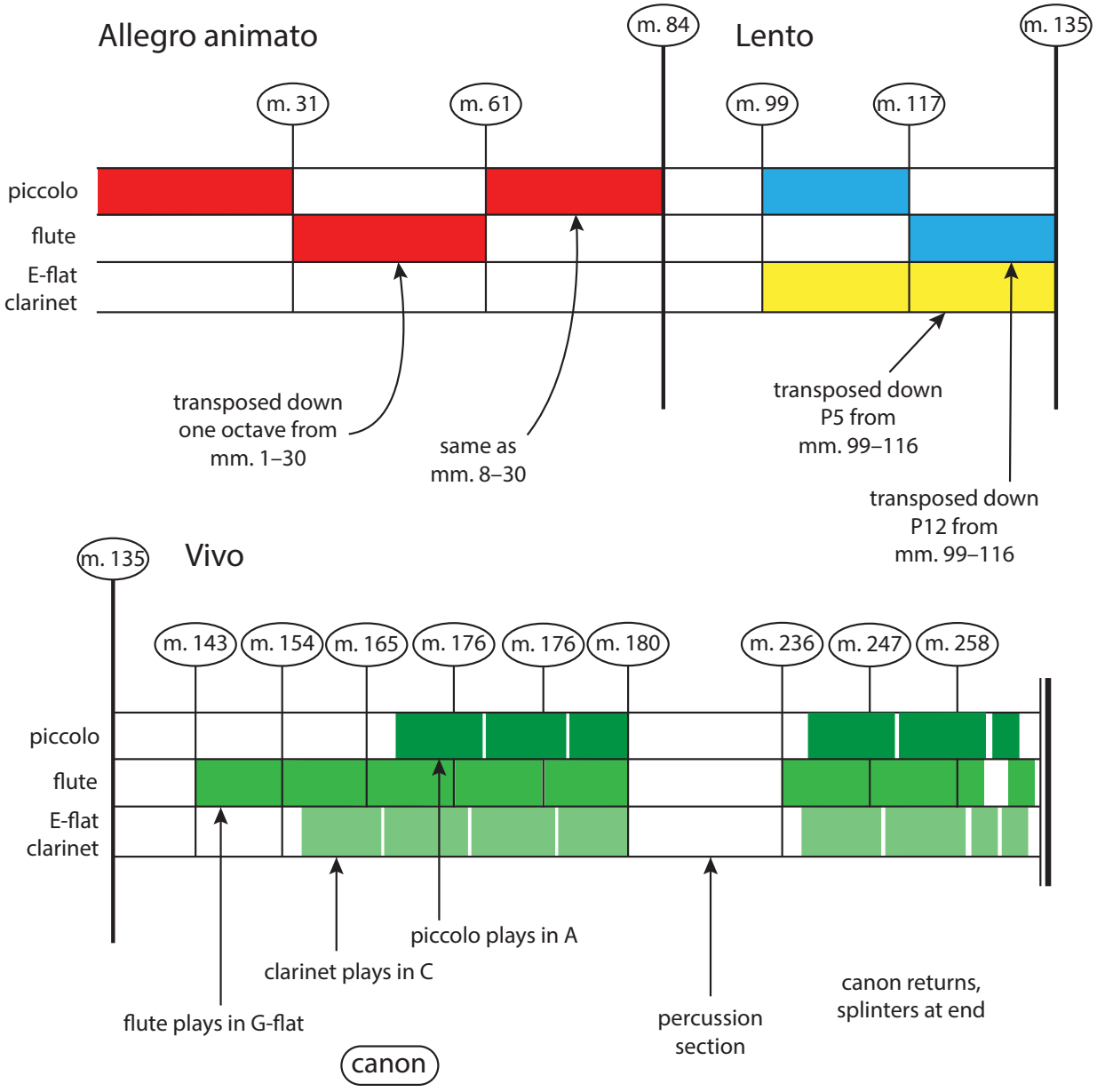


Figure 3.14: Chávez, *Xochipilli*, chart of principal lines as they appear and repeat

And while the percussion at times sounds formless, it is frequently quite the opposite. Chávez uses techniques of extension or arch forms to create structure for these lines. Returning to the opening section, the rasp accompanies the piccolo with two small rhythms that expand and contract in repetition, as shown in figure 3.15. Further, through variations on these rhythms, he shows the connections between the two, eliding them in a final statement of the section, measures 17–19. Figure 3.16 demonstrates another structure created by building cells: in measures 49–55, Chávez uses an arch form to create the marimba line.

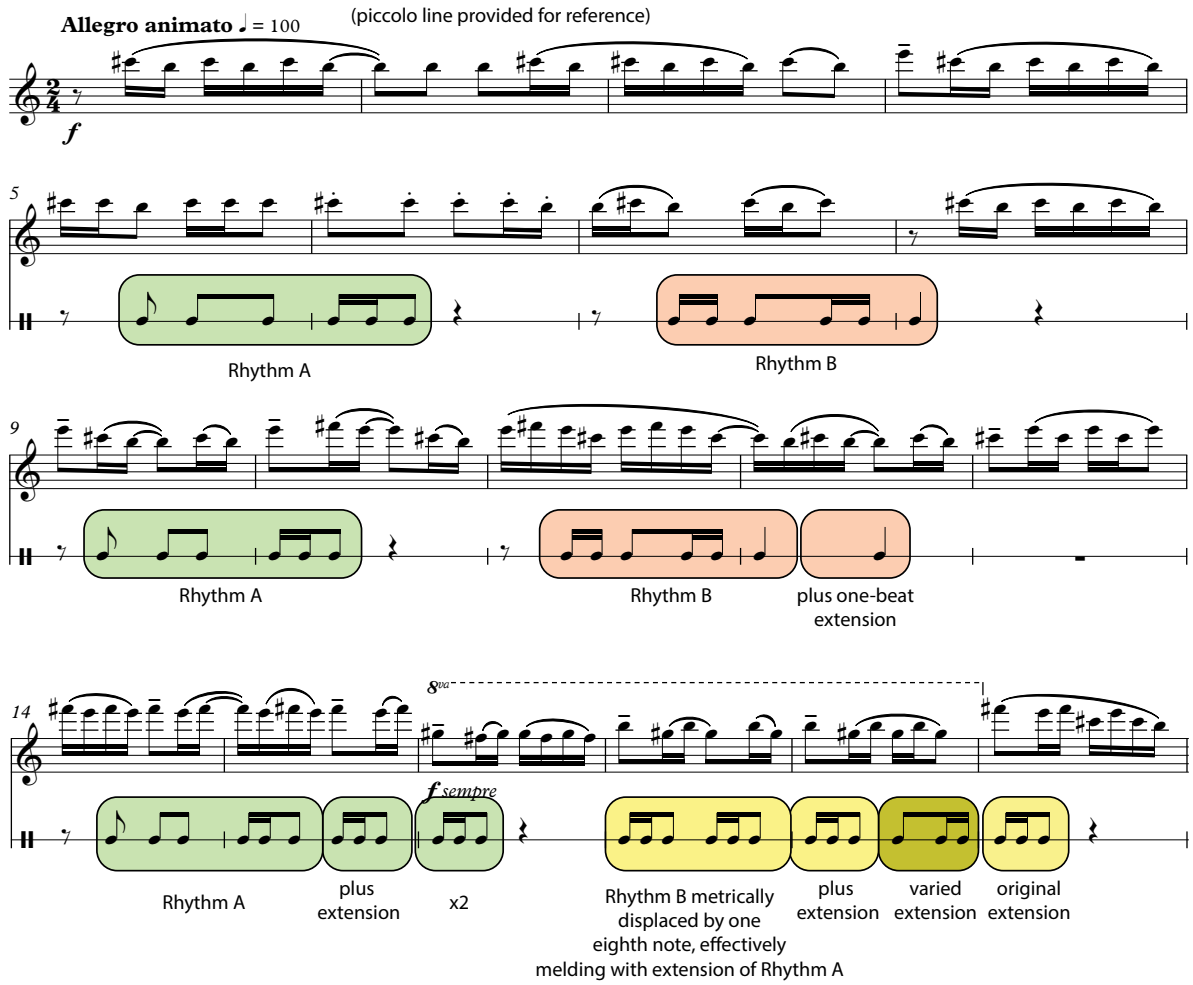


Figure 3.15: Chávez, *Xochipilli*, mm. 1–19, full score

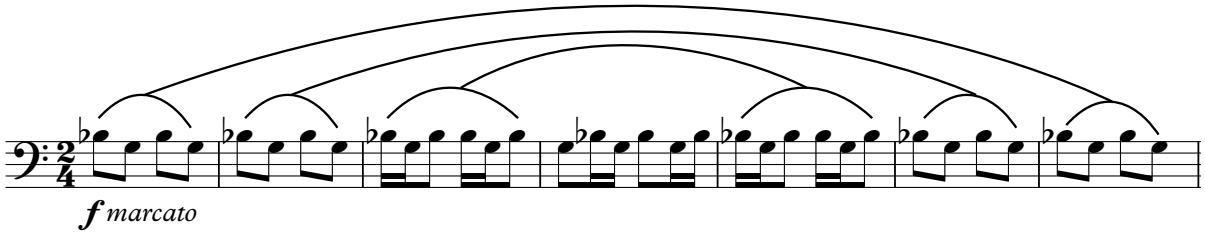


Figure 3.16: Chávez, *Xochipilli*, mm. 49–55, marimba line

Ultimately, Chávez weaves together his assumptions about Aztec music—its simplicity, its lack of coordinated form or development—with his own compositional style to create a work that is both primitivist and modernist, a place where Chávez's ideas about the past and present of Mexican music can intersect through his musical machinations.[16]

Of course, Chávez is not simply evoking the idea of the indigenous, but specifically a pre-Columbian (or pre-Cortesian) form of indigeneity, which gives him an especially wide berth for imagining materials. As Leonora Saavedra has amply discussed, research on indigenous musics in the 1930s was heavily biased from European assumptions about primitivism, pentatonicism, and evolutionist ideas, allowing Chávez and other Mexican composers to encode indigenous peoples simply as exotic Others.[17] Moreover, these assumptions about indigeneity allowed Chávez to elide concepts of pre-Cortesian indigenous musics with contemporary musical practices. Chávez made this connection between past and present indigenous peoples explicit in his introduction to the 1940 program notes, writing that indigenous music had remained stagnant, while music of Ibero-European origin had continued to evolve and develop (Chávez 1940). The particular latitude afforded by a long-past referent clearly held appeal for composers: these fantasies of the

[16] This reciprocal relationship between primitivism and modernism is a well-worn scholarly path, beginning with work on Stravinsky, and continuing through Latin American music in work by Carol Hess (2013), *Representing the Good Neighbor: Music, Difference, and the Pan American Dream*.

[17] Saavedra (2001) highlights one reference point in particular that may have heavily influenced Daniel Castañeda's research through the ministry of public education (SEP), René and Marguerite d'Harnoncourt's *La Musique des Incas et ses survivances* (1925).

indigenous served a certain exotic-nationalist utility, and several composers engaged in similar treatment of the topic, including Manuel M. Ponce (*Chat et dance des anciens mexicains*, 1926/1933–34), Francisco Domínguez (*El vaso de Dios: Ballet tlaxcalteca*, 1930), Silvestre Revueltas (*Cuauhnáhuac*, 1931), Candelario Huízar (Symphony No. 2, "Oxpanixtli," 1936) and others. Indigenous imaginings populate several of Chávez's own works from the 1920s, such as *El fuego nuevo*, and *Los cuatro soles*. And while he incorporates research on instruments in this 1940 concert, as well as collected indigenous melodies in his 1935 *Sinfonía india*, similar primitivist impulses remain.

This kind of flexibility of combination, between primitive and modern, continues in texted works on indigenous themes as well, as shown in Villa-Lobos's *Tres poêmas indígenas* and José Rolón's *Cuauhtémoc*.

Heitor Villa-Lobos, *Tres poêmas indígenas*

In October and December of 1927, Villa-Lobos performed two concerts to great acclaim at Maison Gaveau in Paris; at the second of these concerts, Vera Janocopulos premiered *Trois poêmes indiens* with orchestra, a series of three "indigenous" songs. This work was especially well received, garnering an enthusiastic response from reviewer Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, who wrote:

> In addition to musical interest, it is newsworthy to speak of Villa-Lobos and his concert at the Salle Gaveau, given last Monday and led in part by the composer himself. For this young Brazilian composer, just like the nephew of Mr. Steeg,[18] was captured by savages—truly, with feathers on their heads—and from his stay with them he brought his impressive music.[19]

[18] Here Delarue-Mardrus refers to the 1927 Moroccan capture of French Resident-General Théodore Steeg's nephew, who was returned in exchange for ransom (Singer and Langdon 2004). Later in the article, Delarue-Mardrus laments that, unlike Villa-Lobos's, Steeg's nephew's very real capture did not result in fresh, wild music.

[19] Delarue-Mardrus 1927: "En dehors des choeurs, orchestrations et morceaux de piano proprement brésiliens, il nous fut donné d'entendre, salle Gaveau, trois poèmes indiens accompagnés par l'orchestre et les voix féminines, et chantés—comme elle sait chanter—par Vera Janacopulos.

As is clear from the short quote above, while Delarue-Mardrus expresses admiration for the concert throughout, she spends significant energy on a story of Villa-Lobos's (surely apocryphal) capture by cannibals and collection of indigenous musical materials while awaiting either rescue or death. This story comes to dominate the review, which mentions the music largely in light of his ability to collect and remember themes while awaiting imminent death. Moreover, the article as a whole may have been pre-organized as a publicity stunt, particularly in light of the emphasis and information presented.

The work was later published in a few different forms, including a simple *a cappella* version of the first song for the second volume of *canto orfeônico*, and a piano-vocal score published by Max Eschig in 1929 with the addition of the Portuguese title, *Tres poêmas indígenas*. It is this piano-vocal edition I will address. These three songs, collected under the label "indigenous," come from three different sources. The first, "Canide ioune - Sabath," is a combination of two melodies presented in Jean de Léry's account of his 16th-century exploration of Brazil, *Histoire d'un Voyage Fait en la terre de Brésil, autrement dite Amerique*. The second, "Teirú," was taken from Edgard Roquette-Pinto's collection, *Rondônia*, an early-20th-century ethnographic study of indigenous peoples in the present-day states of Mato Grosso and Rondônia. The third text, "Iára," was new at the time, having been written by Mário de Andrade.

As with Chávez's "La paloma azul," Villa-Lobos is constrained somewhat—at least in the first two songs of the set—by his use of pre-existing melodies. And while these works bear some similarities, Villa-Lobos's overall treatment of the material is a far cry from that of Chávez's use of folk songs in "La paloma azul."

1. "Canide ioune - Sabath"

In the heading of this song, Villa-Lobos writes "After an Indian and Brazilian theme collected by Jean de Léry in 1553." The title, however, notes two distinct materials, as indicated by their subtitles:

under "Canide ioune," he writes "Yellow bird," and under "Sabath" he writes "elegiac song," as shown in figure 3.17.

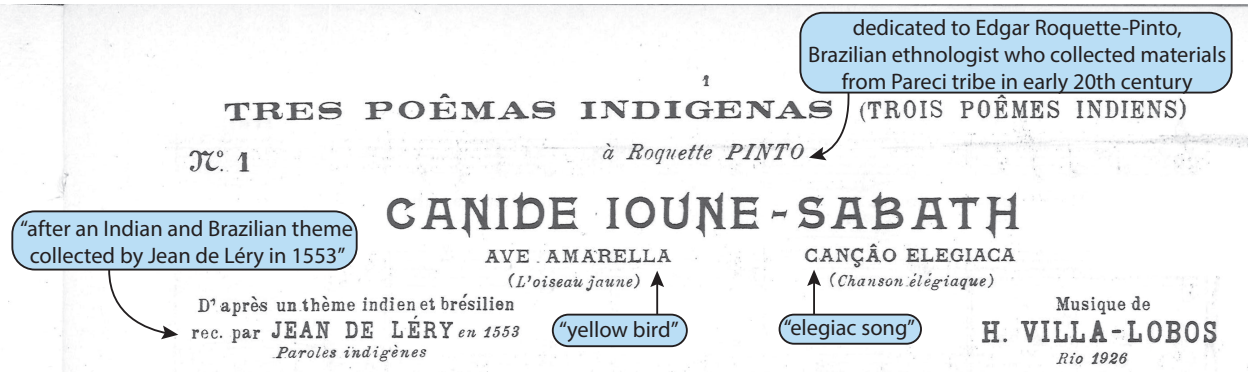


Figure 3.17: Villa-Lobos, *Tres poêmas indígenas*, first page, Editions Max Eschig 1929

As mentioned, the source material hails from Léry's most well-known text, *Histoire d'un Voyage Fait en la terre de Brésil, autrement dite Amerique* (*History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Also Known as America*). Within this account of Léry's explorations, four brief melodies appear. Below are the Léry scores Villa-Lobos uses in this song—between editions, there is some variation in clef, but these appear to be simple printing errors on what should have been given as follows:

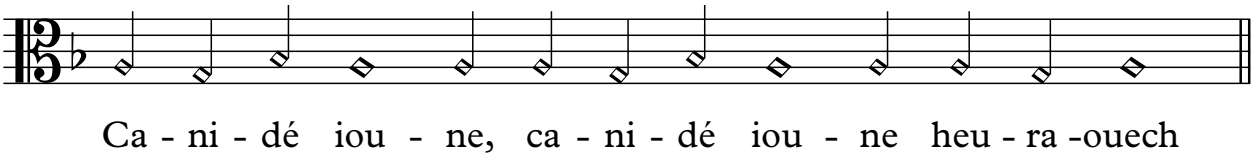


Figure 3.18: Jean de Léry, "Canidé ioune," adapted from 1585/1611 editions

These melodies are significantly more minimal than the materials Chávez used for "La paloma azul," and there is a starkness to Villa-Lobos's setting of them. "Canide ioune - Sabath" consists largely of three elements: the collected melodies from Léry, a rhythmically destabilizing D ostinato, and a series of chords that relate to a foundational harmony of EFAB. Like Chávez, Villa-Lobos marks the form of the work by alternating between tunes, in this case creating an ABA structure. Unlike Chávez, however, Villa-Lobos sets these melodies in dissonant surroundings, making the song on the whole aggressively strange, with a loud

ostinato D in the left hand of the accompaniment, and chromatic chords that defy any clear tonal assignation. Figure 3.19 shows the opening of the work. Note that while Villa-Lobos preserves the contour of the melody and the idea of longer and shorter notes, the precise pitch and rhythm don't match—not knowing which edition of the score Villa-Lobos saw, it is unclear whether he simply lacked a clear pitch reference for the melodies or chose to alter the notes for other reasons. In the version published for *canto orfeônico*, Villa-Lobos transposes the entire song up one fifth, suggesting that the specific pitch center of this melody is not as important as its contour.

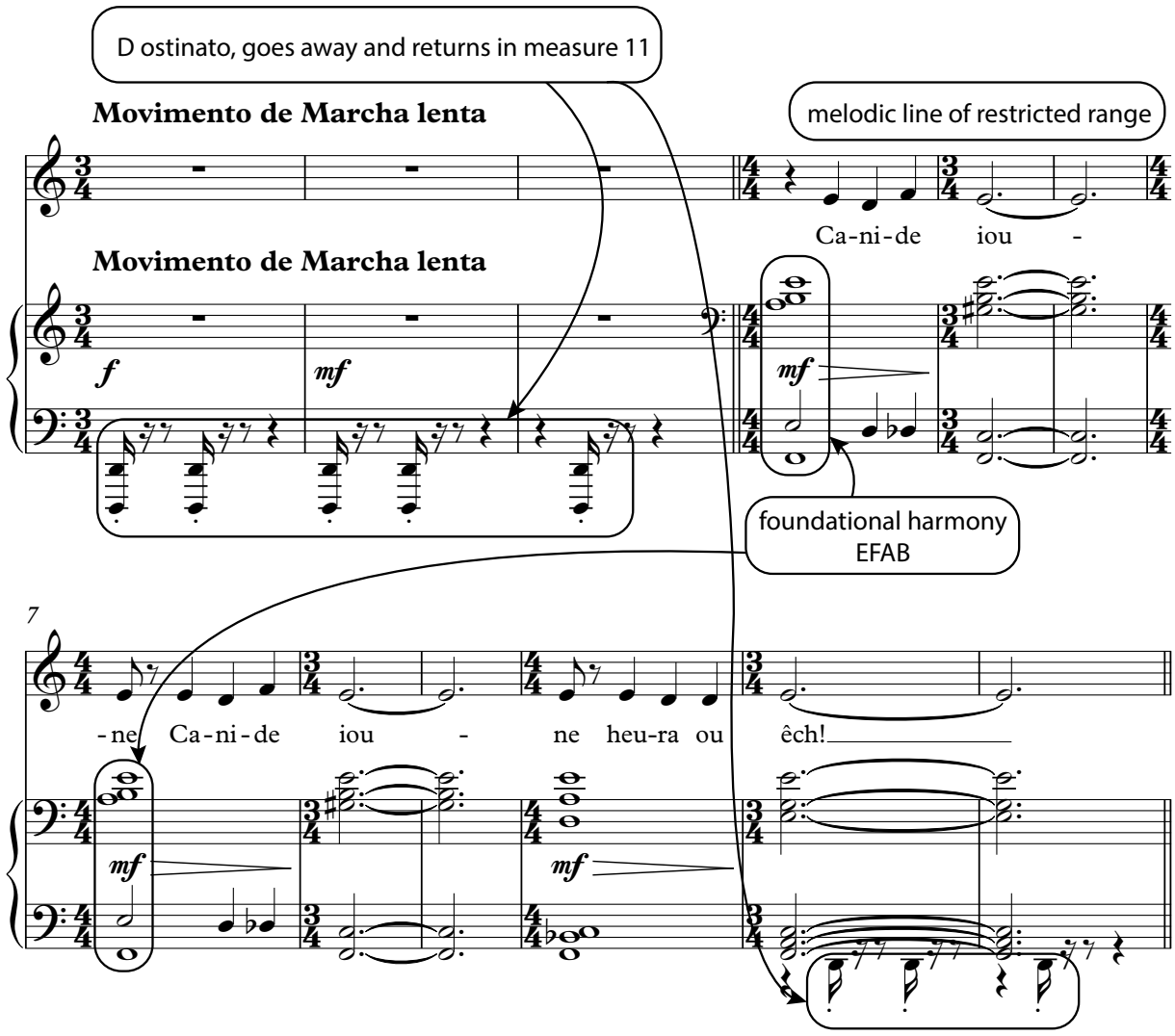


Figure 3.19: Villa-Lobos, *Tres poêmas indígenas*, I. Canide ioune – Sabath, mm. 1–12

Villa-Lobos uses the chord found in measure 4 as a kind of foundational harmony for the song as a whole, treating it differently in the A and B sections. In the A section, he slides chromatically from this chord to the one in measure 5. The movement of the right hand between chords, from [027]- to [037]-type trichords, As shown in figure 3.20, is repeated several times in this section of the work. The "Canide Ioune" source melody of this section itself has a miniature AAB form, in which the first two parts have the same text and melody, while the B is different. Villa-Lobos matches this structure in the accompaniment, changing the nature of the piano part somewhat for the B part of the melody. As shown in the right-hand side of figure 3.20, the left hand takes over the [027] to [037] motion, while the right hand moves from [027] to [03], creating a shift in the overall character of the accompaniment.

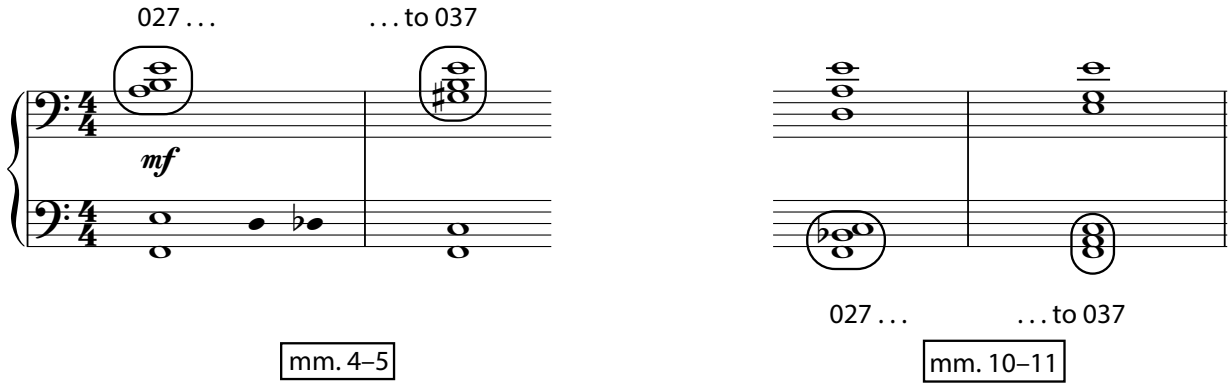


Figure 3.20: Villa-Lobos, *Tres poêmas indígenas*, I. Canide ioune – Sabath, comparison of chords in mm. 4–5 and mm. 10–11

Villa-Lobos moves to the second Léry melody (which he calls "Sabath," following Léry's description of it) at the start of the B section; here, he connects the new melody to the previous material by reusing the pitches of the opening chord—EFAB—in a different arrangement. Figure 3.22 shows how he creates a quartal structure that moves in parallel, following the motion of the melody from a top pitch of A down to G, then D. In this section, note that Villa-Lobos does not quite match the shape of the collected melody, which is shown in figure 3.21 for comparison.

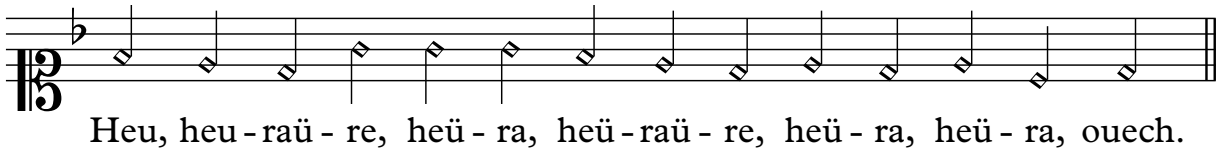


Figure 3.21: Léry, "Sabath," adapted from 1585 edition[20]

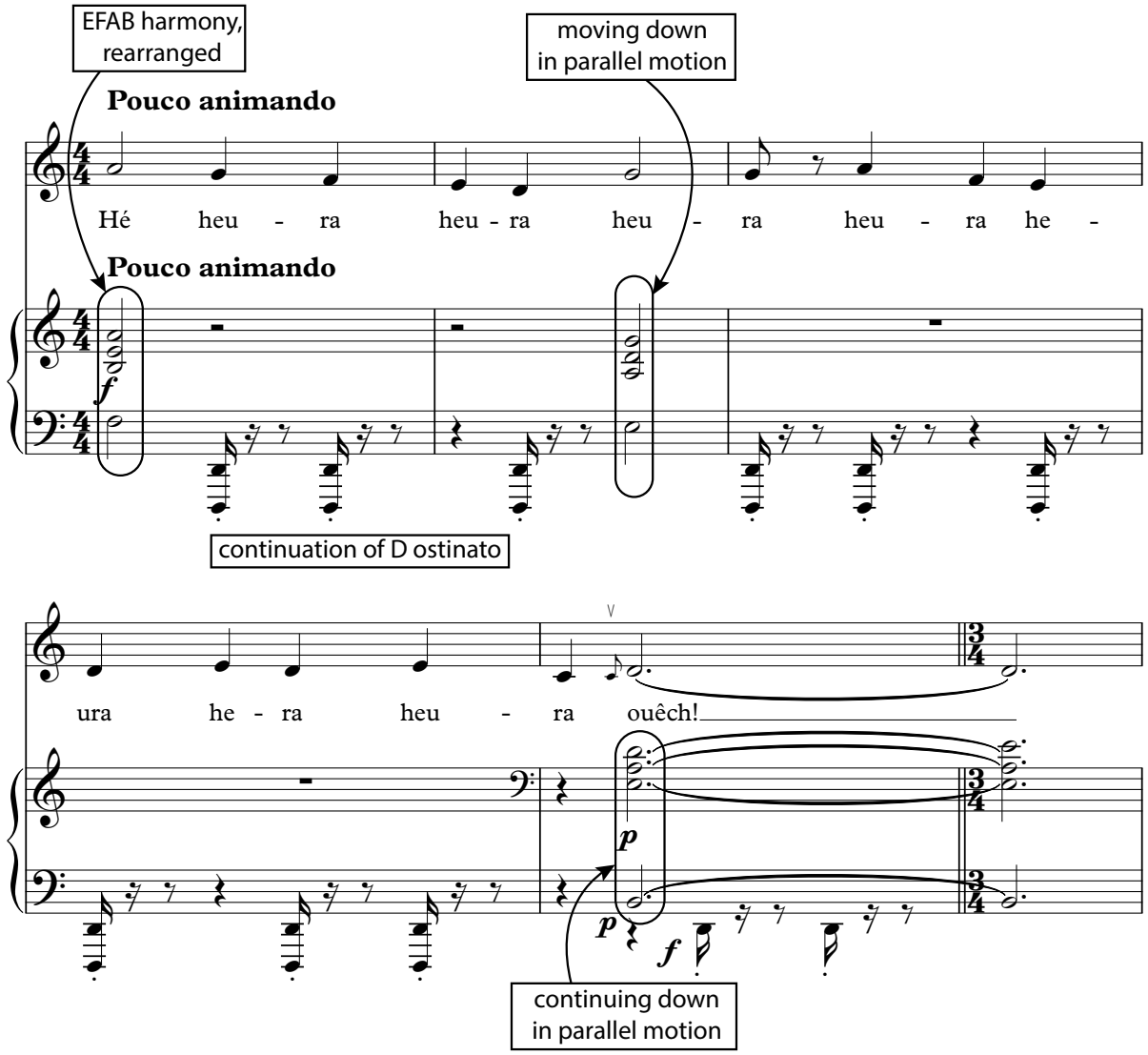


Figure 3.22: Villa-Lobos, *Tres poêmas indígenas*, I. Canide ioune – Sabath, mm. 22–27

[20] As with "Canide ioune," the published version of "Sabath" from Léry appears to have had an error in it; in the 1585 edition, the soprano clef is paired with a single flat in the key signature that would amount to A-flat instead of B-flat.

While Villa-Lobos has set the song in dissonant surroundings, he still makes it relatively easy for the singer to follow: the melody, of course, is already quite simple and singable, and he doubles it at the start of every measure, making it easy for the singer to stay on track. Further, unlike Chávez's changes from stanza to stanza in "La paloma azul," Villa-Lobos keeps everything the same in repetition: for each part of the work, he states the melody in full twice, and does not change anything but dynamics between statements. Even with these aids to the vocalist, however, it is clear that Villa-Lobos's aim here is quite different from that of Chávez's in "La paloma azul." Although he also published this song in an a cappella version for *canto orfeônico*, the emphasis is on a kind of dissonant primitivism, with simplicity that is twisted by the exotic elements of ostinato and defiantly dissonant harmonies. In particular, both the chords and the shifting rhythm of the ostinato complicate the communal, a cappella structure of *canto orfeônico*, and he removes them for that version, as well as much of the chordal dissonance.

2. "Teirú"

For his second song, "Teirú," Villa-Lobos uses a melody that was collected by Edgard Roquette-Pinto in 1912—figure 3.23 shows the version of this melody as it was printed in Roquette-Pinto's ethnographic text, *Rondônia*. Note that while the pitch collection is still highly restricted (consisting of just four notes), the text is considerably longer, and though the text does not repeat at all, the melody consists of a six-measure segment that repeats twice, followed by a contrasting ending, for a form of A-A-A-Coda.

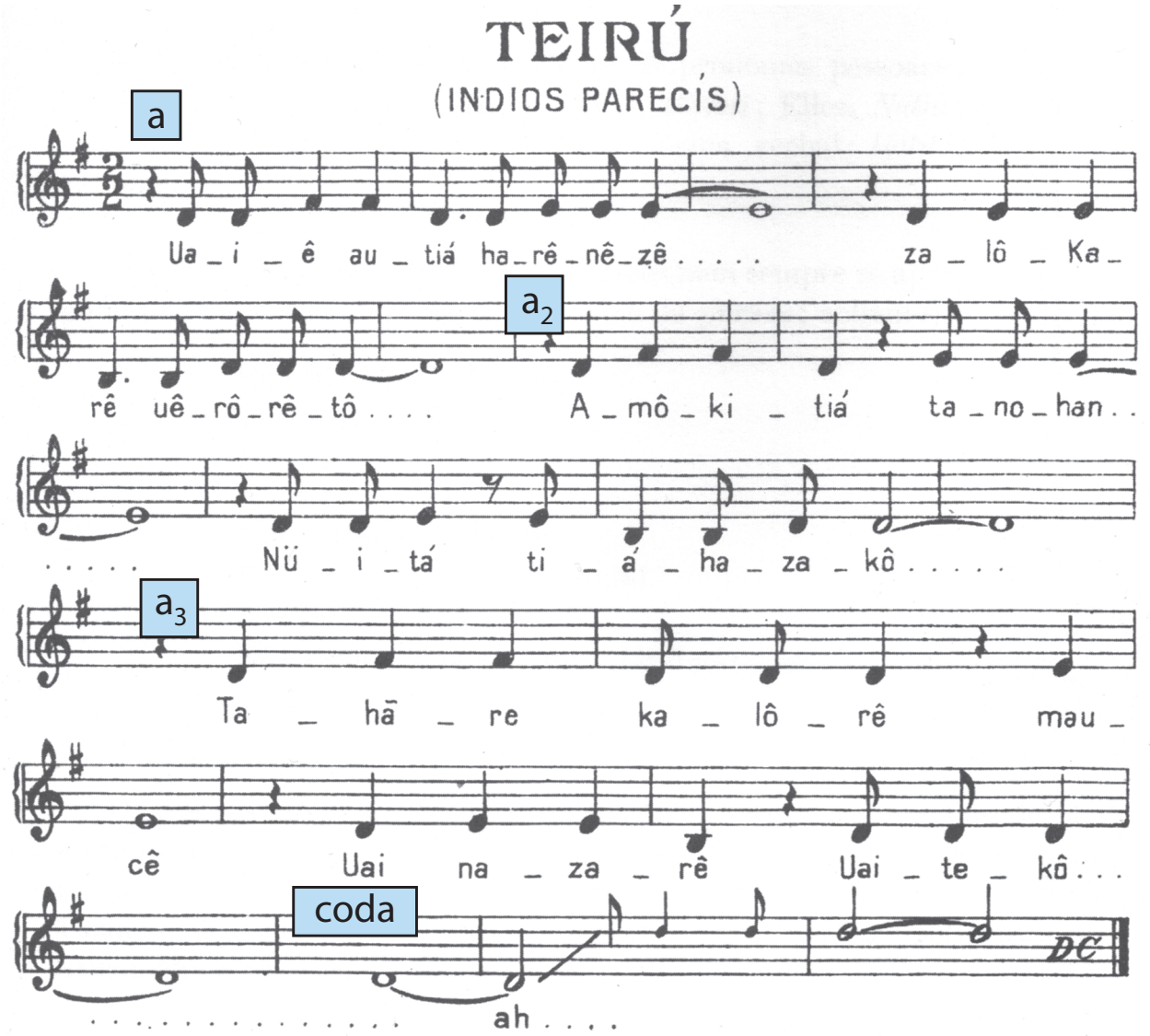


Figure 3.23: "Teirú" as collected and transcribed by Edgard Roquette-Pinto (Roquette-Pinto 2005 [1912], p. 87), annotated

"Teirú" carries over some of the same musical features of "Canide ioune – Sabath," but develops others in a way that suggests progress or development. The pitch collection he uses here matches that of Roquette-Pinto's original, and is closely related to the "Canide ioune" A-section melody (Villa-Lobos's

setting of "Canide ioune" uses only D, E, and F, while the melody for "Teirú" has B, D, E, and F♯[21]). In "Teirú," however, Villa-Lobos expands the vocal range by repeating some phrases an octave lower, adding a registral shift as one of the compositional techniques he employs. Figure 3.24 shows this octave shift along with other compositional interventions. As in "Canide ioune - Sabath," Villa-Lobos uses a repeated bass note—this time, B instead of D. But unlike in "Canide ioune - Sabath," he changes the way in which this incessantly repeated pitch is used: at times he simply uses the note as the bass of longer, sustained chords, while in sections like the beginning, he uses it as a repeated pulse that not only asserts its pitch but also articulates a steady beat. It also changes at times—in the very opening of the song, Villa-Lobos uses G as his repeated bass, but quickly shifts to B, and remains there for roughly the entire song. In other moments, he moves away from B briefly, but it always returns after just a few measures. For most of the song, like "Canide ioune," the accompaniment remains relatively inactive in comparison to the vocal line, largely playing longer chords over which the melody floats.

[21] As noted previously, it is possible that this results from a miscommunication regarding the pitches of the Léry originals. In the 1585 version of Léry's text, the publisher mistakenly used a soprano clef for "Canide ioune" instead of alto clef, and the resulting pitches would have been read as D, E, and F, though the B-flat in the key signature was placed to go with the alto-clef notation and would thus have read as F-flat in this printing, resulting in conflicting information for music readers. For the Roquette-Pinto, the original pitch classes match the ones used by Villa-Lobos, as shown in figures 3.23 and 3.24.

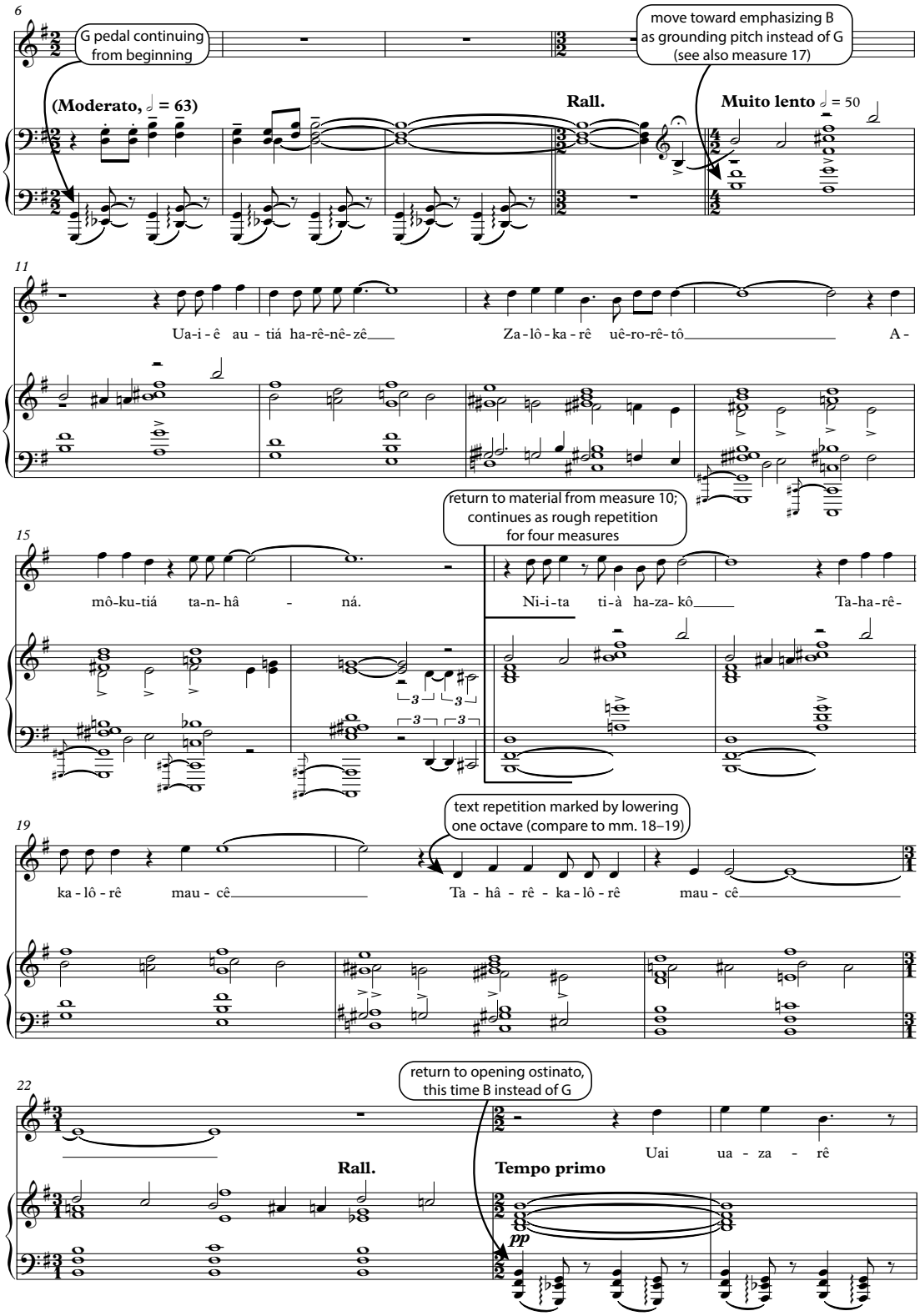


Figure 3.24: Villa-Lobos, *Tres poêmas indígenas*, II. Teirú, mm. 6–24

As in "Canide ioune - Sabath," Villa-Lobos highlights the repetition that already exists in the collected materials in "Teirú," but here the repetition is less marked. This is in part because he changes the relative length of materials through partial repetition, shifting the balance and shape of the original collected melody. Returning to figure 3.24, note how measures 10–13 and 17–20 have the same accompaniment, but the materials directly after each of these segments changes, both in the melody and in the accompaniment. Figure 3.25 shows how Villa-Lobos uses segments of the melody in repetition. As highlighted here, Villa-Lobos marks this repetition not only textually but also registrally, dropping by an octave for repeated lines.

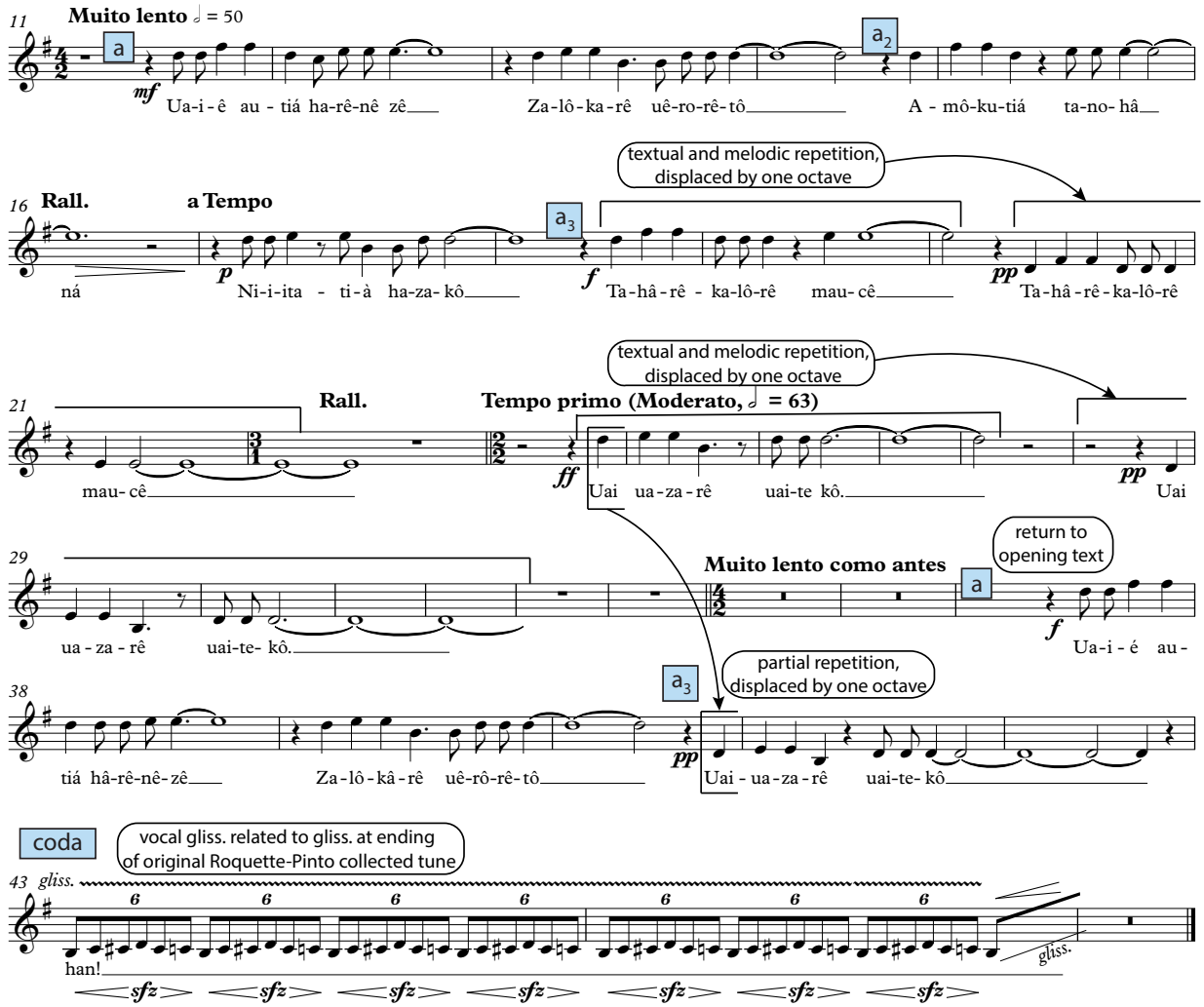


Figure 3.25: Villa-Lobos, *Tres poêmas indígenas*, II. Teirú, complete vocal line

In addition to this change through repetition, Villa-Lobos varies the accompaniment more here than in "Canide ioune – Sabath." As in "Canide ioune – Sabath," Villa-Lobos returns to the opening material near the end, but in "Teirú" he gently undermines the rhythmic stability of the beat by undergirding the accompaniment with a triplet rhythm in the left hand that creates a three-against-two pattern in the piano, and more complex polyrhythms against the vocal line. As figure 3.25 shows, he also takes advantage of the

vocal glissando in the coda of the collected melody to highlight chromatic vocal movement, culminating in this glissando. Figure 3.26 below shows the return to the opening material in the last section of the song.

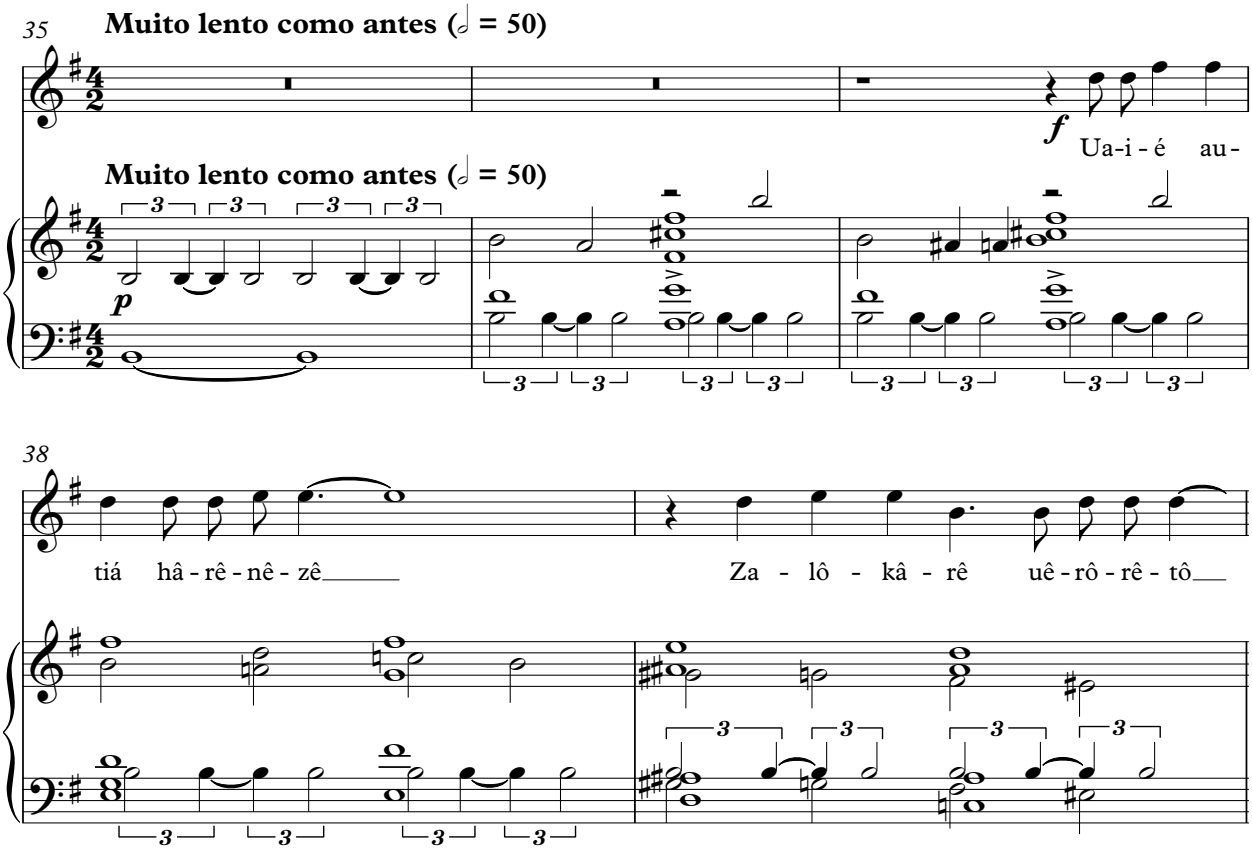


Figure 3.26: Villa-Lobos, *Tres poêmas indígenas*, II. Teirú, mm. 35–39

Finally, as shown in figures 3.24 and 3.26, Villa-Lobos does not assist the singer as clearly as he does in "Canide ioune – Sabath," though he does not make it especially difficult to find the correct pitch, and the restricted range of the melody certainly eases the task. The melody is rarely doubled at the top of the accompaniment, though it is often present somewhere in the concurrent chord or just preceding it.

3. "Iára"

"Iára" presented a different compositional context for Villa-Lobos: the text was a newly written poem by Mário de Andrade, and thus had no pre-existing melody. Unlike the first two songs, Villa-Lobos's

manuscript for this score exists, suggesting that perhaps it was composed under somewhat different circumstances. Still, it is clear that Villa-Lobos means for this song to serve as part of the set—he draws a number of parallels to the preceding "Teirú" and, by extension, some of the traits of "Canide ioune – Sabath."

At the start, Villa-Lobos marks this song as having a different, though related, nature from that of the other two songs: the opening presents the same pitch collection as "Teirú," but shifted down a half-step. As Figure 3.27 shows, the B-pedal becomes a B♭, and the melodic B-D-E-F♯ becomes B♭-D♭-E♭-F. Following this brief echo, however, he quickly moves away from the suggestion of pentatonicism and the B♭ ostinato.

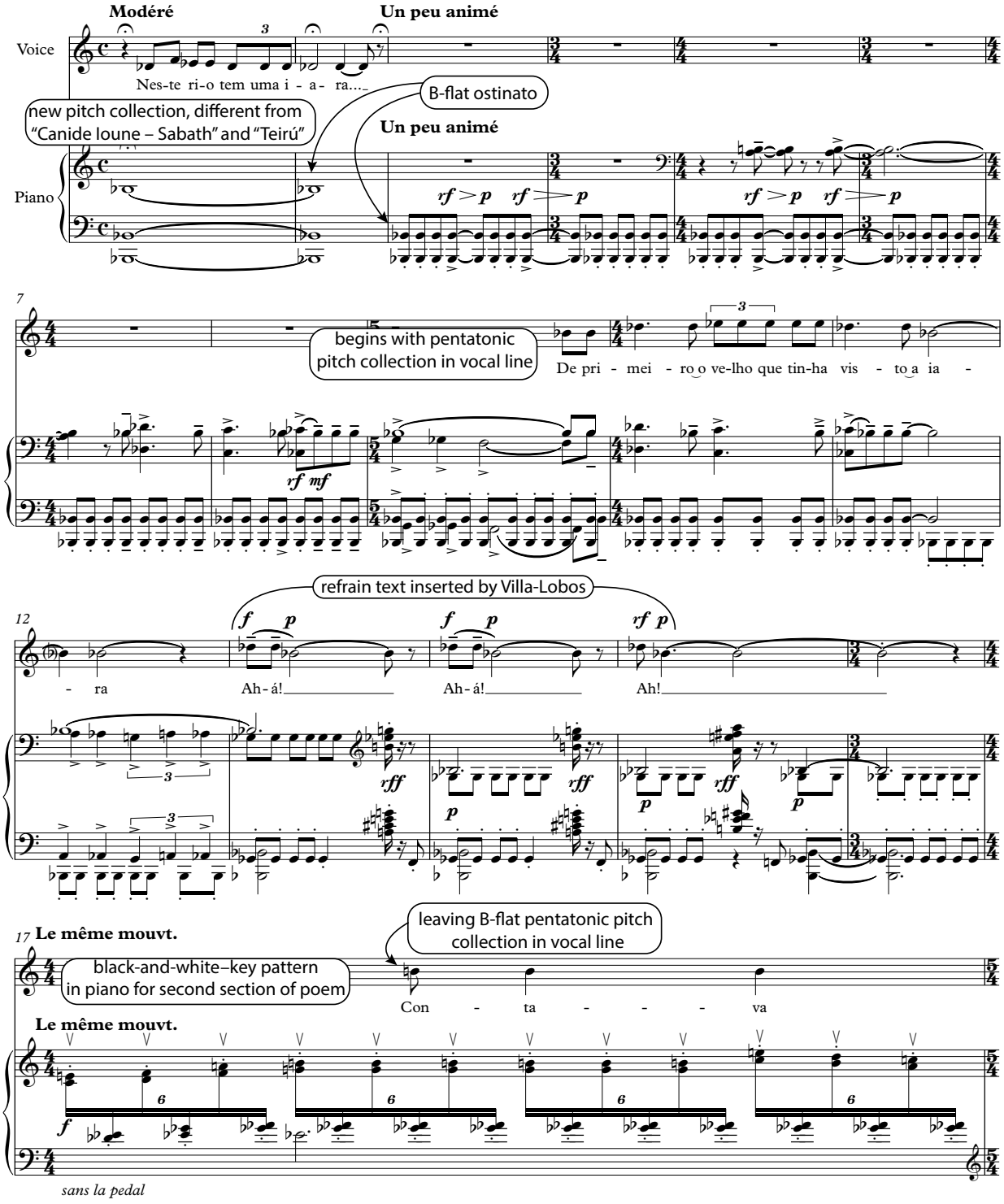


Figure 3.27: Villa-Lobos, *Tres poêmas indígenas*, III. Iára, mm. 1–17

In comparison to the preceding two songs, "Iára" is considerably more heterogeneous, both in melody and accompaniment. In Andrade's original poem, the text flows without stanza breaks, a feature that Villa-Lobos changes in his setting. Here, he breaks the text into chunks, and ends each with the inserted exclamation, "Ah! Ah! Ah!" Villa-Lobos uses this exclamation as a kind of refrain over the course of the song. In between, he marks each section with a distinct accompaniment style and grounding bass: as mentioned, the first stanza has a B♭ ostinato; in the second, Villa-Lobos moves to an accompaniment style he frequently uses in piano works, where the pianist rapidly alternates between hands, with one hand playing white keys while the other plays black keys.[22] Here, he sustains E♭ in the left hand underneath this frenzied motion. For the third stanza, Villa-Lobos uses a minor ninth of F♯/G as the ostinato. Finally, the structure breaks down—at the end of the third stanza, Villa-Lobos changes the refrain somewhat, shifting to an E♭ ostinato in preparation for stanza 4, where the texture and pitch center change in the middle of the stanza (from E♭ back to B♭) before breaking into an extensive piano interlude. Finally, the melody of the opening returns with a reprise of the opening line of the poem. In this third song of the set, Villa-Lobos barely supports the singer at all, often leaving the melodic line at odds with the accompaniment. The singer's task gets harder and harder as the song goes on, because the melody itself becomes increasingly angular, with leaps of augmented and diminished intervals to notes that are unprepared in the accompaniment. Further, the accompaniment itself is more active, at times creating competition with rather than support for the vocal line.

One of the most notable differences between "Iára" and the other two songs of the set is the way that Villa-Lobos's structure changes with the words of the poem; here, the text becomes increasingly tense

[22] For more discussion of Villa-Lobos's black-white alternation technique at the piano, see Oliveira 1984. This technique is also associated with Debussy, as discussed in Lewin 1993. However, rather than assert a chain of influence, I would suggest that Villa-Lobos often demonstrates a sensitivity to instrumental topography, as shown in his guitar etudes.

and threatening, and the changes described above directly connect with these textual shifts. The poem tells the story of a iara, a Lorelei-like river mermaid who drags people to their deaths at the bottom of the river (Marun 2010). Below is the text of the poem as Villa-Lobos sets it, with a few small changes: the published version from Max Eschig contains some spelling and accent errors; I have returned these to Andrade's original spellings.

Iára[23]

Neste rio tem uma iara…	In this river there is a iara…
De primeiro o velho que tinha visto a iara	At first the old man who had seen the iara
Ah á! Ah á! Ah!	Ah á! Ah á! Ah!
Contava que ela era feiosa, muito!	Said that she was ugly, very!
Prêta gorda manquitola ver peixe boi	Fat black crippled manatee
Felizmente o velho já morreu faz tempo!	Fortunately the old man died a long time ago!
Ah! Ah! Ah!	Ah! Ah! Ah!
Duma feita madrugada de neblina,	Finally one foggy early morning,
Um moço que sofria de paixão	A young man who suffered from passion
Por causa duma índia que não queria ceder pra ele	Because of an Indian woman who didn't want to yield to him
Se levantou e desapareceu na água do rio.	[He] Rose and disappeared into the water of the river.
Se levantou e desapareceu na água do rio.	[He] Rose and disappeared into the water of the river.
Ah! Ah! Ah!	Ah! Ah! Ah!
Então principiaram a falar que a iara cantava, era moça,	Then they began to say that the iara sang, that she was a young woman,
Cabelos de limo esverdeados do rio.	With hair of the greenish river slime.
Ah! Ah! Ah!	Ah! Ah! Ah!
Ah! Ontem o piá brinca brincando	Ah! Yesterday the young man play playing
Subiu na igara do pai abiscada no porto	Climbed into the canoe of his Abisca father at the port
Botou a mãozinha na água funda	Put his little hand in the deep water
E vai, a piranha abocanhou a mãozinha do piá.	And well, the piranha bit the little hand of the boy.
Neste rio tem uma iara…	In this river there is a iara…
Neste rio tem uma iara…	In this river there is a iara…

[23] Villa-Lobos gives this song the title "Iára," but Mário de Andrade's original appears to have been printed without a title. Sometimes it is given the title "Poêma" ("Poem"), and other times, the first line is simply printed above as the title.

This kind of close relationship between textual shifts and musical changes is not seen in the first two songs of this set, and I would like to propose that this is for two reasons. First, as described above, Villa-Lobos is creating a sense of progress and development over time through the course of these three songs. Second, however, Villa-Lobos has limited knowledge of the specific meaning and use of the collected songs. For each of the preceding songs, Villa-Lobos's description echoes that presented in the original publication of the materials, suggesting that he had contact not only with the individual scores but also their original printed context. Even with this access, no information is given about the specific meaning of much of the text—rather, Léry states (as Villa-Lobos mentions at the top of the score) that "canide ioune" means "yellow bird," while the words of the second melody are not translated at all. Instead, Léry states that this song was sung during the "witches' sabbath," and is an elegy to long-dead ancestors—thus Villa-Lobos's label of that melody as "Sabath" in his score (Léry 1990, 144). The situation is even less specific for Roquette-Pinto, who notes that the song was written in celebration of an accidental killing of a chief from another tribe. If there is specific content to the text of the song, Roquette-Pinto does not provide it. In his heading for "Teirú," Villa-Lobos provides roughly this description. Thus Villa-Lobos's access to these texts and any particularities they might have is limited, while he has ready access not only to the Portuguese language of Andrade's text for "Iára," but also to Andrade himself. In that way, this third song straddles the fantasy of the indigenous and the category of art song based on modernist poetry.

The shift across songs presents a series of features that are held in common, and thus could be described as markers Villa-Lobos uses for indigeneity—these traits are not revelatory, but rather common features that allowed contemporary listeners to perceive the songs as marked as indigenous. As with the first two songs, he incorporates gestures toward simplicity with the opening melody, and he uses ostinati in combination with chromatic chords, a combination that is tense and aggressive, particularly with the irregular rhythm of many of the ostinato presentations. Over the course of the three songs, however, Villa-

Lobos presents steadily increasing complexity and diversity of sound, to the end that even within this final song Villa-Lobos increases from comparative simplicity at the opening to increasingly difficult vocal lines. Further, the accompaniment for this final song is significantly more difficult than the previous two songs.

Despite their differences of instrumentation and specific topic, Chávez's *Xochipilli* and Villa-Lobos's *Três poemas indígenas* bear much in common in terms of marking the idea of the indigenous musically, traits that have been described at length by others as common traits of Indianism, a treatment that shares significant overlap with exoticism.[24] Here, both composers highlight simple melodies that include restricted pitch collections, and set these melodies with ostinati. Both also use these features as bases from which to fly more freely into a blend of primitivism and modernism. Notably, while these common features of Indianism and primitivism are shared between the works, the two compositions reflect essentially different views about the nature of the indigenous through time. While Chávez conceives indigenous music as having remained static over time, Villa-Lobos highlights change, setting these three songs in chronological order with increasing levels of complexity and internal contrast. Further, the presence of words does not appear to affect the treatment of these materials—whether words are present or not, the composers create a blend between modernist musical techniques and stereotypical indigenous musical features.

José Rolón, *Cuauhtémoc*

José Rolón's *Cuauhtémoc* (1929) is a four-movement orchestral work loosely framed by the narrative of the eponymous last Aztec emperor. The work is for the most part instrumental, but in the third movement Rolón incorporates part of a well-known poem by R. López Velarde, "La suave patria"; here he sets a section of the poem that discusses Cuauhtémoc. Like the third of Villa-Lobos's *Tres poêmas indígenas*, "Iára," this section of the work pairs an indigenous topic with a contemporary text. For this setting, Rolón

[24] See, for example, Béhague 2006, Saavedra 2001, Locke 2009, and Hess 2013.

uses modernist surroundings, rather than highlighting Indianist tropes. This holds true for the work as a whole, throughout both texted and untexted sections, allowing for a kind of intra-work comparison of texted and untexted treatment of indigenous materials: in the second movement, while he incorporates a melodic cell from a collected indigenous melody, he does not surround this cell with parallel fifths, indigenous percussion instruments, or pentatonic ambience (Miranda 2015). Rather, he uses dissonant lines and avoids tonal tropes. Figure 3.28 shows an excerpt of the third movement in which Rolón uses this same treatment: early in the movement, an unaccompanied bassoon introduces a highly chromatic, meandering theme.[25]

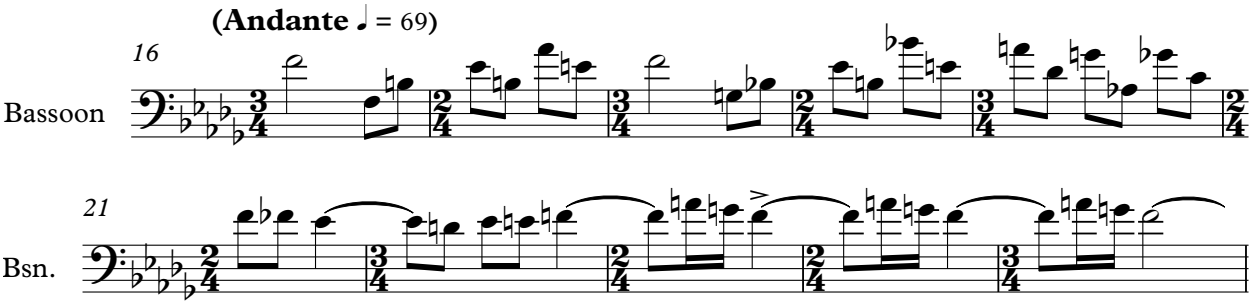


Figure 3.28: José Rolón, *Cuauhtémoc*, III. Tormento de Cuauhtémoc, bassoon solo, mm. 16–25 (all other instruments *tacet*)

This prominent line alternates with thicker sections in the orchestra that undulate around B♭ Minor without building to clear cadences or even creating a sense of chord progression and which, like in Chávez's *Xochipilli*, include some wholesale repetition. Rolón later repeats the chromatic theme in the English horn as a kind of minimal underscoring to the choir, which speaks Velarde's text in unison. Figure 3.29 below shows the section of the text that is accompanied by this line in the English horn. In comparison to figure 3.28, the English horn line begins with a similar contour but slightly varied pitches, and comes to rest on

[25] Miranda 2015 asserts that this movement opens with a twelve-tone bassoon solo. While the movement does feature a bassoon solo relatively early on, it is not a twelve-tone melody. To his point, however, it is highly chromatic, and features 11 of the 12 pitch classes.

the same notes as the earlier bassoon line at the end of measure 48.[26] Notice that Rolón's treatment of the text flows easily with the stresses and rhythm of the language as it would be spoken, and yet the flatness of speech instead of singing creates a kind of harsh sound reminiscent of a Greek chorus.

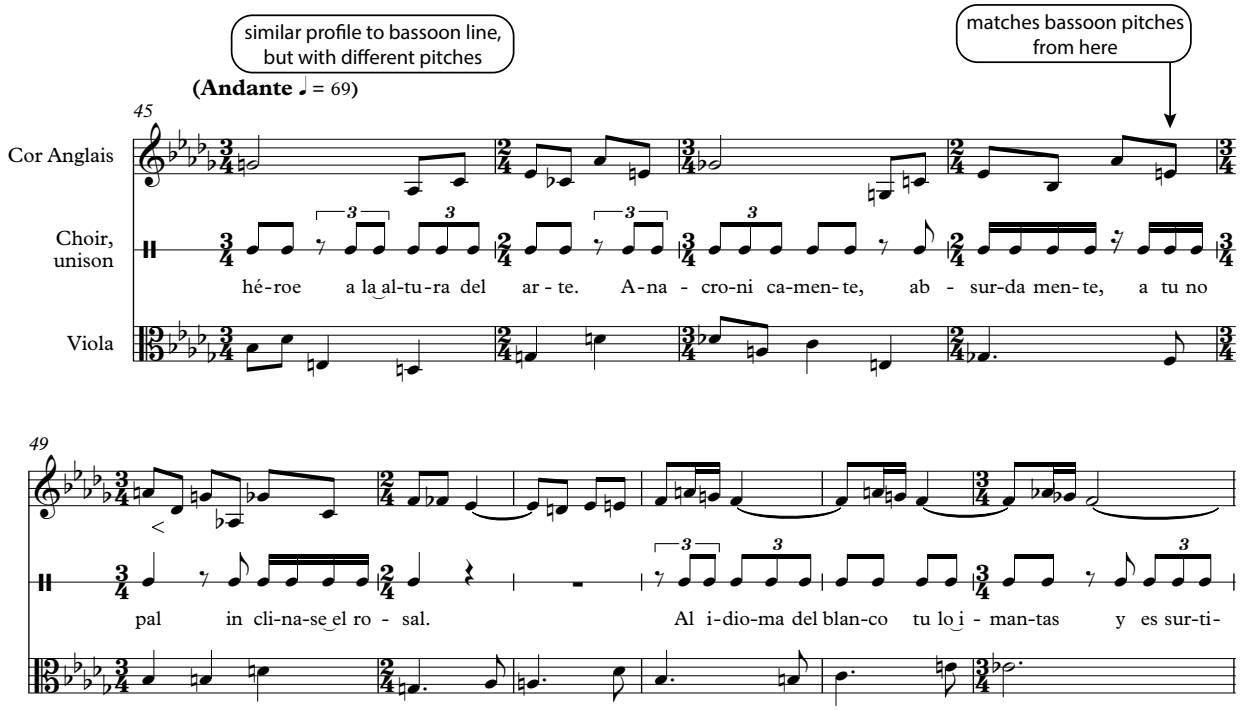


Figure 3.29: Rolón, *Cuauhtémoc*, III. "Tormento de Cuauhtémoc," mm. 45–54 (all other instruments *tacet*)

While sensitive to the rhythm and syllabic stresses of the language, the flatness of the spoken text is perhaps at odds with the affective, flowing rhymes that Velarde used in the poem. The text Rolón sets is part of a longer poem about Mexico, which Velarde structured as a "first act," "intermedio/intermission," and "second act." The intermedio carries the parenthetical subtitle "(Cuauhtémoc)," and tells of the ruler's encounter with and suffering at the hands of the Spanish.

[26] I have notated the English horn line here at concert pitch.

Intermedio
(Cuauhtémoc)

Joven abuelo: escúchame loarte, único héroe a la altura del arte.	Young grandfather, hear my praise [to the] only hero at the height of art.
Anacrónicamente, absurdamente, a tu nopal inclínase el rosal; al idioma del blanco, tú lo imantas y es surtidor de católica fuente que de responsos llena el victoria zócalo de cenizas de tus plantas.	Anachronistically, absurdly, To your nopal bows the rosebush; The language of the white[s], magnetizes you and is the pump of the Catholic fountain which with memorials fills the victory zócalo of the ash of your plants.
No como a César el rubor patricio te cubre el rostro en medio del suplicio; tu cabeza desnuda se nos queda, hemisféricamente de moneda.	Not like Cesar, the patrician flush covers your face in the middle of torture; Your bare head you leave us Hemispherically on coin[s].
Moneda espiritual en que se fragua todo lo que sufriste: la piragua prisionera , al azoro de tus crías, el sollozar de tus mitologías, la Malinche, los ídolos a nado, y por encima, haberte desatado del pecho curvo de la emperatriz como del pecho de una codorniz.	Spiritual coin in which you forge Everything you suffered: the canoe Of your capture, the ghost of your cries, The sob of your mythologies, Malinche [Cortés's mistress], the swimming idols, And above all, to have unleashed From the curved chest of the empress Like the chest of a quail.

Rolón won the premiere performance of this work in 1930 through a contest held by the Orquesta Sinfónica de México (OSM), a contest that included Chávez and Revueltas on the evaluation committee (Miranda 2015). As a result of Rolón's win, the OSM played the work on January 7, with Carlos Chávez conducting (Rolón 1930). While *Cuauhtémoc* was well received by a number of critics, including Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster and others, it did not receive uniform praise. Specifically, some more conservative composers such as Arnulfo Miramontes (1881–1960) criticized it for its melodic incoherence, and more broadly described Rolón's approach as being imported from France (Miranda 2015). A closer look at Miramontes's output reveals a number of works on indigenous topics from the 1910s, works which are not only more conservative but also more Indianist in approach. Thus, Rolón's loose treatment of the topic

without more concrete markers of indigenous representation was certainly not an approach embraced by all Mexican composers. Indeed, following the award to *Cuauhtémoc*, several dissenting musicians held a counter-competition, giving awards to Miramontes and Elías, another comparatively conservative composer (Miranda 2015).

More broadly speaking, however, Rolón presents a third possibility for treatment of indigenous topics, one that largely eschews ideas of evolutionism or Indianist tropes, in favor of a kind of "universalist" sound.[27] Here, the references to indigeneity range from the movement titles, to the collected melody in the second movement, and the use of Velarde's poem, but none of these is paired with the expected musical markers for these materials. In this case, then, indigeneity is perhaps just a topic like any other, a story on which to base a symphonic poem that otherwise has no obvious nationalist musical markers.

Domestic Others, writ large

While the works described in this section show the flexible relationship between texted and untexted works on indigenous topics, I should note that in general, far more instrumental works than vocal ones were written on indigenous themes, both in Brazil and in Mexico. In Brazil, while some composers wrote works with indigenous topics, others eschewed the material entirely as part of a national music: Luciano Gallet rejected the idea of indigenous music as a part of the national experience, vehemently asserting that indigenous music did not influence or affect the history or makeup of modern Brazilian music, and therefore should not be included as an integral part of national musical identity (see Chapter 2). Moreover, in Brazil there is another domestic Other that composers of this period very frequently referenced: Afro-Brazilians. As an integral part of the urban Brazilian population, Afro-Brazilians—and their musical practices—were visibly and audibly present for elites in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and yet

[27] For more on universalism, see Chapter 4.

still provided an ample site for exoticism. Thus composers wrote works on Afro-Brazilian religious and musical topics, often with stereotyping features. There is much to be said about this representation of identity in a place where, like many former slave societies, prominent racial disparity still persists. Given the limitations of this chapter's focus on text, and the difference in musical representation for this population between Mexico and Brazil, I have chosen not to discuss this particular repertory. For further exploration of this topic, see Hartford 2013, Stallings 2009, and Hertzman 2013.

III. Art Song: Carlos Chávez, "Segador"

While folk songs and indigenous materials have served as a kind of grouping that marks certain uses and structures for both composers and audiences, art song with modern poetry moves away from these traits and, for music analysis, suggests at least partially a different sort of reading. As a means of illustrating this contrast, I will engage now in a work that Chávez wrote in close temporal proximity to "La paloma azul" and *Xochipilli*. Two years prior to the MoMA concerts, Chávez set three modern Mexican poems for voice and piano, songs that did not feature on the MoMA program. Indeed, no music with text by modern poets appeared in those concerts. For the purposes of this discussion, I will focus on the first of the three, "Segador," a setting of a poem by Carlos Pellicer.

Pellicer was a founding member of the modernist poet group known as Los Contemporáneos, and a longtime friend of Chávez's—indeed, Chávez's first songs, "Exágonos," were settings of Pellicer's poems, and the two exchanged long and extensive letters throughout their adult lives. Despite Pellicer's association with Los Contemporáneos, his style has always been described as distinct from the primarily avant-garde group; Pellicer's emphasis on color, image, and sounds evokes a kind of impressionism that contrasts with the abstraction of many more modernist poets of the time (Mullen 1977). "Segador," a poem dedicated to José Vasconcelos, fits well with this description of Pellicer, in this case a poem that combines nature and

labor in a depiction of the reaper's work. As shown in the text below, Pellicer highlights visual elements like the play of light across the landscape and in the eye of the reaper, as well as drawing parallels between the tall, golden grain and the color of the late afternoon heading into sunset.

Segador	Reaper
El segador, con pausas de música	The harvester, with musical pauses
segaba la tarde.	Harvested the afternoon.
Su hoz es tan fina,	His sickle is so fine,
que siega las dulces espigas y siega la tarde.	that he reaps the sweet grain and reaps the afternoon.
Segador que en dorados niveles camina	Harvester who in golden levels walks
con su ruido afilado,	with his sharpened noise,
derrotando las finas alturas de oro	ruining the fine gold heights
echa abajo también el ocaso.	he also casts the sunset down.
Segaba las claras espigas.	He cut the bright grain.
Su pausa era música.	His pause was music.
Su sombra alargaba la tarde.	His shadow lengthened the evening.
En los ojos traía un lucero	In his eyes he brought a star
que a veces	that at times
brincaba por todo el paisaje.	played across the whole landscape.
La hoz afilada tan fino	The sickle so fine
segaba lo mismo	harvested the same
la espiga que el último sol de la tarde.	the grain as the last sun of the evening.

Like Pellicer's poem, Chávez's song plays with flashes of tone color and brightness; ephemeral major harmonies shine through between sections of stark quartal blocks, set to a shifting beat that shimmers between simple and compound meter. This kind of ephemerality is present in several of Chávez's works—for example, his *Three Pieces for Guitar* have a similar kind of quick alternation between simple and compound beat division. In "Segador," he uses the technique especially effectively in relation to the text. Figure 3.30 below shows the opening measures of the song: notice how the emphasis shifts between

quarter-note and dotted-quarter beat emphasis, sometimes presenting conflicting messages as in measure 7, where the voice articulates a dotted quarter while the piano emphasizes a quarter-note beat length. Here one can also see brief appearances of major triadic harmonies, such as D major in measure 8.

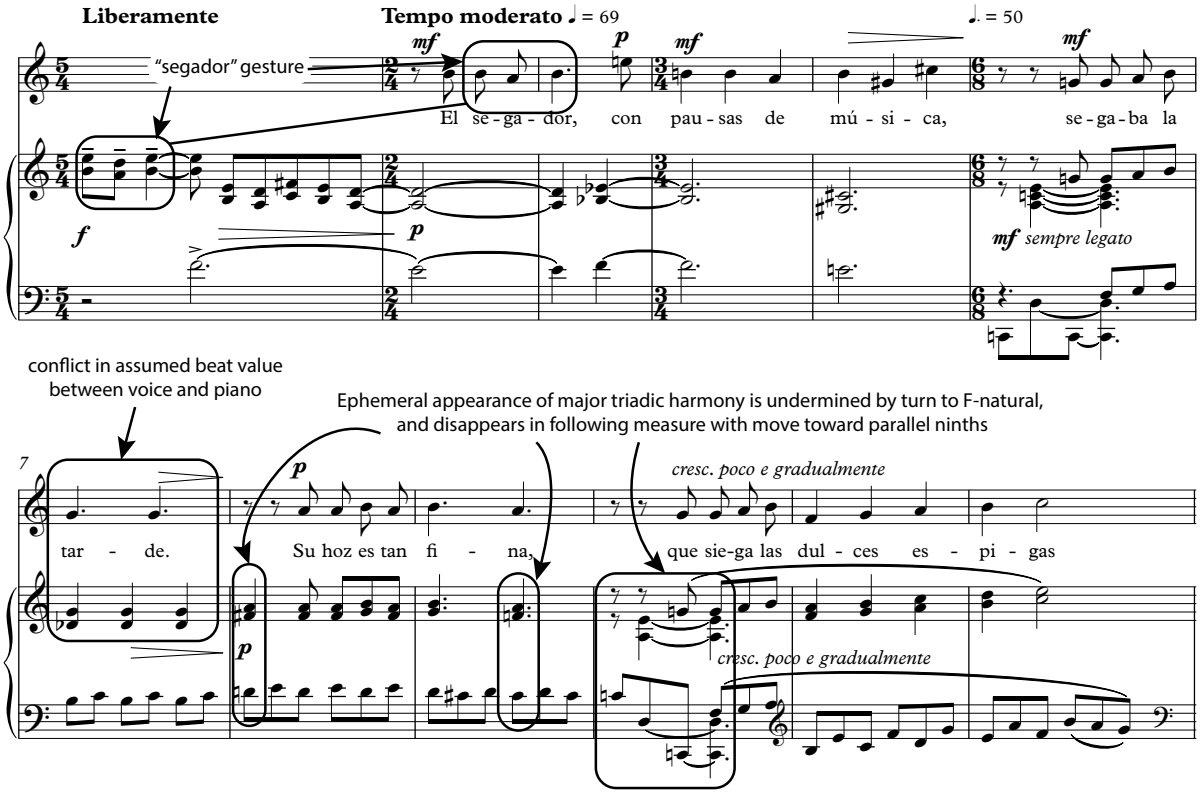


Figure 3.30: Chávez, "Segador," mm. 1–12

Chávez uses the opening three notes of the piano line (a lower-neighbor gesture, see figure 3.30 above) as a sort of marker of the word *segador*, a theme that carries throughout the song. The one time Chávez inserts a piano passage that allows the voice to rest between stanzas is just before the start of the third stanza, where Pellicer omits the word *segador* in the opening. Figure 3.31 demonstrates how Chávez inserts the word for him via the accompaniment. In so doing, Chávez demonstrates sensitivity to the parallel structure of the poem, and allows the musical gestures to contribute to the text by suggesting words in their poetic absence.

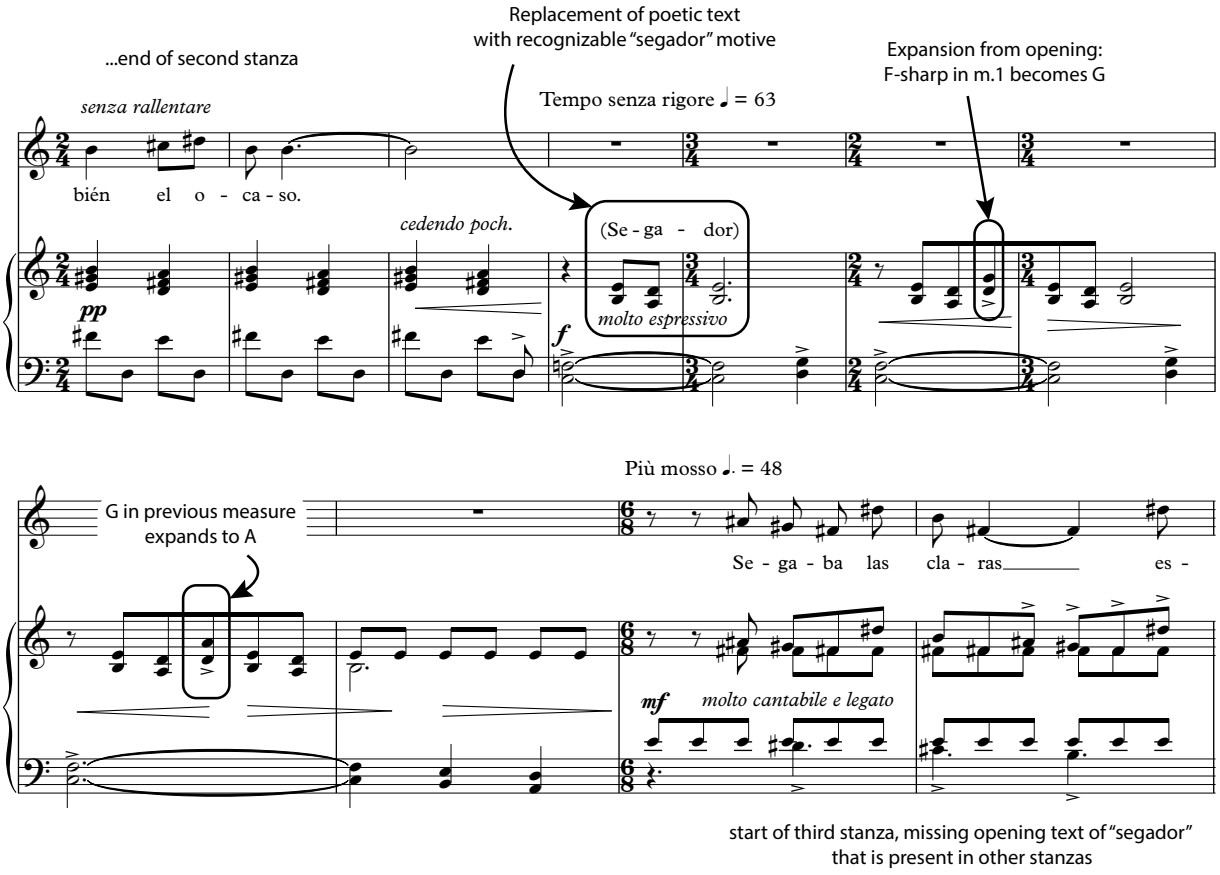


Figure 3.31: Chávez, "Segador," mm. 44–54

Chávez only rarely engages in direct word painting, though it does appear in this song—for example, when he sets the text "Su sombra alargaba la tarde" ("his shadow lengthened the afternoon"), Chávez drops the tempo, stretching or lengthening the beat like Pellicer's description of shadows and time. In general, however, the relationship between the text and music is less directly mimetic. Nevertheless, it is clear that here, unlike in the case of the indigenous or folk materials, Chávez has the opportunity to play more freely with textual meaning and style, and he brings a kind of modern cosmopolitan sensibility to the composition. And as previously shown with instrumental folk tunes, this is not because of the presence of a predetermined melody, but rather because of a different sense of function and use.

Unsurprisingly, art songs such as this—which have no particular nationalist flavor—were not featured in the MoMA concerts, as they failed to provide the kind of exotic or rural aesthetic provided in the rest of the program. Critically, I have been unable to determine what the circumstances were for this work's composition or premiere performance; there is no dedication on the score, and I have not been able to find any performance reviews that mention it. At the time, Chávez was splitting his time between the United States and Mexico, and it was not published until 1942, by G. Schirmer. Without this contextual grounding, it is difficult to know what Chávez's aim or constraints might have been, or whether there was a specific singer in mind.

Chávez was of course not alone in his predicament of engaging with a selective national identity at the time: many composers, both Mexican and Brazilian, wrote settings of modern poetry that lacked obvious markers of the national, and these works have generally received much less visibility in comparison to the rest of their oeuvres. It is not hard to see why: these composers were most valued when they presented what was expected of their "tropical" identities. In a *New York Times* review of the MoMA concerts, Howard Taubman wrote,

> As of purely musical interest, there was much to delight the ear. Mr. Chávez has not trotted out a scholar's dry-as-dust compilation. The program has warmth and gaiety, sentimentality, color and vitality. It represents music of the people, without too many artistic frills and furbelows. Esthetes may sniff at parts of it, but listeners with open minds will relish its naïveté and simplicity of spirit. (Taubman 1940, 25)

In commenting on the selection of works, Taubman cited Chávez as saying "In making our choices, we considered first the purely musical interest of the program; our second insistent desire was to give some conception of the historic development of music in Mexico during the twenty centuries already mentioned." While Chávez claims to focus mostly on musical interest, it is clear from his selections that he is highlighting only a certain aspect of Mexican music, one which elicits the emphasis of being "of the people, without too many artistic frills."

Conclusion

While Chávez's approach was well received by many critics, more broadly the combination of folklorism, concert adaptations of dances, and contemporary works did not receive uniform praise in New York. Less than six months after Chávez's MoMA concerts, the museum presented a "Festival of Brazilian Music" in coordination with an exhibit of paintings from Brazilian artist Candido Portinari, sponsored by the Brazilian Commissioner General to the New York World's Fair, Armando Vidal. Unlike Chávez's production, this one was built as a series of three distinct concerts, each of which would present different works from a variety of composers, focusing most on Heitor Villa-Lobos (Rockefeller Archives 1940). In his New York Herald-Tribune music column, Virgil Thomson unleashed a barrage of criticism regarding these Brazilian concerts.[28] He wrote two reviews, and did not bother to comment on the third concert. The first review, titled "Heavy Hands Across Caribbean," begins:

> Folk-lore [*sic*] is supposed to be an especially virtuous form of music, and the composers who use it for art purposes are often considered with a respect they would never receive if they took the trouble to write their own tunes. There is also supposed to be something particularly noble and virtuous about the Museum of Modern Art. This reviewer confesses to a certain allergy on both counts. He thinks music is music, no matter who wrote it, and a dumb tune is a dumb tune, no matter how anonymous its origins. (Thomson 1940a, 27)

The second review goes on to describe Villa-Lobos's works as "charming," "acceptable," "pleasantly vague," and "low in expressive intensity" (Thomson 1940b, 11). There is undeniably a distinction to be made here between individual reviewers' agendas, however—in contrast to Thomson's litany of complaints and faint praise, New York Times reviewer Olin Downes was a perennial supporter of Villa-Lobos's music, and advocated for it for decades in the city. Moreover, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, Downes served as the

[28] Unfortunately, Thomson did not write in the Herald-Tribune about Chávez's concerts, so we cannot specifically see the difference in Thomson's specific reception of these two events; it could be that Thomson held disdain for both. However, it is significant that Thomson's articles appear to have been the most press that these Brazilian concerts received. There is one other concert review on them in the Rockefeller archives (also negative), but this was published in the liberal periodical *PM* by a significantly less-well-known reviewer, Henry W. Simon (incidentally, uncle to singer-songwriter Carly Simon).

chair of the music committee for the World's Fair for which these works were originally prepared, and thus played an important role in the existence of these programs.

Further, while Chávez's concerts were well received, they were not profitable. Following the concerts, live broadcast, and subsequent album release by Columbia Records, Nelson Rockefeller had to write personal checks to cover a shortfall of $3710.16, after having already procured $15,000 in contributions for the initial concert budget.[29] Members of the board also expressed their desire to pay for the Mexican concerts completely from contributions and ticket sales, rather than from the museum's operating budget. While a more extensive discussion of the relationship between patronage, critical reception, and ticket sales will have to wait for another time, it is clear from correspondence with potential donors that the particular contents of the concert weighed heavily in eliciting financial contributions—by extension, these concerts were clearly shaped by a sense of donor preference, and ideas about what New Yorkers might see as a useful or interesting representations of Mexico as a foreign neighbor.

In this chapter, I have presented a non-exhaustive look at uses of text in this repertory, and how the presence or lack of text affects composers' musical choices. There are, of course, other musical settings from this period in which text was commonly included, such as operas or zarzuelas and patriotic songs. While I have not included these, the three categories of material addressed here suggest that text affected materials differently depending upon the setting. For materials based in folk repertories, the presence of text often marks a pedagogical purpose, and yields strongly diatonic treatment. By contrast, this distinction does not apply for materials on indigenous topics, which perhaps allowed greater space for musical fantasy and freedom. Finally, art song is a category that largely marks a separate genre and set of text–music relations. As shown with "Iára" by Villa-Lobos and Rolón's *Cuauhtémoc*, there is some overlap between the

[29] Letter from Nelson Rockefeller to Ione Ulrich July 12 contains payment for $12,803.43, including $10,000 contribution for MoMA's annual budget; Letter from Rockefeller to Ulrich July 17 includes check for shortfall on the concert programs, $906.73 (Rockefeller Archives 1940).

indigenous and art-song categories, as these materials incorporated modern texts that could just as easily have been used individually as poetry for art song, rather than being grouped into a larger work on indigenous themes.

While the chapter is framed by New York concerts and also incorporates materials from Paris premieres, I do not intend to give a primarily foreign lens for the topic, but rather to provide a sense of how certain social and economic forces exerted pressure on composerly activities, shaping the choices that composers made and guiding the opportunities available to them. As is clear from the interchange between domestic and international communities and distribution, composers created music to function for certain purposes: for Villa-Lobos's *canto orfeônico*, rural songs necessarily take on a pedagogical and political bent under Getúlio Vargas, while similar treatment of folk melodies for the MoMA concerts serves a very different purpose. Among these threads, however, text appears to be a significant compositional consideration, and thus ought also to be brought into analysis not just for close readings of text–music relations, but also to probe broader issues of context and meaning.

Chapter 4. *Música Universal*

In present-day Mexico City, the Gandhi bookstore chain divides adult fiction into two categories: "Iberoamerican" and "Universal." Here the term *universal* has a sense that is somewhat different from its common meaning in English—it means neither "global" in the sense of "world literature," nor "accessible to and understood by all," as in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's oft-cited platitude that "music is the universal language of mankind." Rather, the word here means *not* national, *not* of Mexican or Iberoamerican origin. This distinction also holds in present-day Mexican curricula: to pass the 2015–16 preparatory test in universal literature at UNAM (the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the largest university in Latin America), students must read Sophocles, Machiavelli, Mary Shelley, Lewis Carroll, and Haruki Murakami. While this list, like many in the United States, presents an expansion of the canon, it is clear that "universal" is meant to distinguish these authors from Iberoamerican writers such as Octavio Paz and Gabriel García Márquez, paradoxically marking self as Other.

This same usage of the term was also present in the 1920s and 1930s in both Mexican and Brazilian writings, though writers in the two countries judged the value of "universal" materials somewhat differently. For example, in Brazil, music critic and writer Mário de Andrade struggled with the term's anti-national implications, writing, "There is not international music, let alone universal music; what exists are geniuses who universalize themselves through fundamentals… Even within this internationality or universality, such musicians…never cease to be functionally national."[1] For his own poetic work, Andrade rejected the possibility of universalism altogether as something utterly incompatible with the personal

[1] Andrade 1991 [1941], 22: "Não há música internacional e muito menos música universal; o que existe são gênios que se universalizam por demasiado fundamentais. … Mesmo dentro desta internacionalidade ou daquela universalidade, tais músicos … não deixam nunca de ser funcionalmente nacionais."

nature of his poetry, writing, "My revolt in *Paulicéia*, while others have also felt revolts, did not come out as universal; it is the cry of just one man, my unmistakable cry."[2] Nevertheless, Andrade's opinions are clearly in tension with one another; what would it mean for certain composers to become universal if universal music does not exist? As Brazilian historian Arnaldo Contier writes, "Nationalist musical modernism, in its essence, dialogued with a 'universal' tendency that encompassed diverse European and American countries. The modernist slogan, 'from the national to the universal,' in its essence, refers to a circularity of aesthetic-ideological ideas that arose following World War I."[3]

In this setting, the relationship between national and universal does not *become* freighted—rather, it is already freighted in the language. In usage that persists today in both countries, the national is explicitly contrasted with the universal. By extension, as shown in comments like those of Andrade and Contier, the national cannot exist without the universal; like cosmopolitanism, it highlights that there can be no "marked" nation without the "unmarked" world at large.

While several composers, both Mexican and Brazilian, expressed a kind of ambivalence toward nationalist music (see Chapter 1 for more discussion on this topic), none of the major composers of Brazil or Mexico in this period were strictly speaking *anti*-nationalist. Thus any work in this repertory that eschews a national character must be taken as part of a broader career trajectory that also encompasses, to a greater or lesser degree, nationalism. Further, the specific timing of a composer's choices are idiosyncratic to individual life events. For example, Heitor Villa-Lobos and Carlos Chávez both highlighted national features to a greater extent after traveling abroad. In contrast, their earlier works tend to emphasize

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[2] Andrade 1982, 96: "Minha revolta de *Paulicéia*, embora alguns tenham sentido também revoltas, não saiu universável; é um grito dum homem só, grito meu inconfundível." *Paulicéia* refers to *Paulicéia Desvairada*, Andrade's most celebrated poetic work.

[3] Contier 2004, 10: "O modernismo musical nacionalista, em sua essência, dialogou com uma tendência 'universal' que abrangeu diversos Estados europeus e das Américas. O lema modernista 'do nacional para o universal', em sua essência, referia-se a uma circularidade de idéias estético-ideológicas surgidas, concomitantemente no pós-guerra (1918)."

universal composition, much in the way that students and young composers work to prove a kind of technical competency. After gaining international recognition (or perhaps as part of gaining international recognition), both Villa-Lobos and Chávez shifted to incorporate nationalist features into their works more frequently, making "universal" works notable exceptions for both of them in the 1930s, particularly since both held national music positions during that period. In the case of Brazilian composer Francisco Mignone, it is his return from Milan in 1929 that marks the start of his intensely nationalistic period. In contrast, Manuel M. Ponce moved in the other direction. While he emphasized *canción* as a basis for many of his works in the 1910s and early 1920s, he traveled to study with Paul Dukas in Paris in 1925 and thereafter turned his compositional focus away from national song, emphasizing instead works without obvious Mexican musical markers.

Of course, the "universal" is not the same as the "absolute." Rather, this category or approach allowed composers to explore other Others, such as Ponce's *Poésies Chinoises*, an Orientalist work that may strike modern ears as resembling French "impressionism," and written while Ponce was in Paris. Among other works, I will discuss in this chapter Chávez's *Sinfonía de Antígona*, which originated as theatrical accompaniment to Jean Cocteau's adaptation of Sophocles's *Antigone*; while not "absolute," the work is clear in its non-Iberoamerican approach, and thus expresses one form of universalism in the period.

In this chapter, I will address what Brazilian and Mexican composers in the 1920s and 1930s were doing when they were *not* doing nationalism. For the purposes of this examination, I will closely address three works that I take to be representative of distinct phenomena within the idea of universalism. First, I will discuss Villa-Lobos's Fourth String Quartet, a work that displays many common characteristics of early-career compositions, designed to demonstrate a kind of technical competence. Second, I will address post-1930 works through the lens of Chávez's *Sinfonía de Antígona*. Finally, I will examine Revueltas's chamber work, *Planos*, in order to illustrate a fluidity between ideas of Mexicanism and universalism.

Through these three works, I hope to elucidate a number of features: 1) how young composers demonstrate competence through "universal" techniques and approaches, 2) what affordances the idea of the universal provides for composers, and finally 3) how the "universal" interacts with the "national" in works written during a heavily nationalist period. Thus this discussion will necessarily be nuanced, understanding a gradation rather than a black/white contrast between the national and the universal. Secondarily, this examination will also attempt an understanding of these composers' works that holds features in common across both national and universal angles, to give a better sense of these composers outside of the national characterization that so often dominates description of their musics.

Early Compositions: Heitor Villa-Lobos, String Quartet No. 4

As developing professionals, virtually every young composer addressed in this dissertation worked to demonstrate competency in a way that was transparent and separate from a nationalist agenda. This is as true for Chávez and Revueltas as it is for Villa-Lobos and Mignone, and of course is a trait shared with many young composers outside of Latin America as well. Through Chávez's early works—*Energía*, *36*, and others—he is shown to be a modernist first, and later a Mexicanist.[4] On the other hand, many of Villa-Lobos's early works resemble Debussyan compositions (see, for example, a brief discussion of *A Prole do Bebê No. 1* and its relation to *Children's Corner* in Chapter 3), while later Villa-Lobos takes up the mantle of Brazilian identity, a fact especially evident in the foreign reception of his work and in its later links to the strongly nationalist Vargas government (as discussed in Chapter 2).

While the central composers of this dissertation were born in different years—indeed, often different decades—many share similar timing in terms of career events: most of them began composing in

[4] For more discussion of this shift, see Madrid 2008, especially Chapter 2.

the 1910s and early 1920s, and obtained professional employment in the late 1920s and early 1930s.[5] To that end, I consider works written in the late 1910s and early 1920s to be among their "early career" compositions: pieces written before most of them had official posts or conservatory teaching positions, and also before most of them traveled abroad. For all of these composers, this period thus represents a phase in which they needed to demonstrate technical competence and stylistic awareness of concert-music practice. Indeed, it is during this period that Mignone divides his works into popular-genre compositions under the pseudonym Chico Bororó and concert-music compositions under his own name.[6]

With that in mind, we will begin with Villa-Lobos's String Quartet No. 4, a work written in 1917 in Rio de Janeiro. To provide some context for this work within Villa-Lobos's professional career and exposure to art-music composers, Villa-Lobos wrote his Fourth Quartet after he was well-known in the Rio de Janeiro concert-music community, but before befriending international musicians Artur Rubinstein and Darius Milhaud on their visits to Brazil in 1917 and 1918. Two major nationalist orchestral works, *Amazonas* and *Uirapurú*, have manuscripts with the year 1917 written on them as well, but there is significant doubt regarding the actual composition date of these works.[7] In any case, nationalism is not as dominant in Villa-Lobos's works prior to the Week of Modern Art (1922) and his travels to Paris in 1923.

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[5] There are several prominent composers of the period in both countries who were alive and writing during this period, but who were born earlier, and for whom this period represents a somewhat different part of their careers. This is the case with both Julián Carrillo (1875–1965) and Manuel M. Ponce (1882–1948) in Mexico (for more on these composers' interaction with the period, see Saavedra 2010 and Madrid 2008 and 2015), and complicates a consideration of their participation in modernist musical discourses. In addition, most older Brazilian composers of the period, such as Ernesto Nazareth, did not engage in modernist composition, and for this reason have not been featured in the dissertation at all.

[6] For more on the perception of popular music versus concert music in this period in Brazil, see Chapter 2.

[7] Both *Uirapurú* and *Amazonas* were first performed more than a decade after the date listed on the manuscript, and several scholars have suggested that he may have listed the date of 1917 as a date of "inspiration" rather than actual composition, or maybe as a way to assert a kind of creative primacy. There are other ways in which these mirror later works as well—a suggestion of folkloric materials without an

Eero Tarasti describes Villa-Lobos's string quartets as dividing into three periods: early style, 1930s/40s, and late period. In his words, the early and late periods both reflect universalism in a certain sense, but from two different points of view. He writes:

> Thus the string quartets illustrate the temporal transition from national romanticism to the universalism of the mature composer, and on the other hand, the difference between the post-nationalist abstract style and that universalism which had not yet experienced the discovery of national expression and which, therefore, was primarily a reflection of European late-romantic influences. (1995, 294–95)

Like many writers on Villa-Lobos, Tarasti writes a narrative of the composer that takes Europe as a dominant point of reference, first as an imitative posture and later as a kind of dialogue. While I would choose to characterize these periods somewhat differently—less about national discovery and more about choices of cultural emphasis—the periods themselves are still potentially useful here, and Tarasti's use of the word "universalism" is significant, specifically excluding the works of the middle period. Villa-Lobos wrote string quartets in nearly every decade of his career, composing a total of seventeen over the course of his lifetime. Notably, the 1920s are missing from this period, which provides a clear break between the early quartets and the works of the 1930s and 1940s, which are quite nationalist. Setting aside the question of whether Villa-Lobos returns to universalism later in his career, then, we can examine his Fourth Quartet as the last of his early quartets, and one that provides a clear example of Villa-Lobos's universal early-career style.[8] Here I will focus on the fourth movement of this quartet, one that features a number of techniques that Villa-Lobos also uses in the other movements, and exemplifies his pre-Paris universal style.

The fourth and final movement of the quartet begins with a bold, sweeping gesture that divides the four instruments into pairs of parallel fourths driving in contrary motion. This brief but energetic quartal

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actual folk tune, for example, is a technique he also uses in String Quartet No. 6 (1938), but not in earlier works. See, for example, Appleby 2002, 42.

[8] For a contrast between this and Villa-Lobos's string quartets of the 1930s, see the brief discussion of his Fifth String Quartet in Chapter 3.

gesture suggests a modern sound for a work dating from 1917. Yet its potentially modernist promise quickly dissolves, at least on the surface: as figure 4.1 shows, this gesture is followed by a more tonal set of cues. The upper voices descend not in parallel motion, but rather in pairs of eighths that echo cadential shapes, followed by a series of Baroque trills that lead to the dominant, G Major. Further, a closer examination reveals that this first theme and the elaboration that follows through measure 15 are built upon various expansions of a C-Major scale, cadencing on the tonic in measure 14.

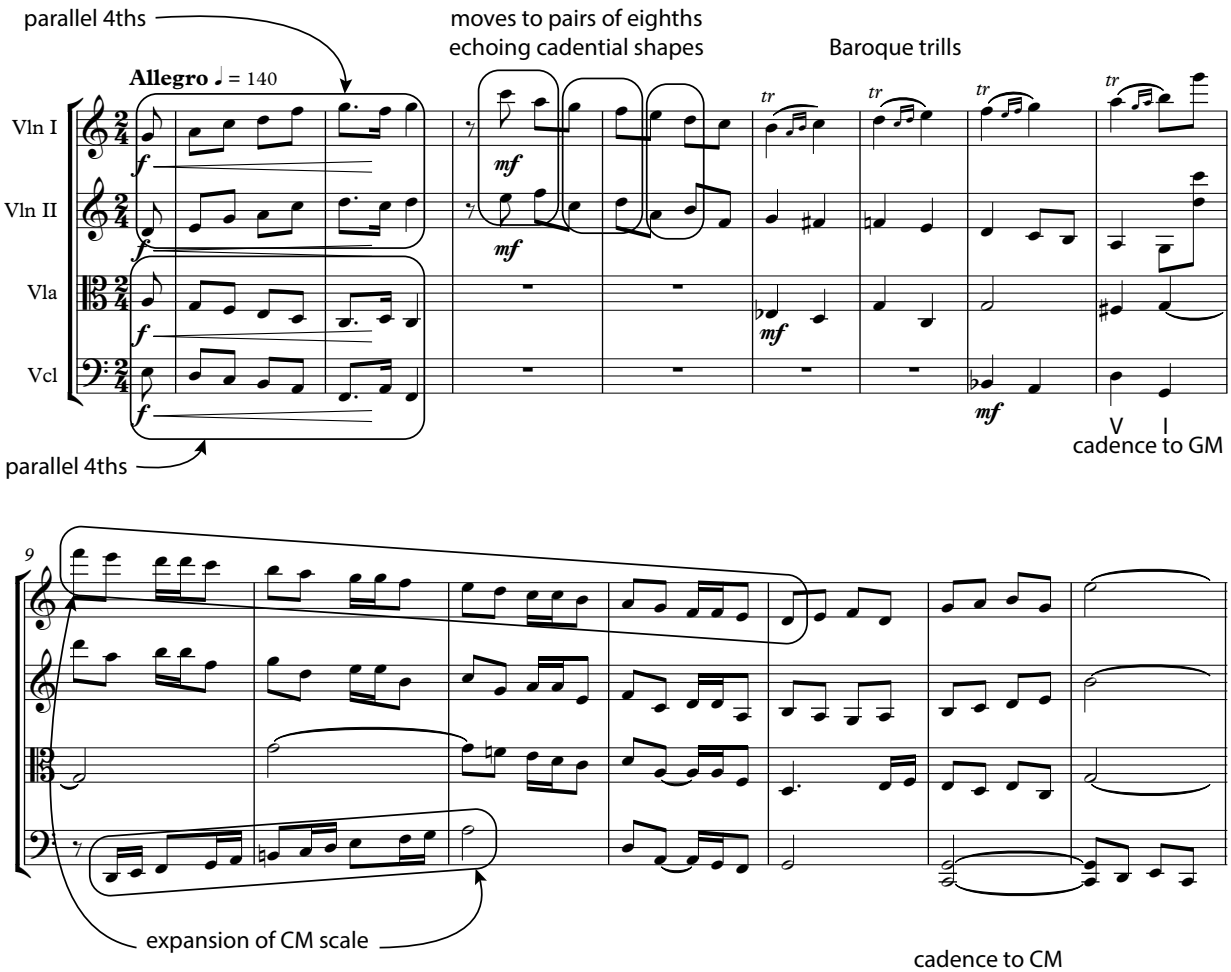

Figure 4.1: Heitor Villa-Lobos, String Quartet No. 4, IV. Allegro, mm. 1–15

This description of a series of conventions, however, belies the compactness of this opening, and a kind of harmonic novelty that would seem to contradict the simplicity of the C-Major scale or the

conservatism of Baroque trills. For example, while the pairs of eighths in measures 3–4 are related to cadential shapes, only the first pair actually outline a cadential harmonic motion, C–F. The others take the shape of that gesture to more tonally ambiguous territory, C–Dm and A–Bm. In both, the first notes of the pair form an open perfect fifth rather than an implied triad or seventh chord, which not only amplifies the ambiguity of the initial harmony, but also removes the cadential drive of an implied leading tone that a chordal third would provide. Continuing onward to the trills of mm. 5–8, the harmonies here are tonally odd. Both the first and second violins each move in a largely scalar—and clearly tonal—pattern (with the addition of an F♯ in the second violin), but the support from the viola and cello combine with these upper voices to create some unexpected harmonies, such as an E♭ augmented triad going to a D7 chord through parsimonious voice-leading in measure 5, or measure 7's G-Minor 6/5, which goes to an A-Minor 7. These unusual progressions are interspersed among more expected harmonies: between these two measures, Villa-Lobos places a progression of G7–C, and as shown in figure 4.1, the final trill is supported by a V–I cadence in G major. Thus Villa-Lobos underlays strategically anachronistic gestures, like Baroque trills, with a rapidly changing mix of modern flashes and more conservative harmonic choices. In particular, the speed of these changes allows the listener to glide over the disjunct harmonies, perhaps minimizing the potentially jarring nature of some of these moves.

This mix of modern and conservative tactics also aptly characterizes the movement as a whole. Following the opening section, Villa-Lobos uses a string of fully diminished seventh chords followed by an incomplete three-stage sequence to shift to the subdominant, an area that he emphasizes strongly over the course of the movement. In this sonata-form movement, Villa-Lobos substitutes a fugue for the standard development section, one which is based in the subdominant, and when he returns to the opening material at measure 157, he uses wholesale repetition of the first 100 measures of the movement, transposed up a

perfect 4th.[9] These tonal and formal choices are surprisingly conservative for the period, suggesting rule-following rather than demonstration of innovative composerly qualities.

Yet these sections also contain somewhat awkward features that betray either Villa-Lobos's inexperience or a kind of subtler modernism. For example, returning to the fugue, there is a slight tonal ambiguity to the subject. Figure 4.2 shows the opening of the fugue; while the first statement of the subject is based around F, and the answer moves to C (ostensibly the dominant here), the pitch collection is not one of F Major, but rather C Major. This is minimally present in the subject, with just one B♮ that arrives relatively late, just before the answer. This note is not part of a shift to the new key for the answer, but rather a stable part of the pitch collection of this fugue, continuing through statements that start on F, C, and G. In this context, the B♮ sticks out, suggesting that either Villa-Lobos retroactively moves F to the position of subdominant rather than tonic, or that it is based in some kind of F Lydian, which seems unlikely given the minimal emphasis of the pitch and its proximity to subsequent statements that begin on other pitches. On the other hand, it could alternatively be interpreted as a kind of subtle "wrong-note" gesture, connected to Parisian neoclassicist trends, and certainly something that Villa-Lobos would have been exposed to through the music of Darius Milhaud and others that were in circulation at the time.

[9] There are some small changes in voicing in the second theme area, but no substantial shifts, and the harmonic and rhythmic qualities of the section remain the same.

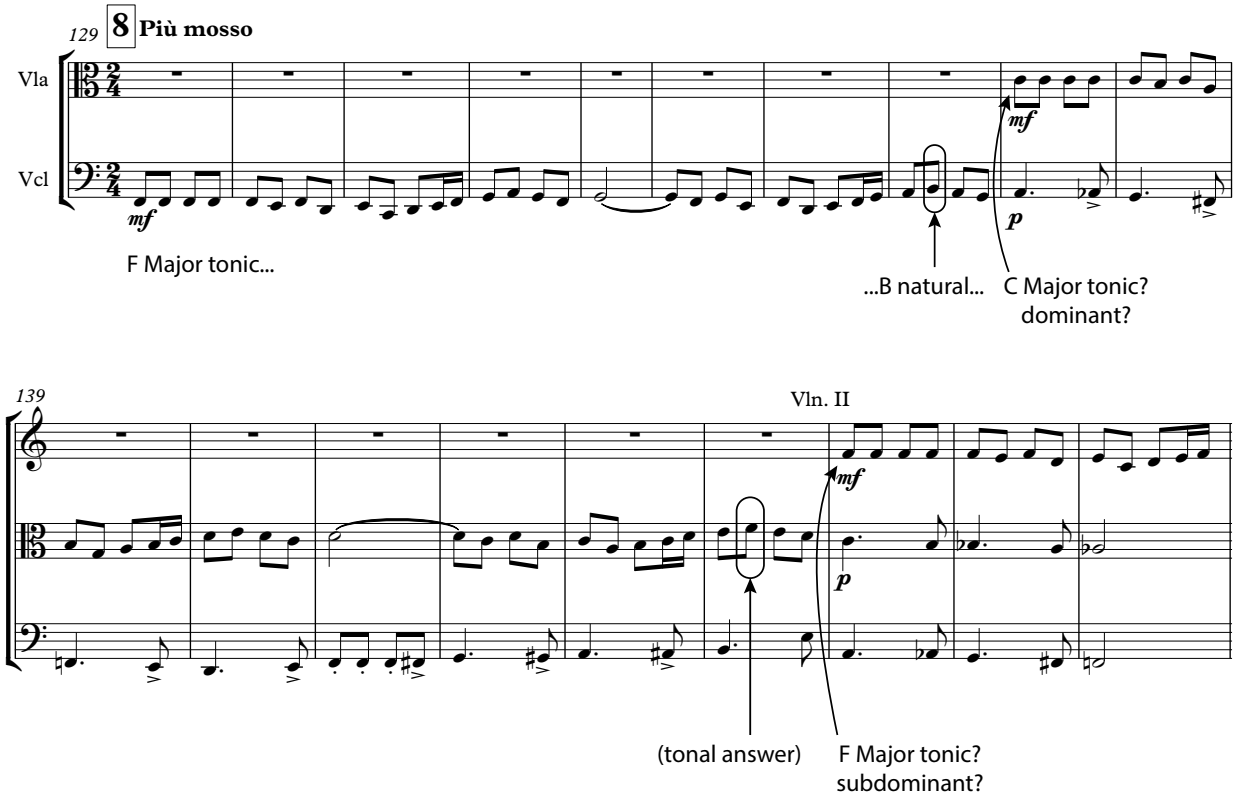

Figure 4.2: Villa-Lobos, String Quartet No. 4, IV. Allegro, mm. 129–47

After shifting among C Major, C Minor, and F Major over the course of the movement, Villa-Lobos makes a sudden turn at the end to a new tonal space. In the final measures, he rests on an F-Major chord in the viola and cello, only to move into what appears to be an A-Major scale in the violins, concluding on an open A/E fifth. The two parts hold for a time on these conflicting pitches—F Major and a non-specified A—before the lower voices step into line with the upper voices, concluding on a fortississimo A/E. This hasn't been suggested as a tonal focus in the rest of the movement, though at times the chords Villa-Lobos uses have emphasized the pitch classes of the open strings of the instruments. Figure 4.3 shows the end of the movement, including this split into two conflicting parts, and their resolution in the final measures.

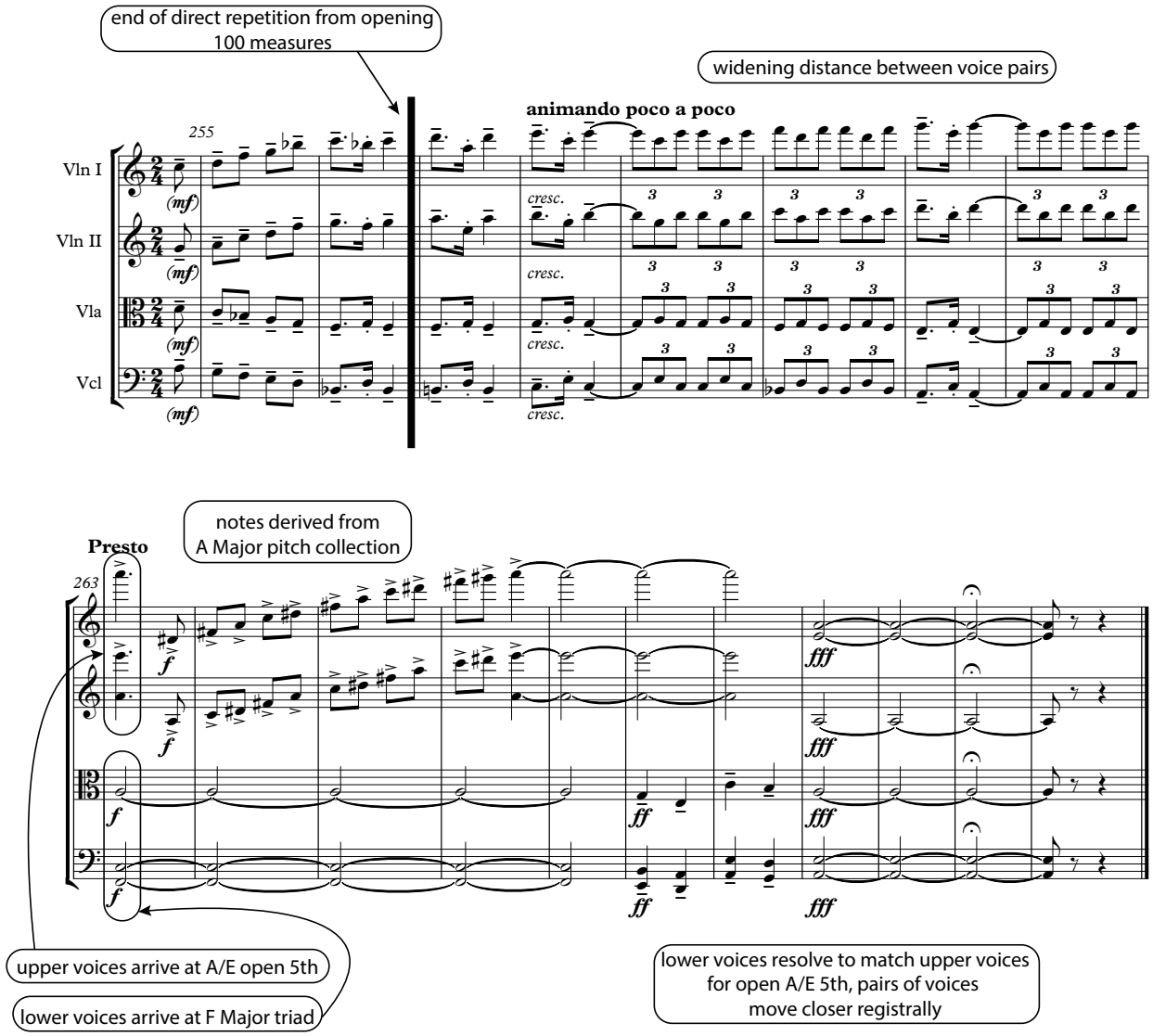

Figure 4.3: Villa-Lobos, String Quartet No. 4, IV. Allegro, mm. 255–end

Several of the features of this movement are held in common with the other movements of the quartet. Throughout the work, Villa-Lobos pairs a strong emphasis on sequential motion and loosely fugal textures with themes that suggest a move away from tonality and a tension with these same tonally based structures. Overall, however, tonal shapes win out, with these moments of atonality or modernism providing contrast rather than structural importance for the work. In his later works that emphasized *brasilidade*, Villa-Lobos tended to reserve strongly tonal shapes for moments of folklorism or the "popular,"

while he paired these with a more "universal" cosmopolitan modernist dissonance to create works that fused the "popular" with the "learned" (for more discussion of this interaction, see Chapter 2). From String Quartet No. 4, however, it is clear that tonality has not always been marked as folkloric for Villa-Lobos; rather, it takes on that character in his later compositions.

There are several ways that Villa-Lobos makes effective use of tonality as a marker for the vernacular in his works of the 1930s; for example, he often pairs heavily diatonic harmonies with pentatonic melodies that suggest a kind of rural simplicity, even when the melody itself might not be a specific folk tune. One factor that allows Villa-Lobos to use this kind of diatonicism as a Brazilian marker in later works is that he does not have "universal" works that feature diatonicism in the period of his most nationalist compositions, which might otherwise undermine such interpretation. Indeed, Villa-Lobos writes no clearly non-nationalist works in the period 1925–1940. More broadly speaking, no major Brazilian modernists wrote music that could be characterized as universal during the late 1920s or all of the 1930s, demonstrating a remarkable void in compositional output. Thus, his nationalist works allow for a shift in signification of these tonal structures, in part because of a lack of "universal" examples.

It is difficult to say concretely why Brazilian *modernista* composers would not create universalist works between the late 1920s and 1940. For Villa-Lobos this is an issue that intersects with both his visits to Paris and his later drive to become the creator of the first national music curriculum under Getúlio Vargas's heavily nationalist government, but a complete absence for all composers is surprising, to say the least. As I discussed briefly in Chapter 2, however, nationalism and regionalism became dominant features—perhaps the defining features—of modernism in Brazil in the 1930s. As Saulo Gouveia (2013) notes, the *modernistas* of the late 1920s and through the 1930s moved away from the *avant garde* approaches that had been prominent in the early modernist arts, embracing a kind of populism and non-controversial quality that would have been anathema in early 1920s. More specifically, while Williams (2001) and Gouveia (2013)

discuss the embrace of modernism by the Vargas administration in the 1930s, Schwartman et al. (1984) more pointedly address the terms under which this embrace took place, suggesting that the reason that modernism fit within the Vargas administration's ideals was the focus on folklorism. Within this understanding, it might be plausible that a more cosmopolitan approach to modernism was not embraced with the same fervor. While it does not explain a complete absence of such works within this period, this assertion certainly bolsters the idea that within the possibilities of modernist expression, nationalist works received greater administrative support, and thus might have been more economically and politically appealing for composers.

Universalism in the 1930s: Carlos Chávez, *Sinfonía de Antígona*

While both Mexican and Brazilian examples of universalism are rare in the 1930s, some Mexican examples do exist. To explore universalism in the 1930s, I now move to Carlos Chávez's 1933 *Sinfonía de Antígona* (Symphony No. 1). In July 1932, Carlos Chávez composed incidental music for a production of the Jean Cocteau version of Sophocles's *Antigone* at Teatro Orientación in Mexico City. Judging by letters from the director, Celestino Gorostiza, the music was written on short notice—in a letter dated Thursday, July 21, Gorostiza sends some suggestions for instrumentation, length, and style, concluding, "I beg you to help us resolve the problem, and whatever your decision, please do me the favor of seeing if it is possible for the musicians to come to the theater on Monday at 7 for a rehearsal."[10] The nature of the "problem" remains

[10] Carmona 1989, 143: "te suplico que nos ayudes a resolver el problema y que cualquiera que sea tu decisión, me hagas favor de ver si es posible que los músicos vengan al Teatro el lunes a las 7 para hacer un ensayo." The source volume for this quote provides the name of the author as José Gorostiza, but I believe this to be an error—according to Leonora Saavedra (2015), Celestino Gorostiza was the director of this production. Further, Celestino was the director of the Teatro Orientación in 1932. According to the New York Public Library catalog, the *Sinfonía* premiered in 1932, but all other references, including a compilation made by the Orquesta Sinfónica de México in 1948 (*21 Años de la Orquesta Sinfónica de México, 1928–1948*), list 1933 as the premiere performance year.

unspecified here, but one might surmise that it connects to the short timeline of composition. In any case, Chávez later used this material as the basis for his 1933 *Sinfonía de Antígona*, usually numbered as his first symphony.[11]

Despite the psychological weight often accorded to symphonies of the 19th and 20th centuries, Chávez's *Sinfonía de Antígona* is a one-movement work of approximately eleven minutes in length that does not appear to be so freighted with anxiety or status. Rather, the work draws heavily upon the incidental music—large chunks of the composition are directly lifted from that material (with some re-orchestration and expansion). To that end, it might more aptly be considered a symphonic poem. The work roughly breaks down into four sections, as shown in figure 4.4:

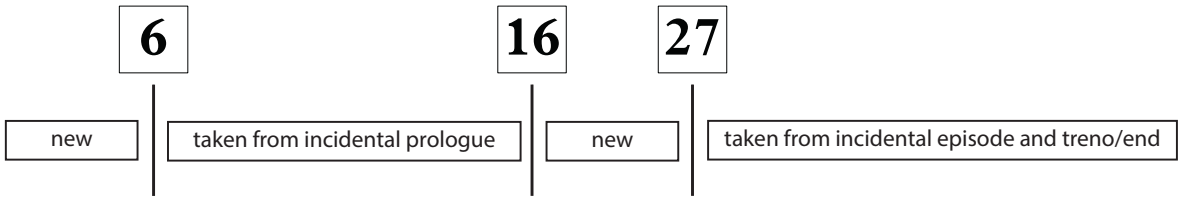

Figure 4.4: Carlos Chávez, *Sinfonía de Antígona*, diagram with score rehearsal numbers

This work also maintains much of the episodic character of the original music, with abrupt breaks in sections rather than development across the movement. Notably, the most connected thematic material is also linked in the original incidental music for *Antigone*—while the newly composed sections introduce new themes, the parts drawn from the prologue and episode of the play are thematically tied to one another, presenting similar material in different keys, and with different instruments.

Considering the close relationship between the 1932 incidental music and the 1933 *Sinfonía*, it is especially useful to consider the influences and models under which Chávez was operating for the 1932

[11] It should be noted that he has works from 1915 and 1918 that also take the label of symphony, but they are student compositions, and usually not included in the ordering of Chávez's symphonies by number (Parker 2002).

composition. Returning to Gorostiza's letter, the director makes a number of notes that might be productively placed in dialogue with the theatrical music. He writes,

> Carlos:
> Here is where the author marks "music," during a scene change. Also in the Teatro Orientación a masked person will appear, as indicated in the note at the foot of the page, but in any case the pause cannot be greater than three minutes.
> Would three or four instruments be sufficient, among them flute and drums? Could they play something like Milhaud's *Oresteia*, if some part of that exists without text?[12]

Perhaps Gorostiza is referring literally to the possibility of the musicians playing some excerpt of the *Oresteia*, but this is unlikely, as it would require a significant reworking of materials for this much smaller ensemble—Milhaud's composition asks for massive orchestral and choral forces, and highlights vocal lines throughout, containing little in the way of exclusively instrumental music. It does, however, highlight drums and winds as Gorostiza suggests. Nevertheless, it seems more likely that Gorostiza is asking Chávez to either translate or abstract some of Milhaud's style from this work, presenting a clear referent for the composition at hand. While Chávez's work bears little resemblance to Milhaud's composition, such a reference is not surprising: Milhaud's last and largest part of the *Oresteia* was completed in 1923, and Jean Cocteau wrote his version of *Antigone* in 1922. Also unmentioned but certainly present in the contemporary milieu of musical settings for newly revamped Greek works is Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* (1927), another recent Parisian premiere that was also based upon a Cocteau rewrite. Chávez was aware of the work and discussed it with friends in letters (Carmona 1989). Considering Gorostiza's knowledge of Milhaud's *Oresteia*, it is likely that he would also have been familiar with Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. Here, then, it would

[12] Carmona 1989, 143: "Carlos: Aquí es donde el autor marca 'música', durante un vacio en la escena. También en el Teatro Orientación se hará aparecer un enmascarado, como lo indica la nota al pie de página, pero de todos modos la pausa no podrá ser mayor de tres minutos. ¿Bastaría con tres o cuatro instrumentos, entre ellos flauta y timbales? ¿Convendría tocar algo como *La orestíada* de Milhaud, si existe un fragmento sin recitado?"

seem Gorostiza and Chávez are trying to recreate a kind of miniature Paris, complete with Parisian-style music and Parisian rewrites of Greek plays.

On the short timeline he had, Chávez created musical vignettes for chamber ensemble that were both modernist and Orientalist, setting modal melodies with dissonant accompaniments, or using the tropes of "ancient/exotic" oboe and harp in combination with highly chromatic lines and alternating [016] chords. His ensemble of winds, trumpet, and percussion connect thematically between parts—for example, in the section titled "Episodio y treno," Chávez transposes a section that was played by oboes in the "Preludio," and moves it to the clarinets and flutes. In total, he created about six minutes of music, most of which were then used wholesale in the *Sinfonía*.

In the first half of the 1930s, Chávez wrote very few pieces that do not reference Iberoamerican themes. Instead, his oeuvre of this period is dominated by such works as *H.P.* (1931/2), *El sol, corrido mexicano* (1934), *Llamadas: sinfonía proletaria* (1934), *Sinfonía India* (1935), and *Chapultepec* (1935), all of which feature—either in sections or as a whole—elements that are marked as Mexican. With the exception of a few chamber works, Chávez was largely writing music that highlighted Iberoamerican-ness, and to that end, *Sinfonía de Antígona* stands out as the only composition for full orchestra in this period that does not attend to these topics.

Despite this distinction, however, the work shares a number of common traits with others of the same period from Chávez. For example, his treatment of this as a vaguely programmatic work mirrors his writing in *Sinfonía India*, which is usually numbered as his second symphony—here, too, Chávez writes in a way that suggests a topical theme rather than a structure such as sonata form. He also draws on some of the same techniques he used in *H. P.*, such as quartal and quintal harmonies, and a rambling 6/8 section of somewhat static diatonicism. However, *Sinfonía de Antígona* lacks the populist quality of *Sinfonía India* and *H.*

P., instead alternating between a kind of modal Orientalism and dissonant harmonies. Indeed, the opening theme is built on a three-note chromatically descending motif, shown in figure 4.5.

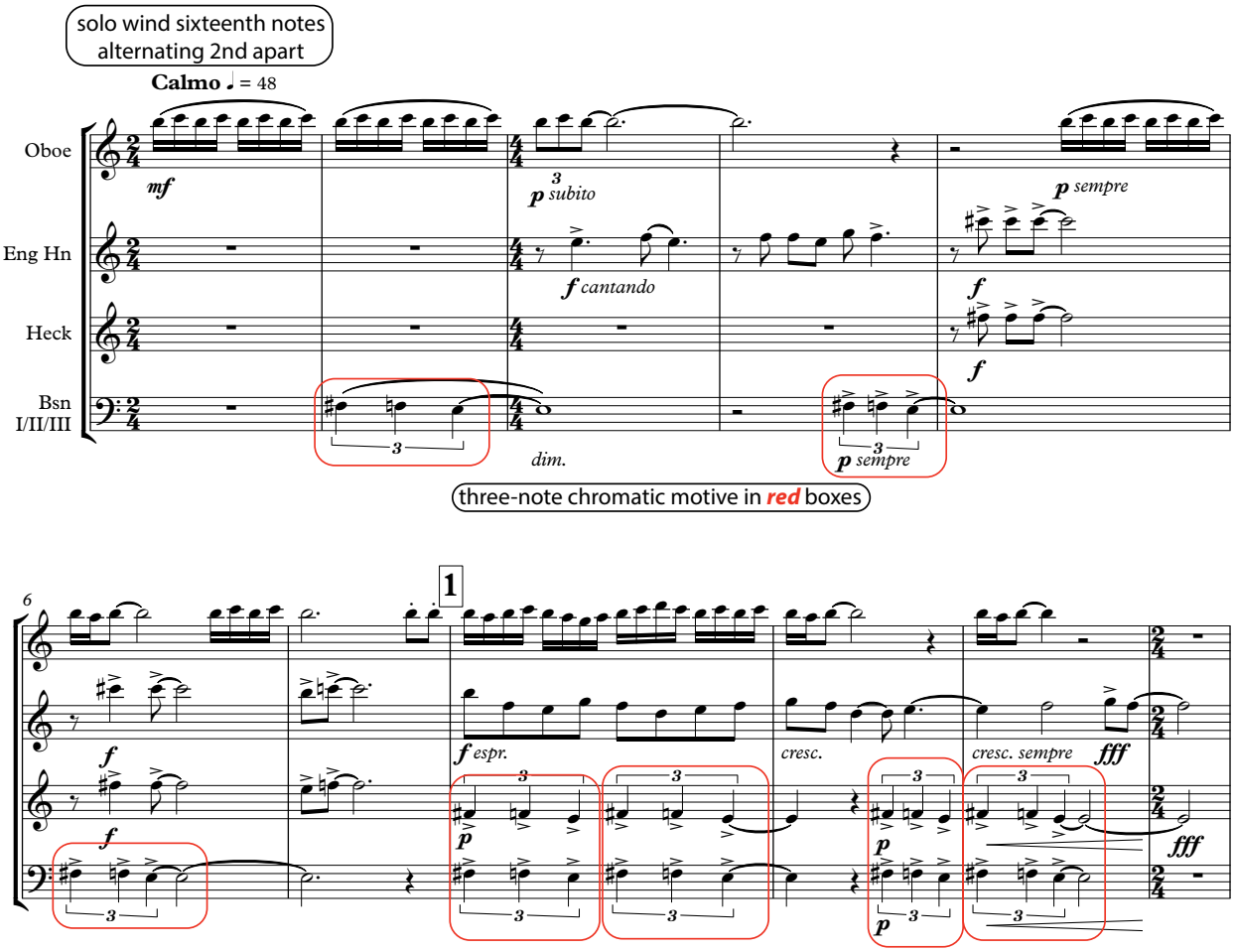

Figure 4.5: Chávez, *Sinfonía de Antígona*, mm. 1–11

The *Sinfonía* also relates to Chávez's later *Xochipilli,* a work addressed in detail in Chapter 3. The two compositions share an initial sparseness of resources that highlight alternating sixteenth notes a 2nd apart in a solo wind instrument; compare, for example, figure 4.5 here and figure 3.13. in Chapter 3. In addition, they share an overtly imagined relationship to their stated topics (here, ancient Greeks; in *Xochipilli*, Aztec music). Later in the work (in a section that was taken from the incidental music), Chávez employs another technique shared with *Xochipilli*: he uses an additive approach to a motif, going from a

three-note gesture to a four-note one, then resting on five notes, the last three of which descend chromatically, tidily tying this theme to the one presented in the opening measures. Figure 4.6 shows a brief excerpt of this expanding passage.

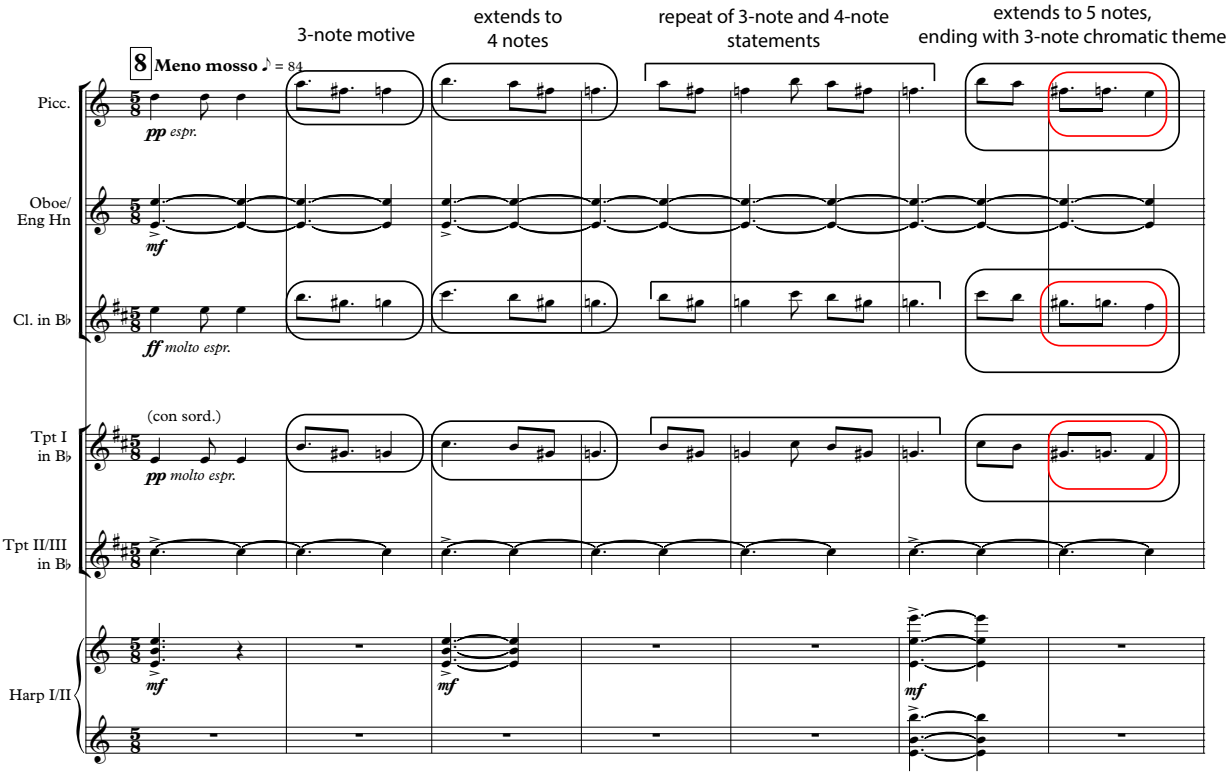

Figure 4.6: Chávez, *Sinfonía de Antígona*, rehearsal 8

Ultimately, what shines through in this work is Chávez's substitution of one Other for another—instead of writing in an "Indianist" pentatonic style as in *Sinfonía India* or *Xochipilli*, or representing a consonant tropical paradise as in *H. P.*, Chávez blends imagined ancient Greece with modern, angular sounds in *Sinfonía de Antígona*. While *Sinfonía India* incorporates collected indigenous melodies, and to that extent is not complete fantasy, it clearly draws upon stereotypes and encoded markers for the exotic Other, a common approach to both pre-Columbian and contemporary indigenous Mexican references in concert music of the time, and works like *Xochipilli* overtly carry the indication "imagined" in the title (Saavedra 2001). In this way, while Chávez is in theory writing a universal work, devoid of Iberoamerican character,

it is just as much a site for exoticism as his Mexicanist works. Here, then, we see just how non-specialized Mexican markers can be in Chávez's writing, by way of his carrying over these same supposedly national features to a both geographically and historically displaced subject.

Universalism and Nationalism Intertwined: Silvestre Revueltas, *Planos*

While works that might easily be characterized as having a universal or national bent clearly exist, I argue that the majority of compositions from the interwar years are more nebulous in character, involving a blend of universal and national markers. A quick skim of this dissertation yields ample evidence of this. In Chapter 1, I discussed Carlos Chávez's *H. P.*, a work that includes both Mexican and cosmopolitan elements, at times blending the two. In Chapter 2, I addressed Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 4*, a work that contains a cosmopolitan section that is separated from a more vernacular-influenced section. In Chapter 3, I explored Chávez's "Segador," a song that uses a text about landscape and farming from a Mexican poet, but whose music is not particularly marked as Mexican in sound. Moreover, it is quite common for a recognizable Iberoamerican trope to appear in the middle of a work that is otherwise unmarked in this regard (or rather, marked by an absence of this element, depending upon one's point of view). Among the composers discussed in this dissertation, Silvestre Revueltas displays an especially flexible approach to the question of the universal versus the local. In Revueltas's works, elements marked as Mexican flit in and out freely, creating a kind of continuum in which the universal and the national are not opposed, but perhaps in dialogue with one another or in some other, more fluid relationship. In particular, Revueltas frequently wrote in a kind of pastiche style, which allowed for elements that have been characterized as Mexican to appear embedded in a series of layers that combine to create a sometimes-chaotic impression.

The very first work I addressed in Chapter 1, Silvestre Revueltas's String Quartet No. 2, clearly presents a blend of these two approaches; in that chapter, I argued that this very mix—one which distorts,

bends, and breaks off folkloric references—highlights tension and ambivalence that might be inherent in the very idea of nationalism. Revueltas's Second Quartet, however, makes clear its nationalist markers, beginning with a direct reference to a folk tune that forms a primary theme for it, "Los Magueyes." In this section of the chapter, I argue that some of these same markers appear in works that are not overtly national in description or structure, and thus require inferences about meaning and interpretation. To explore this subtler interweaving of the local and the cosmopolitan, I turn now to a chamber work from 1934, *Planos*. This angular, single-movement composition is at first glance absolutely universalist, and devoid of obvious Mexicanisms. The work opens with a grounding harmony of [01256] in disparate registration played by solo piano—a harmony that brackets the work as a whole, prominently framing the beginning and end of *Planos*. The piece is full of chromaticism and gestures that outline augmented triads, particularly highlighting repeated cells; for example, figure 4.7 below shows a brief excerpt in which the strings and trumpet alternate between two of the prominent motives of the work.

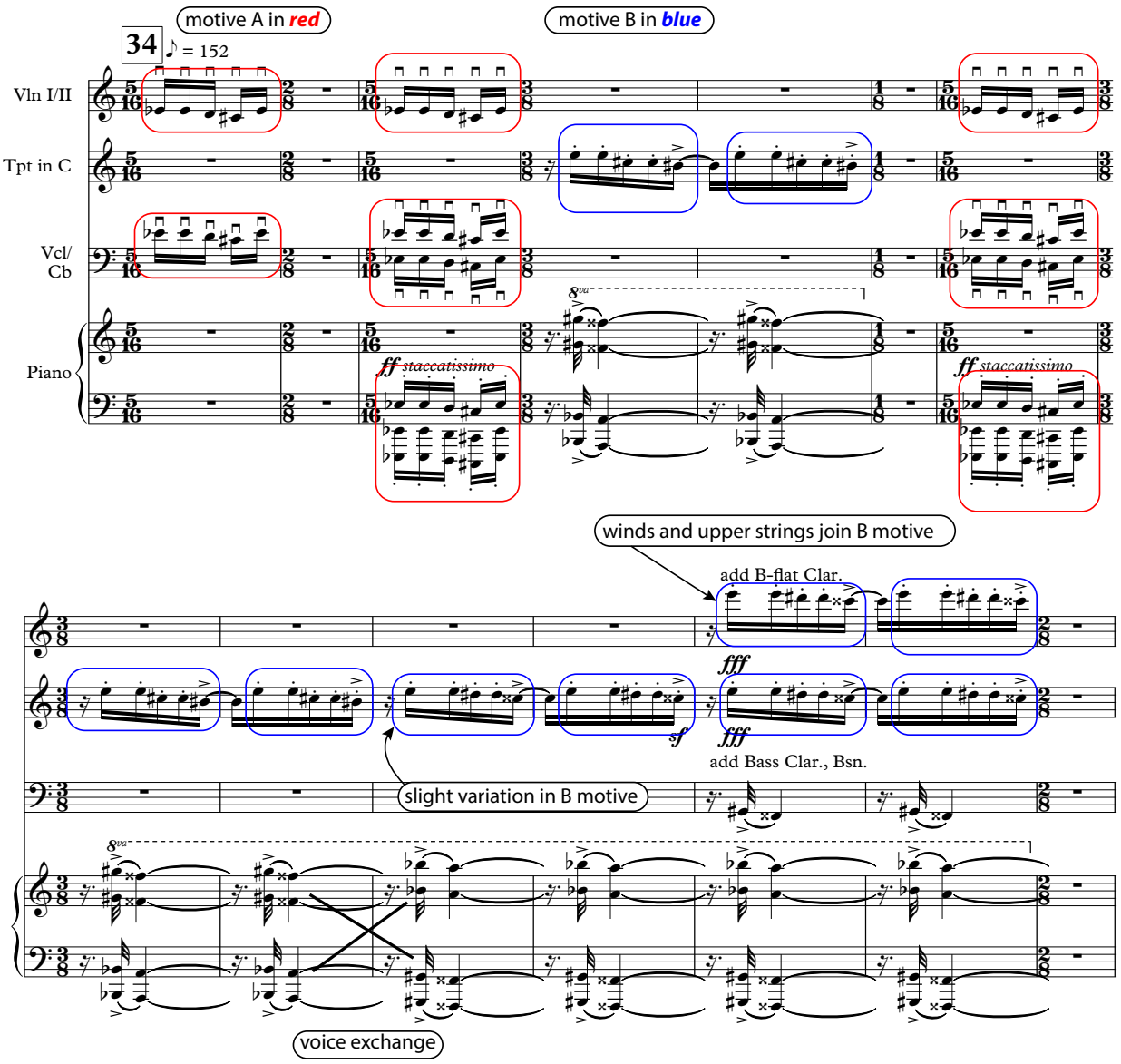

Figure 4.7: Silvestre Revueltas, *Planos*, rehearsal 34

In *Planos*, Revueltas never ventures into diatonic or folkloric idioms, staying instead in an aggressively dissonant realm that features sharp interjections in registrally distant instruments, such as quick alternations between low bass and high treble lines. This separation by register is emphasized visually in the score by the arrangement of parts: rather than grouping by section, the violins are placed at the top of the

score, separated from the other strings by B♭ clarinet, C trumpet, B♭ bass clarinet, and bassoon, as shown in the image from the score below.

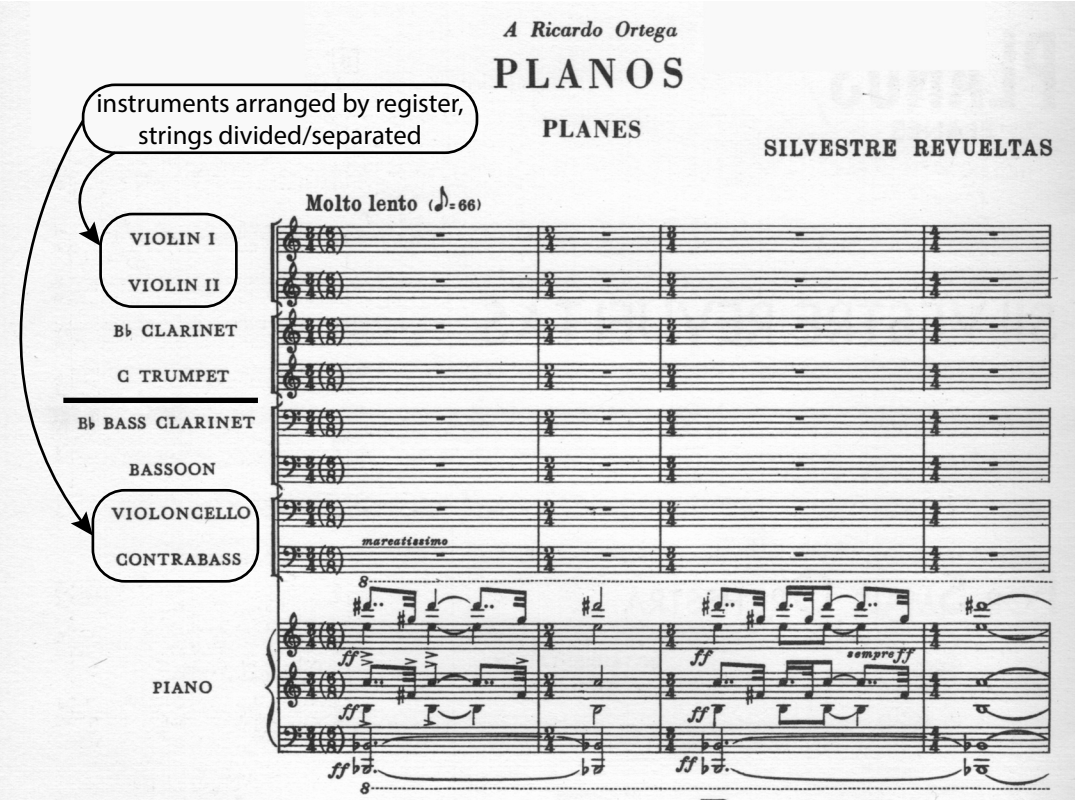

Figure 4.8: Revueltas, *Planos*, excerpt of first page from published score (Southern Music Publishing, 1963)

Even in the brief opening excerpt shown in figure 4.8 above, the piano plays a minor ninth in the left hand, a major seventh in the right hand, and octaves in the bass that do not fit with the notes of either hand, resulting in a cluster of B♭-B-C-D♯-E, the aforementioned [01256] that appears several times in the opening, and returns at the end. More specifically, it is not merely the harmony [01256] that returns repeatedly, but this specific arrangement on the piano, with the same rhythm and execution. In addition, Revueltas uses frequent meter and tempo shifts, which destabilize and undermine metric expectation,

particularly as associated with a kind of "groove" that might be connected with vernacularity, and evade concomitant folkloric associations.[13]

Despite the sharply modernist sound of the work, there are moments when gestures appear that connect to sounds from other pieces that have been described as Mexicanist. While *Planos* is not strictly programmatic, Revueltas provides some hints to his thoughts regarding the work in a note next to the score. He writes,

> Planes: "functional" architecture that does not exclude feeling. The melodic fragments emerge from the same impulse, the same emotion, as others from the same author. They sing in an obstinate rhythm, always marching, in a perhaps strange sonority, unaccustomed, which is like their environment. Rhythm and sonority reminiscent of other rhythms and sonorities, probably like one construction material that resembles another, or is the same, but serves different constructions, in sense, in form, in expression.[14]

Here Revueltas hints at threads connecting this work with others, but disavows their commonalities as perhaps a misreading of the work itself. Nonetheless, there are clear aural links between this work and others of his, and despite Revueltas's admonitions, it would be useful to examine this work in comparison to others from this period, and address features that scholars have described as Mexicanisms in Revueltas's works. I begin with a moment that appears very briefly in Violin I and Violin II. Below are two excerpts: the first comes from *Planos* (figure 4.9), and the second from *Música de Feria* (figure 4.10)—Revueltas's Fourth String Quartet, written just one year earlier, and which Saavedra (2001) has described as one of his Mexicanist works. While this moment in *Planos* passes very quickly, and could easily go unnoticed, the

[13] There is an extensive body of work discussing groove and vernacular music, as well as groove more broadly—I will not review this literature here. For more information on the subject, see for example Zbikowski 2004, Zagorski-Thomas 2007, or Keil and Feld 1994.

[14] Kolb 1998, 61: "Planos: arquitectura 'funcional' que no excluye al sentimiento. Los fragmentos melódicos brotan de un mismo impulse, de una misma emoción, que los de otras del mismo autor. Cantan dentro de un ritmo bastinado, siempre en marcha, dentro de una sonoridad tal vez extraña, por desacostumbrada, que es como su ambiente. Ritmo y sonoridad reminiscentes de otros ritmos y sonoridades, probablemente como un material e construcción se asemeja a otro, o es el mismo, pero sirve construcciones diferentes, en sentido, en forma, en expression."

marked connection between the two sounds is unmistakable to listeners familiar with both works, for a few reasons: the abrupt shift to a high register for a largely conjunct melodic contour in the two violins at fortissimo volume, and also the rhythmic resonance between the two. While this moment in *Música de Feria* fits with one of the musical features that Otto Mayer-Serra (1941) and Leonora Saavedra (2001) have characterized as a Mexicanism—parallel thirds—this echo moment in *Planos* only roughly approximates that relationship, instead highlighting a few thirds while moving in and out of this relationship, rather than directly parallel thirds. In this case, the resonance might thus be characterized as "Mexican," despite the fleeting quality of their presence, and the broader failure to literally fit the marker of parallel thirds.[15]

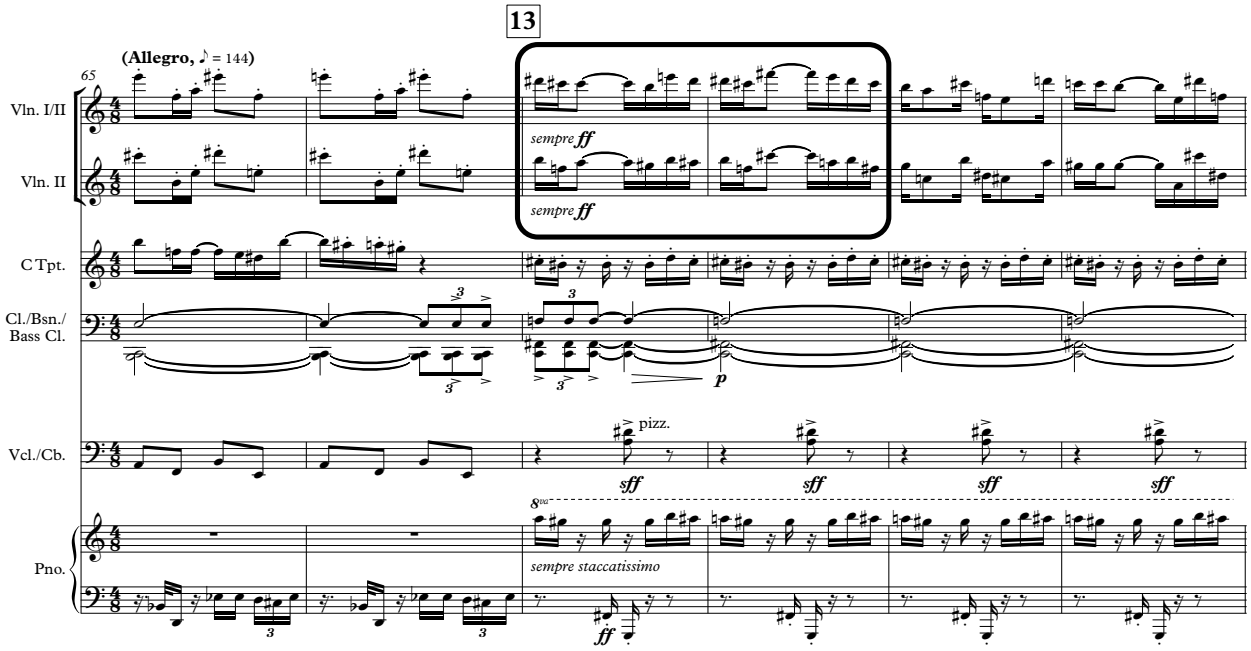

Figure 4.9: Revueltas, *Planos*, mm. 65–70

[15] This same shape reappears about eight measures later in the score as well.

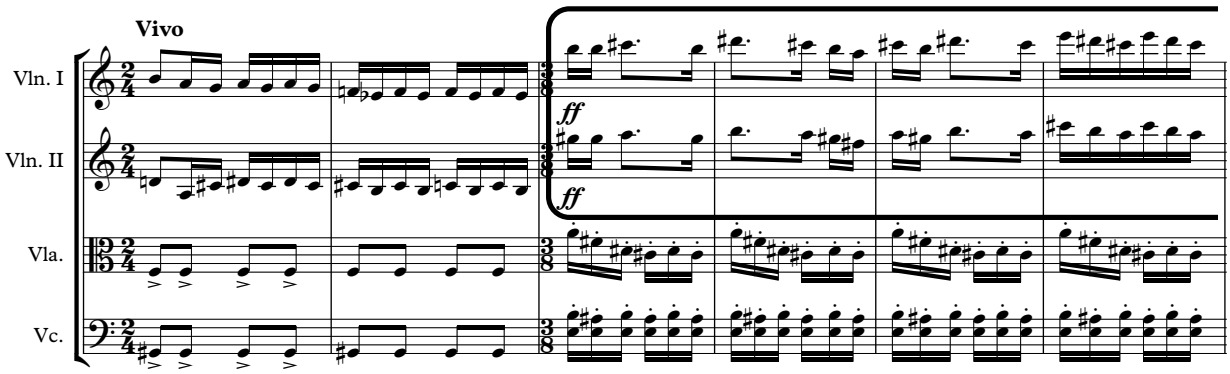

Figure 4.10: Revueltas, *Música de Feria*, mm. 54–59

At rehearsal 27, Revueltas uses a shape that he later employs in *Sensemayá* (1938) as well, a kind of distorted and repetitive tonic–dominant melodic gesture in the upper strings that incorporates a raised dominant. Below are excerpts of the string parts from *Planos* (figure 4.11) and *Sensemayá* (figure 4.12), showing these similar gestures. As with the example above, a number of other features also connect these moments: similar register and instrumentation, and again, a related (though not identical) rhythm.

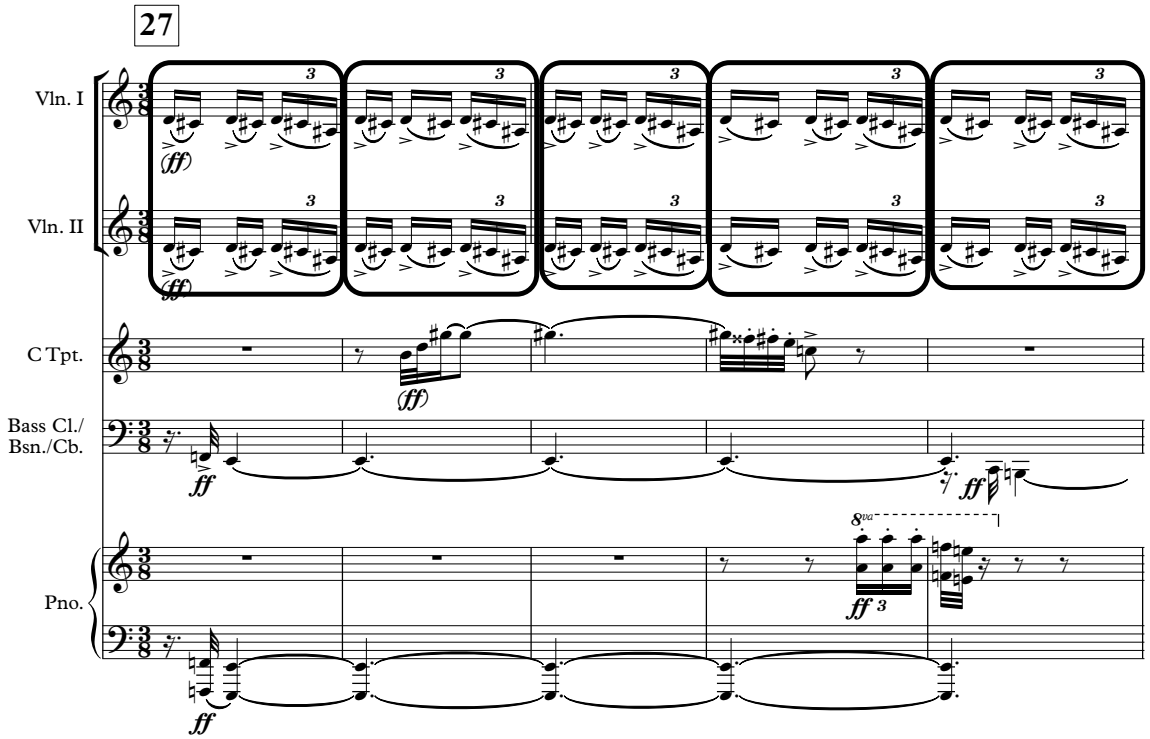

Figure 4.11: Revueltas, *Planos*, mm. 153–57

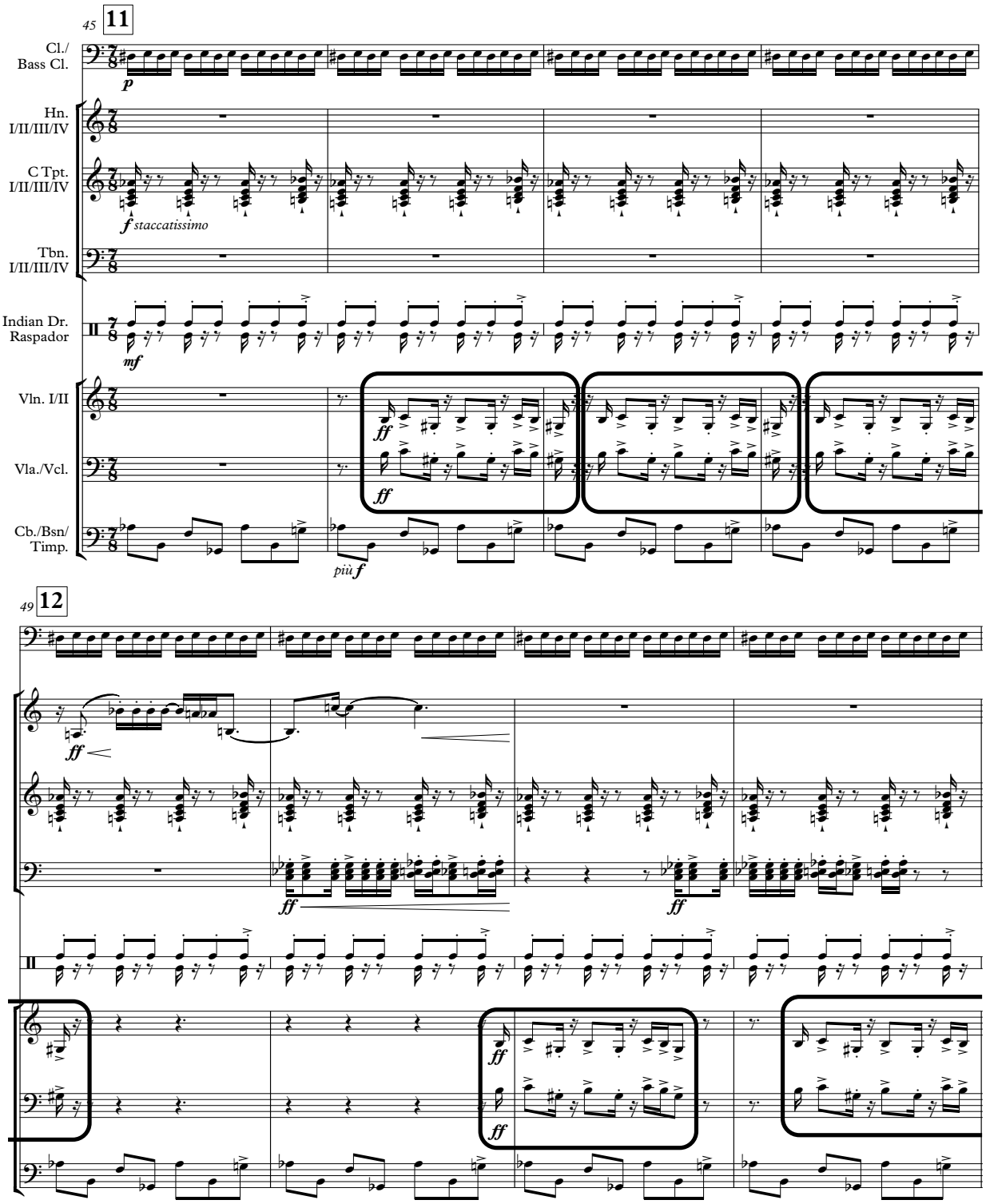

Figure 4.12: Revueltas, *Sensemayá*, mm. 45-52

There are other moments with connections to Mexicanisms in the work as well: for example, a solo trumpet melody is often described as a reference to Mexican vernacular musics, as in the opening of Revueltas's 1933 *Ocho por radio.* At rehearsal 16 of *Planos*, Revueltas features a solo trumpet melody with a less vernacular contour, which nonetheless carries some resonance with Revueltas's other solo trumpet melodies. Here, I do not find it particularly meaningful that these momentary parallels exist in Revueltas's works from the 1930s. Rather, I find most interesting the question of how these specific features have been discussed in other works, and what surrounds these markers in the music. In the setting of *Sensemayá*, a composition that is connected to Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén's poem of the same title, this gesture is taken to be part of a ritual chant to kill a snake—indeed, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon (1998) interprets this gesture as a literal statement of the poem's ritual text. In *Música de Feria*, the high-register strings in parallel thirds are taken as a street-music reference within a broader setting of folklorisms and vernacular elements. In *Planos*, however, neither of these markers is quite so clear. Rather, these parallels carry multiple possible meanings: perhaps these are simply features of Revueltas's style that do not necessarily carry the meanings stated as obvious and clear by previous scholars; on the other hand, perhaps they suggest that Revueltas slips these elements deliberately into other works, allowing for a kind of permeability and fluid interpretation or understanding of the features. My inclination is to understand both of these as partially true—while Revueltas certainly incorporates references to vernacularity and Mexican markers at times, perhaps some of these "Mexicanisms" are less direct and obvious than they might at first blush seem, more deeply part of Revueltas's writing style than an overt and deliberate street reference; moreover, their presence in otherwise universal works suggests a flexibility both of use and interpretation.

Concluding Thoughts

I began this chapter by asserting that universalism was best defined for this discourse and repertory as an absence of nationalism. However, as shown by the readings of these compositions of Villa-Lobos, Chávez, and Revueltas, a definition of universality need not be exclusively apophatic—rather, the idea of universalism is colored by a number of other issues surrounding the relationship between Latin America and Europe or the United States. Here, the discourse of universality is tied to cosmopolitanism, erudition, modernism, and a European sound, a rotating roster of concepts—some of them contradictory in certain situations—that are taken in differing amounts depending upon the particular work. Like discussions of whiteness, the "universal" implies a power relationship of the unmarked, as well as an assertion of values and norms to which the Iberoamerican is considered external.[16]

As demonstrated in these works, it is not enough to be from a place in order to express that place. Rather, it is possible to be Mexican and to fail to create Mexican music; identity is not sufficient for representation. Indeed, this is what allows these composers to create so-called universal works, or even the creation of nationalist works: a distancing of nation from composer is necessary in order to assert (or not) one's national character. By extension, the lack of works that could be characterized as universal from Brazilian composers in the 1930s assumes this same fact—that to be a Brazilian composer does not necessarily lead to sufficiently Brazilian composition, but rather that the character of *brasilidade* necessitates a certain projection of identity through recognizable tropes.

As we have seen, the projection of universal and national ideas in these works are unique to each composer's individual style and career trajectory, but there is also a broader difference in the output of

[16] In other chapters, I have touched briefly on questions of race, which are not a primary focus of this dissertation, but here I mean to discuss the broader scholarly discourse on whiteness. For more on this large field of research, see for example Garner 2007, Boucher et al. 2009, Giroux 1997, Dyer 1997, and Frankenberg 1993.

Brazilian and Mexican composers, the aforementioned lack of universal works in the 1930s. This difference between Brazilian and Mexican non-nationalist compositions is undoubtedly connected the distinct national histories and political settings of these two places. While Mexico's First National Congress of Music in 1926 highlighted multiple approaches to music, and especially distinctions between universal and national ideals, Brazil's discourse did not contend with this difference (Madrid 2008). Rather, both "new" and "old" approaches highlighted nation, albeit in different ways. As Daryle Williams (2001) discusses in *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930–1945*, the (preceding) Pessoa government highlighted nation as progress through neocolonialism, while the Vargas government appointed modernists in positions of cultural power as a means of asserting a national identity. For Villa-Lobos, this translated into a major national role in music education, and the transferal of his compositional focus into works that equally featured indigenous references, folk tunes, urban popular call-outs, and blatant pandering to the government (see, for example, "Saudação a Getúlio Vargas" in the *Canto Orfeônico* songbooks), and virtually eliminating ideas of universalism from his works during this period.

In addition, individual international mobilities clearly played a role as well—while Chávez remained actively involved in Mexican music-making in the 1930s, he also spent a significant amount of time in New York, as well as touring the United States at large, and enjoyed relative fluidity between these spaces. In contrast, Brazilians such as Mignone and Villa-Lobos spent significant time periods in Europe in the 1920s, but returned in the 1930s and did not engage in as much international travel during this period, certainly not with the frequency that Chávez did.

Despite these differences, there are larger commonalities one can draw about the use and relevance of universalism as a discursive and compositional focus during the 1920s and 1930s. That is to say, composers of a variety of stripes chose to employ or not employ marked features at times for social or political reasons; in the case of early works, universalism showed a kind of skill that transcended the local, a

basic technical competency, whereas later universalism provides opportunities to explore subject matter or approaches outside of the national. In the works of the composers discussed here, ideas of universalism and nationalism are more fluid and flexible than they might at first seem—a work need not be analyzed through exclusively one lens or the other and, indeed, is often more fruitfully examined as a combination of the two, frequently serving both cosmopolitan and national needs at the same time.

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