The Puerto Rican Danza: A Stylistic Study with Emphasis on Performance, Teaching, and Practicing Strategies

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THE PUERTO RICAN DANZA: A STYLISTIC STUDY WITH EMPHASIS ON PERFORMANCE, TEACHING, AND PRACTICING STRATEGIES

By
Inesa Gegprifti

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty of
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THE PUERTO RICAN DANZA: A STYLISTIC STUDY WITH EMPHASIS ON PERFORMANCE, TEACHING, AND PRACTICING STRATEGIES

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The Puerto Rican Danza: A Stylistic Study with Emphasis on Performance, Teaching, and Practicing Strategies

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The danza puertorriqueña is considered a national emblem for Puerto Rico and it has a long-standing history as the music that has accompanied the people of the Island through multiple political, social, and cultural changes. In essence, it stemmed from the choreographed European contradanza and its inherited influences. However, the danza, particularly that for piano, took on a life of its own with idiosyncratic elements of the Caribbean culture in the mid-nineteenth century.

This study traces the history and style of the danza since its adoption in Puerto Rico and provides more information about the genre with the hope of it being incorporated more actively in the teaching and performing repertoire for the late intermediate and advanced students. The danzas are perfect examples of shorter compositions which can be used in preparation for larger-scale works that stem from the same Romantic tradition. The first three chapters offer an overview of the historical background, and a review of the available literature on the danza puertorriqueña, and a description of the method and the components of the study. The fourth and fifth chapters provide biographical and stylistic sketches of five composers, as well as pedagogical and analytical discussion of five compositions by
Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, Juan Morel Campos, José Ignacio Quintón, José Enrique Pedreira, and Héctor Campos-Parsi.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Historical Background of Musical Life in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is an island bursting with a vibrant musical life, which is a reflection of its complex history as a cultural melting pot since its initial colonization by Spain. Prior to its discovery by the Spanish fleets in 1493 during Columbus’ second trip to the New World, Puerto Rico was populated by the native people, Taíno. It soon became Spain’s favorite territory for those in hopes of finding gold, the latter facilitated by the exploitation of the indigenous people as the convenient workforce. Spain protected this island form Dutch and British attacks for a little over 400 years, and four centuries of colonialism affected its culture tremendously.

Secular music in Puerto Rico prior to the nineteenth century was usually interleaved with public celebrations, especially those glorifying the church or the Spanish crown.¹ The beginning of the nineteenth century brought forth an effort to create an elevated artistic environment in Puerto Rico; one that would include building the first theatre, now the San Juan Municipal Theatre (1832), as well as the establishment of a philharmonic society which aimed to create a music academy and an orchestra. Besides the local initiatives for the enrichment of cultural lifestyle, the European Romantic tradition of composition and performance was catapulted into the island of Puerto Rico and its neighbor, Cuba, through visiting musicians and opera companies. This influence upon Puerto Rican art music is

reflected in the stylistic elements and use of the refined classical genres such symphonic works, instrumental chamber music, as well as an impressive number of character pieces for piano. The foundation of the Ateneo Puertorriqueño in 1876 was one of the most important moments in the cultural evolution of Puerto Rico. The Ateneo promoted “the arts by encouraging the development of literary forms, musical compositions, musical performances, and other fine arts.”

In 1898, after the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States of America. Puerto Rico was now under the economic rules of the United States, whose living standard and currency rate were much higher. Various historians, such as Fernando Callejo and Carmen Gómez Tejera, believed that this event marked a regression of Puerto Rican cultural growth. In their writings they speak of the economic depression of the early twentieth century which deeply affected arts and music. Because of the lack of funding and a decline in music patronage, it was harder to stage operas, commission symphonies, or invite international musicians to tour the island. Instead, at the beginning of the new millennium there was an outburst of chamber music, art songs, and solo piano music since these were now the most convenient mediums of composition.

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3 Ibid., 1.

4 The use of Puerto Rican money was abolished in 1899 and United States currency substituted on the basis of 60 American cents for one peso. This necessitated readjustment of local values, temporarily to the disadvantage of the Island whose economy was based on the peso. From *Puerto Rico: A Guide to the Island of Boriquén Compiled and Written by the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration in Co-operation with the Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration* (New York: The University Society, Inc., 1940), 36-67, [http://newdeal.feri.org/pr/pr06.html](http://newdeal.feri.org/pr/pr06.html), (accessed October 4, 2016).

5 Dower, *Puerto Rican Music Following the Spanish American War*, 78.
One of the genres that flourished throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as an outgrowth of the above historical context is the danza puertorriqueña. In its heyday, the genre of the danza was highly respected and often performed. Since its initial inception as a national musical expression, there have been numerous Puerto Rican composers who have created instrumental and vocal music in the style of the danza. These dances are short works that not only reflect the same cultural influences that have molded Puerto Rican music of today, but are also a testimony to the complex socio-political developments tied to the existing racial mix on the island. The danza puertorriqueña is a cultural emblem that has since paradoxically taken on a secondary role in the music scene of Puerto Rico in recent years. Similarly to its role in concerts, the genre has been relegated to the back burner of the teaching repertory in music schools and conservatories of Puerto Rico in favor of standard repertoire choices by European composers.

Puerto Rico and its musical identity mirror its history, having undergone various political and cultural leaderships. In the 1950s, music and other art forms took on a more nationalistic character, a trend reflecting an overall conscious effort to create an original and distinguishable Puerto Rican art. However, since the 1960s, influences from the avant-garde and innovative compositional devices stemming from Europe and the United States inspired composers Héctor Campos-Parsi (1922-98), Jack Delano (1914-97), and Amaury Veray (1922-95), among many others, to explore the styles of post-Romantic, conceptual, and serial techniques. In the middle of the twentieth century, initiated by the legendary cellist Pablo “Pau” Casals who had made the island his home, the Puerto Rico Casals Festival was established (1957).6 This festival is a three-week annual endeavor which has

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brought to Puerto Rico, for more than half a century, musicians of the highest caliber. Recently, this festival has been showcasing contemporary classical music by local as well as international composers. The Casals Festival, the recent institution of the Steinway Society in Puerto Rico and the musical investigation initiatives at the Conservatory of Music, has been primarily instrumental in upholding high standards for the classical music scene.  

The Rise of the Danza Puertorriqueña

The lessons of history and the conclusions of experts tell us that two important elements must be present for a musical genre to materialize: 1) a common human feeling in a certain time and place, and 2) the labor of those who mold that feeling into their compositions. If we analyze the first point, we see how art, and in this case music, is a consequence of the lifestyle of people living in a specific place and time.

Throughout the five centuries of colonial and post-colonial periods, the music of Puerto Rico has gained a uniquely heterogeneous character. The multitude of cultural influences have aided in creating a dynamic musical scene which is demonstrated by the current flux of music, spanning from indigenous genres such as bomba and plena, the

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10 Plena blends elements from Puerto Rico’s wide cultural backgrounds, including music that the Taíno tribes may have used during their ceremonies. This type of music first appeared in Ponce about 100 years ago. Ibid.
stylized danza, and the classical contemporary music, to even the pop hybrids such as reggaetón. Very few people in the current generation of Puerto Ricans, including musicians, may remember tunes or entire compositions of danzas, which is peculiar considering the long historical significance of the genre. This is an indication of the genre’s unfortunate depreciation within the broader musical and cultural circles of the island.

Currently, the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, understanding the value of this genre, holds an annual composition competition for the danza. This has contributed greatly to a refreshed interest in the genre, its composers, and its performers.

Despite the fact that the genre subsided beneath the general cultural consciousness for the broad audience, the danza has nonetheless managed to become an identifiable Puerto Rican element, much like the tango for Argentina. This genre, as it stands now, exemplifies the merging characteristics of the European tradition and Afro-Cuban influences. However, the origin of the danza puertorriqueña continues to be an unresolved topic amongst international and Puerto Rican scholars. As mentioned earlier, due to its colonization, Puerto Rico was highly influenced by the art and music of Spain, which was in turn influenced by other colonial peoples and European countries. An important addition to this mix came from another significant source of cultural interjection for Puerto Rico, Cuba, due to the continuous immigration and trade movements between the two islands.

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Historical accounts mention a wide array of elements that may have contributed to the evolution of the *danza*. Cecilio Font, a medical doctor by profession and a music enthusiast who has extensively written on the origins and importance of the *danza*, speaks of the inherited elements of the *danza* prior to its naturalization as a native genre. According to him, its predecessor might be the *contradanza española*, the Venezuelan *danzón*, the Cuban *habanera*, or the rhythmic aspects of the *Cántigas de Santa Maria*, a collection of nearly one hundred poems set to music during the second half of the thirteenth century by Alfonso X “el Sabio,” king of Castile-León. It is interesting to relate the genre of the *danza* this far back, since there must have been elements of the secular music that remained prominent in the Spanish courts during the following centuries, ultimately influencing the formation of the *contradanza española*. However, Font insists on making a distinction between all these influences and the final product of the *danza* in Puerto Rico, which to him stands on different ground compared to all its predecessors:

The melody, sweet and serene of the *paseo* [introduction/first section] has taken some of the dignified qualities of the Spanish dance… The interpretation of the *danza* is absolutely Puerto Rican, and it bears no relation to that of other countries of Latin America.

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In support of his claims of originality of the *danza*, Font compares the rhythmic figuration and character of the *paseo* based on the *danzón* from Venezuela, which seems to have had many of the same attributes as the *danza*, including the habanera rhythm:

Example 1.1. Basic habanera rhythm.

![Example 1.1](image)

This rhythmic figuration was widely spread throughout South and Central America, especially in musical idioms inspired by dances. The *danzón*, however, was quite monotonous in its rhythm, melody, and harmonic expression. Font also argues that the *danza* is primarily a Romantic genre since it emerged at the peak of the nineteenth century. He supports his arguments for the recognition of this genre as a national musical representation by using the example of Puerto Rico’s unofficial national anthem, which is a romantic and sentimental *danza*, *La Borinqueña*.

Rosa-Nieves, a distinguished Puerto Rican historian, considers the influences and evolution of the *danza* as follows:

There was [in Puerto Rico] a musical composition with the *paseo* and the dancing portion called *una habanera*. This composition was later called a *merengue*, and the structure it inhabited in terms of harmony and melody was transformed later into the *danza puertorriqueña*, with the characteristic *tresillo elástico*, which was created by Julián Andino.¹⁶

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¹⁶ “Existió una composición musical con su paseo y parte bailable con nombre de *una habanera*. Que este tipo de pieza se llamó luego merengue, y que al cuajar en armonía y melodía esta composición musical se transformó posteriormente en la danza puertorriqueña, con el tresillo carateristico que le imprimió Julián Andino.” Cesáreo Rosa-Nieves, *La lámpara del faro* (San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1947), 8, quoted in Font, *Cosas de la danza de Puerto Rico*, 20. Free translation by the author.
Reflecting upon the second point that Salgán makes, it takes an outstanding dedication from the composers who mold and crystalize a genre for it to come to life, to develop, and to survive through time.\textsuperscript{17} Julián Andino (1845-1926) employed the combination of duple-triple rhythms in the accompaniment. The concept of the *tresillo elástico* (elastic triplet) implied that the conventionally known triplet in the bass figuration was not to be played as such, but as a syncopated rhythm with uneven, nearly swung note values. The example below displays two basic ways of writing in the *danza* followed by how it is mostly performed.

Example 1.2. Basic *danza* rhythm as written, followed by the most common rhythmic manipulation in performance.\textsuperscript{18}

The structure that Rosa-Nieves speaks of has remained prominent in the genre up until this day. The genre itself, and the elements that contributed to its Puerto Rican sound, continued to evolve when the young pianist and composer Manuel Gregorio Tavárez (1842-83), who had just arrived from his studies in Paris, took it to a new artistic level.\textsuperscript{19} Tavárez, together with Juan Morel Campos (1857-96) and Braulio Dueño Colón (1854-

\textsuperscript{17} Refer back to Salgán’s quote on page 4.
\textsuperscript{18} Information and examples provided by Luciano Quiñones in the form of written interview. Refer to Appendix A.

1934), are some of the composers who created the early prototypes of today’s Puerto Rican 
danza. These early works are quite simple in terms of harmonic language; however, they 
display rhythmic intricacies and multifaceted phrasing contours forecasting what was to 
come.

As a dance form, the contradanza (predecessor of the danza) was highly regarded 
by aristocratic circles in Puerto Rico, as it retained a certain elegance and majesty in its 
music and choreography. However, with the incoming influences of the Cuban culture, the 
new form that evolved into the danza was rejected by the intelligentsia of the time. This 
resulted in an unsuccessful prohibition of performing and dancing the danza “based on 
moral principles” in 1848 by Governor Juan de la Pezuela. Although less popular with the 
bourgeoisie, the new style was instantly embraced by the young generation who found in 
it a freeing artistic expression of their youthful character. As a testament to the shift of the 
perception and interpretation of the danza, the composer and historian Amaury Veray 
states:

The arrival of General Aristegui, Count of Mirasol, on the 24th of April of 
1844 marked a new direction in the development of our regional music. In 
the company of this governor were a group of young Cubans who brought 
with them a new type of dance in which the couples engaged in a rhythmic 
cadence more appropriate towards dancing. This dance was more 
expressive and its accompaniment more interesting, replacing the four 
simultaneous eighth notes for an arpeggiated figure which instead 
accentuated the tonality of the piece.\footnote{\"La llegada del General Aristegui, Conde de Mirasol, el 24 de abril de 1844 marca nuevo derrotero a nuestra música regional. En el séquito de este gobernante llegaron a la Isla unos jóvenes cubanos los cuales traían una nueva modalidad de danza para parejas solas, donde la unidad rítmica tenía más cadencia de baile. Muchísimo más suelta y expresiva, su acompañamiento no era el de las cuatro corcheas simultaneas, si no desdoblado en forma de arpegio que acentuaba la cualidad tonal.\" Amaury Veray, “Vida y desarrollo de la danza puertorriqueña,” In Ensayos sobre la danza puertorriqueña (San Juan, Puerto Rico), 24, quoted in Alma Iris Batista, “The Life of Puerto Rican Composer Narciso Figueroa and His Contributions to the Puerto Rican Danza.” (Doctoral Essay, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002), Proquest Dissertations & Theses, 58, (accessed March 23, 2016).}
Attempting to deepen the existing knowledge of the *danza*, Peter Manuel, in an article written for *Ethnomusicology*, discusses in more detail the extent of Cuban influences on Puerto Rico. He quotes Puerto Rican poet and author of the unofficial national anthem text, Lola Rodríguez de Tió, who states: “Cuba and Puerto Rico are two wings of the same bird.”\(^{21}\) De Tió’s words succinctly display the unequivocal connections and influences that these two islands have had on one another. Having been the only remaining Spanish colonies after the independence of the rest of Latin America, they continued to be tied politically and economically. This aspect affected the cultural influx of both islands, which led to creation of music that resembled one another.

In more extensive research, Manuel also traces the origin of the *danza* all the way back to the English country dance, which was then exported to France and Spain. Due to the Spanish sovereignty in Puerto Rico, the locals believed that this social figure dance, namely the *contradanza*, was purely of Spanish origin. However, due to numerous travelling musicians, there has always been an exchange of cultural traits among European countries. These ventures brought forth a mélange of rhythmic and melodic elements, which were then transported across the ocean to the island of Puerto Rico.

The *danza* emerged musically and choreographically from the ashes of the duple-metered European contradance [country dance] through the incorporation of local and regional rhythms that incited dancers to move in ways that eventually subverted whatever aristocratic and stately identity remained in this expression.\(^{22}\)


This statement speaks of the process of creolizing European cultural elements, apparent throughout all Latin American nations that used to be Spanish colonies. Through such transformation and the addition of indigenous elements, European music earned a wholly new character and sound. This lengthy evolution led to forms and genres of music that are now considered native to the country which naturalized them, and in this case, the danza became puertorriqueña.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the danza evolved further from the simple, elegant early archetype into a richer and more complex harmonic composition in the hands of Narciso Figueroa, “the father of modern danza.” Although significantly lessened in number from its heyday, there are still some modern-day composers who write for this pianistic genre. The most important living composer of danza, who has been selected more than ten times as a winner of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña Competition, is Luciano Quiñones (b. 1948). As a pianist and composer who has dedicated his life to this genre, his contribution to the dissemination of the danza to wider audiences is invaluable.

**Performance Aspects of the Danza Puertorriqueña**

Although the Puerto Rican danza is explored as a pianistic genre in the current study, its initial purpose was music that one could dance to. As such, its instrumentation has varied throughout the years based on what was available to the directors of orchestras and bands. A typical setting for a danza instrumentation was violin, double bass, trumpet, clarinet, euphonium, and güíro. The güíro gave to the compositions an unmistakable

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23 Güíro is a hollowed gourd with ridges cut into the side and played with a wire fork adds a unique percussion sound to many popular music genres. Rivera, “Puerto Rican Music” *Welcome to Puerto Rico*.
criollo sound, which contributed to the danza’s characteristic identity. With the development of military bands during the second half of the nineteenth century, the snare drum was added to the group of percussion, highlighting the rhythmic elements of the danza. Some of these works were also sung, in which case a folk singer would join the ensemble.  

Due to the evolution of the genre and its purpose in Puerto Rico, the danza for the piano idiom contains various components that constitute its specific sound. These aspects include instrumental accompaniment features present in the rhythmic elements, vocal quality of the melody with reference to its subject matter, improvisatory character stemming from folk tradition, and distinct structural construction based on the choreographical steps of the dance. The danza underwent a somewhat organic transition from mere dance music accompanying bourgeoisie functions to music that could be sung or played on its own merit. The latter was believed to have been capable of transmitting meaningful messages of historical, political, and emotional natures. In many musical functions in the beginning of the twentieth century, the genre most performed in various instrumental settings was the danza.  

The gentrification of the genre did not cease with it simply becoming an instrumental one, but continued further into becoming a cultural representation of the people of Puerto Rico. Although Tavárez elevated the danza beyond salon music, it was the music of Juan Morel Campos that many Puerto Ricans identified with in a period of

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25 Dower, Puerto Rican Music Following the Spanish American War, 93-96.
socio-political transition. Morel Campos, being a young musician (he passed away at only thirty-nine years of age), poured his feelings of pathos and youthful energy into his compositions, notwithstanding his lack of formal training. Although his works were not the most technically advanced, possibly due to the improvisatory nature of his style, they nonetheless exemplified the drive of the young generation who was leaning towards expression without pretention or artifice.26

Typical for a genre stemming from popular social tradition, the danza draws on progressions of functional harmony within its major-minor relationships. Unlike traditional Western hierarchy where the harmonic tension is built towards the dominant which then resolves to the tonic, these gravitational laws do not apply in Caribbean music. Due to its influences from African idioms, music written by composers of the Antillean area leans towards the following motion of harmony: V-IV in Major keys, or V-iv in minor ones. This spin on conventional harmonic movement is one of the creolizing elements that makes the contradanza change its European vest and take on a Caribbean character as the danza.

As an instrumental genre derived from a dance form, the danza’s rhythmic interpretation is rarely strict according to the written notation. While still maintaining a steady overall pulse, the looseness of the rhythmic interpretation of the melody as well as its accompanying figuration is very important in creating the characteristic flexibility needed. This freedom of interpretation is most effective when the performer understands the role of the anchoring beats as the slightly emphasized syncopation in the tresillo.

The clearer the relationship between the long-short-long note values, the more authentic the interpretation. In dance-like genres it is crucial to notice the causality of rhythmic inflection, a task that becomes quite difficult when attempting to maintain a smooth melodic outline.

The structure of the danza for piano is undoubtedly influenced by the form of the dance itself. Most danzas follow the A-A, B-B, C-C, D-D, -B (or C), and optional Coda structure. The A section, the paseo, is the only section in the composition that does not need to have the rhythmic figuration in the bass line. This introduction can be melodious, virtuosic, or fanfare-like, articulated across eight or sixteen measures. After the paseo, the following sections display different thematic materials that do not have to be related to or developed from one another. Here, the aforementioned habanera rhythm with its permutations takes a prominent role in the left hand for the piano.27

Example 1.3. Habanera rhythm and just a few of the many possible permutations in left-hand figurations.

The texture of the danza is quite simple, where the melody takes on a leading role while the accompaniment complements its elegance. The vocal quality of the melody is closely related to the subject matter of the text, which is often reflected in the title of each composition. The titles are indicative of dedications to people, historical events, nature, cities, and emotional states. Understanding the possible textual connotation of these danzas

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is important in approaching their interpretation. They generally fall under two categories in general, that of the *danza festiva* or *afectiva* and the *danza sentimental* or *romantica*. The first is a more up-beat, light-hearted composition and the latter is more reflective, expressive, and sentimental. Although the two categories may be clearly identifiable in some compositions, not always are they excluding of one another. Due to the variety of the thematic material, at times there are abrupt character and mood changes within one *danza*, thus creating a mixture of the *festiva* and *sentimental*.

A successful performance of these works is tightly conditioned by the right balance between the two registers (melody-accompaniment), the recognition of the flexibility of the *tresillo elástico* and the melodic contour, and the character of the *danza* accentuated by its subject matter. The ability of the musician to read beyond the written notation of the score and understanding the above elements along with the historical context of the music is of the essence in producing a convincing and authentic performance.

During the nineteenth century and in some cases in the present day, these compositions were performed by the creators themselves. Thus, interpretative implications and teaching approaches were never discussed nor notated, as the performances came straight from the source. Thanks to a few recordings in existence by pianists of the golden generation, such as José Enrique Pedreira (1904-1959) and Jesús María Sanromá (1902-1984), we can deduce certain performance practices in regard to style, tempo, rhythmic inflection, and overall freedom of interpretation. Although these recordings are hardly numerous nor easily accessible, the legacy that Pedreira and Sanromá have left behind is the essence of interpretation, as well as the reverence for the genre of the *danza*.28

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28 More information on recordings is given in Chapter II.
Motivation for the Study

The danza puertorriqueña is a vibrant and evocative genre that is due its proper recognition and representation on the concert scene. With its performance practice being preserved only among the few remaining performers, without any specific written documentation on interpretation, it is understandable that danzas are scarcely taught even in Puerto Rico.29

In the literature from Puerto Rican and foreign authors, there is a significant output towards historical narrative regarding the danza, its composers, and its social values. However, the paucity of scholarly work on the interpretation of this genre is startling: a few of the existing sources are a couple of paragraphs by a living composer Luciano Quiñones, Alma Batista’s analysis of some of Narciso Figueroa’s danzas, Peter Manuel’s analysis of the general structure and features of the danza, and José Leonardi Moore’s performance practice of string quartet arrangements of five danzas. In order to fully comprehend the interpretative intricacies of the danza, there is a need for an informed study exploring musical and extra-musical elements relevant to the compositions. The musical elements of key importance are the rhythmic notations and their underscored pulse inflections (tresillo elástico), phrase lengths as affected by the irregularity of the pulse, and overall “sabor” (flavor) of the compositions.30 For a performer, these aspects are essential to proper interpretation and require close scrutiny.

29 When attending the Tercer Simposio de Investigación Musical “Andanzas: nuevas perspectivas sobre la danza en el Caribe,” (April 2017) it became even clearer that such neglect towards the genre is present throughout the Island and the educational system.

As classically-trained pianists, many of us seldom venture outside of the canonical spectrum of music, both for teaching and performing. While tackling compositions by the great European masters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is essential in building a strong foundation for the student, a broader knowledge of alternative repertoire pertaining to the same period is equally necessary and enriching. Since the danzas are a musical representation of the mixture between European and Latin American characteristics, their idiomatic attributes can be of significance especially in the educational process of young aspiring pianists in terms of development of pianism and musicianship.

Most of the danzas scored for piano are idiomatic pieces exploiting the possibilities of the instrument. Nearly all of them exhibit pianistic challenges, which when tackled in a smaller scale, can be less troublesome and good preparation for more difficult and lengthier repertoire. For the teacher, understanding the stylistic requisites and identifying challenging elements of the compositions would be of crucial interest in presenting the students with these selections. The problem arises when one, unaccustomed to the simple yet figurative rhythmic notation, attempts to play or teach these works without having an initial understanding of the style. The resulting performance is rather strict, and unimaginative. Worse still, an uninformed pianist or teacher may never perform or teach the danza because it may be tempting to dismiss it as uninteresting when the most essential and attractive feature of the style, thus misinterpreted, is absent.

Goals of the Study

The piano repertoire is extensive and it may seem unnecessary to append more music to an already enormous list. However, as teachers, it is a privilege and a duty to expand the teaching repertoire and provide a wider variety of choices for the students. The
repertoire used in representing the Romantic period tends to lean towards the typical choices of waltzes, mazurkas, and polonaises. As these compositions are overly performed and taught, at times stylistic details go unnoticed. Also, for a composition which may become a part of the permanent repertoire for a pianist, it is difficult for it to be learned under such circumstances and not to become “unhackneyed,” to borrow Ruth Slencynska’s expression. Standard Romantic period compositions are ideal for teaching concepts of rubato, right hand-left hand independence of roles, and dance-like rhythmic inflections; all valuable assets when approaching nineteenth-century character pieces and fostering overall artistic growth of the student.

Enriching the repertoire with music that is imbued with a mixture of elements from multiple cultures will aid in inspiring a different creativity for the student, as well as appreciation for unfamiliar music. Furthermore, learning repertoire that is deeply rooted in folkloric tradition demands a deeper level of immersion in its culture, language, and history. Ángel G. Quintero Rivera considers the danza to be a way of living and being for Puerto Ricans—certainly, it was so in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. This statement is merely a glimpse into the level of ingrained connection that previous generations felt with this genre. In its construction and style, the danza, including the contemporary compositions, retains elements of its folkloric origin, but its evolution in the second half of the nineteenth century created a new hybrid—a genre that possessed the charm and sentimentality of people’s music as well as the poise and pianistic content of works by European masters.


32 From his lecture held on April 5th 2017 at the Third Symposium of Musical Investigation.
The *danzas* are perfect examples of shorter compositions which can be used in preparation for larger-scale works that stem from the same Romantic tradition. The unfortunate reality of the current teaching scene is that many students are often forced to make an unprepared leap musically and technically from what is considered “middle intermediate” level to the demands of large-scale Romantic works. However unwitting this may be on the part of the well-intentioned teacher, the root cause lies in the lack of familiarity with a sufficient variety of shorter, lesser-known works of the Romantic tradition. Unearthing a number of these *danzas* representative of various compositional styles will be a beneficial step towards enlarging the Romantic and Twentieth-Century pianistic repertoire, to fill the typical gap that exists starting from the “late intermediate” level prior to advanced standard Romantic repertoire.

This study intends to provide a comprehensive yet practical overview of the Puerto Rican *danza* for piano. To facilitate dissemination and familiarity with the genre among performers and teachers, all pertinent factors contributing to proper interpretation will be closely examined based on a comprehensive overview of existing literature. These factors are namely: historical background of the genre; biographical information for some of the most representative composers of the genre; and structural and stylistic analysis of selected works from the performance perspective. Because conveying the proper rendition of *tresillo elástico* in text would be highly elusive, video demonstration of selected works will accompany the discussions of teaching and practicing suggestions targeting specific pianistic and interpretative aspects during the learning process of the *danzas*. With the above-stated purpose in mind, the discussions of the selected composers and compositions will be kept to the most essential for the sake of practical utility of the information. The
process of selection and distillation of research will be discussed in the methodology section. An important aspect of this study is the creation of a website which will retain all the above-mentioned information. It is hoped that this is to become an accessible and comprehensive hub for teaching and practicing tips for this genre. This study will be the first step towards covering an extensive compositional output for *danza puertorriqueña*: it is intended that information on additional compositions will be continually added beyond the completion of the current study as well as news on the advancement of scholarly research on this subject.

33 Piano Danza – www.pianodanza.com
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Overview of the Development of the Genre, its Composers, and Stylistic Elements

Five centuries of musical life in Puerto Rico have been recorded beginning with Spanish chroniclers during its colonial period. During and after the Spanish-American war, which ended in 1898, there have been more publications by journalists, visiting ethnomusicologists, Caribbean music specialists and scholars. An attempt at unearthing specific aspects of Puerto Rican music has been made by doctoral students over the past two decades. Numerous sources, many of them in Spanish, speak of the historical importance of the danza, yet few have delved into analytical elements in regard to its structure, harmony, melody, rhythm, and most importantly, interpretation. The literature available and pertaining to this study has been categorized chronologically in order to provide a temporal understanding of the changes in research interest in the danza, as well as the overall perception of this genre.

Original sources from nineteenth-century newspapers and magazines can only be found in the Puerto Rican Collection of the University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras - General Library. Some of these articles have been made available to English language speakers greatly due to the work of Donald Thompson, who is one of the most distinguished contributors to Puerto Rico’s music history. Besides Thompson’s co-authorship on *Music and Dance in Puerto Rico from the Age of Columbus to Modern Times: An Annotated Bibliography*, his anthology *Music in Puerto Rico: A Reader’s Anthology*, translated and

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edited by him, is a fundamental starting point in understanding the musical tradition in Puerto Rico. Thompson has collected journal entries, book chapters, editorials, and letters from numerous sources dated from 1853 up until 1956. These writings display the variety of opinions on the continuum of the danza’s existence. Renowned historians and musicians Ángel G. Quintero Rivera, Amaury Veray, and Carlos Peñaranda are showcased in the fourth chapter of this book. Their work exposes the danza under the light of its socio-political influences and implications, as well as its musical growth within the genre and throughout the overall musical tradition of Puerto Rico.

One of the earliest publications that includes a significant chapter on Puerto Rican danza is Salvador Brau’s Disquisiciones sociológicas y otros ensayos (1956). In this chapter Brau explores different articles and essays written prior to the publication date. His accounts include social connotations of the danza, popular instruments that were in use, and potential sources of origin of the genre as a pianistic character composition.

Cecilio Font’s Cosas de la danza de Puerto Rico was published in 1970 in Madrid. This short book is dedicated solely to the Puerto Rican danza, drawing on connections with other national genres. Font’s writing style is very poetic and his narrative is charged with feelings of nationalism, and as such, it gives a clear idea of what the danza meant to Puerto Rico and its people. All historical events surrounding his arguments are used to underline the originality and importance of the danza. Font describes to his best


37 Font, Cosas de la danza.
ability the potential theories of the origins of the danza, its main musical traits, and its development throughout the past century.

Font uses writings by musicologists, historians, and performers to take various stands in regard to the origins of the danza. Of particular note is his attempts to equally represent the various opposing views on the origin of the danza. Furthermore, another useful element of Font’s writing is the explanation of the structure and harmonic language of this genre. Albeit short, his input, in describing the changes that occurred to the danza from the simple and contrived figure dancing of the early nineteenth century to the newly-stylized piano concert genre, is helpful in detecting musical features. He is one of the few writers of this period to speak of the creation of tresillo elástico in the left-hand figuration creating an ambiguity of pulse in meter.

Catherine Dower’s *Puerto Rican Music Following the Spanish American War, 1898: The Aftermath of the Spanish American War and Its Influence on the Musical Culture of Puerto Rico* (1983) is a detailed account of the island’s socio-economic and cultural state beginning in 1889. Dower has conducted meticulous research in the field by consulting sources of the era. An essential aspect that her evidence has shown is that, contrary to the general belief (until 1983) that composers were not active in the early 1900s because of the economic and cultural regression, music in Puerto Rico was alive and well during this period. Although large-scale productions were not possible to stage, the military bands, chamber ensembles, and solo performances continued to enliven the cultural life of the Island. This book is organized and presented as a survey of the cultural activities in Puerto Rico following Spanish American war, otherwise known as the American occupation.

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38 Dower, *Puerto Rican Music Following the Spanish American War.*
Dower has included in this survey a list of music performed in military band services, festivities, religious day observances (focusing on instrumental music), band concerts, public school programs, and visiting opera companies and performers. She documents that in 1905 the most performed pieces by Puerto Rican composers were *danzas*.\(^{39}\) This attests to the popularity of the genre at the turn of the century. Besides simple analysis of some compositions, Dower also provides information on performances of these works by including venues, dates, and occasions in which they were heard. This book is a valuable resource, not only in that it provides a detailed account of composers and their music, but it also draws a comprehensive image of how music was perceived, used, and valued in the early twentieth century in Puerto Rico.

Born in Ponce in 1927, Elías López Sobá is one of the most successful and highly-regarded Puerto Rican pianists of the twentieth century. Since his return from his studies in U.S.A. in 1960, Sobá’s contributions to Puerto Rican culture have been numerous and versatile including performances, lectures, teaching, and academic writings. His most important written work is *La contradanza española: Debates sobre su origen, mudanzas por las cortes de Europa y derivas en el Caribe* [The Spanish Contradanza: Debates on its Origins, Transformation in the Courts of Europe, and Variants in the Caribbean].\(^{40}\) This book, in its edited form, presents a collection of essays that constitute Sobá’s doctoral thesis on the contradanza and the surrounding influences on the Antillean lands starting from the eighteenth century.

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Although in Spanish, this source is extremely useful in that it provides the most comprehensive view of the origins of the danza as it examines its choreographical characteristics, its influences from various European countries, lyrics that have been appended to the compositions—overall painting a complete picture of the features of the genre and its transformational trajectory throughout the Caribbean. The first six chapters are organized in a logical way, tracing the origins of the contradanza as a dance (chapter 1), the entrance of the French contredanse in the Spanish court in 1701 (chapter 2), the technical aspects of the dance by 1746 (chapter 3), the crystallization of the contradanza in Spain through 1788 (chapter 4), the irradiation of the contradanza in the Caribbean (chapter 5), and the sung danza in the Caribbean (chapter 6).

The author gives a detailed account of the profound changes in the cultural life of the court and town of Madrid as a result of the new French influences as well as of the establishment of public dances in function of societal traditions. Furthermore, he connects the inherent attributes of the contradanza to the elements that contributed to the idiosyncratic crystallization of the danza as a genre of its own. As a determining factor of the dissemination of the genre, special attention is given to the illustrated treatises of choreographic notation. Finally, Sobá’s book reveals the process of irradiation of such musical genre in the Greater Antilles, revealing the various factors that lead to the emergence of autochthonous Caribbean rhythms in the danza.

Besides all of the above, the two outstanding aspects of this book are the concluding chapter and the bibliography. The seventh chapter, “General Conclusions,” details sixty-one final thoughts encapsulating the core ideas that this publication puts forth creating a practical abridged version of Sobá’s work. As for the bibliography, it is
extensive, nearing forty pages, comprised of: I. Documents and Manuscripts in the Archives of Madrid, II. Anonymous Musical Sources, III. Primary Musical Sources, IV. Primary Sources, V. Secondary Sources, VI. Theoretical Treatises on the Danza and the Dance, and finally VII. Bibliography on Spain, Suba, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico. Sobá’s work is certainly an essential source for all those studying the danza, but it is practically impossible to encounter it, unless one knows the complete Spanish title.

Present-day research and scholarly output on the topic of Puerto Rican music has been explored to great extent by Peter Manuel, an ethnomusicologist dedicated to the musical expertise of India, Spain, and the Caribbean. He is the author of eight highly regarded books on the aforementioned cultures and over seventy scholarly published articles. Especially pertinent to this study are the articles on Puerto Rican identity and music, and the chapter on Puerto Rico in his book of 2009, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean.41

Manuel’s “Puerto Rican Music and Cultural Identity: Creative Appropriation of Cuban Sources from Danza to Salsa” written for Ethnomusicology in 1994 is a substantial source of information regarding specifically Cuban influences on the folkloric genre of the danza, which later developed into a stylized concert form.42 The article explains the development of the danza throughout the nineteenth century, and it reflects upon the influences of habanera elements on what later became the stylized Puerto Rican danza. Manuel identifies the danza as a socio-musical re-articulation of multiple features present

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42 Manuel, “Puerto Rican Music and Cultural Identity.”
in Puerto Rico, due to its mixed ethnic character. He emphasizes the importance of the *danza* for the culture of Puerto Rico when mentioning essayist Antonio Pedreira who in 1934 argued that “the *danza* embodied the best aspects of Puerto Rican character—gentility, mildness, and aestheticism.” These qualities were believed to be threatened by commercial and materialistic American influences.43

*Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean* is the most comprehensive, yet specific guide to the development of contradance throughout the Caribbean islands written in English. Peter Manuel and Edgardo Díaz Díaz, co-authors on the third chapter, “Puerto Rico, The Rise and Fall of the *Danza* as National Music,” explore the trajectory that this genre traced over the past century and a half.44 Each stage of the development of the *danza* is supported by historical facts denoting social changes, which place the genre in an all-inclusive cultural context. Although only one chapter of the book, this section is twice as long as Cecilio Font’s *Cosas de la danza de Puerto Rico*. Besides the fact that it is a more recent work, it is also more detailed in its analysis of form, melody, and harmony of the *danza*. The authors have included musical examples, with annotations and analytical explanations of terminology in general, as well as excerpts pertaining to specific compositions. The analytical aspects of this chapter in regard to harmony and structure of the *danza* will give this current study a more systematic backbone of information on these particular compositional aspects.

With this chapter the authors aim to clarify the already existing knowledge of the *danza* by thoroughly tracing its lineage from Spanish, French, and British country dance,


44 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 113.
through the early nineteenth-century merengue, to the renamed Antillean *danza* that is now recognized as *danza puertorriqueña*. Díaz and Manuel draw on preceding research by Ángel Quintero-Rivera, Tapia y Rivera, Brau, Alonso, and Balsiero. An important statement here is that of the power of representation that the symbol of the *danza* has had for the people of Puerto Rico. Using *La Borinqueña* (1868) as an example, Manuel goes on to explain how no other symbol in the history of Puerto Rico had served with such grace and strength in depicting the character of the people. Manuel distinguishes the *paseo* (introduction) as the most outstanding residue from the precursors of Spain, France, and England. In regard to the historical accounts, Manuel makes a valid point by stating that early chronicles in Puerto Rico considered the contradance to be of Spanish origins due to its cultivation in the courts of Madrid since 1710. The incongruity stands in that, probably unintentionally, these chronicles disregarded the fact that this type of dance originated in rural England around 1500s and it was later stylized and used in the court of Elizabeth I by 1600, prior to its appearance in the Spanish court.

Between the two publications by Peter Manuel stands Alma Batista’s dissertation “The Life of Puerto Rican Composer Narciso Figueroa and His Contributions to the Puerto Rican Danza” written in 2002. This dissertation examines the life of Narciso Figueroa, one of the most prominent *danza* composers. Besides being a thorough account of Figueroa’s life and compositional output, this work exhibits useful analysis of the *danza*

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45 Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*, 115.

46 Ibid.

as a genre. Through her research, Batista aims to place Figueroa among nationalistic composers, who represented their culture and heritage through their art. Like many other writers on the matter, Batista acknowledges the ongoing debate in regard to the origin of the Puerto Rican danza. In line with the assertions that Cuban music has had a great influence on the evolution of the danza, the author echoes the writing of Amaury Veray about Cuban immigration to Puerto Rico, as well as their ongoing trade exchange, which inevitably affected musical traits.

Batista gives a general outline of the structure of the danza. Similarly to Manuel, she states that the paseo was kept in its eight-measure format by providing the tonal and character introduction of the dance. The middle section, the merengue was characterized by an active rhythm and more dynamic movement. An important aspect in her outline of structure is the fact that she speaks of the proportionally lengthened danza after 1854, attesting to the growth of this genre past the social dance format and into the concert scenes.\(^{48}\) Many of these compositions began to have deep and specific cultural meanings, thus earning a more substantial character, and creating the need for longer works in order to explore expressive possibilities.

The Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña issues a quarterly journal dedicated to the music of Puerto Rico in particular, as well as music from around the world: Resonancias: La revista puertorriqueña de música.\(^{49}\) The March 2002 issue is of great significance because it includes an article on the life and musical attributes of the composer Juan Morel

\(^{48}\) Batista, “The Life of Puerto Rican Composer Narciso Figueroa,” 53.

\(^{49}\) Nélida Muñoz de Frontera, “Valorización de Juan Morel Campos,” Resonancias: La revista puertorriqueña de música 2, no. 3 (March 2002).
Campos, “Valorización de Juan Morel Campos” written by Nélida Muñoz de Frontera. This article honors the figure of Morel Campos, and what is most important is the categorization of danzas in six groups by subject matter: tribute to the Puerto Rican woman, tribute to love and emotions, tribute to the Puerto Rican man, tribute to childhood, tribute to nature, and tribute to Puerto Rico. Each one of these categories exhibits different traits which exemplify the character of its subject matter.\textsuperscript{50} When observing the selections in this study, the categorization of the danza based on the subject matter will be useful in achieving a thorough understanding of the style of each specific composition. In a nod to his place in the genre of the danza, Luciano Quiñones’ work is recognized in this issue, where the winning composition of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña Annual Competition, Sueño de amor, is allegedly featured and the full score is made available.\textsuperscript{51} Unfortunately for those wishing to learn this composition, the score displayed in Resonancias is not the music of Sueño de amor. In fact, the composer does not even recognize this work as being his composition.\textsuperscript{52}

Luciano Quiñones has created a website in which he has listed all danza composers, short biographies, and most of their works with links to performances, scores, and lyrics where applicable.\textsuperscript{53} Quiñones has provided brief information on historical background, structure, instrumentation, its development, and pictures of events collected over the years. Although rather comprehensive, this website is more coherent in its Spanish version as the

\textsuperscript{50} De Frontera, “Valorización de Juan Morel Campos,” 7-10.

\textsuperscript{51} Resonancias: La revista puertorriqueña de música 2, no. 3 (March 2002): 50.

\textsuperscript{52} Information gathered while conversing with him on the availability of music scores of the danzas.

English translations are still in progress. When browsing the website, the reader can get a good general sense of the danza and its development, as well as the components that have contributed to its growth into a pianistic genre of the highest expression of Puerto Rican musical identity. Quiñones has singlehandedly provided the wider audience with a vessel of information on the danza puertorriqueña, which is useful for those simply looking for general knowledge, for teachers who would like to introduce these works to their students, for composers who would like to write music in this genre, and for performers who would like to broaden their understanding of the danza. However, the proposed study is not only an expansion of his work, but also a hub for a new perspective on this music, as it delves into more depth of interpretation based on analysis, and it stretches out into pedagogical implications of the selected compositions.

As somewhat expected of a genre that is a fusion of multiple cultural traits, yet a distinct national emblem of a nation, the existing literature is heavy handed on the historical and social narrative. While these sources are essential in locating the impact of as well as influences on the danza, it is beyond the realistic research expectation of an average performer or teacher who may be interested in performing or teaching the danza. More distilled historical information based on comprehensive research, which the current study intends to accomplish, is certain to facilitate the popularization of the genre among performers and teachers.

**Performance Scores and Recordings of Danzas**

Accessibility to a musical score is essential in having a work performed. With a few exceptions, the danza puertorriqueña has always been published in Puerto Rico. The Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña has issued numerous editions of compositions by the
prominent composers of the genre, Tavárez, Morel Campos, and Pedreira, to name a few. Some of the scores that are out of print, as well as newer compositions that remain in the form of manuscript, are housed in the Colección de Música del Archivio General de Puerto Rico (Music Collection of the General Archive of Puerto Rico), created in 1955. Its purpose was to collect and save important historical documents and music manuscripts of Puerto Rico in order to become the national archive of authentic musical materials for execution, edition, publication, and recording of the Island’s music. The Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, in collaboration with the Conservatory of Music have begun the lengthy process of digitizing the scores, and Josilda Acosta Figueras as well as archivists at the General Archive have been instrumental in helping locate the music and gaining access to it for the purpose of this study.

Besides the digital copies of the music available through the library of the Conservatory of Music and the General Archive at the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, musicologist Ernesto Alonso Rivera has published an anthology of unedited scores by Puerto Rican composers. This anthology contains a number of *danzas* as well as songs, waltzes, polonaises, marches, and the antique *villancico*. Rivera has added brief annotations on each composition, including composers’ biographical sketches, explanation of dedications, style and subject matter and token references to musical elements. Along with its important contribution towards the accessibility of the musical scores, this source

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56 Ibid., 81-100.
has been valuable in highlighting the specifics of the genre of the *danza* in comparison to other types of music concurrently existing in Puerto Rico.

For the general public and researchers who wish to listen to performances of *danzas* by Puerto Rican musicians, until 2017 it would have been practically impossible to do so, unless one were to be physically present at the General Archive. The Institute of Culture has begun the monumental task of cataloguing and digitizing all recordings that they have produced since 1958. The website is not published yet, but it was revealed in its beta phase at the Third Symposium of Musical Investigation. The recordings have been classified in ten categories: 1. Historic, 2. Contemporary, 3. Literature, 4. Popular, 5. Folkloric, 6. Celebrated Artists, 7. Chamber Music, 8. Puerto Rican Pianists, 9. Collaborations with the Institute, 10. Anthology of the Danza. In its entirety, this project covers music for piano, voice, strings, full orchestras, poetry and drums, improvisation, unedited rural songs, and it features the most celebrated performers of the past century. Most of the discs or LPs do not have dates of publication, but the developing team has provided references of journals and newspapers where these recordings were mentioned in order to create a time frame of their release.
CHAPTER III
METHOD

This study strives to create a comprehensive resource for the genre of the Puerto Rican danza for pianists interested in performing them or for teachers looking to expand their teaching repertoire. The process of this study will consist of the following: 1) distillation of historical background of the danza as well as compilation of short biographies of representative composers; 2) selection of the most representative works by the composers chosen for the study; 3) theoretical and formal analysis of the selected danzas; 4) an interview with composer Luciano Quiñones; 5) video recordings of the selected compositions; 6) pedagogical examination of the selected danzas to be provided as written practicing and teaching tips to accompany each video selection; and 7) setting up a website to retain and disseminate all the information.

Alongside a comprehensive account of the evolution of the danza based on scholarly research of the existing literature, the biographical information will provide the interested reader and viewer with a historical context as a frame of reference for the musical selections. The selection of the danzas to be closely examined and performed is based upon three criteria: the prominence of the composer and his/her importance in the development of the genre, the pianistic features of each composition, as well as their relevance for the purpose of the musical and technical development of the student. The theoretical analysis of each danza will be centered on its structure, harmony and melody, as well as specific rhythmic features; all elements highlighting both the common stylistic elements of the genre as well as the individuality of each composition and informing proper interpretation.
The composer Luciano Quiñones will be interviewed in order to gain feedback on stylistic elements in performance. His input will be invaluable since we seldom have the opportunity to discuss directly with living composers the performance implications of the music. This interview will be displayed in Appendix A in the paper and on a separate tab on the website.

When approaching an interpretational study, it may become quite taxing to convey ideas only through the written word. The visual demonstration can facilitate the swift absorption of technical features and physical approach to the keyboard. As such, an interpretation guide aided by video performance with practice and teaching tips would provide more efficient guidance to performers who are interested in pursuing these compositions, as well as to teachers who are inclined to add these works in their repertoire. Thus, the video performance aims to highlight stylistic practices of the danza. The practicing and teaching strategies will target and illustrate musical and technical aspects with pertinent explanations for each composition.

The entirety of this information will be uploaded and displayed on a website dedicated entirely to the study of the danza. In order to facilitate the search for information on the genre, additional sections will include a glossary of terms, referential videos, websites, list of suggested further reading material, and other extra-musical features. With the increase of digitized information in the recent decades, it is of utmost importance that scholarly contributions are made available to the wider audience. The convenience of an online resource will aid in increasing the popularity of the genre. The website is also intended as a long-term project, since videos with practicing and teaching tips will be continually added to populate it. The aforementioned elements will be combined with the
aim of creating a pedagogically-oriented portal for the *danza*, in recognition of all the efforts put forth by composers, historians, and performers who have so passionately dedicated their creativity to the genre of the *danza puertorriqueña*. 
CHAPTER IV
BIOGRAPHIES AND STYLISTIC TRAITS OF THE SELECTED COMPOSERS
(in chronological order)

Manuel Gregorio Távarez

Biographical sketch - Manuel Gregorio Távarez was born on November 28, 1843 in San Juan and passed away on July 1, 1883 in Ponce. He began his piano studies with José Cabrizas, during which time he also took organ lessons with Domingo Delgado. In 1856 he travelled to France and began his studies at the Conservatory in Paris with François Charles d’Albert and Daniel François Esprit Auber. He was abruptly stricken by a cerebral disease that left him partially deaf and debilitated his left hand. Távarez was then forced to abandon his studies in Paris and return to his motherland, where he established himself in Ponce. For years to come, he dedicated his time to teaching and composing. Some of his most distinguished students include Juan Morel Campos, Francisco Cortés, Gonzalo Núñez, and his daughter Elisa Távarez.

Távarez was one of the contributors to publishing two early editions of Puerto Rican music: the Álbum filarmónico (1863) and El delirio puertorriqueño (1867-69). Távarez was also the first composer to cultivate specifically the danza for piano and elevate it from its popular roots to art music. Rightfully, he is attributed the title of “father of the Puerto Rican danza.”

Prior to 1898, there was no central governmental archive in Puerto Rico. Távarez lived during a period of political uproar and instability as the Spanish-American War was

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57 Fernando Callejo, Música y músicos puertorriqueños (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editores Cantero Fernandez & Co., 1915), 37-50.
thickening. Few biographical facts are known about him since most of the materials collected during Puerto Rico’s colonization cannot be found. The Spanish took many of the existing works and some were lost across the ocean on the way back to Europe. The remaining part of the archived materials was stored at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., and they were returned to Puerto Rico in various intervals from 1901 until 1974. 58

Stylistic Traits - Tavárez’s style was strongly influenced by the Western European tradition of composition. He admired the language of Chopin and attempted to recreate in his works the same musical quality and breadth that the iconic Romantic composer possessed. Peter Manuel makes a connection between the insistent cinquillo 59 [quintuplet] ostinato found in the more rural style of bomba, to Tavárez’s “gently-lilting left-hand syncopation.” This syncopation is usually executed with unhurried rubato to the point of sounding unrecognizable. 60 Such an important performance element is what Puerto Rican historian Ángel Quintero Rivera refers to as a “camouflaged drum;” such a characteristic is truly camouflaged under the lyricism of the melody. Due to its subtle nature and lower strata association, in a 1913 writing, conservative essayist Braulio Dueño Colón denounced its presence in the genre of the danza, pointing a finger to this element as “grotesque and anti-aesthetic bomba rhythm.” 61 Whether accepted or not, this underlying rhythmic


59 Manuel, Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean, 22.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.,
ambivalence is what projects the creole sensuality, “like the swaying of palm trees on a hot afternoon.”62

Juan Morel Campos63

Biographical sketch - Juan Morel Campos was born in Ponce on May 16, 1857 in a family of immigrants; his father was Dominican and his mother was Venezuelan. He began his studies in music at the age of eight with Francisco Borja Gómez and later continued to pursue studies in music theory, euphonium, flute, and piano. It was at the age of fourteen that Morel Campos met Manuel Gregorio Tavárez and became one of his protégés. Although in his teens, he joined a local popular music group that played in dance events. In doing so, the young composer gained valuable experience which reflected itself in his style. With a few exceptions, although written as art music, his danza is danceable and retains a certain popular appeal. His early attempts at composition were not thoroughly polished works, but the seal of an individual touch was already present.

In 1877, Morel Campos joined the Cazadores Battalion of the Madrid Regiment based in San Juan as a euphonium player in this band. In San Juan, he studied instrumentation with José Valero. The exposure to a complete band setting inspired him to start his own ensembles, La Progresista and La Lira Ponceña. In fact, in the Ponce Fair and Exposition of 1882 his symphonic work, La lira, was awarded the first prize and certificate of honor. In the same fair, he was also given the second prize in conducting his concert orchestra. In commemoration of the Fourth Centennial of the Discovery of the Americas,

62 Ibid.
in 1893, Morel Campos wrote the symphony entitled Puerto Rico. Alongside his work as an orchestral conductor, he also directed the Spanish operetta company Bernard y Abella with which he travelled to Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, and Argentina.

In his short-lived life—he passed away on May 12, 1896 shortly after having collapsed of an angina attack in the middle of a performance on April 26 at La Perla Theatre in Ponce—Juan Morel Campos delivered approximately two hundred compositions ranging from piano, art song, orchestral, and opera. His patriotic spirit is present not only in the titles of his compositions, but also in the characteristic Puerto Rican musical elements that he garnered with great respect. Juan Morel Campos and his mentor, Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, set the model of the danza from Ponce, which in turn became the model for Puerto Rican danza. Certainly, the genre was being cultivated in San Juan as well, however per musicologist Amaury Veray, the danza ponceña had a particular character that mirrored the intrinsic indigenous quality of the city.64

Stylistic traits - Juan Morel Campos (in older documents - Juan Morell Campos) was one of the first composer to crystallize the genre of the danza for piano. Together with Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, they became archetypal composers that future generations drew inspiration from. Luciano Quiñones considers the music of Morel Campos to be the largest influence in his aesthetic.65 While the danza became a national phenomenon, there were two different, yet similar fronts of composers who wrote in this genre: the ones from San Juan (the capital) and the ones from Ponce (southern city). Although from extreme corners

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64 Thompson, Music in Puerto Rico: A Reader’s Anthology, 65.

65 Refer to Appendix A.
of the island, all danza composers shared the same respect and love for this genre, and regardless of their location, all contributed to the dissemination of this music.

Juan Morel Campos was perhaps the most popular composer among the youth as well as the artistic circles. Fernando Callejo, with a poetic language describes Morel Campos’ persona and style:

…and Campos, his vigorous genius, agitated by the wrangles and passions of his time, embodying in his immortal danzas the collective spirit of the Puerto Rican people, while also creating the two principle styles that served as a guide for the young generation when they began working on composition.66

His art was certainly a synthesis of his love, and of his impulsive nature of expression, the passionate love [for the women in his life] and the love for his people.67

In the words of Callejo, Morel Campos’ first danzas were not as pretty as the later ones, and they did not exhibit rich harmonies, but they nonetheless reached the larger public as they appealed to their sensitivity and expression of feelings. These were the first steps to Morel Campos’ recognition throughout the island.68 Many of Morel Campos’ danzas were not written originally for piano solo. We have to hold into account the fact that at the time, the only way one could hear their favorite music or dance to it was to go to live performances. Numerous danzas by Morel Campos were written for his orchestra, La Lira Ponceña, and to accompany dances, thus most of them exhibit lively and up-beat

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66“…y Campos, agitado su vigoroso genio por las luchas y pasiones de su tiempo, encarnando en sus danzas inmortales el alma colectiva del pueblo portorriqueño, formando ambos, los dos estilos principales que sirven de guía a los jóvenes cuando se inician en los trabajos de la composición.” Callejo, *Música y músicos puertorriqueños*, 126. Free translation by the author.

67“El arte absoluto fué la síntesis de su amor, y las formas impulsivas de expresión, el amor pasional y el amor patrio.” Ibid., 133. Free translation by the author.

tempi, regular phrase lengths, as well as persisting and steady rhythmic figurations, certainly with the inherited flexibility of pulse.

**José Ignacio Quintón**

Biographical sketch - José Ignacio Quintón (1881-1925) was born into a musical family. His father was a native of France, where he studied at the Paris Conservatoire and assisted the chapel master of Rheims Cathedral. Juan Quintón, José Ignacio’s father, moved to Caguas where the talented composer was born. José Ignacio Quintón, although living through the turn of the century, composed in a traditionalist, Rossini-inspired manner. His short-lived creativity has given a substantial amount of well-written music to the Puerto Rican classical repertoire, with one composition in particular that has departed from the traditional conventions of harmony and form, the musical poem *Una página de mi vida* (*A page of my life*).

Carlos Gadea-Pico was Quintón’s student and he copied much of his musical style. Gadea-Pico donated the musical poem to the Puerto Rico Archives where it is now preserved in the Gadea Collection. José Ignacio Quintón was awarded various prizes in Puerto Rico, including the first prize in the 1911 Manatí contest for *Marcha triunfal* dedicated to the memory of Josefina Parés. Two years later, his *Variations on a Theme by Hummel* and *String Quartet in D Major* earned him another award. Quintón ventured into multiple idioms of composition as his orchestral and choral works show, among which the most revered are: *Nocturno* in E minor (1918), *Ballade* and *Scherzo* (1925) for instrumental ensemble, as well as *Obertura de concierto* for orchestra, and *Misa de Requiem* for mixed chorus and orchestra.

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Although not a pianist, José Ignacio Quintón left his mark on the danza puertorriqueña for piano, most notably with the virtuosic danza de concierto. For nearly half a century, the performance of his music was neglected, thus remaining solely in manuscript form, until, in 1973, the Ateneo Puertorriqueño paid him tribute. During this event, his major works were recorded, with contributors to this endeavor including Puerto Rican music advocates Louis Antonio Ramirez, Amaury Veray, and Carlos Gadea-Pico.

**Stylistic traits** - Quintón expanded upon the stylistic scope of the danza by incorporating colorful chromaticism, thicker textures, additional contrasting sections, and richer harmonic progressions. While the structure of the danza and its distinctiveness as a nineteenth-century character piece remained essentially the same, in the hands of Quintón it became weightier musically and technically. While Tavárez is considered to be walking in the footsteps of Chopin, it is Quintón’s florid runs, overlaid melodies, and creative use of left hand figurations that display a Chopinesque touch. Alongside, his evidently virtuosic writing shows influences of Lisztian techniques. Quintón often interchanges the accompaniment and melody between right and left hands, and in this way, he sets new challenges for the performer. Many of his danzas have been recorded by pianist and professor of music at Universidad de Puerto Rico, Nydia Font de Vera, and they can be heard on the Antología de la danza puertorriqueña.

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70 Dower, *Puerto Rican Music Following the Spanish American War*, 133.
José Enrique Pedreira

Biographical sketch - José Enrique Pedreira was born on February 2, 1904 in San Juan, Puerto Rico where he also passed away on January 6, 1959. According to many critics, Pedreira represents the bridge between modernism and the nationalist movement in the concert music of Puerto Rico. He began his piano studies at the age of eight with the renowned professor Rosa Sicardó. By his early teen years, he had already become a competent performer and thus his career began. His first appearances included playing music for silent movies while they were projected in the Parque Borinquen.

In 1925, he moved to New York City where he entered the Juilliard School. During the six years of his studies at this prestigious institution, he received piano lessons from Zygmunt Stojowski. In 1931, he returned to Puerto Rico, where shortly after, accompanied by the Orquesta Sinfónica de Ponce conducted by Domingo Cruz, he took on a tour of numerous municipalities in the island by performing Robert Schumann’s A-minor concerto.

In 1933, Pedreira married Alicia Hutchinson, who was the daughter of the prominent family of musicians. The Hutchinsons and the Figueroas molded the artistic life of Puerto Rico, and their legacy continues to uphold similar activities to this day. Alicia became his inspiration and he dedicated many of his works to her, including waltzes and mazurkas, and among them, the danza, Tus caricias. Together with his wife, they founded the Academia de Piano Pedreira in Santurce, Puerto Rico, which they directed until the composer’s passing. In 1953, Pedreira joined efforts with another one of his students, José

Raúl Ramírez, and they formed the Duo Piano-Órgano Pedreira-Ramírez. This unusual pair garnered popularity throughout Puerto Rico and the United States as they often performed in radio and television programs.

While keeping up with a pedagogical and performing career, Pedreira wrote works for various instrumentations. A number of his compositions that were prize-winning pieces in national and international contest premiered by renowned artist of the time are: *Canción criolla*, winner of Premio Manuel Elzaburu organized by the Ateneo Puertorriqueño (1934); *Concierto en Re menor para piano y orquesta*, premiered at the Amphitheatre of the University of Puerto Rico with the Orquesta Sinfónica de San Juan, conducted by Jesus Figueroa Iriarte (1936); *Ritmo zapateado*, dedicated to the virtuoso pianist Jesús María Sanromá, who included this composition in his habitual repertoire (1948); *Siempre (danza)*, winner of the First Prize at the competition organized by the Institute of Culture in honor of the centennial of Juan Morel Campos (1956); and *Tus caricias (danza)*, which received its premiere in 1944 as one of the winning compositions of a contest organized by the Julliard School of Music in New York City.

**Stylistic traits** - Being a pianist himself, Padreira’s writing for the instrument is quite idiomatic, and he makes use of the full register of the instrument to his best ability. Luckily there are remaining recordings of the composer playing his own music, as well as other works by his mentors and contemporaries. By listening to his playing, we can deduce that the score exists primarily as a blueprint. This deduction opens a variety of possibilities and allows us to not feel restricted and bound to the printed score unconditionally. Certainly, in order to gain the freedom and flexibility of interpretation in the composition,
one needs to initially study it with a fresh approach. According to his student and colleague, José Raúl Ramírez:

…the works of Pedreira display a great deal of Romantic lyricism and a tendency mostly conservative in terms of style and scope of harmonic language. In them, we can find the brilliant and at times elegiac touch of the Russian School, as well as the refinement of the French style.72

As a composer who was born in the twentieth century, Pedreira is an “old-soul” in that his music takes one back in time, in the period of high Romanticism. Most of his output is for the piano, and each work displays challenges of execution, especially in regards to left-hand figuration. Per Ramírez, Pedreira was exceptionally masterful in his attention towards the left hand and considered it to be an integral element in the melodic and rhythmic construction of the music.

Pedreira considered the danza to be the most representative genre of the Puerto Rican spirit. They are a testimony to the composer’s maturity, competence, and understanding of this genre. To this day, Pedreira is the only composer who has written a danza for the left hand alone (1957).73 The score is regretfully not available on any publication or in the General Archive of the University of Puerto Rico. The entire collection of Pedreira’s compositions was passed on to Ramírez with a consent of his family. Ramírez passed away recently, on May 23, 2016, making the process of acquiring Pedreira’s music challenging, since currently little is known as to who will have the rights to his works.

72 “…las obras de José Enrique Pedreira acusan un gran lirismo romántico y una tendencia eminentemente conservadora en cuanto a estilo y envergadura armónica. En ellas encontramos el toque brillante y a la vez elegíaco de la Escuela Rusa, así como el refinamiento propio del sabor francés.” Ortiz, “San Juan, Puerto Rico: José Enrique Pedreira,” https://prpop.org/biografias/jose-enrique-pedreira/. (accessed February 18, 2017).

73 Kerlinda Degláns and Luis E. Pabón Roca, Catálogo de música clásica contemporánea de Puerto Rico (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Pro-Arte Contemporáneo, 1989), 113-117.
Biographical sketch - Héctor Campos-Parsi (1922-1998) was born in Ponce. He studied piano throughout his elementary school years, and in 1939-1944 he pursued studies in biology and psychology at the University of Puerto Rico. He began his career in the school of medicine in 1945 when he moved to Mexico. His medical ventures ended soon after, when in 1947 he was offered a scholarship by the Department of Public Education to study at the New England Conservatory in Boston with Francis Judd Cooke. His musical studies at NEC led him to take the summer courses in 1949 and 1950 at the Berkshire Music Center of Tanglewood, Massachusetts, where he studied with Irving Fine and Aaron Copland. Campos-Parsi was active in the circles of musicians and composers. Besides working in various student and musical clubs, he also served as the director of Composer’s Union of Boston.

Due to his late start in music composition, Copland suggested to Campos-Parsi to study with other people in order to repair the gaps in his education. He took this suggestion diligently: a study with Paul Hindemith at Yale for some weeks was followed by a move to Paris in October of 1950 to study with the pedagogue that attracted the largest number of great up-and-coming composers at the time, Nadia Boulanger. He remained in Paris until the summer of 1954, and that same year he returned to Puerto Rico a mature and seasoned composer.

After returning to San Juan, Campos-Parsi dedicated himself to composition and promotion of Puerto Rican culture in academic and journalistic writings. In 1958 he was assigned the position of director of the music department at the Puerto Rican Institute of

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74 Rivera, Partituras inéditas, 107.
Culture, and in 1970 he was promoted to a position at the Academy of Arts and Sciences of Puerto Rico. Besides being an artistic promoter of Puerto Rican culture, he was also a man of firm political beliefs. His feelings of nationalism come across in his strong stands on the statehood of Puerto Rico and his fruitful efforts in creating the Inter-American Festival of the Arts and the San Juan Chamber Music Festival. He composed a multitude of works, including chamber music, piano, vocal, and orchestral. Campos-Parsi also authored the two-part voluminous and encyclopedic book, *La música de Puerto Rico*.

**Stylistic traits**\(^{75}\) - Héctor Campos-Parsi was a versatile figure in Puerto Rican music. Within the classical music, his aesthetic has often been described as Neo-Classic and he has composed works in both national vernaculars, as well as international idioms. Campos-Parsi’s harmonic language is mostly tonal, although he has ventured into electronic and aleatoric music, by following the footsteps of great figures of the twentieth century. He has composed incidental music for movies and some of his most experimental sounds have emerged from this genre.

His treatment of the *danza* is quite traditional in terms of structure, rhythmic identity, and thematic expression, yet his approach on notation is that of an academic. He shows a great aptitude for variety of characters within the composition and inventiveness of harmonic language, without stepping too far out of the ‘prescribed’ box of tonal relationships.

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\(^{75}\) Rivera, *Partituras inéditas*, 107.
CHAPTER V
ANALYTICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL DISCUSSION OF THE SELECTED DANZAS

This chapter delves into deeper detail of five compositions. All information will be paired with the video recordings, which will be timed and linked to the sectional descriptions. For the sake of visual and reading practicality, the content that is to be uploaded on the website has been formatted as bullet points. This content may be descriptive, analytical, or pedagogically-oriented, depending on their relative value to the intended readership and the goal of the website, which is to introduce the broader audience to this music, inform teachers and students about the attributes of the danza for piano, and disseminate the awareness of the genre.

In order to cater to the various interests of students, teachers, and also music aficionados who are curious to learn more about the danzas, the commentary has been divided into three levels. Depending on which section it pertains to, i.e. paseo, theme 1, theme 2, theme 3 or coda when present, at times there are only two levels associated with it. The paragraphs and bullet points outline the main harmonic progressions of each section, describe the prominent features of the thematic materials, and highlight elements to be taken into consideration for a successful assimilation and performance of the composition. The aim of this organization is to create a layered learning process for each composition, to target the idiomatic pianistic elements and musical content with appropriate practice strategies.

The levels are prefaced with a brief introductory paragraph of the work, making the audience aware of the composition and enabling them to create an idea of the character and style. The first level includes points that explore general compositional
features and performance considerations, which may be useful for anyone wishing to learn these danzas. This level of information is also useful for those wishing to select a danza to study. The second level is geared towards a more detailed description of technical and musical elements. Practice strategies and performance suggestions are at the foreground of this level. The third and final level examines an additional layer of ‘special challenges’ where technical and musical aspects will be placed under a closer look for those ready to tackle such challenges. In this level, there will be a couple of examples for each composition where either the technical elements pose a challenge or the extra-musical references supply an added layer of understanding, thus enhancing the performance. Based on what is discussed in the previous levels, here the student or teacher will be invited to add their own creativity to the learning process and come up with their individual practice strategies.

1. ¡Margarita! (Único amor) by Manuel Gregorio Tavárez

Nicknamed “the weeping of a passionate heart,” this Danza de concierto para piano was composed in 1870 and it is considered to be the most refined, elegant, and pure example of the stylistic character of the danza written by Tavárez. He is the “father of the danza” and ¡Margarita! is used often as an archetype of the influence Tavárez had on multiple subsequent composers, including Juan Morel Campos and José Enrique Pedreira, whose music is included in this study.

This is a type of danza sentimental imbued with passionate, yet intimate elements which give it a rhetorical nature. From the very opening of the paseo, the listener can

76 The character of ¡Margarita! may have been the daughter of musicologist and historian Fernando Callejo, bearing the same name or simply a charming title for a composition dedicated to beauty.
perceive a sense of warmth and tenderness, as the cascading two-note slurs envelop the simple harmonic progression of tonic-subdominant-dominant. Differently from a lot of the music where an intellectual idea is at the center of its creation, in this danza the element propelling the music forward is sheer sentiment. Tavárez composed this work for piano solo, but due to its popularity, numerous arrangements can be found, including songs with lyrics added to the original music.77

PASEO

Level 1

Figure 5.1. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, harmonic diagram of paseo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PASEO : measures 1 – 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the key of D minor – ends on a half cadence on the dominant seventh chord of A7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compositional Features:

- The melody of the paseo is colored by two-note slurs and arpeggios.
- The left hand is written with arpeggiation of chords in octaves and harmonic intervals with considerable leaps.
- The phrase lengths are regular: eight measures (four + four, with pick-ups).
- The first and second ending differ from one another in the contour and direction of the arpeggio, as well as the harmonic outline.

77 This video is of an orchestral rendition of this danza accompanied by dancers, who illustrate the simplicity of the music with their movements. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O81D46EM55w
General Performance Considerations:

- Due to the two-note slur gesture, the right hand melodic descent risks at sounding motoric if the continuation of the line is not present.

- The broken arpeggio in the second ending in the right hand could be tricky to execute evenly and smoothly:
  - Fingering decision could aid in transitioning with ease through the distances and the slightly uncomfortable white-black key relationships.
  - You can use the suggested fingering in the example below.

Example 5.1. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, mm. 6-7 with pertaining fingering in the right-hand passage.

- Left-hand figuration requires close attention due to the leaps between the downbeat and the remaining eighth note beats.

- The dynamic control and lightness of both hands is of utmost importance.

Level 2

Right-hand eloquence:

- Practice by playing only the main notes of the melody in mm. 1-3:
This type of practice aids in hearing the scalar skeleton of the moving line.

It allows for a better understanding and execution of the shape of the melodic contour.

It aids in planning the point of musical tension which informs direction and pacing of rubato.

Example 5.2. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, main melodic skeleton mm. 1-3.*

* The last B is in anticipation of the following downbeat which resolves the descending passage.

- Practice by holding the third finger depressed while lightly ‘grabbing’ the second finger:
  - Volume proportion here is more-less, fingers three-two respectively.
  - Notice how on finger three the wrist needs to lean slightly lower than bridge position of the hand in order to and allow for the softer second note to be played on the way up, thus creating a light and elegant gesture.
  - Try playing through the line with this gesture and creating the illusion of a semi-legato line for all the notes played with the third finger:
    - Be aware that the softer notes, with the second finger, are not lost.
- The dynamic relationship is proportional and it cannot be taken as a \textit{f-p} difference.

- Practice in larger groups of notes:
  
  - Start with four at a time, by holding the first note longer, then smoothly and rapidly transitioning through, until the beginning of the next group of four.
  
  - Add on to the grouping by noticing where the direction of the two-note slurs changes:
    
    - The example below highlights this type of grouping.

Example 5.3. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, \textit{¡Margarita!}, rhythmic groupings for mm. 1-4.

- Mm. 6-7 of the second ending need to be worked out separately from their iteration in the first ending:
  
  - Practice the descending arpeggio in m. 7 as blocked chords:
    
    - While doing so, notice that the intervallic distance is not the same in both octaves.
  
  - After deciding on fingering (you may choose to use the suggested fingering in the example above, Level 1), practice the passage with dotted rhythms.
  
  - Practice in larger rhythmic groups:
- Four notes at a time with clear emphasis on the first, then second, third, and forth notes of the group.

- In triplets while shifting the accents that fall on the passage (similarly to the four-note group).

 Since the passage is in quadruple figuration, practicing a triplet grouping will create another layer of association which will also provide a smoother execution beyond the written and obvious pattern.

☞ Be sure to release the previous notes in the correct direction horizontally in order to avoid inconsistent tone production and unnecessary tension:

- For example, the thumb on G-sharp in m. 6 ought to be released and move lower towards the D, as the hand closes in to prepare for the fifth finger playing on A.

☞ Play both hands together by only sounding the octave of the left hand:

- This manner of practicing helps with coordination and anticipation of the faster harmonic rhythm in m. 7—two changes within one measure.

Left-hand fluidity and dynamic control:

• Practice by readily moving from the octave to the higher note (second finger) on the second eighth count of the measure:

☞ Go back and forth the two positions multiple times, as both directions appear in the music and creating the connection of this movement will aid the evenness of this section.

☞ When coming up to the second finger, notice the placement and alignment of the hand:
- Each chord has a different intervallic distance and as such needs to be treated individually.
- The thumb should not be too far out from the key, since that would make the simultaneous descent of both keys quite taxing.

踅 Practice very softly:
- By doing so, you engage your mechanism sooner, since the finger needs to start the depressing of the keys sooner in order to produce a soft sound.
- If this practice is done constantly, controlling the dynamic when executing it in performance tempo will be more feasible.

Level 3

Special challenges for the paseo:

• Try playing the first eight measures (sixteen with repeats) at extreme tempi: faster and slower than performance tempo:
  - Notice how does speed affect your mechanical and musical approach to this opening.
  - Do you tend to play louder when attempting a faster tempo?
    - If so, then you will need to work on this section at a slower tempo with careful attention to dynamic level and attack of the finger on the key.

THEME 1

Level 1

Figure 5.2. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, harmonic diagram of theme 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 1 : measures 9 – 40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D minor → F major → G minor → D minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compositional Features:

- The melody is found in chords or harmonic intervals.
- Left-hand figuration is an alteration of the *tresillo elástico*.
- Rhythmic patterns generally alternate every two measures in triple or quadruple groups.

Example 5.4. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, *¡Margarita!*, left hand *tresillo* mm. 9-10.

![Example musical notation](image)

- The regularity of the phrases set forth in the *paseo* continues in the first theme
  - Four + four + eight measures.
- The harmonic rhythm is affected by the marked phrase lengths and vice-versa:
  - More changes are present in the shorter phrases, and the harmonies are sustained for longer in the more expansive phrases.

General Performance Considerations:

- While always paying attention to the top voice of each chord which highlights the main thematic content, there is potential for the counter melody (top voice of the left hand) to supply an added layer to the texture.
- In all chordal melodies, particularly with longer notes, it is difficult to sustain the continuity of the line throughout the vertical chordal changes.
- The left-hand syncopated triplet cannot be performed exactly as written:
It is important to always remember that even though Tavárez composed his danza in the image of elevated art music, its roots remain folkloric.

The flexibility of the accompaniment in particular, and of the rubato in general, is an essential stylistic trait of the danza.

The rhythmic pattern of the left hand will need to become dotted rhythm as described previously.

Example 5.5. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, melodic content of mm. 9-10.

Level 2

Left-hand flexibility of rhythm:

• Play only the first, third, and last eighth notes of the triplet figurations of the left hand, resulting in a quarter-note triplet rhythm:

  This approach enables you hear where the point of anchor is in the beat and how much flexibility can be given to the surrounding notes.

  It is also important to try this reduction of the figuration in order to discern what the difference between the measure with eighth-note triplets should sound like in comparison to the one with quarter-note triplets.

• Practice the arpeggio figure as if it were all sixteenth notes, with a flowing and continuous motion.
• Arpeggiatos in m. 10 (and similar other places):

  ➔ Avoid unintentional accentuation of notes within each one:

  - Practice each arpeggiato as it were a melodic arpeggio with care for each note
descent in a soft dynamic.

  - Speed up the pace as you become more comfortable with this passage.

  ➔ Practice by preparing each chord before-hand:

  - Release the top note of each arpeggiato sooner than its length and anticipate
the starting point (finger and note) of the following arpeggiato.

Sweeping phrase motion:

• In order to retain its vocal and melodious element—although written vertically—
vertical playing of the quarter-note triplet figure needs to be shaped across this gesture:

  ➔ Practice by playing only the top voice of each chord in the right hand together with
the left-hand part.

  - Listen to your sound production carefully and notice how you would you
shape it, if the melody were written monophonically.

• When repeated thirds appear in the melodic material of the right hand, always strive to
shape across the repetitions.

Example 5.6. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, mm. 19-23.
A similar strategy to the one above can be used in this instance as well

Unless marked so, it would be helpful to avoid playing the repeated notes with overly done emphasis.

**Level 3**

**Special challenges of theme 1:**

- Try to vocalize the top melody of each phrase:
  - While doing so, notice how much time and effort (in terms of breath) it takes to get to the end of each one.
  - Such practice will inform tempo choice and overall inflection of the phrases.
  - By singing through the main notes of the melody, we can also create a better sonic image of the melodic contour and devote more attention to it while other elements are happening simultaneously.

- Attempt to voice some of the intervals differently:
  - In certain cases, the top voice of the left hand could be an interesting counter-melody.

**THEME 2 + BRIDGE**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.3. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, *Margarita!,* harmonic diagram of theme 2 and bridge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 2 + BRIDGE : measures 41-68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D major → V of A major → A major → D major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compositional Features:

- While the phrase structures remain regular, this section offers the most variety of elements explored, since within it there are both thematic and transitory statements.

- The opening of the second theme is a passionate outburst, marked ff con passion:
  - The right-hand chords feature more prominent accentuations.
  - The left-hand range of arpeggios and octaves is wider, offering richer bass tones.

- In m. 45, after the second repeat of the passionate theme, a transitory section begins:
  - A sequential rhythmic pattern in the right hand provides a certain light-hearted element that is new to the character and mood of the piece.
  - This rhythm is based on the habanera rhythm (illustrated in the first chapter).
  - In this case, it is shifted by one beat, thus going through the bar line as opposed to inhabiting one measure:

Example 5.7. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, rhythmic figure in the right hand in mm. 48-49.

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example57.png}} \]

- The previously-established phrase lengths of four measures each are shaken here:
  - What drives the structure is more so the harmonic sequence, rather than melodic content.
  - Although the two-measure gestures do not necessarily have to be considered phrases, since the sequences are part of the larger line, their brevity changes the temper of this section.
- An emotional build-up of this sequence, calls for a relaxation of the musical tension, and the reinstatement of the second theme in m. 61 can be affected by this.

- The left-hand rhythmic pattern alternation is more consistent in this section: eighth-note triplets + four eighth-notes.

General Performance Considerations:

- The \textit{ff con pasión} theme could be interpreted in various ways.

- In terms of build-up of momentum, there are two tempo considerations that can affect its execution and character projection:
  - An expansive pace will produce a grandiose, lavish character; a more sentimental interpretation of the indication \textit{con pasión}.
  - A forward pace will produce a sweeping, driven character; a more youthful and animated interpretation of the same indication.

- The turn on the anacrusis lends itself to a variety of rubato manipulations:
  - Coming out of the second time, into the bridge, it could be interesting to prepare the resolution—from dominant seventh chord on A, to the resolving chord on D major—with a more gently and slowly played turn.

- After the bridge, the same thematic material initially presented as \textit{ff}, has now no dynamic indication:
  - This could be a hint towards a more delicate, introspective mood leading to the recapitulation.
  - It could also be partly due to the intensification that occurred with the sequences within the transition.
Level 2

Voicing and direction of chordal passages:

- Practice only the top voice of the right-hand chords with correct fingering:
  
  ⇒ Be sure to listen closely for direction, shape, and continuity of the line, although a physical connection is not possible.
  
  ⇒ Notice the balance of the hand as you are using only finger five to trace the melodic movement (which side do you feel the natural weight of the arm is falling on?).
  
  ⇒ The distance between the chords in the right hand and the range covered by the left hand is now larger, for instance in m. 42.

Example 5.8. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, m. 42.

- While descending from the second to the third chord:

  ➢ Practice only the thumbs first, with an open position of the hand, as if you were to play the complete chord.
  
  ➢ Then the inner voices; the intervallic relationship is different between them—a third going to a sixth, moving from thumb and second fingers to thumb and third fingers.
Such change in alignment will affect the coordination of the motion between upper arm, forearm, and wrist.

In order to polish the transition, the shift between these two chords should be practiced independently from the rest of the measure, and after an appropriate level of familiarity has been achieved, the entire gesture can be considered as one large motion.

- Practice the bottom voice of the right-hand with correct fingering:
  - If highlighting the top voice gives an idea of the shape and direction of the music, the bottom voice can act like a map.
  - Guide with the thumb the movement from one chord to the other.
    - Pay attention particularly to the larger leap (i.e. from D down to F in m. 42, as shown in the example above).

Left-hand figuration in the bridge:

- Practice left hand of the bridge with blocked chords, when possible:
  - Notice the frame of the hand and how its shape morphs with every different harmony.
  - Since the top part of the left-hand figuration is quite high on the treble clef, for instance in mm. 47-49, the angle of the wrist will change depending on how much closer to the body the position is.
    - If not worked out slowly and with care for the tone production of each note, its placement in a higher register can affect the flow and projection of the passage:
Practice in a soft dynamic, as this will enable you to level out any unwanted bumps.

Due to its sequential patterns, it is helpful to listen carefully the color of the harmony and its intensification:

- When harmonic content is ‘spelled-out,’ at times we lose the sense of its function and color as we listen to single notes, one at a time.

- Practicing in blocked chords, when possible depending on the distance, is important since it helps to also hear the melody played against the full chord that supports it.

A new element of broken octaves in the right hand appears in m. 54:

Example 5.9. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, m. 54.

- Practice the octaves harmonically first, together with the left hand:

  When doing so, listen attentively for the relationship of the interval of the third created between the left hand and the thumb of the right hand.

  Practice this interval as if it were a melodic passage in one hand, where the balance between the top and bottom voice is clearly layered.

  - Play the thumb of the right hand, then shortly after play the corresponding left-hand note softer.
- Keep doing this by bringing the descent of the left hand sooner and sooner until the two fingers (left hand and thumb in the right) play together harmonically.

- Smoothness of the broken octaves:
  - Play and hold the thumb while the pinky or the fourth finger lightly sweeps the key for the upper note of the octave.
  - Repeat the same exercise in the opposite direction—hold the top voice while the thumb lightly plays and releases the bottom voice.
- Although the stronger and melodic notes are the lower notes of the octave, the combination of the above exercises helps in avoiding heavy, unbalanced octave in a two-note slur figure.

**Level 3**

**Special challenge for theme 2 – ff con pasión:**

- The right and the left hand do not need to line up exactly at the same time at the ff section:
  - Start with being accurate and lining up the chords with the exact eighth note in the triplet.
  - Then experiment with various ways in which rubato can be as effective as possible without sounding hackneyed.
  - As many danza composers or performers state, flexibility of timing is not a formula, but if you manage to emphasize the point of tension within the phrase and/or measure, then the ‘push and pull’ will happen naturally around it.
- The main aspect to keep in mind is the manipulation of the rhythm in the left hand and making the triplet as a dotted-eighth note and sixteenth-note rhythm.

**RETURN OF THEME 1**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.4. Manuel Gregorio Tavárez, ¡Margarita!, harmonic diagram of return of theme 1.

![Return of Theme 1: measures 69 – 83]

D minor ➔ A major ➔ G minor ➔ D minor

**Compositional Features:**

- The material of the second half of theme 1 returns verbatim.

- The closing phrase leaves one uncertain:
  - There is no closing arpeggio after the descending sixths in the melody.
  - The measure numbers for this reiteration of the first theme are an odd number too, which contributes to its dubious ending.
  - The last phrase is only seven measures long (previously eight), and although the cadence is a perfect one, it still feels inconclusive.

**General Performance Considerations:**

- Consider adding a D-minor arpeggiation after the resolution in the last measure, resembling the first iteration of the theme in mm. 39-40.

- Alongside, slowing down may aid in create a sense of closure.

- The expressive marking for the return of theme 1 is *tranquillo* suggestive of a calmer, more introspective delivery.
2. ¡Bendita seas! by Juan Morel Campos

¡Bendita seas! [May you be blessed!] is a danza festiva in E minor, dedicated to Doña Dolores Yriarte, perhaps a love interest of the young composer. Besides being a prolific composer, Juan Morel Campos was also a euphonium player. His attraction for the brass sound is displayed clearly in the two phrases of the opening paseo with a fanfare-like character. His defiant and exuberant ponceño attitude can be heard in the unexpected turns of harmony, character, and melodic contour.

Although packed with intense and ever-changing musical material, this danza is quite brief, and it follows the structure of paseo, two thematic sections, a transitory bridge, a recapitulation in the parallel major key, and a coda. The rhythmic figuration in both hands throughout the first and second themes is substantially varied. What stands out in this composition, more so than in the works of Tavárez, is the youthful attitude of the rhythmic drive and assertive motivic patterns. While ¡Margarita! displays the introverted emotional elements of the danza, ¡Bendita seas! showcases a more extroverted expression.

Even though ¡Bendita seas! is not the lengthiest or most famous danza by Juan Morel Campos, it fully represents the individuality of the composer, and certainly the free-spirited character of ponceños. There are multiple versions of this danza, including the present one for piano, but the original version was conceived for Morel Campos’ ensemble.

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78 The score for this study and performance has been obtained at the General Archive of Puerto Rico – Music Section, through the digitized sources hosted at the University of Puerto Rico.

79 Refer to Juan Morel Campos’ Stylistic Traits, pp. 41-42.
Compositional Features:

- The right hand is written in octaves and chords and it provides a resonant texture.
- The pitch movement between the faster notes of the right hand is step-wise, except for the arpeggiated leap in E minor in mm. 6 and 7.
- Besides being a counter melody to the right hand, the left-hand figuration doubles as a rhythmic ostinato in octaves.

Example 5.10. Juan Morel Campos, ¡Bendita seas!, paseo, mm. 1-4.

- Similarly to the right hand, the pitch movement of the left hand is step-wise, until mm. 5-7, where larger distances frame the figuration.
- Although the rhythmic gestures between the hands are quite short, the phrases last for four measures each.
• The composer does not indicate any dynamics for the first seven measures, except for the expressive marking of *deciso* (decisive/resolute).

• Only in m. 7 do we see the *f*, which could imply a softer beginning, perhaps in *mf*.

**General Performance Considerations:**

• It could become challenging to create a well-rounded phrase when the writing is this vertical:

  ➔ Practice the right hand as a one-voice melodic line to hear how you would shape it.

    - Since the purpose of this exercise is to listen to the continuation of the phrase, it is acceptable to use fingering that would fit the melodic contour and not only four and five, which is the case when playing the octaves and chords in full.

• Although you may choose for the entire *danza* to be at a fast tempo, the *paseo* can handle a slightly slower tempo in order to set the *deciso* character:

  ➔ Within the same tempo margin, there is certainly room for fluctuation and rubato.

**Level 2**

**Practicing the smooth octave transitions in each hand:**

• Practice moving away from the first key in the direction of the next one using only the thumbs:

  ➔ While practicing this way, stay close to the keys.

  ➔ Depress the key gradually with an expectation to quickly spring out of it as soon as the tone sounds and move on to the next one with the same intension (watch out that the motion of springing off the key does not bring your hand too far from the keys, otherwise an accumulation of loud and accentuated sounds would occur).
- This is particularly important when dealing with larger distances of jumps.

▷ By practicing with the thumbs only, you are creating a map of the inner part of the hand which will be easy to follow when we add speed, dynamics, and phrasing to the equation.

- After having worked on this exercise with hands separately, do the same with hands together and notice if you tend to be more focused on one hand rather than the other:

▷ If such one-sided attention is not hindering the flow of the phrase and your technique is responding well, then it is fine to have your focus rely on one hand at a time.

▷ However, if you find yourself still ‘searching’ for the notes, then you will need to work at that specific hand separately for a while longer.

- The same practicing strategy can be applied to the fifth/fourth fingers in each hand.

- Most of us are inclined to pause our thinking and listening on the long notes and restart the process with the subsequent fast notes:

▷ This aspect is clearly present in the rhythmic figures of the *paseo.*

▷ It is helpful to practice hands separately without rhythm and simply moving swiftly from one position to the other:

- As an alternative to this, when practicing hands together, you can release the dotted-quarter note in the right hand right away and position yourself for the next sixteenth note, while the left hand is playing regularly.

➢ In this way, you can manage to create the coordination between the hands, as well as timely anticipation of the following sounds.
Achieving a greater breadth of phrasing:

- Practice slowly with attention towards the top note of each right-hand chord/octave and bottom note of each left-hand octave.

- As if you were to play a nocturne, practice softly and attempt to create a feeling of legato, without any undesired accents.
  - Obviously, this manner of playing is not fitting to the character of the piece or the notation.
  - Practicing something in the way that it is not written, opens a multitude of possibilities that would have otherwise been unknown.
  - When staying with only one practicing method, our musical vision of the composition can become stale and unimaginative because it is restricted by singular technical approach.

- Once you have practiced in this manner, you will know what kind of shape and direction you are looking for in the phrase.

- In transferring this knowledge to the faster tempo, louder dynamic, and clearer articulation, you will find that the phrase is now less broken.

Level 3

Instrumentation challenge:

- This goes for the entire composition, but let us focus on the *paseo* initially:
  - Which instrument would you assign to each hand and voice of the chords/octaves?
  - Try to imagine how those instruments would sound if they were to play this piece.
    - Does that change the way you approach the sound and overall projection of this introduction?
THEME 1

Level 1

Figure 5.6. Juan Morel Campos, ¡Bendita seas!, harmonic diagram of theme 1.

Compositional Features:

- In most folkloric and instrumentally-derived genres, the melody is harmonized (with chords or harmonic intervals), and so is the case with the first theme in this danza.

- Its contour is well-balanced as it ascends towards the penultimate measure of the phrase and then descends to close it gently.

- The regularity of the phrases is mirrored in the recurring and consistent rhythmic pattern of the left hand.

- The expressive marking for the first theme is amoroso (lovingly), suggesting a shift in mood and character, compared to the paseo.

- The second phrase of this section is marked con anima, which could indicate increased speed or more emotionally forward playing, including a raised dynamic level since it comes after a crescendo.

- An interesting aspect of the left-hand tresillo elástico is the placement of an accent on the second eighth note, before the tie (syncopation). Refer to the rhythmic figure below.
Example 5.11. Juan Morel Campos, ¡Bendita seas!, mm. 9-10 with suggested fingering.

General Performance Considerations:

- The melodic treatment of the right hand will be a challenge in itself due to the verticality of the thematic material, similarly to the *paseo*.

- In this case, the left-hand sweeping arpeggios help with creating more movement.

- When practicing the left hand, it is important to anticipate and prepare each new beginning of the arpeggio from the key in order to avoid an accent on the lower notes, which would then lead to an even more vertical reading of the score.

- In order to make the movement towards the new position easier, it is helpful to play four notes in one gesture with a flexible wrist.

**Level 2**

Creating a coordinated, properly voiced and paced phrase:

- Practice left hand as written and only the top notes of the right hand with correct fingering.
  
  ⇨ The coordination between the hands and specific fingers will be smoother.
  
  ⇨ The flow of the phrase will not be broken from the vertical nature of the chords and you will be able to hear how much time and momentum you need for each phrase.
• When focusing on one voice at a time in the right hand, the attention towards actual voicing of the chord is heightened as well.

• For more accurate voicing in the thematic material, practice by:
  
  ➢ Playing the top voice in \textit{mf} and while holding it, placing the remaining notes of the chord in \textit{p} and repeating them four times before moving on to the next chord, simulating a four sixteenth-notes pattern.

  - Pay close attention to the descent of the softer notes and make sure that the timing is accurate for all the fingers, otherwise the chord will sound like an arpeggiato (later in the piece, the composer marks it this way).

  ➢ Playing the full chord by sounding all the notes at the same time with exaggerated dynamic difference of the top voice in comparison to the bottom ones.

  - While doing so, release the bottom notes and sustain only the top voice.

  - With silent finger substitution (where possible) move on to the next chord, thus creating a consecutive melodic line.

  - As you substitute finger five for four, release any accumulated tension in your forearm and use the natural weight of the arm to transfer from one position to the next.

• Practice by playing the right-hand chords twice as if they were written in eighth notes
  
  ➢ This exercise will enable you to better pace the phrase inflection and match the left-hand rhythmic patterns.

• For a seamless left-hand figuration of arpeggios, practice by:
  
  ➢ Aligning the fingers to their pertaining position.
- Watch carefully that your wrist is not misplaced (too much to the left when thumb needs to play or too much to the right when the outer part of the hand needs to play).

- This alignment should be treated more so as the wrist moving to support the finger, rather than a stretch of the palm in order to place the finger on the pertaining key.

- Preparing the shift form the first to the fifth fingers (last note of the first arpeggio to the first note of the second arpeggio):
  
  ➢ While the larger muscles (e.g. the arm) can guide the bigger movements, the flexibility and mobility range of the wrist is key in relaxing the hand, creating the connecting point between the arpeggios, and procuring a good tone production.

- Besides the arpeggio figuration, the other left-hand element that needs to be subtle in its transitions is the tresillo elástico:
  
  ➢ The connection between the last note of the tresillo and first note of the arpeggio is between the second and fifth fingers.

  ➢ The entire left hand should be practiced separately with phrase inflection and accents, as it is technically and musically independent of the right hand.

  ➢ This figuration, as may be heard in the video recording, is certainly not executed as written: 

  - There is a slight delay and lengthening of the middle of the measure, and a quicker (affrettando) motion towards the next downbeat.

  

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80 Note the explanation from Luciano Quiñones on the Appendix A.
THEME 2 + BRIDGE

Level 1

Figure 5.7. Juan Morel Campos, ¡Bendita seas!, harmonic diagram of theme 2 and bridge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 2 + BRIDGE : measures 25-40 + 41-47</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G major ( \rightarrow ^bVI \rightarrow ) B minor ( \rightarrow ) E minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compositional Features:

- The second theme goes through more abrupt figuration changes in terms of rhythm and melodic content.

- Both phrases of this section begin with a legato, expressive figuration:
  - The first, an arpeggiation on the fully-diminished #iv chord of G major.
  - The second, an arpeggiation on G major and chromatic left hand.
    - Both are leading to the tonicization of G major.

- In the following seven measures of each phrase, the rhythmic patterns in the left-hand resemble those that a güiro would play in an orchestral setting, thus providing a percussive timbre for this section.

- The phrases in the second theme are longer—eight measures each.

• Both hands are written in faster rhythmic subdivisions compared to the first theme.

• At times, the right hand exhibits similar rhythmic figures as the left hand.

• The material in \textit{ff} in m. 36 expands on a simple descending melodic line, in this case articulated in repeated chords with accentuated left-hand octaves.

• The compositional features of the bridge are comprised of a mixture of previously-explored elements: step-wise movement in octaves and arpeggios in the left hand, and repeated chords with syncopated accentuations in the right hand.

  \textit{⇒} Although not written in the left-hand figuration, the rhythmic quality of m. 42, for instance, resembles a more emphatic and displaced rendition of the \textit{tresillo elástico}.

• The bridge gives the impression of an improvisatory section.

General Performance Considerations:

• The writing in the second theme eludes to a light and playful character.

• The grace notes in the right hand are an addition to the overall spirited demeanor of this composition.

• The left hand is at times leaping over two octaves and such jumps, particularly due to the speed and value of the note (only an eighth), ought to be practiced by anticipation.

  \textit{⇒} If played grace fully, this leap can aid in organically creating the space and timing for the manipulation of pulse.

  \textit{⇒} This element can add onto the Antillean flair\textsuperscript{81} that Juan Morel Campos seems to be after, based on the insistent rhythmic figurations that are found further as part of the return of the first theme and the coda.

\textsuperscript{81} Antillean – culture of the islands in the West Indies, specifically of the Greater Antilles (Puerto Rico, Cuba, Hispaniola, and Jamaica).
The bridge material is marked *spiritoso* (its literal meaning is funny, in this case, it could potentially mean playful or jokingly).

- Such indication gives us an insight into the type of touch that is needed for this section.
- Although marked *f*, its fleeting nature and the texture until m. 47 seems to need a lighter, crisper touch.

**Level 2**

Lightness, flexibility, and clarity of the *güiro*-like rhythmic figuration:

- Its main role is to project rhythmic transparency, as opposed to harmonic coloring.
  - More frequent pedal changes according to the rhythm can aid in striking a better balance of texture.
    - In general, shaping of the melodic line cannot rely on pedal.
    - While keeping a longer-shaped phrase, the more frequent pedal changes could be an opportunity to vary the articulation.
    - A change in articulation, coupled with the often-changing pedal will create an interesting contrast to the more expansive opening measure of the phrase.

- The sixteenth-note portion of the left-hand pattern (second half of the measure), needs certain ingredients for it to be fitting to the timbre and character of the section.
  - Although not a lengthy pattern, writing such as the one in mm. 26-28 and further, needs a good amount of rotation.
  - When approaching a pattern as this one with varying intervals in the bottom voices, each one needs to be practiced separately, since the center of the rotation will change based on the fingering and intervallic distance.
- Practice m. 26 by playing only the fifth and first fingers (letting go of the C that would be played with the second finger).
  ➢ It is helpful to start with the outside intervals to find the rotation, then find the shape of the finger for the inside note to suit the pertaining rotation.
- Try the same approach for the thumb and second fingers (the inside note).
  ➢ Notice how the balance of the hand changes with each rotation.
  ➢ As this is a short repetition, try adding another three counts to the same sixteenth-note figuration to “over practice” for crispness and comfort.

- Practice the opening measures of each phrase (m. 25 and m. 33) with careful legato and warm tone production for both hands.
  ➢ Voice the chords, and place the first one carefully so you pace your dynamics in the right hand.
  ➢ Connect the notes of the left-hand part imagining a cello playing it.

- Although written in a homophonic fashion, the chords in mm. 36-39 have a certain vocal characteristic.
  ➢ As such, momentum and direction are necessary ingredients to an integral execution of this phrase.
  ➢ Although the dynamic is ff throughout, it is helpful to start each repetitive gesture softer in order to create the illusion of a continuous crescendo, yet without the verticality that may arise from playing all the chords and octaves at the same dynamic level.
Besides the musical benefits, this approach also aids in a tension-free execution as the mechanism will have time to ‘relax’ in preparation for the softer beginning of each gesture.

The example below shows this phrase with the suggested dynamic levels.

Example 5.13. Juan Morel Campos, ¡Bendita seas!, dynamic suggestion added in green color, mm. 36-40.

**RETURN OF THEME 1**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.8. Juan Morel Campos, ¡Bendita seas!, harmonic diagram of the return of theme 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RETURN OF THEME 1: measures 48-55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E major (\rightarrow) V(^7)/ii (\rightarrow) V(^7) (\rightarrow) E major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compositional Features:**

- Compared to its first statement, this return of theme 1 is in E major as opposed to E minor and marked *cantabile* as opposed to *amoroso*.
• The first four measures (mm. 48-51) are restated verbatim, with the exception of
  arpeggiated chords in the right hand.

• The following four measures, however, interrupt the flow of the phrase by jumping to
  the second part of the theme, this time reharmonized with the dominant seven of the
  second scale degree.

  This shift is abrupt and although the figuration of the first measure (m. 52) is similar
  to its initial statement, it soon develops into a blend of the same melodic contour
  but with the rhythmic figuration of the second theme.

Example 5.14. Juan Morel Campos, ¡Bendita seas!, the melodic line resembling the first
statement of the theme is circled in red, while the rhythmic feature taken form the second
theme is denoted in green rectangular, mm. 52-55.

General Performance Considerations:

• The key alteration and expressive marking already contribute to a more festive, yet
  fervent character.

• The technical preparation for this section is similar to that of its initial statement (for
  more detailed practice strategies, refer back to the discussion for theme 1).

• Voicing and layering of the texture in mm. 53-55 could be quite challenging, since the
  rhythmic movement is homogeneous between the hands, mostly in double notes.
Strategies mentioned previously—playing the melody in single notes while the left hand is played as written, playing the top note louder, holding it while playing the lower note softer and repeating it, or placing both notes simultaneously and still repeating the bottom note softly—are of great help in creating a clear difference between each voice and discerning the amount of time and speed that it takes to play both keys.

Level 2

• Due to the busier texture in mm. 52-55, there is a need to create the illusion of a continuous line, also without getting carried away by the persistent rhythm:
   Start each second half of the measure at a softer dynamic than the first half.
   The repeated notes gestures begin on a weak sixteenth-note beat, and an accent or heavy articulation of it, would hinder the continuity of the line.

CODA

Level 1

Figure 5.9. Juan Morel Campos, ¡Bendita seas!, harmonic diagram of the coda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODA : measures 56-63</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E minor → bII (F major) → E minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compositional Features:

• The Coda is a recollection of the previously-explored musical material:
   In it we can find the melodic contour of both themes, the rhythmic figuration of the second theme, the left-hand arpeggios of the first theme, and the overall passionate and romantic mood that permeates this danza. |
• In m. 59, the abrupt harmonic change to the Neapolitan chord (F major in the main key of E minor) after a string of secondary dominants creates an interesting shift in the mood and it interrupts the trajectory towards the minor that was being prepared.

• The expressive indication for this final thought is *sensible*, yet the dynamic marking is *f* until the last two measures where it fizzes off into *p*.

**General Performance Considerations:**

• Since the dynamic and expression markings may be contradictory, it is important to settle on a mood that you are trying to portray.

• As we may know from other repertoire, *f* does not always mean loud and grandiose, as *p* does not always mean soft and mellow—for example in textures where the melody is part of a chordal texture and it is marked *p*, while the lower notes are soft, the top voice of the melody can be brought up to a *mf* and still create the impression of a soft dynamic overall.

• However, less voicing to the top voice in forte dynamics would give a darker and more even color to the sonority.

• Based on this understanding, although marked *f*, this section can be thought of as a fuller-sounding *mf*, with expressive legato, and cohesive phrasing, always keeping in mind the request of the composer for a sensitive touch.

**Level 2**

• In mm. 57 and 58, the repeated chords are now substituted by movement to the neighboring tones:

  ⇔ If the student’s reach is smaller than or barely an octave, these two measures may pose a problem and contribute to both physical and musical stiffness.
Practice by playing only the top voice of the right hand with accurate fingering.

- Add the left hand also, and try to keep the balance between right and left hands clear at all times.

Example 5.15. Juan Morel Campos, ¡Bendita seas!, mm. 57-59.

Practice only the interval of the third (the two top voices of the chords) with accurate fingers.

Along the same lines, practice by holding the inside fingers more legato and naturally letting go of the fifth finger by the bounce of the wrist, while connecting with the pedal.

The next step can be to practice the lower two notes (the sixths) with the legato voice on the same notes as previously, so now the top.

In order to create smooth connection between the two gestures, the rhythmic variant denoted in Example 5.14 with a red-colored slur, can aid in shaping across the bar line both musically and technically.
3. *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3 (Danza de concierto) by José Ignacio Quintón*\(^{82}\)

This *danza* was dedicated to Quintón’s friend and colleague, notable pianist and composer, Aristides Chavier Arévalo.\(^{83}\) At first glance, the rhythmic figuration of the *tresillo elástico*, particular to the *danza*, seems to be lacking in this work. *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3* defies the expectation of what the left-hand should look like in this genre due to its florid passages and hidden or shifted syncopations. The dedication to Chavier explains the more European Romanticism of this composition, which sets it apart from most of the other *danzas*. The structure of this *danza* follows the traditional setting of *paseo*, three clearly distinguishable themes (with repetitions), a varied recapitulation of the first theme, and a coda. This composition exhibits a vast textural range, interesting harmonic progressions with addition of chromaticism, and challenging technical aspects. It is certainly a display of showmanship and overt virtuosity for the young pianist. The idiomatic qualities of this work are a testament to Quintón’s depth of understanding of the instrument, where Liszt’s pianistic language, combined with Caribbean gestures and articulations produce quite an original take on the virtuosic *danza*.

In this composition Quintón explores a variety of pianistic qualities by using several technical elements that expand the scope of the *danza*. The overlaying textures provide the opportunity for an array of touches and articulations. The quickly shifting characters and

\(^{82}\) The edition used is published by the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña in 1986 under José Ignacio Quintón - Obras Completas. This edition is out of print and it has not been republished since. The score is digitally available through the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico.

\(^{83}\) Aristides Chavier Arévalo (1867-1942) was Puerto Rican pianist, composer, professor of music, music critic, and, in a manner, philosopher of music. He composed multiple works for the chamber music idiom, and similarly to many of his contemporaries, studied in the United States (New York) and in Europe (Paris). He was one of the main proponents of ‘artistic’ music in Puerto Rico. Many attribute the relegation of the folkloric repertoire to his compositional ideology, which was essentially inspired by the European and modern compositional techniques. Rivera, *Partituras inéditas*, 105.
figurations demand a high level of control of the instrument. As such, this danza could be assigned to an advanced student who has already achieved a certain level of pianistic brilliance. This danza could be suitable for a student who is extroverted and enjoys the flamboyant character of the music. If the student is excited to perform something that fits their personality and matches their ability, most probably the execution and the work leading up to that will be a successful one. On the other hand, this composition could be assigned as a challenge for a student who is more withdrawn and less flashy in their delivery. Working towards building this skill could be a much-needed addition for the artistic growth of such a student.

Two of the main types of passagework in this composition are scales and arpeggios. If the student is not fluent in major and minor scales and arpeggios with their permutations, this would be a good time to challenge them to achieve eloquence in all the keys. It could either be prescribed to the student before learning this danza, or while working on it, as a long-term project and technique strengthening exercise.

**PASEO**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.10. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, harmonic diagram of paseo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PASEO : measures 1-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E major → A major → A minor → B major → E major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compositional Features:**

- The opening section is characterized by visible virtuosity with a sense of sentimentalism.
Passages that exhibit bravura and technical prowess are at the centerstage of this *paseo*.

Although partly flashy, this opening also displays moments of tenderness.

The passages here are a combination of arpeggios, large leaps, and turns; at times written in sequential fashion.

Although the harmonic movement is quite straight-forward, the addition of chromatic non-chord tones makes for a colorful sound palette.

- The left hand keeps an accompanying role throughout the *paseo*, allowing for the right hand to flourish.
- Hints of syncopated rhythms are achieved through accentuated or *sf*-marked eighth notes.

**General Performance Considerations:**

- In the choreographed *danza*, during the *paseo* the couples walk in circles showcasing themselves, the clothing, and allowing for the music to set the mood.

  The introduction of Quintón’s composition embodies that purpose:
  - Clearly showing off pianists’ technical abilities and sense of virtuosity.
  - *Capricciosamente* marking at the beginning denotes a certain attention-seeking character and improvisational introduction.
  - Other markings such as *espressivo*, *risoluto*, *allargando*, and *calmato*, point towards a variety of expressions and mood shifts within this section.

- The overall touch for the technical flourishes is light and fluid, resembling the writing of Claude Debussy.
Level 2

Five technical aspects that need individual attention in order to swiftly proceed with the learning of the entire composition:

1. Opening quintuplet gesture in the right hand:
   - Since it is a pick-up to the downbeat, this gesture cannot be heavy.
   - The musical and technical approach for this quintuplet ought to produce a flowing yet clear result.

   ⇨ Practice by starting on the second note of the quintuplet on finger four:
      - When starting on the second note, the motion from there on is descending, which enables you to trace the trajectory of the gesture without the hurdles of changing directions.

   ⇨ Practice by holding the first note longer, while the other four notes descend quickly as part of a single motion:
      - When doing so, avoid the accent of the thumb before crossing over the fourth finger:

   ➢ Practicing for a smooth transition of the fourth finger can be done by:
      - Holding the thumb on the note (in this case E) and moving back and forth between the second and fourth fingers on the notes G-sharp and D-sharp while always watching for the wrist to be floating.
Example 5.16. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, pick-up to m. 1.

2. Sixteenth-note triplets ascending sequence in the right hand:

- While it is necessary to outline the main notes of this ascent, they cannot stand out as accented.

- The only ‘arrival’ point of this gesture is the C-sharp in the second measure (marked with an accent).

- The momentum gained from the ascending sequence leads to the crescendo.

  Practice only the first notes of each triplet with the respective fingering by smoothly tracing the ascending line of F-sharp, C-sharp, F-sharp, C-sharp:

  - Release each key in the direction of the upper key.

  - Notice the position, particularly height of your wrist and elbow, and how this position changes with each new set of triplets, depending on the register.
Example 5.17. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, mm. 5-6.

- Understanding where your point of anchor is in this kind of passage helps in creating a smooth and undisturbed line, since your control of finger (small muscle) and forearm/arm (large muscle) will be more coherent.

- The challenging element in this passage is that the hand needs to modify its shape between narrow and open positions in a short span of time.
  - The passage is comprised of chromatic triplets and leaps of fifths and sixths.
  - Some of the leaps are placed from white to black key, and others vice-versa.
  - This changing figure conditions the height of the hand over the key and how each descent is approached.
  - Practice by repeating the chromatic triplet three times in place for each position:
    - This will offer you an aural insight to the desired evenness of touch.
  - Practice similarly but by clustering the first two notes of the triplets and holding that for an eighth note within the triplet rhythm.
  - Practice by grouping two notes at a time and shifting the starting note:
    - In doing so you are closing the gap between position and finger changes.

3. The left-hand cross-voiced counter melody:

- Within the left hand, there are three layers in the chordal setting.
• The first: the top voice starts the counter melody and sustains it (mm. 5-7).

• The second: the middle voice acts as a response to the sustained top voice (mm. 7-8).

• The third: the bottom voice remains softer and supports the moving lines by completing the chords.

Example 5.18. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, left-hand part in mm. 5-8.

4. Contrary motion jumps from triplet to chord (RH) and octave (LH) in mm. 9-10:

• Large leaps, particularly when happening simultaneously in both hands, can pose quite a challenge.

  ➢ Practice each hand separately first in order to fully concentrate on the motion:

    - Initially practice the jump from the first note of the triplet to the higher chord.
    - Then play the triplet too as part of that beat and as one gesture.

    ➢ If you can manage to play the eighth-note beats comfortably and always with the shape of the phrase in mind, then placing the triplets in the larger gesture will be much easier.

    ➢ Practice hands together by doing similar steps as for hands separate.

    ➢ Challenge yourself to play the entire passage softly:

    ➢ For softer sounds, you need to be on the key sooner to anticipate its resistance, hence practicing softly enables you to approach the shift faster.
Example 5.19. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, mm. 9-10.

Practice the opposite direction:

- Since the jump is from inside out, practice moving in the opposite direction.
- Start at the chord/octave and quickly shift towards the lower notes (the first notes of the triplets).

5. Descending diminished arpeggio in the right hand in m. 12.

*This passage, and other similar ones, can be played by splitting the gesture between the two hands (moment of hand change is marked in red in Example 5.20).

- In variation, this feature will appear often throughout the entire composition, and in this instance, it is an A-sharp fully diminished arpeggio.
- The dynamic marking is *ff* and *decrescendo*, which makes the seamless execution of this arpeggio somewhat troublesome.
Example 5.20. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, m. 12 with suggested right-hand fingering (notice the optional fifth finger over the fourth).*

- The crucial aspect to smoothen out first is the turning point between fingers one and four (or five).
  - Practice by blocking each diminished chord and noticing the shape and alignment of the hand as it descends through the registers.
  - If you decide to split the arpeggio, then a similar tactic may be applied to both hands.
  - Play fifth finger or thumb (beginning or continuation of arpeggio) separately and block the remaining three notes.
  - Continue further by holding the first note of every group (the G) slightly longer as you rapidly descend with the subsequent notes.
  - To begin with, stop for every group of four notes, then eight, then the entire gesture of twelve notes:
    - While doing this, move past the finger turn as lightly as possible by avoiding potential accents on the thumb or the fourth (fifth) fingers.
- Stay close to the key when approaching its descent and release in the direction of the following note.

- It is very important to switch stopping points or arrival points by starting the grouping on the second, third, fourth note, and so forth:
  
  ^ the same could be accomplished by imagining the bar line shift.

➾ In order to feel more confident with the shape of this arpeggio, practice in both directions, ascending and descending.

**THEME 1, *Più lento***

**Level 1**

Figure 5.11. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, harmonic diagram of theme 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 1: measures 19-34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E major → G-sharp minor → C-sharp minor → E-flat major → B-flat major → E major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compositional Features:**

- Similar to many other *danzas*, the thematic material (melody) is written in chords, or harmonic intervals.

- In this case, the left-hand syncopation on a written-out variation of *tresillo elástico* is on the second of the two measures and its pattern lines up with the right-hand rhythm.

- The melody is enveloped in the embellishing material, both in the right and left hands.

- Phrase lengths are regular (four + four).

- On the first measure of each group of four, the left hand is embellished by scalar passages which accumulate resonance and provide a different color.
Example 5.21. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, the melodic line is circled in red, while the typical rhythmic feature of the *danza* is clear in m. 30 denoted by a blue rectangle.

General Performance Considerations:

- The first theme seems to be both spirited and sensuous.

- Due to the embellishing passages, its character still inhabits the capricious charm of the *paseo*.

- Since the melody is written in chordal texture, voicing is the first important aspect to target:
  - The range of the first phrase is quite low, hindering the top voice from being projected easily.
  - The composer marks *sentito il canto* providing a clear demand for the prominence of the melody.

- Due to the dense scalar passages of the left hand, pedaling needs constant attention in order to avoid the accumulation of too much resonance:
  - Often changing (flutter) pedal may help in controlling the volume.
    - Perhaps also cleaning it up completely at the end of the passage.

- The sequential nature of the phrases lends itself to repetitiveness:
The performer needs to experiment with and plan for dynamics, pacing, and at times diverse articulations for the sake of variability.

Since the melodic line is broken by fragments of arpeggios and scales, it is important for the performer to attentively listen at the moment of tone production, receive quick aural feedback and be able to sustain (aurally) the segmented melody.

It could be a useful exercise to play only the melodic content and the longer notes in the left hand without the rest of the texture.

In this section, as well as all the following thematic materials, memorization is put to the test due to the different endings of each section:

Similar with large-scale works—i.e. sonata form—one needs to strike a balance between practicing the varying endings back to back, and entirely isolated from one another:

- It is important to be aware of the conflicting information being sent to the memory retention process, possibly negating the time spent in practicing if not careful.

- Having a steady and equal amount of practice of each ending by itself, as well as in comparison to one another could be helpful in creating the right pathway for a swift and accurate memory retrieval.

Level 2

- The left-hand scalar passages should sound as if they are gliding through.

- Similar strategies of rhythm and accents practice used for scales in technique training will work well in developing an even execution.
For a systematic approach to scale virtuosity, work with the second book of Alberto Jonás’ *Master School of Piano Playing and Virtuosity*.\(^8^4\)

- Since the dynamic indication is *p*, it could be difficult to control the dynamic and preserve the fluidity in this passage.

- Practice with a louder dynamic to begin with, perhaps *mf*:
  - This will give you the confidence in the shape and direction of this passage, as well as establish a good connection between the fingers and the keys.

- Once you have assimilated the notes of the passage, work your way to the softer dynamic:
  - Stay close to the key and on the tips of your fingers so that you can control the key descent with more viability.
  - While practicing at a *p* level, see if you can soften the articulation of each note and use more of the padded area of your fingers:
    - This way, you could be able to produce an airier, more coloristic sound, resembling that needed for much of the music of French Impressionism.

- A sudden cadence to E-flat minor of the first ending takes one by surprise:

  - Certainly, the performer has a clear idea of such cadence approaching, however it should sound as a fresh and new diversion from the expected turn.

    - It is here that the dynamic indication for the left-hand scalar figuration changes:

      - Instead of *crescendo* (as in all previous instances), the indication is a *decrescendo*, calling more attention on the minor resolution.

---

After the cadence, an oblique chromatic passage in octaves leads us back to the beginning of the theme.

- The second ending proceeds with great flair and elegance as E major scalar passages ascend in *brioso* style through the dominant-tonic cadences.

**Level 3**

**Contrary motion challenge:**

- Practice the embellishing passages of both hands one after the other and notice any differences between the execution of each hand.

  - Generally, there is always one hand that is more fluent than the other (conditioned by previous training or default mechanisms).

  - The hand that appears to be behind, can ‘learn’ from the advanced hand by noticing approach to the key resistance, speed of attack, and release of the key.

  - Play the same passage in contrary motion since the same fingers in both hands play at the same time.

**THEME 2**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.12. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, harmonic diagram of theme 2.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 2 : measures 35-54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C major → A minor → B-flat major → F major → C major → (A-flat major) → C7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
Compositional Features:

- Surprising key choice for the second theme (far relation to E major, hinting at a possible VI chord relationship with E minor, or the $b$VI in E Major).
- The register covered by the texture is wider than in the first theme.
- The melodic content is clearly differentiated from the accompaniment as it is further spread across the range of the piano.
- The syncopated left-hand figuration appears only on the second measure of a four-measure phrase.
- Left-hand embellished gestures feature ascending and descending pentascales of varying qualities, much like the five-finger patterns found in exercise books.

General Performance Considerations:

- Flamboyant is a word that comes to mind for this section.
- While the first theme was marked *Più lento*, and there is no tempo change here, the second theme could flow more.
  - The content of the left hand could become motoric if not shaped appropriately, and a quicker pace could aid that.
- Mm. 49-50 of the first ending have a glissando ranging two octaves
  - Based on the wave-like effect that seems to be desired, the meter, and tempo of the composition, it could be possible to extend this gesture to three octaves for the building of momentum.
- Mm. 47-52 of the second ending expand on the pentascales by sequencing on the tonic and dominant chords, until in m. 51 when the dominant C chord is placed underneath a cascading scale based on the V/IV leading to the F Major of the following section.
This gesture resembles the glissando of the first ending in that it creates a certain tidal effect.

Its execution should not be seen as a generic descending scale, but more so as a virtuosic passage found in a rhapsody of Liszt.

**Level 2**

Split harmonic intervals in the right hand (varying articulations between the two voices):

Example 5.22. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, mm. 35-37.

- Particular attention needs to be given to the different articulation type (staccato on the top voice and detached, but not staccato on the bottom voice).
- In order to gain sufficient precision of this element, the following practicing strategy could help:
  - Sustain the bottom notes longer while the top staccato notes are repeated lightly with quick attack of depressing and releasing of the key.
- Although the top voice is written as staccato for all the notes in the measure, the second time around, it could be interesting to vary the articulation by slurring two notes, particularly in m. 44 due to the harmonic movement of $V^7$ of A-flat major.
- The two-note slurs will create a more expansive feel contrasting with the light-hearted mood of the first time.

- This, paired with a more grandiose attitude of the entire repeat, particularly in the placement of the chords, could produce a pleasant character change.

Left-hand scalar passages with crescendo towards the sf of the next downbeat:

- These gestures create the allusion that the chord itself is growing in volume.

  - We know that this is not possible on the piano, however listening to the growth of this sweeping gesture, inspires the performer to imagine a crescendo within the chord.

  - This allusion helps in avoiding a sense of verticality that can easily become repetitive in such angular phrases.

First and second endings light staccato right-hand passages:

- There are two measures where the right hand is set to light, staccato thirds, sixths, and octaves.

Example 5.23. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, mm. 43-44 with suggested fingering for the harmonic intervals in the right hand.
Each shift of intervals should be practiced by anticipation since the relationship of white-black key and open-close hand shape is abruptly changing.

As with every double-note notation, voicing is essential for an elegant delivery of the figuration.

Focusing on the right hand: Practice by repeating twice each interval softly and lightly.

- When shifting from one interval to the other, anticipate the new position by releasing the previous key speedily and in that direction.

Since we inevitably pay attention to the top voice, it would be helpful for the consistency of sound and articulation to practice also the bottom voice alone with correct fingering.

Descending scale over C dominant seventh chord in mm. 51-52:

- This element requires careful pedaling:
  - As the scale descends towards the lowest end of the register the thickness of the strings provides a bigger resonance.
  - In order to avoid unnecessary accumulation of noise, flutter the pedal increasingly until you let go of it completely as you approach the last five notes of the passage.

**THEME 3 + BRIDGE**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.13. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, harmonic diagram of theme 3 and bridge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 3 + BRIDGE : measures 55-85 + 86-93</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F major ➔ E major ➔ A major (minor) ➔ F major ➔ V₇ of E major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compositional Features:

- This section exhibits a certain warmth in tone, yet retaining the flightiness of the paseo with the embellishing segments that are inserted in between the melodic material.
- The embellishing elements in this section are a combination of:
  - Chord-tone and chromatic arpeggios (both in quintuplets).
  - Trills in the counter melody of the left hand.
  - Sixteenth-note triplet figurations in the right hand shifting in openness and closeness of the hand position.
- The texture of the recapitulation of theme 1 is foreshadowed in the bridge.
  - The melodic content is split between right and left hands, as is the embellishing material.
  - The two hands trade roles until the cadential figure in m. 92.

General Performance Considerations:

- The most challenging aspect of this section, besides technical assimilation of the material, is listening for the melodic continuity as the embellishing gestures envelop it.
- The varied and thicker texture, coupled with the cross-voicing of the melody written in chords or harmonic intervals between the right and left hands, add to the challenge.
- Dynamic stratification between sequences, as well as within each one is crucial for this section due to the juxtaposition of multiple layers.
- The third theme stands between the climactic descent in the final measure of theme 2, and the bridge that prepares the return of theme 1:
  - While each gesture seems to be ramping up energy and resonance, it does not ever climax dynamically to a point of arrival.
Its resolution in F major in m. 86 is subdued and fleeting with only one outburst in m. 92 at the end of the bridge, where the harmonic instability of F-sharp fully-diminished chord is highlighted by the right-hand descending arpeggio leading to the dominant of the recapitulation key, E major.

It is challenging to execute this section with grace and elegance in the embellishing passages, yet with intensity of expression in the melodic fragments.

**Level 2**

The embellishing passages in this section should all be treated individually due to the distinct intervallic content of each one (e.g. mm. 56, 60, 64).

- With the intention of creating a sweeping descending gesture, the fingering that seems appropriate for all is 5-4-3-2-1.
- Due to the shift in register, the placement of the hand and fingers on the keys changes with each octave:
  - A wrist position higher than the bridge of the hand can aid making the passage lighter.

Example 5.24. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, the right-hand embellishing figuration in m. 56.
• Practice slowly, but with a clear aim in mind and ear for the final product:

  ⊰ In slow practice, do not neglect the speed at which the finger depresses the key.

  ⊰ Similarly to the practice strategies of the *paseo*, these passages could be helped with:

    - Varied rhythm and articulation practice.
    - Note groupings and shifting their starting point.
    - Chunk the fifth, fourth, and third fingers (played together as a cluster) and using the last two notes move on to the next group.
    - And “gestural” exercises where one note is held longer and the subsequent notes (in groups of four, five, and continuously increasing) are played swiftly and lightly.

  ➢ There are two ways to approach the above practice; by landing on the long note and by simply transitioning through it.

  ⊰ The aim for all the above methods is to produce a light, coloristic effect of these embellishing passages, and a non-obtrusive overlaid texture for the melody.

**For the ascending triplet passages, similar to the one in m. 58:**

• Practice transitioning between the first notes of each triplet:

  ⊰ Swiftly move horizontally while visually and aurally imagining the notes in between.

    - In doing so, you are creating for yourself a map of the contour in the gesture
Example 5.25. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, the right-hand triplet figuration in m. 58.

- In wanting to find a grouping without a turn in direction, think of one beginning with the second note of the triplet, as opposed to the first one.
  - The second note leads more organically towards the top of the line and it traces more smoothly the intervallic relationship between the notes of the triplets.
  - Practice each triplet by starting on the second note and stopping at the arrival note for a fraction of a second, before moving on to the next gesture.
    - While doing this exercise, the first note of the triplet may become heavier than intended.
  - The final goal is to have a smooth passage throughout, without any angularity to it.
    - For this reason, it is important to continuously shift the starting and stopping point of the passage, in order to create co-existing layers of the same string of notes.
  - Depending on what is your natural inclination, you would either rotate according to the outer notes or the inner notes.
- Practicing by playing only the top note of the third and continuing on with the patterns and switching with the lower note only will reveal which is the default technical approach.

➤ Depending on the outcome, practicing then should be balanced in such a way to create the right sound, and not being playing out of technical habit.

**Level 3**

**Special Challenges:**

- Consider writing up or highlighting only the notes where the thematic material appears.

  ➤ Play both hands by only following this line and letting go of all embellishing material.

  ➤ This will give you a clearer understanding of the shape and structure of the theme, the harmonic rhythm, and it will bring out more prominently the main voices.

  ➤ After having done so sufficiently, play yet again only the main thematic material – this time pretend as if you are playing the other notes by simply tracing the gestures with your hand and without sounding the keys.

  ➤ After having practiced well enough and solidified the passages with the previously-mentioned steps, the bird’s-eye view of this section will enable you to move beyond the numerous notes and follow the larger scheme trajectory.

**Interesting musical and extra-musical reference:**

- The right-hand flourishes, such as in mm. 68 and 69, sonically resemble the sound of the *coqui*. 85

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85 The “mascot of Puerto Rico” – a native miniscule frog that makes an astonishingly loud sound, its name is given to it onomatopoeically. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiLxQXA38nA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiLxQXA38nA)
Quintón wrote a *danza* onomatopoeically depicting this curiously-sounding animal.⁸⁶

Example 5.26. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza Puertorriqueña No. 3*, the right-hand triplet pattern in mm. 68-69.

![RETURN OF THEME 1](image)

**RETURN OF THEME 1**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.14. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, harmonic diagram of the return of theme 1.

RETURN OF THEME 1 : measures 96-112

E major → G-sharp minor → B major → C-sharp minor
→ E major → D-sharp fully diminished → E major

Compositional Features:

- The thematic material remains the same as in initial statement of this theme.

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⁸⁶ Listen to it here, performed by Luciano Quiñones, and see if you can imagine this sound when you approach the gestures in mm. 68 and 69, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhEWovqraX0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhEWovqraX0)
• The theme is now shared between right and left hand and it is enveloped in the embellishing material.

• Embellishing arpeggios and scales are expanded by one more octave.

• This section is by far the most chromatic.

• The intensity is built as the register keeps moving higher throughout the section and the dynamic levels are increased.

**General Performance Considerations:**

• The return of the first theme begins with the same relaxed approach as its initial statement.
  
  ➤ By its second measure (m. 95) the cross-voicing takes over and this is one of the main aspects of the execution for this section.

• The composer has marked this section *tenuto il canto*:
  
  ➤ The performer ought to always sustain the sound of the melody in their mind and ear as they move through the widely-ranged embellishments.

  ➤ This allows for the theme to be present constantly in the performer’s perspective as well as clear for the listener.

**Level 2**

• Use the time to fully get to know the right and left hands independently of one another and practice each element separately.

• Part of the success in execution of this section is the ability to clearly differentiate not only rationally, but also aurally between moving and embellishing elements, versus thematic ones.
• All the right-hand flourishes are chromatic and difficult to assimilate due to the numerous accidentals and ‘inconvenient’ intervallic relationships.

Example 5.27a. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, m. 103 with suggested fingering for both hands.

Example 5.27b. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, m. 105 with suggested fingering for both hands.
Example 5.27c. José Ignacio Quintón, *Danza puertorriqueña No. 3*, m. 107 with suggested fingering for both hands.

- Practice with smaller groups of notes and see if you can find fingering or intervallic patterns that aid you in remembering the relationship between the notes:
  - You may use the suggested fingering in the example above, especially since it is less common than the typical scalar fingering.

- Each one of the gestures with fifteen notes, for practicing purposes, could be split in seven and eight:
  - The group of eight notes lines up well with the two sixteenth notes of the left hand.

- In mm. 108 and 109, the stretched out, arpeggiated left-hand chords appear to hinder the flow of the phrases.

- Consider taking the top note of each chord, respectively E-sharp and F-sharp with the thumb of the right hand in order to preserve the momentum of the passage.
CODA

Level 1

Figure 5.15. José Ignacio Quintón, Danza puertorriqueña No. 3, harmonic diagram of coda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODA : measures 110-125</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E major → A minor → E major → A-sharp fully diminished → B7 → E major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compositional Features:

- The coda combines musical materials of the first and second themes.
- For fourteen measures, it meanders around E major and E minor with similar gestures of the first two themes, but less assertive as it is all in a softer, more subdued dynamic.
- The last two measures are marked with striking accented ff on a syncopated beat.

General Performance Considerations:

- Due to the similarity of musical content with the first two themes, it is up to the performer to create the anticipation of the composition coming to an end.
- The final chords, seemingly appearing as a surprise, could benefit from a less driven coda, which would enhance their effect further.
  - Dynamic levels will need to be controlled within their smaller range in all the passages.
  - The sf chords will need to be paced in such a way that hints at the resolution of the work, refraining from any sense of opulence and saving this expression for the end.
- Although placed on a syncopated beat paired with accents, the final chords could be seen as somewhat expansive.
Example 5.28. José Ignacio Quintón, Danza puertorriqueña No. 3, mm. 124-125.

The composer marks this final thought as “pesante” reaffirming the grandeur and scope of the composition.

Their reach is wide enough that it will require most pianists, if not all, to arpeggiate them.

Another option for the execution of these chords is using a spezzato division (two + one, or one + two notes).

This manner of approaching the chords gives them more resonance, which might be needed to achieve the desired lavish effect at the end of this danza.

4. *Tus caricias* by José Enrique Pedreira\(^{87}\)

*Tus caricias* [Your Caresses] (1944) is a substantial composition in regards to musical content and technical features, as well as a representative example of the danza for

\(^{87}\) The edition used for this performance and study is published by Edward B. Marks Music Corporation.
piano. Compositions such as this one are characterized by a certain charm, nostalgia, longing, and declamatory nature.

*Tus caricias* is in the key of E minor, with the exception of the third theme which unfolds in its parallel major key. Its construction adheres mostly to the expected order of the sections: it begins with the introduction and proceeds to a string of three distinct themes. Before the reinstatement of the first theme, there is a connecting section (bridge) which presents materials from the second theme, with harmonic and melodic innovation.

Being a pianist himself, José Enrique Pedreira performed most of his music, and fortunately there are a few recordings of his playing, including one of *Tus caricias*. In his rendition, Pedreira leaves out the repeats, however within each section he takes the liberty of adding notes between phrases and creating different transitions. These additions are either single notes, turns, or simple arpeggiatos. In my performance, I have chosen to take the repeats, and use the second time to add a few embellishments. The repeat of each section also allows for a certain level of experimentation with pace, tempo, rubato, and inflection.

**PASEO**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.16. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*, harmonic diagram of *paseo*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PASEO: measures 1-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E minor → C major → E minor → tonicization of B major → E minor (V7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compositional Features:**

- The melodic content of the *paseo* is set in thirds and fifths.
• This section is marked Moderato and there is a sense of swaying movement to it until the Agitato in the last phrase that pushes the tempo forward.

• The left hand is characterized by large leaps of octaves and blocked-chord inversions of the harmonic outline.

• The lead-in to the Agitato phrase starts off with broken chords spread throughout both hands, creating the impression of a wide arpeggio.

• Closing the section is a cadential figuration of staccato right hand, an element which is sprinkled throughout the left hand in the rest of the composition.

**General Performance Considerations:**

• The two voices could represent:
  
  ⊳ Pedreira and his wife (the dedicatee).

  ⊳ The dance setting of two lines in the *contradanza’s* choreography—one for women and one for men.

• The texture of the introduction makes balancing of melody and accompaniment quite challenging.

• It is important to create phrases that have continuous legato, dynamic and pace fluctuation, as well as balance within the hand.

• Due to the large leaps of the left hand, the performer needs to devote particular attention to smooth transitions.

**Level 2**

**Tackling the right-hand passage work:**

• Fingering decision is of utmost importance.

  ⊳ For suggested fingering, see the example below:
Example 5.29. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*. opening measures of *paseo* with suggested fingering for the thirds and fifths in the right hand, mm. 1-4.

**Moderato**

- Voicing needs to be practiced continuously.
  - Hold the top voice in *mf* while you repeat twice the bottom voice in *p*:
    - While doing so, notice the angle of your wrist and slight bounce that enables you to “walk” through the passage without stiffness.

- Fluidity of the phrase requires connection of each new position.
  - Practice by grouping the notes as if they were slurred in two, then shift the grouping to the next two notes:
    - While doing so, pay attention to the relaxation of the wrist between each new group.

**Light yet supportive left hand:**

- Practicing should include a good amount of preparation and anticipation exercises to avoid accented chords and octaves in the bass.
  - Practice by moving swiftly and without sounding the notes (simple physical preparation to play it) from one chord to the octave:
    - Check that the positioning of the hand is on the accurate notes.
  - When practicing these distances add a few repetitions with the right hand playing along in order to have some relative timing aim in mind.
- A metronome marking range of quarter note = 56-80 could aid in having a timing reference.

- Being sooner on the key in order to play softer and control the placement of the chord is essential in maintaining the balanced levels between melody and accompaniment.

  - Be sure to always listen carefully as you place each chord and octave, when practicing hands separately as well as together.

  - Within the quick shifts to each new position, you need to also be careful with the voicing of the upper chords, as well as the simultaneous placement of all three notes on the keys, otherwise they will sound closer to an arpeggiato.

  - Practicing various combinations of two notes for each of the chords (bottom and middle voice / top and middle voice / top and bottom voice) helps to attain the desired balance.

**Level 3**

**Special challenges for the paseo:**

- Thirds are one of the hardest intervals to voice appropriately due to the closer frequency.

  - Challenge yourself to be able to play the right-hand thirds and fifths passages faster and softer.

  - To do so, you will need to practice by smoothly and quickly transitioning from one position to the next, since you need to start the sound sooner in order to play softer.

  - While challenging yourself to do this, keep paying attention to the voicing: the top voice should sound like a continuous melodic line.
Being able to play separate voices with steady tempo and correct fingering can aid this process.

Shifting the starting point and emphasis (strong beat) of the grouping of two notes facilitates building of speed, because it can then create a stream of two layers, each to be followed comfortably, but overlapping.

- Attempt a mirror exercise for the left-hand movement.88
- Below is an example of the mirror method for m. 4. You may choose to create your own for other spots that you find challenging:

Example 5.30. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*. left-hand figuration in the original octave, while right-hand is mirroring it in C Major (symmetrical), m. 4.

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88 Why is symmetrical practice helpful? In essence, as it is known, the right side of our body is controlled by the left hemisphere in the brain and vice-versa. There are connections between the similar areas in both sides of the brain, and by using symmetrical practicing tools, we are drawing on the strengths of the individual sides simultaneously. In other words, the hands are teaching each-other how to best practice.
THEME 1

Level 1

Figure 5.17. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*, harmonic diagram of theme 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 1 : measures 18-39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E minor → vii&lt;sup&gt;07&lt;/sup&gt; → G major → B&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt; → E minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compositional Features:**

- The melody is written predominantly in double thirds, sixths, and octaves, and it is mostly in long notes.

- The marked phrases are short, and at times irregular (two or three measures, with brief extensions).

- The left hand is busier than in the *paseo*.

- The syncopation is present mostly every two measures.

- The arpeggio figuration is a combination of wide and narrow distances, needing flexibility in adjusting the relative contraction and expansion of the hand.

- In m. 23, the cadential staccato rhythmic figuration initially stated in the *paseo* appears in the left hand, as the melody continues its legato descent.

- Overlapping phrase inflections between the two hands.

**General Performance Considerations:**

- Since the melody is articulated in long notes, the process of sustaining the continuity of the melodic line is quite challenging.

  - It is actually physically impossible to sustain the sound and continue, and it is only to a creating the illusion that we attribute the term legato.
• Right-hand fluency and legato can be helped with consistent and careful choice of fingering.
  ⇧ Consider voice importance, most prominently in this case, the top voice.
  ⇧ Fingering should be based on finger legato of the top voice wherever possible:
    - Finger legato is not always the most appropriate and necessary way to attain legato.
    - Smoothness of forearm motion and mobility range of the wrist should always be taken into account.

• Voicing remains a basic, yet important element to solve:
  ⇧ As a preliminary step: practice by physically leaving the keys on the lower notes and sustaining the sound by the use of pedal only, in favor of melodic sound from the arm.

• Left-hand arpeggios need to be smooth, creating a continuous shape across the bar lines.

• The tenuto marks are good reminders of the necessity of rubato rendition.

• Freedom of pulse is created also by a shift of syncopation emphasis, generally present only every two measures.

• Independence of the role of each hand is essential.

**Level 2**

**Mastering the melodic contour of the right hand:**

• Although written with longer note values than the *paseo*, the eloquence needed in the right hand in this first thematic material relies heavily on mastering the technique of legato singing tone.
• Practice the melody in two ways:
  - Without rhythm, watching for smooth, even, and singing sound.
    - In order to achieve this sound quality, the fingering needs to be coordinated with the larger arm motion.
    - Practice by using the pedal for each tone production, without feeling the pressure of sustaining the notes physically.
      ➢ While doing so imagine the phrase and shape against the decaying sound.
    - While using the pedal and no direct connection of the notes, practice dynamic control by playing each one louder and softer systematically.
      ➢ All these steps help for the wrist and forearm movement to be correlated with fingering changes and dynamic control.
  - With rhythm, but faster than the tempo, particularly the long notes.

• Sustaining the continuity of the long melodic line, especially when indicated by slurs:
  - Avoid accentuation in the middle of the phrase (unless marked with tenuto).
    - Especially important: listen carefully and pay attention to the end of the prior sound so that the next one can continue at approximately the same level of volume.
    - This exercise of ‘matching’ of the previous tone will create a sense of continuity, never letting the phrase die away.
  - Familiarity with fingering changes and transitions from one position to the next will allow for the natural weight to be carried from one note to the other, and will decrease the potential for tense playing.
**Left-hand arpeggios:**

- For achieving smooth, flowing motion of arpeggios, practice by anticipating the distance between notes:
  - For each preparation, particularly in wider intervals, notice your release of the tension from the wrist and lead with the bigger muscles (forearm, arm).
  - Remove rhythm from the equation and only play the notes with accurate fingering as if they were part of a continuous motion.
  - Practice with different rhythms and groupings (dotted eighth + sixteenth and variants).

- Pedaling and inflection is not always based on the harmonic rhythm:
  - Although the arpeggio within the measure tends to be of one chord, multiple pedal changes can produce a lighter and more nuanced effect.
  - Although the syncopation is generally every two measures, this should not be considered a formula for repetitive rubato.

**The necessity of hand independence:**

- A complete independence of the hands is needed to allow for autonomous shaping.
- The disparity in subdivision, by itself, is not an issue (if certain beats can be anchored the same way).
  - Overlapping phrase inflections between the hands may cause angular melodic shaping, with unwanted accents.
  - The shaping required for each hand does not allow notes played together to be prepared together (or approached similarly).
Influence of the left-hand syncopation may obstruct the right hand from smoothly following its lyrical trajectory.

- When practicing this section, create a greater difference of volume between right and left hands in order to discern each one’s shape clearly.
- Make certain that the right-hand sound producing motions are slower and less sudden.
- Follow through aurally with each note played in the same hand directly so that the preparation for the next one is timed right.
  ➢ Paired with that, the suspended arm can then relax while the busier left hand catches up.
  ➢ Having an aural cue of the continuation of the line aids in detracting some of the physical tension that can accumulate instinctively in an attempt to connect the melodic contour.

Level 3

Special challenges for theme 1:

- Illusion of different instrumentation in the left hand:
  ➢ Particularly when not slurred, the left hand can be more assertively articulated to produce a more distinctive rhythmic character.
  ➢ A quick pedal change (flutter-pedal) can aid in creating the sonority of a guitar strum, adding a variety of colors.

- Varied voicing for the right hand:
  ➢ Since the section repeats, the second time around, the lower voice of the third could take a foreground role.
THEME 2

Level 1

Figure 5.18. José Enrique Pedreira, Tus caricias, harmonic diagram of theme 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 2 : measures 40-55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A minor → B major → A minor → B7 → E minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compositional Features:

- The melodic content showcases a more open and resonant sound in octaves later followed by thirds and sixths.
- The dynamic indication of *f* asks for a more expansive, yet energized sound.
- The half-diminished-seventh submediant chord creates a new color before leading to the cadence.
- The left-hand part consists of bigger jumps between the bass and the continuation of the arpeggio.

General Performance Considerations:

- One of the most challenging aspects of this section is creating the “illusion” of legato in octave playing in the right hand.
- The abrupt dynamic change within four measures, from *f* to *p* requires swift preparation as a large chord needs to be played softly.
  - The descending left-hand arpeggio and long note in the right hand help this *subito* dynamic change.
If the soft execution of the chord is troublesome—notes not landing together and voicing not reflecting the importance of the top note—it would be useful to practice by depressing and holding the top note first, then slowly filling in the remainder of the chord.

- Practice in this way both by starting right on the chord and by playing the measure before, thus creating the connection between the two.

Although to the audience this dynamic dip should appear surprising, the performer needs to control such change seamlessly.

**Level 2**

**Targeting legato octave playing:**

- A productive starting point would be to practice sustaining the top voice (fourth and fifth fingers) while releasing the bottom (thumbs) and smoothly transitioning from one octave to the next.

  This approach makes for a lighter, more in control, and less square gestural playing, while affording more control.

**Left-hand leaps:**

- Brisk preparation of left-hand movement in anticipation of the soft low notes is necessary.

  Practice by moving towards the low note, staying close to the key and faster than the performance tempo.

  Transition from the low note to the first note of the *arpeggiated* figuration by not sounding the note.
Do the same exercise **toward** the low note, creating the cue and connection between them.

**THEME 3**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.19. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*, harmonic diagram of theme 3.

**Compositional Features:**

- This is the first instance where the melodic line consists of one voice.
- The composer marks it *cantabile* and *p* and there are no great climactic moments.
- The texture thickens quickly by m. 60, where the right-hand part is written in sixths.
- The left hand also displays more interesting intervallic content, particularly with the florid descending motions at the end of each phrase.
- This section can be divided into two sub-sections (mm. 56-72 and mm. 73-88).
- The re-harmonization of similar melodic content leads the music out of the major key, as it speedily transitions into the key of E minor of the following section.

**General Performance Considerations:**

- The legato leap of the interval of the sixth, from the pick-up note B to G-sharp on the downbeat and its descent suggest a vocal quality of the melody, resembling a folk song tune.
In fact, when present, the third thematic material of the danza is nicknamed, *canto del bombardino* [the song of the euphonium], implying that in this section, the euphonium would step out of the accompanying role and take over the melody.

- Although the composer does not establish a tempo change, a slightly slower tempo allows for:
  - The indulgence of the tenuto marks and swaying rhythm and the luscious florid content of the left hand.
  - The enunciation of the ‘unexpected’ intervallic distances.
  - In the example shown below, I have marked this theme *poco più lento*:
    - Playing the E major section at a slower tempo creates an unexpected shift of mood, since it projects a dreamy more nostalgic character, similarly to a minor section in a Chopin waltz.

Example 5.31. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*. The tempo marking in italic is my suggestion. The remaining markings are original based on the edition used.
Level 2

Flowering left-hand figuration in mm. 62-63 and mm. 71-72:

• Decide on effective fingering based on distances, phrasing, and hand predisposition (everyone’s physique is different).

  ⇔ Below is my suggested fingering for each passage:

Example 5.32. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*. Fingering suggestion for the left-hand passage in mm. 62-63.

![Example 5.32](image)

Example 5.33. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*. Fingering suggestion for the left-hand passage in mm. 71-72.

![Example 5.33](image)

• Practice each example with varied rhythmic patterns, articulations, and accents:

  ⇔ The example below shows: in red – articulations; blue – rhythmic groupings; green – accentuations.

  ⇔ When practicing rhythmic groupings, notice the direction and position of wrist and forearm.
Played differently from a regular arpeggio, the shift in direction at irregular rate demands closer attention to anticipation and movement of the entire mechanism.

Example 5.34. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*, additional articulation, dynamic, and rhythmic practice.

Level 3

Special challenge for Theme 3:

- Get creative by adding scalar figuration, turns, mordents, or any other embellishing elements:
  
  - These are particularly effective in moments of dissonance, phrase endings, or pick up to phrase openings.
  
  - The video recording has a few additions of brief embellishments added, should you want to use them as reference. However, the possibilities are many.

- In mm. 66-69, try varying the prominent voice and/or hand:
  
  - Modify the articulation of the left hand the second time.
  
  - Play around with timing between the entrances of each hand without disrupting the overall flow of the music.

- Add lyrics to melodic line of mm. 56-59:
Many danzas were attributed lyrics after their initial composition.

If you were to sing this descending melody, how would that inform your playing?

**BRIDGE**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.20. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*. harmonic diagram of the bridge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRIDGE : measures 89-104</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E minor → G major → A minor → G major → E minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compositional Features:**

- This section begins similarly to Theme 2, only this time with more vigor.
- By m. 93, the harmonic movement suggests a shift to the key of G Major with a persisting pedal tone of D (V of G) as the section moves towards its half-cadence on V7 of E minor.

**General Performance Considerations:**

- In m. 91 there is an added syncopation in the right hand which gives the pulse slightly more bounce.
- Voicing continues to be an essential element of this section as the melody is again in octaves, chords, thirds, or fifths.
- If Theme 3 is played slightly slower, you need to consider the transition into this section.
  - There is not one single answer to making this transition smooth and musical.
玺  The dynamic indication of the composer (f) makes it more difficult to avoid a clear break between them:
  - With that said though, both scenarios are interpretational suggestion.
  - If you choose to keep the same tempo for the third theme, then the transition will be more straightforward.

**Level 2**

Right-hand octave passage in m. 94:

- The high register setting of the right-hand octave passage deserves close attention, since our body perceives the placement of each register differently.

  - Practice only thumbs with a good frame of the hand (bridge) as is you were to play the complete octave.

  - Trace with your wrist the low to high movement from white to black keys.

  - As you swiftly transition from one key to the other, release horizontally and anticipate the next position.

  - Apply the same strategy to the top voice.

**Level 3**

- As mentioned above, the composer was a pianist himself and he often varied his interpretation of the piece.

  - Explore various ways to approach tempo, dynamics, and articulations by slightly manipulating each parameter within a tasteful range.
RETURN OF THEME 1

Level 1

Figure 5.21. José Enrique Pedreira, *Tus caricias*, harmonic diagram of the return of theme 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RETURN OF THEME 1 : measures 113-134</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E minor → vii⁹⁷ → B⁷ → E minor → G major → A minor → (B⁷) E minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compositional Features:

- This reiteration of theme 1 is identical to its initial statement until m. 131:
  - The harmonic intervallic descent is now written in triplets as opposed to sixteenth and eighth notes.
  - The phrase lengths from m. 122 until the end are not regular, creating the feeling of an unresolved, abrupt ending.

General Performance Considerations:

- The last phrase of the piece consists of an odd number of measures (thirteen).
- In this setting, the codetta—of only two measures, taken from the *paseo* closing material—appears abruptly by cutting the previous phrase off.
  - Due to the sudden break in phrase continuity, a feeling of unresolved and incomplete end may seem quite surprising.
- The performer will need to experiment with various timing options until finding a fit that complements the tempo and pace of the entire section.
  - Consider how instrumentation would affect such shift in texture.
If this were a different instrument—perhaps percussion—or a subset of a larger group, other than the prevailing one throughout the section, imagine how much time such a shift in timbre and personnel would take.

- This may be a good starting point at gauging the fitting amount of time that could make sense musically of such a drastic change.

**Level 3**

**Special challenges of interpretation:**

- In order to step away from repetitiveness and predictability:
  - Practice the first phrase of the return of theme 1 softer than all other instances of the same theme.
  - Create the space for a *tranquillo* reiteration, almost like an echo, evoking a memory-like sensibility.
  - Consider staying slightly slower (not as slow as Theme 3).
  - Experiment with right-hand timing in m. 125 by manipulating the placement of the eighth notes without disrupting the overall pulse of the measure (achieving a certain rhythmic sway/swing).

5. **Mercedes by Héctor Campos-Parsi**

Héctor Campos-Parsi dedicated this *danza* to doña Mercedes Sanromá, the wife of eminent Puerto Rican pianist, Jesús María Sanromá.\(^{89}\) Ernesto Alonso Rivera comments

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\(^{89}\) Jesús María Sanromá was well-known internationally for his exquisite touch and refined interpretations. He is regarded as one of the greatest Puerto Rican performers of the music of the twentieth century. Rivera, *Partituras inéditas*, 82.
that with Campos-Parsi’s *Mercedes danza* was brought to modernity, where various details in the composition project a new ideal of the genre, for instance:

…the abundant nuances, interesting phrasing, the harmonic language rich in dissonances, as well as diversity of articulations and expressive indications, all provide an added color and layer to the composition, unknown to the genre up until this point.  

The *danza Mercedes* is a synthesis of compositional devices used by previous generations of illustrious composers. In it can be found the elegant breadth of phrases of Tavárez, the daring rhythmic crispness and improvisatory nature of Morel Campos, the virtuosic and expansive passages of Quintón, and the independently-intricate left-hand writing of Pedreira. Furthermore, the texture and layering of the voices resemble the writing of Johannes Brahms.

Campos-Parsi varies most of the elements constantly, particularly between the themes and does not stifle the composition with unnecessary repetitions. A characteristic element in this *danza* is the extensive use of suspensions, which enhance the overall expressivity of the composition. They appear in climactic moments of the phrases, where the tension is heightened, as well as in openings of the phrases, where they are less emphatic and more sensitive. Due to the persistency of the suspensions, it seems that the composer is striving for a sense of thematic unity while balancing the variety of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic content. The composer explores a wide range of expressive markings in this work: *gracioso, con passione ma sempre dolce, cantando con amore, ma giustamente* [singing lovingly, but timely], *con fuoco, dolce* and *dolcissimo*, and *poco*

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90 “…abundan matices, fraseos, signos de articulación e indicaciones de expression; la armonia, rica en disonancias, añade colores desonoscidos hasta este momento en la historia de la danza.”

Ibid., Free translation by the author.
ritardando ma deciso. As may be easily noted, these markings are mostly in Italian, while most other danzas to this date, use Spanish indications for such markings. Rivera has published the scores unedited, which tells us that the composer meant for these indications to be in Italian—possibly a choice that is telling of his affinity for the international classical music aesthetic.

*Mercedes* is in C minor and this key resonates a sense of warmth that is carried through the entire composition, including in the modulations of G minor and G major. It evokes an imagery of days gone by, of elegant nostalgia, and playful youth—its rhapsodic opening turns into an expressive first theme, then a danceable second theme, gently transitioning to the passionate third theme, which soon turns into a recitativo-like rhetoric before returning to the emotion and character of the first theme. This tribute to tradition comes full circle, in that all the above-mentioned characteristics seem to apply to Jesús María Sanromá’s interpretative approach.

**PASEO (mm. 1-8)**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.22. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, harmonic diagram of *paseo*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PASEO : measures 1-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C minor → bVII → A-flat major → F minor → G7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compositional Features:**

- *Mercedes* begins with a lyrical and dramatic *paseo*.
- Chordal passages in the right hand are combined with arpeggios and chromatic fragments in the left hand.
• The articulation of the marked phrases supports the increasing tension throughout this section: the first phrase is comprised of two shorter sequential phrases and the second one grows in intensity and range of register while using motivic half-step figures.

☐ The first two short phrases—both under the umbrella of the first phrase, each consisting of two measures—appear to be two halves of the same thought, nearly in sequence.

☐ Then the second phrase of four measures grows in intensity, range of register, and variety of articulations achieving a creative use of textural subtleties.

• Although in C minor, this paseo in particular, and this danza in general, makes use of ample chromaticism, thus enriching the essential harmonic structure.

General Performance Considerations:

Example 5.35. Héctor Campos-Parsi, Mercedes, the first phrase of paseo, mm. 1-2.

• Already on the downbeat of the first measure, out of the anacrusis gesture, the bass octave C is juxtaposed with an A-flat appoggiatura.
• The use of non-chord tones, coupled with the contrary direction of the descending right hand and ascending left hand, leading towards another suspension in m. 2, ask for a tenuto and a more enunciated downbeat, creating a sense of motion and overall rubato.

• Continuity of the legato lines can become quite a challenge, particularly in the first measure.

**Level 2**

**Legato in the right hand (m. 1):**

• Practice the right hand by playing only the top voice of the first four sixteenth notes, with accurate fingering and the help of the pedal by changing it after every note.

  - Add in only the lower notes and complete the octave (without the inner interval of the third):
    - Pay close attention to the balance between the voices by keeping the top voice more prominent.
  
  - Play the octave first, then add the inner voices softly (C and G with second finger):
    - Notice how the alignment and position of your hand changes from the A-flat to the E-flat octaves.

• Practice by playing the right hand as written but do not be concerned with the physical legato between the notes:

  - Let go of each position in the direction of the new one horizontally by releasing the key with ease and following the arm movement.
    - While you practice this way, use the pedal to sustain the sonority of the melodic line and create the illusion of legato playing
Left hand fluency:

- As mentioned previously, in all danzas the right and left hands’ relationship has to be very independent.

- In Mercedes particularly, this aspect is important since the left hand is not only playing differing articulations and rhythms, but also contains contrapuntal features.

- In mm. 1-2 for instance, the left hand is written in two voices and the ‘tenor’ line has a counter-melody to the right hand:
  - This element ought to be practiced separately in order to create the shape and phrasing fitting to its contour, unaffected by the interpretation of the right hand.
  - In m. 2, even though it is moving in sixteenth notes, the line is an E-flat – D suspension.
    - It would be helpful to play a couple of times on the strong beats in order to hear the tension of the seventh (F and E-flat) resolve to B-flat and D.

Balance of voicing between the hands:

- Since the moving voices are very close to one another, balance could become a troubling issue.
  - At first, practice very slowly (approximately eighth note= 48) and notice the way in which each voice (finger) descends on key while always listening.
    - In order to have a solid balance between the voices and hands, the louder sounds will need to descend faster on the key, but be prepared later, and vice versa for the softer sounds.
    - This fine-tuning of the contact point and speed of key descent will enable you to refine your touch and control of the instrument.
For practicing purpose, or if you prefer to hear the lower register more, play the lower notes of chords or octaves louder.

- This element will enrich the sonority by creating a certain polarity of sounds and if not overstated, can aid the overall balance.

Chordal ascending passage in mm. 6-7:

- Although written in uncomfortable hand positions, up until m. 6, the passages are quite fluid, in that they do not change direction abruptly.
- The example below shows mm. 6-7 and highlights the large distances between the chords of the right hand, the widely-spread arpeggiation in the left hand, and the change in the shape and position of the hand.

Example 5.36. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, mm. 6-7.

- As it is typical with any passages where there are jumps, anticipation is key:
  - In hands separate, practice first only the chords on the beats, making sure that there is good wrist anticipation and connection.
Then practice the right hand alone first by playing the first chord slightly longer, and the single note (resolution of the suspension) slightly faster and swiftly move from the resolution to the next chord, position yourself for the new chord but do not play it.

- Repeat this type of practice for the first shift, as well as for all consecutive ones.

**Level 3**

**Special challenges:**

- As it would be advisable in a contrapuntal work, the ability to play each line (hand) by memory at any starting point, is telling of the level of assimilation of the material:
  - Challenge yourself by memorizing each entry of counter-melodic content in the left hand of the *paseo*, for instance mm. 1-2, 4-5, and 8.

- In order to make the introduction of theme 1 more dramatic, you could consider staying forte all through the second ending, instead of getting softer, as it is suggested on the score.

**THEME 1**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.23. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, harmonic diagram of theme 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 1 : measures 9-24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C minor → E-flat major → C minor → G major → C minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compositional Features:

- Leading from the *paseo* to the first theme, the pick-up gesture is a written-out turn with the expressive indication of rubato and a fermata on F-sharp (acting as leading tone to the dominant chord):
  - By placing such an expressive emphasis on the F-sharp, the composer is strongly foreshadowing the effect of the appoggiaturas in this work, and the different rhythmic iteration that appears in the opening of the second phrase of this section.
- Campos-Parsi marks the first theme as *tempo di danza*, which could be referring to the fact that the *paseo* does not utilize the characteristic rhythmic figuration of the left hand, but the first theme does.
- Within the first three measures of theme 1 (mm. 9-11), the left-hand figuration is written in two variants: one with the tied third note of the triplet creating a clear syncopation, the other one with a straight triplet and an accent on the second beat.


- Throughout this section, the differentiation between melodic and accompanying contents is quite clear.
However, in m. 21, both hands exhibit features of rhythmic characteristics, which anticipate the character of the second theme.

• The phrases in this section are not necessarily divisible in smaller equal units (as it was the case with the earlier danzas).

• The overlapping gestures and the unresolved seventh, and, at times ninth chords (of various qualities) create a continuing eight-measures phrases.

General Performance Considerations:

• The suspensions in the melodic content add a sense of yearning, and suggest a more contained pace, compared to some of the following sections.

• Regarding the interpretation of the left-hand figurations in mm. 9 and 11:

  • If we are to apply the ‘rule’ for the commonly-played version of the tresillo elástico in these figurations, then both triplets will sound uneven (with longer first notes and faster/shorter remaining notes).

  • In the case of m. 9, the rhythmic manipulation falls back to the pulse quite naturally.

  • In m. 11, the accent on the second beat will need to be placed slightly later and held slightly longer, then the subsequent notes will follow more quickly proceeding on to the rest of the phrase. *

  • In m. 13, where both hands have rhythmic material resembling the notation of tresillo, the composer has emphasized each note of the triplet, for both hands, with tenuto markings.

    - This element could be a hint towards a more even interpretation of the triplet, and regarding the rhythmic notation in general as the intended final product.
• The embellishing turn that leads into the opening of the first theme repeats at the end of the first phrase, this time with a different rhythm.

Example 5.38. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, comparison of both rhythms. From left to right: m. 8 and m. 16.

• This element, although written without rubato, should be treated freely, as a literal execution of it could sound mechanical.

**Level 2**

• As mentioned above, suspensions play a significant role in the interpretation of this work:

  › Carefully notice places where such suspensions appear as part of the melodic contour versus the ones where they appear as two-note slurs as stand-alone gestures:

  - You will certainly articulate and project each one of them differently.

    ➢ When starting a phrase or gesture, these suspensions play more of a continuing role and their articulation does not need to be too emphatic.
When in the middle of phrases, or climactic moments, they can be treated as more-less (suspension-resolution) by having more emphasis on the first note.

* The performance of the *tresillo elástico* is a controversial one, as it has been noted by various musicologists and composers.\(^{91}\)

For the younger generation of composers, including Pedreira and Campos-Parsi, the manipulation of rhythm does not always take priority in interpreting the left-hand figuration.

These composers had the tendency to notate the rhythm as they intended it to be performed, as opposed to using the *tresillo elástico* figuration.

As such, besides the natural rubato, the left hand in this *danza* does not necessarily require a particular manipulation of the pulse.

The difference in voicing for this section can be created not only through varying the volume between the voices, but also through varying articulations.

For instance, in the lower voices in mm. 9, 10, and 11:

- You can explore a more detached articulation, or in the form of a two-note slur (as can been seen in m. 9).

- Practice slowly by exaggerating the legato of the top voice (when possible) and the crisper articulation for the lower voices.

By emphasizing each line, you enable yourself to more clearly distinguish between the two physically and aurally.

\(^{91}\) Refer to Appendix A.
Particularly in the cadential figure (m. 22) since the ‘alto’ and ‘tenor’ lines are close to each other, a variety of articulation between the top and middle voices can aid in creating a clearer differentiation.

**THEME 2**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.24. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, Harmonic diagram of theme 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 2 : measures 25-32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F minor $\rightarrow^b$ VII $\rightarrow$ E-flat major $\rightarrow$ G major $\rightarrow$ D major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compositional Features:**

- The second theme varies fundamentally from the first theme.
- Here, both hands take the role of a rhythm section.
- The pick-up gesture leading to the second theme anticipates its sprightly character with staccato articulation.
- The melodic content is built-in and enveloped in the prominence of the rhythm.
- Although the syncopations are clearly present on the last sixteenth notes in the first beats of the first phrase, Campos-Parsi continues to vary the left-hand rhythmic patterns in the subsequent phrase creating a sense of innovation.


- In mm. 29-31, a vocal quality returns to the texture, as half-step motion crosses over the top and middle voices of the right hand.

- Unexpected *sfz* on the second sixteenth note, second beat, add on to the syncopation overlay.

General Performance Considerations:

- Despite the danceable, energetic character and frequent accentuations, this section is marked *gracioso* [gracious, spelled in Spanish—*grazioso* in Italian] and as such it embodies the gracefulness of the earlier *danzas*.

  ⊳ Certainly, *gracioso* could also denote a joyous, fun, perhaps more ‘allegro’ pace.
• If this *danza* were written for an ensemble, the difference in timbre projection of this section hints at a scoring for the percussion instruments.

⇒ As such, the use of pedal can be minimized in order to bring out the variety of articulation as well as the crispness of the fascinating rhythms.

• In the first phrase, the syncopation is placed similarly in both instances. However, it would be interesting to layer the amount of emphasis given to each:

⇒ Play the first accent on the syncopation (in m. 25) slightly delayed and more assertively.

⇒ Play the accent on the similar syncopation (in m. 26) with less emphasis and let the walking bass in octaves of the left hand drive the movement towards the next downbeat.

- In doing so, you are creating a less vertical phrase with a larger pulse:

  ➢ Similarly, the minuet (as a stylized dance genre) receives this type of inflection as well.

**Level 2**

**Voicing the pick-up gestures in the right hand:**

• Since the notes are in close proximity (minor and major seconds, and minor third) and the moving line is in the bottom, it could become quite challenging to achieve the necessary balance and the line.

• We are mostly accustomed to voice the top note in chords or intervals.

• In this case, since the material of interest, the moving line, is in the bottom voice, then the balance of the hand in order to achieve this is different:

  ⇒ Practice by holding the bottom notes by themselves (B, B-flat, A) in succession.
While you are holding them, lightly stroke the top note (C) with the pinky, three times, creating a two-voice figuration of sixteenth-note values with the bottom voice holding a quarter.

For each note in the descending line, depress the key faster and allow for the natural weight of the hand, aided by the wrist, to produce the sound.
- This exercise will enable you to clearly discern the difference of volume for each voice, speed needed for the varying tone productions, and ultimately create a lighter touch guided by the bounce of the wrist for the staccato articulation.

Repeat the same method for the pick-up gesture in m. 28.

Another variety of practice, working on the opposite end, could be to hold the C with the fifth finger and play the moving notes:
- As they will be played in one gesture of the wrist, it would be helpful to play the lower notes legato in a three-note phrase technique.
- Then add the staccato Cs within the gesture.
- And finally play everything staccato, but keeping the general gesture.

The left-hand writing in m. 25 displays a wide jump of over two octaves (from the top F to the lower B-flat).

Consider taking the top F of the second octave with the right-hand thumb (denoted in blue in Example 5.39):
- The right hand is already in that position, and it alleviates some of the pressure from the jump for the left hand.

The octaves in the left hand, in mm. 29-30, trace further distances than in m. 26, for instance.
Practice by only using the thumbs to move from one note to the other while keeping the frame of the hand open, nearly at the distance of the octave.

- While doing so, practice initially without the written rhythms.
- After having learned well the trajectory of the thumbs, add in the notated rhythms and accents.

Do the same work for the fifth and fourth fingers.

Add to this exercise by playing both notes in different dynamic and articulations:
- The thumbs loud and longer, while the fourth and fifth fingers play softly and staccato.
- Reverse the roles.
  - Besides achieving greater accuracy with the octaves, these exercises will also enable you to free the motion of the wrist.

Level 3

Special hand-tapping challenge:

- The overlaying syncopations may be quite challenging for someone who is not used to such writing, particularly since they are split within and between the hands.
- Taking away one element, in this case the pitches, and practicing only the rhythm is a useful and creative way of approaching these figurations.

For mm. 28 (first beat) and 29-30, practice by tapping the rhythms with your palms on the piano lid (with movement similar to hand-drumming).
- Since within the right hand there are two simultaneous syncopations and accentuations on off beats, it is helpful to practice the right hand by itself first.
- Give more emphasis to what would be the top voice, if you were to play it and keep the other notes lighter.

- Practice the left hand by itself making sure that you bring out the accents, particularly the oddly-placed dotted-eighth-note in m. 29.

- After each hand feels comfortable with the rhythmic figuration, move on to tapping both hands.

- Once you have tried this in one placement, see if you can move the left hand towards the direction that it is written in.

- With this last step, you are closer to playing these measures smoothly and with ease and flair, which are quite fitting to the character and notation.

**FIRST BRIDGE**

Different from most of the previously-discussed *danzas* where the bridge or transitory material stems out of its preceding sections, here the bridge is constructed based on elements of the first theme and a small rhythmic reference to the second. As such, I have included it as a separate section for discussion.

**Level 1**

Figure 5.25. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, harmonic diagram of the first bridge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST BRIDGE : measures 33-40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G minor → V₇ of B-flat major, E-flat major, A-flat major (Ⅶ) →</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G minor → (A₇) → G minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compositional Features:

- The melodic material, and in general the right hand, is quite literally inspired by the first theme:
  - There are certain moments, for instance in m. 36, where the ‘alto’ counter melody brings forth an interesting contour.
- M. 37, is rhythmically similar to m. 21 in the first theme, as is its placement in the phrase—being that in both cases this figuration happens on the fifth measure of each phrase.
- The left hand is more loosely derived from the first theme, and it is here that snippets of the rhythmic element of \( \frac{6\, 8\, 6}{16} \) (sixteenth – eighth – sixteenth notes), found in the second theme, appear in mm. 34 and 39.

  - In m. 34, the syncopated figuration is part of a descending arpeggio in a cantabile and legato manner.
  - In m. 39, the same syncopated rhythm is part of an ascending, accentuated, and more emphatic figure leading to a suspension on the downbeat of the following measure.

General Performance Considerations:

- The atmosphere created is more intimate, and the composer’s marking is *con passione ma sempre dolce*.

  - There is a certain tenderness in the overall mood of this section, and although the content is similar to the first theme, its iteration in G minor provides a different color.
• Similar to the first theme, the phrase length here is eight measures, and requires the projection of a continuous line, which is difficult particularly with frequent stoppages in the surface rhythm.

• The pick-up gesture to this section is identical to the one in the first theme:
  ⇒ Coming out of the second theme where the feeling is more dance-like, the sextuplet that prepares the melody of the bridge appears as a quick change of tone color and character \textit{(dolce)}.

• In order to heighten the expressivity of the suspension and to emphasize the cadential figure, consider adding a mordent on the downbeat of m. 40 on the E-flat (first ending).

\textbf{Level 2}

• The counter-melodic material in the left hand in m. 35 is a new and interesting element.
  ⇒ In order to bring it out, practice only the left hand by voicing it towards the top and creating a legato line.

  ⇒ Use a similar strategy as for the octaves in m. 29 and practice by emphasizing and elongating the top voice while keeping the bottom voice light and short.

  ⇒ After having worked on it with only the left hand, practice both hands slowly:
    - Listen carefully if you can layer the sounds in such a way to hear the top voice of the chords in the right hand as the primary melody, and the top voice of the left hand as the secondary melody, while the remaining notes of each hand are proportionally softer.

  ⇒ Similarly to m. 35, the interesting element of fragmented counter melodies can be brought out more in the ‘alto’ line and in the ‘tenor’ line in m. 36, thus creating a cross-voiced counter-melody and bringing textural variety.
• The right-hand passage in m. 37 resembles the opening of the *paseo*, but here each position is a chord and the inner intervals are changing from one to the other.

  ⇒ In order to make a smoother transition to the downbeat of m. 38, you may consider taking the low D of the last octave with the left hand, and use the third finger to play the top D.

**THEME 3**

**Level 1**

Figure 5.26. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, harmonic diagram of theme 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 3 : measures 41-55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G major → A minor → D7 → B minor → C minor → G major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compositional Features:**

• This is the most expansive and stretched-out theme thus far.

• The chordal melodic line covers a wide range of the instrument.

• The phrase lengths are irregular (four + three + two + two + four).

• What begins as a sprawling theme is soon fragmented and the composition does not return to it anymore.

  ⇒ The two-bar gesture in mm. 48-49 is sequenced in mm. 50-51.

• In mm. 44 and 50, the left hand is recalling the walking bass in octaves found in the second theme.

• The staccato gestures in both hands in m. 54 evoke the sounds of a typical Caribbean cadential figuration.
Example 5.41. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, mm. 54-55.

General Performance Considerations:

- Although the previous themes have all had melodic materials in chords, here in the third theme, their voicing mostly open spanning an octave.

- In order to produce a good tone, it is important to remember to use the natural weight of the arm, conveyed through to the fingers without tightening at the wrist, even when playing widely-spanned chords.

- In mm. 45-46, the articulation between the hands is essentially dissimilar:
  - The left hand is written in descending staccato thirds.
  - The right hand is written in ascending legato chords, spanning an octave.

- Similar to the second theme, there are moments in the third theme where rhythmic coordination of the hands is crucial and quite tricky, as you would not want the shape and continuity of each one to be sacrificed

**Level 2**

- Legato in the chordal thematic material in the right hand:
  - Practice by playing only the fifth fingers, yet keeping a solid balance in the bridge of the hand:
- Release the key in the direction of the new note and create a chain of continuity for each one.

- As you trace this melodic contour with only the fifth fingers, notice how your wrist and arm need to support the finger for appropriate tone production.

Example 5.42. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, mm. 41-44.

▷ Practice only the lower voices and notice how the shape of your palm changes as you transition from one interval to the other.

- Notice that in m. 52, the chord on the second beat does not span an octave.

▷ As you add all the notes of the chord and you play the complete passage now, practice it slowly and softly, yet voicing the top notes.

- Create the legato aurally by pedaling after each chord.

- Similar to the contrapuntal nature of the left hand in the *paseo*, its figuration here is quite independent from the right hand.

▷ Besides the rhythmic issue in m. 41 (quarter-note triplet against *tresillo*), which can be practiced by tapping the rhythm, the left hand should feel fluent on its own before playing it in tempo hands together.
In order to avoid unpreparedness and uneven tone production, also practice it hands separate without rhythm and give similar attention to each note.

- As mentioned above, one of the most challenging passages in this composition is the one at m. 45.

Example 5.43. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, mm. 45-47.

The chords in the right hand continue a mostly-ascending melodic line, while the left hand descends in staccato thirds.

- Initially, practice each hand separately.
- For the left-hand passage, begin the practice by isolating only the thirds:
  - Certainly, fingering is an important step towards executing this passage seamlessly (you may find my suggested fingering above useful).
  - Practice it legato initially (wherever possible)—in doing so you are creating a physical and mental connection between the notes, since you are not allowing for the “additional” space in between (when playing staccato) to distract you from the continuity of the passage.
  - Then practice each voice with accurate fingering as if it were a single melodic line, still in legato.
➢ Add to your practice now both voices: connect the top notes of the thirds while releasing the bottom notes—the upper voice is in this case legato, while the lower one is played as the finger grips the key lightly.

➢ Repeat the same step by balancing on the lower voice:
  o With this method, add rhythmic practice (dotted rhythms, and triplets with shifting accents).

- Before playing the left hand as written, keep the legato on the bottom and staccato on the top voices of the thirds (as in the previous step) and add only the top notes of the chords in the right hand (melody – fifth finger).

➢ However, listen carefully for the contrary movement of the lines and notice how your bigger muscles (your upper arm) react to this motion as the right hand ascends and the left descends.

- Another step that can be explored before playing both hands as written, is to play the right hand as written while you lightly tap the left hand.

➢ Thus, away from the pitches, you are creating a channel for the coordination of varying articulations in both hands.

➢ Pedaling for this passage could become quite tricky since the legato line of the right hand is practically impossible and pedaling based on harmonic movement would be overwhelming for the staccato in the left hand.

- Practice very slowly by lightly pedaling after each eighth note, which works quite well for m. 45.

- Because of the sixteenth notes in the left hand, in m. 46 pedaling needs some modification:
- Hold the right-hand chords slightly longer than in the previous measure to give yourself enough time to move passed two sixteenth notes and flutter the pedal if too much sound is accumulated.

- In order for this to happen successfully, it is important to know how to adjust the reattack after the shorter duration of release and not to produce an accented sound.

- In your practice, experience creating the same desired tone as when it was released sooner by comparing the two renditions back to back without worrying about the left hand.
  
  - Start this practice at about eighth note = 62 and slowly bring the tempo up to eighth note = 144.

→ Although this type of practicing appears as if it is dissecting the music, it will help in building the foundation for a unified execution of this passage.

**Level 3**

**Challenge: create your own set of practice strategies for the following measures (mm. 48-49)**

- I have added my suggested fingering in Example 5.43.

- As you choose how to approach this passage, which is repeated in mm. 50-51, keep in mind the following items:

  → Right-hand chordal melodic content:

    - How can you split the voices to facilitate learning of the positions and realize the point of relaxation between each chord?

    - How will you practice voicing?
- How can you group certain notes in order to create continuity of the line?

▷ Left-hand passage:

- What could be challenging in this figuration (distance, difference in articulation, something else that you notice)?

  ➢ In regards to distance, I would suggest to practice the descending staccato G major arpeggio in continuation to the low E, then place the D which begins the subsequent step-wise fragment.

Example 5.44. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, mm. 48-49.

SECOND BRIDGE

Level 1

Figure 5.27. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, harmonic diagram of the second bridge.

SECOND BRIDGE : measures 56-64

G minor → D major → G minor (?)
Compositional Features:

- The second and final bridge, before the return of theme 1, explores similar melodic content to mm. 48-51 in the third theme.

- The left-hand figuration has taken elements from all the previous themes, and the syncopation continues to be a prominent feature.

- This transitory section is comprised of short, fragmented, and sequential gestures.

- Before its cadence in D major, there is a *subito* *p* that swiftly changes the tone of the section, since it is framed by the *f poco rit. ma deciso* and [*subito*] *f*.

  ➔ All these abrupt changes happen in a very short span of time—within only four measures.

General Performance Considerations:

- Although the gestures are quite short, as it has been the case with most phrases in this *danza*, they still overlap, creating larger units.

  ➔ For instance, as it may be noted in the example below, between mm. 61 and 62, the right hand ends its gesture, while the left hand continues the legato of the arpeggiated and step-wise figuration.

Level 2

- Voicing has been an important element to target throughout this danza, and the right-hand sextuplet in m. 60 is another example that needs attention.

  ➤ As you have practiced in the previous passages, all the steps apply to this example as well.

  ➤ In this case, the task is slightly more difficult since the register of the right hand is closer to the left hand than in previous cases.

  ➤ The dynamic level of forte adds another layer to the challenge:

    - It would also aid the balance between the hands if you were to voice the left-hand octaves towards the lower notes and the right-hand thirds towards the top notes.

    - With the further notes played more prominently, the middle voices can be in the background and simply provide harmonic color.

    - In this case, then the balance within and between the hands will be more clearly differentiated.

Level 3

- For the coordination of the three against four rhythm in m. 62:

  ➤ Try starting hands together on the beat, continue only with one hand, and arrive with the other on the next beat.

  ➤ Repeat the same exercise by switching the sides.
RETURN OF THEME 1

Level 1

Figure 5.28. Héctor Campos-Parsi, *Mercedes*, Harmonic diagram of the return of theme 1, mm. 65-72*
*71 for the second ending.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RETURN OF THEME 1 : 65-72 (71 for the second ending)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C minor → E-flat major → C minor → viiº7 and V7 of G major → C minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Compositional Features and Performance Considerations:

- The return of the first theme is an exact repetition of its initial statement, until the last two measures.

- Although the right hand keeps the same chords as in the beginning of the danza, what seems to be a similar cadence to the first one is interjected by the assertive accentuated octaves in the left hand marked *sinistra f*.

  ⇒ An element to consider is the marking of *sinistra* (left hand):

    - Does the composer intend for only the left hand to be loud?
    - If so, balance and projection of the right hand will become quite taxing.
    - Practice the left-hand octaves similarly to the suggestions given for the second theme.

- The last phrase is articulated in only seven measures:

  ⇒ This aspect, coupled with the abrupt dynamic change of the left hand could make for an uncertain phrasing and interpretation of the cadential figure.
- The last phrase of this *danza* could be treated as more extroverted—louder overall level of dynamic, more emphasis on accents and syncopations, and crisper articulations in m. 69.

- It could also help to slow down towards the end, taking the cue of the *subito f* to mean slowing down, which could make up for the shortness of the phrase.

  ➢ The above approaches could be good solutions to projecting a cohesive ending of this composition.
CONCLUSION

As classical pianists, we are fortunate to have a vast, diverse, and masterfully-crafted repertoire spanning four centuries. While for professional pianists the choices are immense, the younger pianists, namely of “middle intermediate” to “early advanced” levels, have a narrower window of options. Much of the time, teachers and students are bound to the more advanced standard repertoire because of the lack of knowledge of other compositions that can fill the breach between easy and difficult works, particularly of the Romantic period.

The Puerto Rican *danzas* explored in this study, as well as many others that have been written since the mid-nineteenth century, comprise a well of versatile works that can be assigned to students of the above-mentioned levels. Exposure to a variety of repertoire enables the student to draw from multiple sources in their technical and musical approach of a composition. Working on a set of *danzas* could inform the way a student will approach a Chopin mazurka in the future, and vice versa. Besides diversity, these works bring forth elements that are essential in the artistic and pianistic growth of each student, such as ability to voice correctly, continuity of phrases through chordal passages, inflections of rhythmic figurations in dance-like forms, and independence of the roles for each hand. More importantly, the genre of the *danza* instills in the young pianist the concept of needing to interpret the engraved score, and not simply reproduce it. Certainly, all music has this attribute, but the *danza* would not come close to sounding authentic unless such approach is taken right away.

The five compositions selected for this study trace the development of the genre and display its multifaceted nature. *¡Margarita!* by Manuel Gregorio Tavárez is one of the
earliest prototypes of the *danza* for piano. It displays some of the most elegant writing in the *paseo* and it challenges the ability to interpret the figurative *tresillo elástico* and to carry a line through long notes in a moderately slow tempo. *¡Bendita seas!* by Juan Morel Campos brings to the foreground the danceability of the *danza*. Since Morel Campos used to be in an ensemble that accompanied the choreographed *danza*, his compositions tend to be more upbeat and instrumental. José Ignacio Quintón, although not a prolific *danza* composer per se, is represented in this study with one of the most virtuosic works, where agility, refined touch, voicing of thick textures, and overall flair are at the centerstage.

José Enrique Pedreira belongs to the generation of composers who studied in the United States. He was a pianist himself, and the beautifully-constructed *Tus caricias* showcases his understanding of the instrument in terms of depth of tone, individuality of the left hand, and variety of articulations. The last composer of the set is Héctor Campos-Parsi, who comes to the genre of the *danza* more so on a tangent, since he is not necessarily a “*danza*” composer. However, in *Mercedes*, Campos-Parsi explores some of the most expressive melodies, features visibly the playfulness of the rhythmic section, and uses a harmonic language saturated by strings of seventh and ninth chords, which to such level were unprecedented in the genre of the *danza*.

For the composers of the twentieth century, including Pedreira and Campos-Parsi, not always did the manipulation of rhythm take priority in interpreting the left-hand figuration. They generally notated the rhythm as they intended it to be performed, as opposed to the *tresillo elástico* figuration. Campos-Parsi, for instance, used his classically-

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92 Luciano Quiñones’ music was initially going to be the representative of the twentieth century. However, research pointed this study in the direction of Campos-Parsi for the same reasons that Rivera points out. Quiñones’ music will be studied in the coming months and will be added to the list of repertoire on the website.
shaped compositional style to micromanage the notated rhythmic inflection as part of a unifying, yet varying motive. Notwithstanding, the *danza* never lost its swaying charm and moldable pulse, which have been engrained in the music for centuries now.

Due to the fact that the Puerto Rican *danza*, as a genre of music, has an inherited assemblage of origins—Spain, Venezuela, Africa, Cuba, and the creole gentrification—its compositional characteristics are eclectic and quite attractive for young pianists. Through evocative and rhetorical musical language, these works inspire the student to seek connections between the notes, further than the bar lines, and beyond the notated text.
APPENDIX A
Written Correspondence with Mr. Luciano Quiñones during March 2017

IG: How do you see the place of the danza currently in the educational system in Puerto Rico? For instance, at the conservatory level, do students learn and perform these works much?

LQ: I [do not] have much information about what is the educational system doing, and [my personal opinion is that]\(^{93}\) they are not doing too much about the danza. Except for the "Puerto Rican week" where they teach many things about our culture, I don't feel there is much information offered about the danza. In the music schools, as the danzas are intermediate to advanced level, they are not taught very much either. And in the conservatory, my perception is that they mostly [choose] the European classical music. I notice some kind of disregard for the danza as lesser music, and it is seldom included in the concerts. That was the opinion of Aristides Chavier in the 19th century, who exhorted composers not to lose their time with “lesser genres” and dedicate their efforts to the “real music.” I feel that it still prevails among most scholars.

IG: How do you personally approach the composition process? Do you already have a clear idea, theme, or plan in mind, or do you simply react to momentary inspiration?

LQ: How do I approach the composition process? Most of the time I [am] provoked [by] the inspiration. The biggest problem is to get a first theme. Once I get that, the rest flows pretty naturally. I do have some guidelines, mostly to make an interesting composition in terms of harmonic progressions, introduction of modern chords, and rhythmic interest especially in the accompaniment. I also try to get the most of the piano sound, so that it sounds full with an interesting arrangement - not [only] with a melody independent from [its] accompaniment. Many times they interlock with each other, and also I begin a phrase with the left hand which is completed by the right hand, etc.\(^{94}\)

IG: Who is the danza composer that you draw inspiration most from (if there is one, or more of them) and why?

LQ: The most influential composer for me is Morel Campos, but now I am composing more in a contemporary style, so I have created my own style regarding that. I try to incorporate jazz ideas, but also trying to keep the traditional danza sound when at all

\(^{93}\) Mr. Quiñones has used at times colloquial English words or freely-written sentences. When I spoke to him over the phone, he agreed for me to edit the text to better reflect his thoughts. All edited words or rephrased sentences are in [ ] brackets.

\(^{94}\) Besides being a composer, Mr. Quiñones is a professional pianist and as such he begins his compositional process at the piano, as a player. Due to this, his danzas are idiomatic for the instrument of the piano.
possible. There are contemporary composers who have taken the genre to a very
contemporary style which makes it almost unrecognizable (in fact, totally unrecognizable
for me) and I don't like that. I have changed some things, as making it more as a genre for
listening than for dancing, as it was originally intended. The “danza beat” is not as marked
as in the traditional ones, but it is almost always implicit and recognizable.

**IG:** What do you think makes the *danza* Puerto Rican (in the hands of Puerto Rican
composers). There are many similarities with Cuban *danza* also, but what do you think are
the most special, defining qualities of the *danza* that make it a point of national pride for
Puerto Rico?

**LQ:** I have listened to, but not analyzed *danzas* from other countries, so I [cannot] answer
that question with authority. I think that mainly the form and rhythm of our *danza* is what
makes it different. Our *danza* has pretty well defined parts—although they may vary a lot,
but perhaps the repetition of the parts is one of the main characteristics. And the
introduction or *paseo*, is also a very defining quality. The other important and defining part
is the rhythm in the left hand. And as I mentioned [in my answer to the second question],
the abundance of interesting harmonic progressions I think is also a defining characteristic
of our *danza*. The Puerto Rican *danza* [does not] [stay within] the I-IV-V progression. It
moves [quite a lot], sometimes unexpectedly, and sometimes [it] even modulates to other
keys. That [is] what makes it different and interesting, in my opinion.

**IG:** You mention (like many other historians and composers) the importance and
distinguishing characteristic of the rhythm. I understand that it is referred to as *tresillo
elástico*, “codified” by Julián Andino. To you, what does the *tresillo* actually do the written
rhythm, since as I understand, it is not performed exactly as it is written. For many people,
this feature creates a problem with interpretation, as they might keep it straight. Where is
the manipulation of the beat, in your opinion?

**LQ:** I have seen very little [written in regards to] the *tresillo elástico* or elastic triplet. In
fact, I have my doubts regarding it. When I was [uninformed] about the *danza* and its
composers, I thought that the elastic triplet was due [simply] to the lack of education of the
composers (I [did not] know at that time of the enormous capability of Tavárez and Morel).
I thought that they [did not] know how to write that rhythm and just wrote a triplet and let
the musicians do it right because they already knew how to do it by tradition. And perhaps
there is something [true] in it, but not that the composers [did not] know how to write it.
The composers knew about it, but as they wrote for musicians with not as profound a
musical education as them, they wrote it that way so as to not complicate things for them.
And as everybody knew how it was played, things ran smoothly for everybody. Let me
clarify that this is just speculation on my part, with no basis; just trying to find an
explanation for that.
In [Juan Morel Campos’] *danza, Alma Sublime*, you can see the triplet in one hand vs. the dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note against it, so it is clear that he wanted a difference.


The sixteenth note is played just a fraction of a beat later than the last triplet note. The difference is practically imperceptible, but it [does exist] and I think [that] this is a basis for further analysis, as it tells a lot! [I remember listening to interpretations of danzas played on the piano by people [of the older generations] and I noticed [something] like a sway or delay, which I felt like a “gusto,” that might be related to this. And I think that is what the *tresillo elástico* is about, at least in part, in addition to changing the rhythmic pattern.

I began my musical career in 1962 playing with the oldest dance band in Puerto Rico, the Happy Hills Orchestra (still in existence!). I remember we played the *danza Bellos ojos* [by Juan Morel Campos] and I particularly remember the beautiful accompaniment as played by the saxophones, who all were old musicians. I never saw the score, so I [do not] know how it was written. The point is that, when later on I began learning that *danza* for piano, I was surprised to find the triplet in the accompaniment, that [did not] sound anything near what I had heard. I play it, and most *danzas* with the “mostly played” rhythm shown in one of the two illustrations I created for you which I am attaching here.

One shows two basic triplet *danza* accompaniment rhythms, as written, followed by how most of us play them. But I think that the second rhythm should be played a little bit out of sync so it gives a nice feeling.
I found this quote from Monsita Ferrer’s biography, which I also think is interesting and pertinent:

Monsita [Ferrer] points out something that Morel Campos had intuited (but only intuited), that the writing of the dance should be done in a way that is well-read by the interpreters, by means of the graphic elimination of the capricious elastic triplet.95

And finally, I am attaching a newspaper article about the elastic triplet published in 1965, written by Prof. Tomás Agrait (whom I met and even got to play in his orchestra just once).96 In it he makes reference to an article written by a “Doctor Barasoain” and published in the “El Mundo” newspaper, which I [have not] seen. If you find it, I would appreciate if you send me a copy. Prof. Agrait advocates for the continuation of the elastic triplet, something in which I [do not] agree with him. My danzas (and most modern composers’ danzas) are written as they should be played, although I [would not] mind a little sway to give them “gusto,” as long as the basic rhythmic pattern is kept.

95 “Advierte oportunamente Monsita algo que había intuido (pero sólo intuido) Morel Campos, que la escritura de la danza debe hacerse de modo que sea bien leída por los intérpretes, mediante la eliminación gráfica del caprichoso tresillo elástico.”

Luciano Quiñones’ writing was originally in Spanish. The English version has been freely translated by the author.

APPENDIX B
Publisher’s Permission for José Enrique Pedreira’s danza, Tus Caricias

Arminda Trevino - TUS CARICIAS / The Puerto Rican Danza: A Stylistic Study with Emphasis on Performance and Pedagogical Implications

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To: inesapiano@gmail.com
Date: 3/22/2017 2:08 PM
Subject: TUS CARICIAS / The Puerto Rican Danza: A Stylistic Study with Emphasis on Performance and Pedagogical Implications

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